

# Jesus And MDR

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**Text:**

**Introduction:**

- I. *David Edwin Harrell*: “I can think of no other point at which our society more seriously challenges Biblical norms than on marriage.” (“Marriage,” *The Mooresville Contender*)
- II. We live in a day and age in which **God’s law on marriage** is ignored, neglected, ridiculed, and rejected by society in general
  - A. In fact, many **seriously question** the importance and the validity of the marriage relationship itself
    1. Some people are advocating “**trial marriages**”
      - a. *Margaret Meade*: “One ought to take out a learner’s permit before one receives a license -- just as with a driver’s license.”
    2. Thousands are just “**living together**” without benefit of clergy
      - a. As Glen Campbell’s song “**Gentle On My Mind**” says, they’re not “shackled by forgotten words and bonds, and ink stains that have dried upon some line”
      - b. Their philosophy is expressed in Gale Garnett’s 1966 Grammy-winning folk hit which said: “We’ll sing in the sunshine. We’ll laugh every day. We’ll sing in the sunshine. Then I’ll be on my way”
    3. Marriage is an “**easy come easy go**” **proposition**
  - B. Divorce, something which used to be a **shame** and a **disgrace**, is an **everyday occurrence**
- III. In an age so permeated with such **wanton disregard for God’s law on marriage**, it is absolutely essential for us to stand “in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein....” (Jer. 6:16)
- IV. In this lesson, I want to talk to you about two things:
  - A. **Jesus’ Teaching On MDR**
  - B. **Man’s Erroneous Teaching On MDR**
- V. But before we do that, there are some **preliminary observations** that we need to consider
  - A. Chart: “Preliminary Observations”
  - B. The marriage relationship was **ordained by God Almighty** in the very beginning of time (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Mt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-9)
    1. It was God who first saw that it was **not good for a man to be alone**
    2. He was the one who **created Eve** and **brought her to Adam**
    3. Marriage was **God’s idea**, not man’s
  - C. As its Author, He has **the right** to regulate, sanction, and judge the marriage relationship

1. Just as a **potter** has the right to do what He will with **the clay** (Isa. 45:9; Jer. 18:5-10; Rom. 9:20-21), so God has **the right to regulate** the marriage relationship
- D. God's laws are **just and right** and given in **the best interest** of His creation Dt. 6:24-25; 10:12-13; 1 Jn. 5:3
1. It is not **God's law** that brings sorrow and suffering, but **sin** Pr. 13:15
  2. And it is not **God's law on marriage** that brings unhappiness; it is **the violation of His law**
- E. God has **revealed His law on marriage** in a very clear and simple way, and all those who enter that relationship are **amenable to His law**
1. Jesus placed the **burden of responsibility** for knowing and obeying God's law on marriage squarely on **the shoulders of man** Mt. 19:4
- F. Our **attitudes** and our **actions** with respect to marriage must not be based upon:
1. The **theories** and **philosophies** of men
  2. The **whims** of society
  3. The **practice** of the majority
  4. The **sentiments** of the saints
  5. The **proclamations** of the preacher
  6. Our own **opinions** and **emotions**
  7. Etc.
- G. Our **attitudes** and our **actions** must be based upon **what God has said** in His word

VI. And so we ask the question: **“What is written in the law? how readest thou?”** (Lk. 10:26)

## Body:

### I. JESUS' TEACHING ON MDR<sup>1</sup>

#### 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**

<sup>1</sup> While the teaching on MDR in the epistles (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7) is Jesus' teaching (Jn. 16:13-15; 1 Cor. 14:37), this study will focus on Jesus' teaching in the Gospels.

Sins	Jesus	The OT
Murder	Mt. 5:21	Ex. 20:13; Dt. 5:17
Adultery	Mt. 5:27	Ex. 20:14; Dt. 5:18
Divorce	Mt. 5:31	Dt. 24:1
Swearing Falsely	Mt. 5:33	Lev. 19:12
<i>Lex Talionis</i>	Mt. 5:38	Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Dt. 19:21
Love Neighbor	Mt. 5:43	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
    - a) “**It is written**” (Mt. 4:5, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13)
    - b) **Writer’s name** (Mt. 12:17; 13:14, 35; 15:7; 21:4; 22:43)
    - c) “**By the prophet**” (Mt. 2:5; 13:35; 21:4; 27:35)
    - d) “**Through the prophet**” (Mt. 1:22; 2:15)
    - e) “**The Scriptures**” (Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Jn. 13:18)
  - 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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)<sup>2</sup>
  - 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 covenants, divorce** was judged **illicit under all circumstances** (CD 4:21; esp. 11Q<sup>Ta</sup> 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**

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<sup>2</sup> *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).

- 3) The **school of Hillel** (110 BC – AD 10 [?]) believed that divorce was permissible for **all kinds of offenses**<sup>3</sup>
- 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 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. 24:1).’ 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. Git. 9:10).” (Bold emphasis added, EBC, Rev. Ed., 9:465-466)

<sup>3</sup> *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)

- 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)<sup>4</sup>
- 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)<sup>5</sup>
    - 1) Gen. 1:26-28: <sup>26</sup> 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.” <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them**. <sup>28</sup> 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: <sup>24</sup> 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

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<sup>4</sup> *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).

<sup>5</sup> *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).

[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* (καταλείπω) is a **strong word**. The simple verb means **‘to leave,’** the prefixed preposition *kata* (κατά), 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 heart<sup>6</sup>

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.*)

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)

<sup>6</sup> *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).



- 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 together<sup>7</sup>
    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)
    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)<sup>8</sup>
- 1) They are no more two but **one**<sup>9</sup>
  - 2) What God has **“joined together,”**<sup>10</sup> let not man **“separate”**
    - a) **“Joined together”** (*sunzeugnumi*)
      1. *BDAG*: **“lit. ‘yoke together’ ...then gener. to make a pair, join together, pair....”** (954)

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<sup>7</sup> *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).

<sup>8</sup> *Leon Morris*: “ὅστε, 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).

<sup>9</sup> *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).

<sup>10</sup> *John Nolland*: “In marriage God makes of a man and woman a linked pair, partnered for the needs, responsibilities, and eventualities of life.” (*Ibid.*).

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* (συζεύγνυμι) ‘**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. τὸ *some*th. (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**

d) Some have taken this to mean that man **cannot separate** what God has joined together.<sup>11</sup> But that is **not true**<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *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).

<sup>12</sup> *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).

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 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**<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *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).

- b. Jesus points out the fact that Moses did not **“command”** divorce; he merely **“permitted”** it because of their **“hardness of heart”**<sup>14</sup> (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)
  - 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)

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<sup>14</sup> *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).

- 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*, 1:154)
- 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)<sup>15</sup>
- 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 p<sup>25</sup>, B, C, W, Family<sup>1</sup> & 13, the Majority text, lat, sy<sup>p,h</sup> and bo.” (Bold emphasis added, “Another Look At The Erasmusian View Of Divorce And Remarriage,” 263, n. 1)
    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 P<sup>25</sup>*, 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**

<sup>15</sup> *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 πορνείᾳ read by κ C<sup>3</sup> K L etc., and παρεχτὸς 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).

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. Interpretation #1: The exception phrase **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. Interpretation #2: The exception phrase 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.”<sup>16</sup> (Bold emphasis added, 67)
3. Interpretation #3: The exception phrase allows **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. Interpretation #4: The exception phrase indicates that divorce is not **adulterous** (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 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. Interpretation #5: The exception phrase 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

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<sup>16</sup> See Bruce Vawter, “Divorce and the New Testament,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 39 (1977), 528-542.

b) So, Jesus **permits**, although He does not **require** or even **recommend**, 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)<sup>17</sup>

b. Refutation:

1. The Hebrew term *zēnut*, which is translated by *porneia* in the LXX, **nowhere appears in Leviticus 18**
1. 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 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)
  2. The Jews did not regard “an **incestuous relationship** as constituting **marriage**” (Bold emphasis added, Constable on Mt. 19:9)

<sup>17</sup> *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).

3. 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)
  4. 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:<sup>18</sup>

1. Chart: “Fornication”
2. **Fornication** [pre-marital sex] (Dt. 22:21; 1 Cor. 7:2)
3. **Adultery** [extra-marital sex] (Sir. 23:23; Herm. Mand. 4.1.5; T. Jos. 3:8)

a) Sometimes “**fornication**” is distinguished from

<sup>18</sup> “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).

“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**<sup>19</sup>

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 sexual activities included in Leviticus 18**. These activities may be summarized in general as **illicit sexual intercourse** -- including **incest, adultery, homosexual practices**, and

<sup>19</sup> *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).

**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**”
  - f) It is a **physical act**, not mental (despite arguments to the contrary)
    1. One cannot commit “**mental fornication**” or “**mental adultery**”
    2. Jesus was speaking **figuratively** not literally in Matthew 5:27-28
      - a. Some argue that “**lust**” is actually “**adultery**” and therefore grounds for divorce
      - b. If so, could one argue that “**hatred**” is actually “**murder**” (1 Jn. 3:15) and therefore grounds for capital punishment?

- c. If so, could one argue that “**friendship with the world**” is actually “**adultery**” (Jas. 4:4) and therefore grounds for divorce?
3. Jesus is teaching that **lust** is **just as much a sin** as **adultery**, not that lust is the **sin of adultery**
- g) It is a **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; NIV<sup>84</sup>; 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 “**adulteration of the covenant**” (despite arguments to the contrary)
    - a. Israel’s **idolatry** was figuratively described as “**sexual adultery**”
      1. Chart: “Israel’s ‘Adultery’”
    - b. When a term is used **figuratively** to describe something else, it does not change its **basic meaning**
      1. Chart: “‘Drunk’ â God’s Judgment”
- 3) 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**

4) 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)

5) 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 the “**put away person**” (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9) or the “**third party**” (Mt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Lk. 16:18b):

1. Chart: “Remarriage Is Adultery”
2. This is true whether:
  - a. **Fornication** occurred or not
  - b. The person **desired the divorce** or not
  - c. The person **protested the divorce** or not
  - d. The person was **innocent** or not

- 
- e. The person was a **Christian** or not
  - f. Etc.
3. As long as one's first mate is alive, one who is **put away** cannot remarry another without **committing adultery** Rom. 7:2-3
  4. 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

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- 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 because of **other’s disrespect for God’s law on marriage** (cf. Ezra 10:1-4, 18-19, 44)
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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)?<sup>20</sup>
        - 1) Arguments for the former:
          - a) The disciples’ statement is the **nearest possible antecedent**
          - 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)

<sup>20</sup> *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).

- 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 καὶ (*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 most** 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 granted<sup>21</sup>

a) But considering repeated warnings throughout the OT not to **tamper** with God’s word<sup>22</sup>, 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.)

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.)

<sup>21</sup> Murray discusses this view although he disagrees with it (46-47).

<sup>22</sup> 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).

- 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: <sup>11</sup> So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery **against her**.<sup>23</sup>
- 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)
  - 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’ autēn* 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?

<sup>23</sup> *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).

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- 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 adultery against another man** by having relations with that man’s wife. But a **husband could not commit adultery against his own wife by being unfaithful to her**. By insisting that a husband could commit adultery against his own wife, Jesus greatly elevated the status of wives and women in general.” (Bold emphasis added, 23:158)
9. In Mark’s account, unlike Matthew’s, Jesus contemplates **a woman divorcing her husband**



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: <sup>10</sup> **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
    - In other words, divorce is **not just a husband's prerogative**

#### D. Luke 16:18

- Remarriage** after divorce is **adultery**
  - For **the divorcer** (i.e. the one who **divorces**)
    - Example:* If Jack puts away Jill and marries Jane, he commits adultery
  - For the **third party** who marries **the divorcee** (i.e. the one who **is divorced**)
    - Example:* If Jack puts away Jill, and she marries Jim, he commits adultery
  - For the **divorcee** who remarries (implication)
    - Example:* If Jack puts away Jill, and she marries Jim, she commits adultery
    - This is not **explicitly** stated here, but it is **implied**
    - It would be **ridiculous** to conclude that one person in a marriage is **committing adultery** and his/her mate is **not**
    - Furthermore, what is **implied** in this passage is **explicitly stated** in another
      - Mt. 5:32: <sup>32</sup> But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality **causes her to commit adultery**; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

## II. MAN'S ERRONEOUS TEACHING ON MDR

### A. There Are No Permissible Reasons For Divorce And/Or Remarriage<sup>26</sup>

- Argument #1: *The exception clause in Matthew 19:9 is an interpolation*
  - Explanation:
    - The phrase "**except for fornication**" was **not in the autograph** (i.e. the original copy) of Matthew's Gospel
    - It was **added by a scribe** at a later time
    - Therefore, it should **not be used** to justify divorce for fornication and subsequent remarriage today
  - Refutation:

<sup>26</sup> This interpretation may be divided into two different views: (1) There are no permissible reasons for divorce; (2) One may divorce for fornication, but not remarry.

- 1) Scholars almost **unanimously agree** that certain words and phrases in some passages are **interpolations** (cf. 1 Jn. 5:7b-8a), but they **do not believe** that the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 is **an interpolation**
- 2) Although there are **variant readings** of Matthew 19:9 (especially the **last part** of the verse) in **different Greek MSS** (just as there are in **many other verses**), the exception clause is **found in all extant Greek MSS**
  - a) The **Majority text**, the **Westcott & Hort text**, and the **Nestle/United Bible Society text** all include this phrase
- 3) This is no doubt why **none of our standard English translations omit the exception clause**
  - a) ASV: “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, **except for fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.”
  - b) KJV: “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, **except it be for fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”
  - c) ESV: “And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another, commits adultery.”
  - d) HCSB: And I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another, commits adultery.”
  - e) ISV: “I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another woman commits adultery.”
  - f) LEB: “Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, **except on the basis of sexual immorality**, and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”
  - g) NET: “Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, **except for immorality**, and marries another commits adultery.”
  - h) NASB: “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for immorality**, and marries another commits adultery.”
  - i) NIV: “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, **except for marital unfaithfulness**, and marries another woman commits adultery.”
  - j) NKJV: “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”
  - k) RSV: “And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, **except for unchastity**, and marries another, commits adultery.”
  - l) NRSV: “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for unchastity**, and marries another commits adultery.”
  - m) NEB: “I tell you, if a man divorces his wife for any cause **other than unchastity**, and marries another, he commits adultery”
  - n) RSV: “And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, **except for unchastity**, and marries another, commits adultery.”
- 4) While several of our standard English translations [ESV; HCSB; ISV; NET; NAB; NASB; NIV; NRSV; RSV) **omit the last part of the verse**, none of them **omit the exception clause**

a) Note: If the last part of the verse is in fact **an interpolation**, other passages clearly **teach the same truth**

1. Mt. 5:32: <sup>32</sup> But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; **and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.**

2. Lk. 16:18: <sup>18</sup> “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; **and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.**

5) The textual evidence in the Greek MSS clearly indicate that **the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 is genuine**, and this fact is recognized by the scholars who have translated our English Bibles, so **this argument is just not valid**

2. Argument #2: “Fornication” cannot be committed by married people

a. Explanation:

- 1) **Fornication** is illicit sexual intercourse by **unmarried people** and **adultery** is illicit sexual intercourse by **married people**
- 2) Therefore, the exception (Mt. 19:9) can only apply to **sexual promiscuity** which took place **before marriage**, not after

b. Refutation:

- 1) Even if this argument were true, Jesus’ statement would **permit** someone to divorce his mate for any **fornication that occurred before their marriage**, so that would be **a ground for divorce**
- 2) It is certainly true that in the **English language**, the word **“fornication”** is most commonly understood as **sexual relations** between **unmarried people**, but the Greek word *porneia* underlying the English is **not limited** to that meaning
- 3) And **scholars** consistently define the original word that is translated **“fornication”** (*porneia*) as a **general word** denoting **all types of illicit sexual intercourse**, not just sex between unmarried people

a) *BAGD*: “*prostitution, unchastity, fornication, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.* 1. lit.... Differentiated fr. **moicheia**...Mt 15:19; Mk 7:21.... On the other hand **moicheia** appears as **porneia**.... Of the sexual unfaithfulness of a married woman Mt 5:32; 19:9.... 2. fig., in accordance w. an OT symbol of apostasy fr. God, of idolatry; fr. the time of Hosea the relationship betw. God and his people was regarded as a marriage bond. This usage was more easily understandable because many pagan cults...were connected w. sexual debauchery....” (Bold emphasis added, 693)

b) *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....” (Bold emphasis added, #4202, 531-532)

- c) *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....” (Bold emphasis added, 455)
- d) *Moulton & Milligan*: “*porneia* which is rare in classical Greek originally meant ‘prostitution,’ ‘fornication,’ but came to be applied to **unlawful sexual intercourse generally**.” (Bold emphasis added, 529, quoted in Maurice Lusk, III, “‘Fornication’--Its Meaning,” *Your Marriage Can Be Great*, 105)
- e) Bagster, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, 337
- f) Abbot-Smith, 373
- g) ISBE, 746
- h) Hastings, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, 29
- i) Richardson, *A Theological Wordbook of the Bible*, 16-17
- j) *The New Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, 9, 111
- k) *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology*, III:538
- l) Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, I:49
- m) Reisser, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, I:500
- 4) When this word (*porneia*) is examined in context, it is clear that it was used to denote **all kinds of illicit sexual relationships**
- a) The word was used in the **LXX version** of the OT to describe **unlawful sexual intercourse by married people**
1. Though Israel was “**married**” to **Jehovah**, her unfaithfulness was described as “**fornication**” (Hos. 2:2, 4-5; Amos 7:17)
  2. Though Jerusalem was “**married**” to **Jehovah**, her unfaithfulness was described as “**fornication**” (Ezek. 16:6-8, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30)
  3. Though Jerusalem and Samaria were “**married**” to **Jehovah**, their unfaithfulness was described as “**fornication**” (Ezek. 23:1-5, 43-44)
- b) The word was used in **non-canonical Jewish writings** to describe **unlawful sexual intercourse by married people**
1. In the *Testament of Joseph*, the writer says of Joseph concerning Potiphar’s wife: “...she sought to draw me into **fornication** [*porneia*].” (3:8)
  2. In the *Testament of Ruben*, the writer says of Joseph: “...he guarded himself from a woman and purged his thoughts from all **fornication** [*porneia*]” (4:8)
  3. In the *Testament of Benjamin*, the writer speaks of “...the **fornication** [*porneia*] of Sodom” as the vilest type of sexual perversion (9:1)



4. In the *Book of Sirach*, the writer says of the wife who is unfaithful to her husband, "...she trespasseth against her own husband;...she committeth adultery (*moicheuo*) through her **fornication** [*porneia*]." (23:22-23)
  5. In the *Damascus Document* of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the writer speaks of those who "...shall be caught up in **fornication** twice by taking a second wife while the first is alive, where as the principle of creation is, male and female created He them." (Quoted in Maurice Lusk, III, "Fornication"--Its Meaning,' *Your Marriage Can Be Great*, 107)
- c) The word was used by **NT writers** to describe all illicit sexual intercourse including:
1. **Homosexuality** (cf. Jude 7)
  2. **Premarital sex** (Dt. 22:21; 1 Cor. 7:1-2)
  3. **Extra-marital sex** (1 Cor. 5:1; 7:1-5; Rev. 2:20-22; cf. Sir. 23:23; Herm. Mand. 4.1.5; T. Jos. 3:8)
  4. **Incest**
  5. **Bestiality**
  6. Etc.
- 5) So, the term "**fornication**" [*porneia*] was used in Bible times as a **general word** for sexual immorality
- a) The term "**fornication**" was used to describe **all forms of illicit sexual intercourse**, including **adultery**
    1. Sometimes "**fornication**" [*porneia*] is **distinguished** from "**adultery**" [*moicheia*] (cf. Mt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21)
    2. Sometimes the words are used **almost interchangeably** (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1; Rev. 2:20-22)
    3. 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)
    4. So while **all adultery is fornication, not all fornication is adultery**
  - b) The term "**adultery**" is used in the Bible to describe **voluntary illicit sexual intercourse** between two people, when at least one of them is **bound** by God's law (on marriage) to **someone else**
    1. Rom. 7:2-3: <sup>2</sup> For the woman who has a husband is **bound by the law to her husband** as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. <sup>3</sup> So then if, while her husband lives, she **marries another man**, she will be called **an adulteress**; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.
  - c) So while **all adultery is fornication, not all fornication is adultery**
  - d) We use our English word "**drink**" in a similar way today

1. Ordinarily the word is used to refer to **any liquid beverage**
  2. But sometimes it is used to refer to **an alcoholic beverage only**
  - 6) Jesus used the term **“fornication,”** because He wanted to include **all forms of illicit sexual intercourse,** not just “adultery”
  - 7) If Jesus had wanted to say **“immorality before marriage,”** He could have, but instead Jesus said **“except for fornication”**
  - 8) Apparently Jesus intended to make **all forms of premarital sex and all forms of extra-marital sex** valid causes for divorce and remarriage
3. Argument #3: Jesus was only explaining the law of Moses
- a. Explanation:
    - 1) Jesus was **only explaining what the law of Moses really taught** concerning divorce and remarriage
    - 2) Since the law of Moses has been **replaced** by the gospel of Christ (Rom. 7:4, 6; Gal. 3:23-25; Eph. 2:14-16), Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage **does not apply today**
    - 3) Since this instruction concerning divorce is **not repeated after Pentecost,** there is **no authority to divorce for any reason** under the new covenant
  - b. Refutation:
    - 1) If we were to **grant for the sake of argument** that Jesus explains **the true teaching of the law of Moses** in Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:9, would that **prove,** in and of itself, that what Jesus said **has no application to us today?**
      - a) In other words, could Jesus have been **explaining the “true teaching” of the law** and also **proclaiming the “gospel of the kingdom”** at the same time?
        1. When you think about that question, I think you will at least have to admit that **possibility,** because **nine of the Ten Commandments** are also **taught in the gospel of Christ**
      - b) If this is at least possible, then one must **do more than just prove that Jesus was explaining the “true teaching” of the law of Moses** to sustain this position. He must also **prove that Jesus was only explaining the law of Moses** and not also proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom
    - 2) Now obviously **some of what Jesus taught applied only to the Jews** under the law of Moses
      - a) Mt. 23:2-3: <sup>2</sup> saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. <sup>3</sup> Therefore **whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do,** but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.
      - b) Mk. 1:44: <sup>44</sup> and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, **show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded,** as a testimony to them.”
    - 3) But the Gospels clearly reveal that Jesus came preaching and teaching the **“gospel of the kingdom”** (Mt. 4:23), and since **the kingdom had not been**

**established** at that time (Mk. 1:14-15), much of what He taught **anticipated the kingdom** (Lk. 16:16) and, therefore, **applies to us today**

- a) The **Beatitudes** Mt. 5:1-12
  - b) The **contrasts** in Mt. 5
    1. Was Jesus' **just explaining** the law of Moses in these passages?
      - a. Mt. 5:21-22
      - b. Mt. 5:27-28
      - c. Mt. 5:31-32
      - d. Mt. 5:33-37
      - e. Mt. 5:38-42
      - f. Mt. 5:43-45
  - c) The **kingdom parables** (Mt. 13:1ff)
  - d) The procedure for dealing with **an impenitent brother** who sins against you (Mt. 18:15-17)
  - e) Call no man your **father** (Mt. 23:9)
  - f) The **new birth** (Jn. 3:3, 5)
  - g) The **Great Commission** (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16)
  - h) Etc.
- 4) **The apostles** repeatedly appealed to **Jesus' teaching** during His Personal Ministry as **authoritative for the church** under the new covenant (Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 7:10-12; 9:14; 11:23-26; 1 Tim. 5:18; 6:3-4)
- a) The word that Christians are to obey "**began to be spoken by the Lord**" (Heb. 2:3), not the apostles after Pentecost
- 5) Since not everything that Jesus taught **applied only to the Jews** under the law of Moses and much of what He taught **anticipated the coming kingdom**, the **immediate context** of Jesus' teaching **must determine its application**, and the **immediate context** of Jesus' teaching on **divorce and remarriage** indicates that His teaching **applies to all men today**
- a) The **Sermon on the Mount** was about **the kingdom** Mt. 5:3, 10, 19-20; 6:10, 33; 7:21
  - b) Matthew 19 is also in a "**kingdom context**"
    1. Mt. 19:12: <sup>12</sup> For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs **for the kingdom of heaven's sake**. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."
      - a. If this was **just a restatement of the law**, why did Jesus mention those who became eunuchs for the **kingdom of heaven's sake**?
    2. Mt. 19:14: <sup>14</sup> But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is **the kingdom of heaven**."

3. Mt. 19:23-24: <sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter **the kingdom of heaven**. <sup>24</sup> And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter **the kingdom of God**.”
- 6) So, if Jesus was **explaining the true teaching of the law**, the context indicates that He was also **teaching the “gospel of the kingdom”**
- 7) But Jesus was **not just explaining the true teaching of the law of Moses** because Jesus’ teaching in Mt. 19:9 is **different** from what the law of Moses taught
- a) The law decreed that fornicators and adulterers were to be **put to death** (Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:13-24)
  - b) Jesus taught that an adulteress wife could be **divorced**
  - c) Chart: “Jesus And The Law”
  - d) Objection: “The **death penalty** was **not carried out** in Jesus’ day because of the teaching of Dt. 24:1-4”
    1. That just **cannot be correct**, because Dt. 24:1-4 was given during the time when the **death penalty for fornication was carried out**
  - e) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasts **His teaching** with the **rabbinical interpretations** of the law (cf. Mt. 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44)
- 8) Besides, when Jesus **answered** the Pharisees’ **question** concerning divorce, He went back beyond the law of Moses all the way to **the beginning** Mt. 19:4-8
- a) Jesus placed marriage in the perspective in which it must be viewed -- not as a **part of a law** which would be valid for a few remaining months, but as the **will of the Creator for all mankind**
- 9) Jesus’ teaching is **not in harmony with the law** and it **cannot be merely an explanation of it**, but it is in complete harmony with **God’s will at the beginning**
- a) Two are **joined** by God, and one can be **freed** from that bond only by the **death** or the **unfaithfulness** of his mate
  - b) **God’s relationship with Israel** in the OT illustrates the fact that Jesus’ teaching on marriage is in **harmony with God’s original marriage law**
    1. Israel’s relationship with God was described as a **marriage** (Ezek. 16:6-8)
    2. When Israel went after other gods, it was called **“fornication”** (Ezek. 16:36)
    3. When **God severed His relationship** with Israel, because of her idolatry, it was called **“divorce”** (Jer. 3:6-10)
      - a. Question: Did God **put away** Israel because of His **hardness of heart** or because it has always been God’s law that adultery is **cause for putting away**?

- b. Question: If God **divorced** Israel according to the teaching of the law of Moses, could she have **married another husband**?
- c. Question: Under Moses' law the first husband could not **take back** a wife, he had **put away** (Dt. 24:4). What about God and Israel; could He **take her back**?
- c) Isn't it obvious that **divorce** here is **not according** to the teaching of **the law**, but rather according to **God's original law of marriage**?
- 10) Furthermore, Jesus speaks of **man** in general, not of **Jews** in particular
- a) "**Male and female**" (Mt. 19:4)
- b) "**A man**" (Mt. 19:5)
- c) "**Whoever**" (Mt. 19:9)
- 11) Moreover, this argument would have us believe that Jesus, near the end of His Personal Ministry, **championed a party position** (attempting to settle an "interpretation" of the law) which would be **valid for only a few more months**. Does that make sense?
- a) This theory assumes that the Hebrews, for 15 centuries did not know the meaning of the Hebrew word *ervah* ("**unseemly thing**," ASV) and that Jesus **settles the question at the last moment**, just months before it became a **vain debate**
- b) This theory pictures Christ as throwing His authority behind **the Shammai position** and sanctioning the remarriage of offended Jews for the duration of the law; after which and without further word, He then **abrogates that authority at the cross** so as to **permit no divorce** (for any cause) under the new covenant. This is **ABSURD!**
- 12) Finally, if Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:9 **do not apply today**, they **never did apply**
- a) Under the law, the fornicator was **put to death** (Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:22-24), thus no need to **put her away**
- b) These passages will not **apply in the future**, because in heaven there is **no marriage** (Mt. 22:30)
- c) Therefore, if these passages **do not apply today**, they **never applied**
4. Argument #4: **Jesus was changing the law of Moses**
- a. Explanation:
- 1) In Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9, Jesus was **changing** the law of Moses; yet what he taught was still **part of the old covenant**
- 2) Jesus **changed** the law of Moses
- 3) But since the law was **replaced** by the gospel, it cannot be used to **justify divorce and remarriage today**
- b. Refutation:
- 1) **Why** would Jesus have **changed** the law of Moses when it was going to be **abrogated at the cross** just a few months later?
- 2) Jesus declared that He came **not to destroy** the old law till all was fulfilled

- a) Mt. 5:17-19: <sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I came to **destroy the Law or the Prophets**. I did not come to **destroy** but to **fulfill**. <sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, **one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled**. <sup>19</sup> Whoever therefore **breaks** one of the least of these commandments, and **teaches** men so, shall be called **least in the kingdom of heaven**; but whoever **does** and **teaches** them, he shall be called **great in the kingdom of heaven**.
- 3) Jesus did not preach to **reform, modify, revamp, or modernize the law**. Rather, He came and **preached “the gospel of the kingdom”**
- a) Mt. 4:23: <sup>23</sup> And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.
- b) He didn’t teach as did **the Rabbis** (Mt. 7:28-29)
- 4) If Jesus **changed** the teaching of the law of Moses during His Personal Ministry then:
- a) He **did** what He said He **didn’t come to do**
- b) He would have been “**least** in the kingdom of heaven,” and that is an **absurd conclusion**
- 5) If Jesus **didn’t change** the teaching of the law of Moses, then His teaching must have been “**the gospel of the kingdom**” preached in **anticipation** of its establishment
- a) *J. T. Smith*: “So, Christ’s teaching in Matthew 5:32; 19:9 could not have been applicable **then**, for it would have **changed Moses’ Law**. And if it is not applicable **now**, **when was it applicable?**” (“Is ‘The Exception’ Applicable Today?,” *Gospel Truths*, Dec. 1, 1984, 2:10)

5. Argument #5: *Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees, not to us*

a. Explanation:

- 1) Jesus was speaking to **the Pharisees**; and therefore, what He said **does not apply** to us today

b. Refutation:

- 1) It is certainly true that **sometimes** what was said on a **particular occasion** to a **particular person or group of people**, **does not apply** to us today
- a) “Make yourself an **ark of gopherwood**” (Gen. 6:14)
- b) “You shall **march** around the city” (Josh. 6:3)
- c) “**Tarry** in the city of Jerusalem” (Lk. 24:49)
- d) Etc.
- 2) But that is certainly **not always the case**, and that means that **the context** of a statement must be used to **determine its application**
- 3) And **the context** of Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage clearly indicates that it **applies to all men**

- a) Jesus basis His teaching on God's institution of marriage "**at the beginning**" (Mt. 19:4-6, 8)
- b) He uses terms that indicate **universal application**
  1. "**Male and female**" (Mt. 19:4)
  2. "**A man**" (Mt. 19:5)
  3. "**Whoever**" (Mt. 19:9)
- 4) Everything that Jesus said, He said to **someone else**, not to us. Does this mean that **nothing** He said is **binding** on us today?
- 5) Does this mean that **nothing** Jesus said to **the Pharisees** is binding on us today?
  - a) **Nicodemus** was a **Pharisee**, does that mean that Jesus' teaching concerning **the new birth** has no application to us today? Jn. 3:3, 5
- 6) We must understand that one can **say something to someone** that **applies to others** also
  - a) Mk. 16:16 was addressed to **the apostles**, but it **applies to all men**
- 7) Though Jesus was **talking to the Pharisees**, He was **talking about all** who enter the marriage relationship
  - a) "**Male and female**" (Mt. 19:4)
  - b) "**A man...his wife**" (Mt. 19:5)
  - c) "**Whoever**" (Mt. 19:9)
- 8) By this logic, we would have to conclude that since **ALL** of the NT was addressed to someone else, **NONE** of it applies to us today

6. Argument #6: *The exception phrase is not found in other passages about MDR*

a. Explanation:

- 1) The exception clause is not found in **other MDR passages** (cf. Mk. 10:2-12; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:10-11)

b. Refutation:

- 1) This is certainly **true**, but what does that **prove**?
  - a) No exception was stated when **the Passover** was first instituted (Ex. 12:1-20), but one was given later (Num. 9:1-14)
  - b) Luke does not mention **baptism** in his account of the Great Commission (Lk. 24:46-47). Does that mean that it is not essential?
  - c) **Baptism** is not mentioned in John 3:16. Does that mean that it is not essential?
  - d) Neither Matthew or Luke record Mark's reference to a **woman's guilt** if she divorces her husband (Mk. 10:12)

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- 2) The Gospels **supplement** each other and often **supply information** which the others **do not supply**
- a) The wording of **the inscription on the cross** is different in each of the four Gospels
    - 1. “The **King** of the Jews” (Mk. 15:26)
    - 2. “This is the **King** of the Jews” (Lk. 23:38)
    - 3. “This is **Jesus** the **King** of the Jews” (Mt. 27:37)
    - 4. “**Jesus** of **Nazareth** the **King** of the Jews” (Jn. 19:19)
  - b) When we take everything revealed, we understand that **the full title** was “**THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS**”
  - c) We would certainly be **unjustified** in **rejecting some of the wording** in one Gospel simply because it is **not mentioned in another**
- 3) We must **take all** that the Bible says on any given subject (Psa. 119:160), and God has **not revealed all of His will** on a great many subjects in **just one verse**
- 4) Furthermore, God only has to **say something once** for it to be **established** as His will, and He doesn’t have to **repeat it** in every other verse on the subject
- 5) Finally, when you consider **the context** in which some of these passages are found, it’s not hard to understand **why the exception clause was not mentioned**
- a) For example, in Romans 7:1-4, Paul uses **God’s law on marriage** to illustrate the principle that “**the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives**” (Rom. 7:1)
  - b) There was **no reason** for Paul to **mention “the exception”** (Mt. 19:9) because it would have been **irrelevant** to **the point** he was trying to illustrate
    - 1. Paul mentions the marriage relationship to **illustrate** that one could not follow **the law of Moses** and **the gospel of Christ** at the same time
    - 2. An **illustration** requires only those details that are related to **the point of truth** being illustrated

7. Argument #7: *The apostles did not teach that one could divorce for the cause of fornication*

a. Explanation:

- 1) *Major Premise*: Jesus commissioned His disciples to **teach all** that He had commanded (Mt. 28:20)



- 2) *Minor Premise*: There is no evidence that the apostles **taught divorce and remarriage** for any reason, though they declared the **whole council of God** (Acts 20:27)
- 3) *Conclusion*: Therefore, the **whole counsel of God** does not include **divorce and remarriage** for any reason

b. Refutation:

- 1) This argument **assumes** that because **Jesus' teaching** on divorce and remarriage is **not recorded** in the book of Acts or the epistles that **the apostles did not teach what Jesus taught**
- 2) But this assumption is **fallacious**
  - a) Should we assume that **Peter and John** did not teach the essentiality of **belief and baptism** when they preached in Solomon's portico because **Luke does not mention** that in his account? (Acts 3:19)
  - b) Should we assume that **Philip** did not teach the essentiality of **repentance** when he taught the **Ethiopian eunuch** because **Luke does not record** that? (Acts 8:35-39)
  - c) Should we assume that **Peter and the apostles** did not teach the essentiality of **confession** on Pentecost since **Luke does not mention** that in his account? (cf. Acts 2:38, 40)
  - d) Should we assume that **Paul and Silas** did not teach the essentiality of **baptism** to the **Philippian jailer**, because **Luke does not mention that** in his account? (Acts 16:31)
- 3) Do you see my point? Just because something has not been **specifically mentioned** does not necessarily mean that it was **not taught** by the apostles?
- 4) Furthermore, the facts of the aforementioned syllogism can be **restated** to logically argue that the apostles **did teach** what Jesus taught on divorce and remarriage
  - a) *Major Premise*: Jesus taught His disciples to "**teach all things** whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:20)
  - b) *Minor Premise*: The apostles declared the **whole counsel of God** (Acts 20:27)
  - c) *Conclusion*: Therefore, the **apostles taught** what Jesus taught on divorce and remarriage, even though it has not been recorded
- 5) The only way that this argument could have **any validity** is to assume that **what Jesus taught** on divorce and remarriage **does not apply under the new covenant**, but we have already demonstrated that **that presumption is not correct**

8. Argument #8: *In Mt. 19:9, Jesus was talking about "betrothal" marriage*

a. Explanation:

- 1) Jewish "betrothal" was **more binding** than modern engagement

- 2) Betrothed couples were called **“husband”** & **“wife”** (Gen. 29:21; Dt. 22:23-24; 2 Sam. 3:14; Mt. 1:18-20, 24; Lk. 2:5)
- 3) **Divorce** ended a betrothal (Mt. 1:19)
- 4) Mt. 19:9 **does not apply** to true marriage
- 5) There is **no exception** for true marriage

b. Refutation:

- 1) This is an **inference**
  - a) Based on the mistaken idea that fornication cannot be committed by married people
  - b) But fornication can be committed by married people
- 2) This is **not a necessary inference**
- 3) Why is **remarriage adultery** following “betrothal” divorce? (Mt. 5:31-32)
- 4) “Betrothal” is **not clearly identified** in any of the MDR texts (cf. Mt. 1:18; Lk. 1:27; 2:5)
- 5) Jesus contemplates **marriage**, not betrothal (Mt. 19:4-6)
  - a) Relationship after **leaving, cleaving**, and becoming **one flesh** and **joined** by God
  - b) Relationship **joined** by God
- 6) 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**
- 7) 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
- 8) Why **“eunuchs”** if just “betrothal”? (Mt. 19:11-12)
- 9) This view has Jesus more concerned about **faithfulness prior to marriage** than during it

9. Argument #9: *The right of remarriage was unanimously denied by early Christian writers*

a. Explanation:

- 1) The church fathers **unanimously condemned remarriage** after divorce (with one exception)
  - a) *Shepherd of Hermas* (4:1:3:6, AF:ET, 381)
  - b) Jerome (*Letter LXXVII*, NPNF2.6, 158)
  - c) Athenagorus (*A Plea For Christians*, XXXIII, ANF2, 146-147)
  - d) Augustine (*On The Good Of Marriage*, 7, NPNF1.3, 402)
- 2) Church members who remarried were **excommunicated**
- 3) The church fathers **dogmatically affirmed** that this was Jesus' teaching
- 4) They **spoke Greek** as their native tongue

b. Refutation:

- 1) How do you know this was **unanimous**?
- 2) The Church Fathers were **wrong** on several things
  - a) **Bishop** over elders, church, diocese
  - b) Sex in marriage only for **procreation**
  - c) **No forgiveness** for sins committed after baptism
  - d) **Sprinkling** for baptism
  - e) Eucharist as a **sacrifice**
  - f) **No remarriage** even after mate's death
  - g) **Total depravity**
  - h) Etc.
- 3) There is evidence that the church fathers were **not unanimous** in this conclusion
  - a) *Craig Blomberg*: "But this reading of Christian history **overlooks important dissenters** in the earliest centuries and does not take adequate account of the growing, unbiblical **asceticism**, especially in sexual matters, which increasingly pervaded the Greek and Roman church." (*Matthew*, The New American Commentary, 22:292)
    1. See P. Harrell, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Early Church*
- 4) **Why** did the church fathers draw their conclusion?
  - a) Is their reasoning **valid**?
  - b) *Anatole France*: "If 50 million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing."
  - c) One can **prove anything** by the writings of the Church Fathers

1. *Sam Dawson*: “Decades ago, I concluded that **you could prove anything from the church fathers**, both sides of any controversial issue.... Why not, they were just as susceptible to error as human beings are today. So **quotes from such men cannot be used to substantiate the truth on any subject.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Essays on Eschatology*, 450)

10. Argument #10: *Jesus reinstated God’s original marriage law and it made no provision for divorce for any reason (Mt. 19:8)*

a. Explanation:

- 1) Jesus reinstated **God’s original marriage law**
- 2) God’s original marriage law made **no provision for divorce** for any reason
- 3) Therefore, there is **no justifiable reason for divorce** today

b. Refutation:

- 1) It is certainly true that **Jesus reinstated God’s original marriage law**, and it is also true that when God instituted marriage in the very beginning, **no provision for divorce is mentioned**
- 2) But just because no provision for divorce is **mentioned** in the very beginning, that does not necessarily mean that no such provision **existed**
  - a) When **God banished Cain** and Cain lamented that whoever found him would **kill him** (Gen. 4:14) that certainly indicates that God may have **revealed His will concerning the punishment for murder**, even though it is **not recorded in Scripture** at that point (cf. Gen. 9:6)
  - b) The right to **remarry** following **the death** of one’s mate is **not mentioned** in the beginning, but who would argue that this right therefore **does not exist**?
    1. **“What proves too much proves nothing at all!”**
- 3) Furthermore, even if God made **no provision for divorce in the very beginning**, this does not mean that He could not have **made a provision later on**
  - a) When Jehovah instituted **the Passover**, He stipulated that it was to be observed on the **fourteenth day** of the **first month** (Ex. 12:2, 6), but later on **He made an exception** (Num. 9:9-11)
  - b) There was **no mention of elders and deacons** when the church was first established, but we know from **later revelation** that they are **authorized** by God
- 4) So even if **no real provision** existed for **divorce for fornication** until Jesus mentioned that to the Pharisees (Mt. 19:9), as God in the flesh, Jesus had the right to **make that exception** (cf. Jas. 4:12)
- 5) But the prophets’ description of **God’s treatment of Israel** suggests that **God’s original law on marriage** made provision for **divorce for fornication**, even though that is **not specifically mentioned** in the beginning

- a) Israel's relationship with God was described as a **marriage** (Ezek. 16:6-8)
- b) When Israel went after other gods, it was called **fornication** (Ezek. 16:26)
- c) When God severed His relationship with Israel, because of her idolatry, it was called **divorce** (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:6-10)
  1. Question: Did God put away Israel because of **His hardness of heart** or because it has always been God's law that **adultery is cause for divorce**?
  2. Question: If God **divorced Israel** according to the teaching of the law of Moses, could she have **married another husband**?
    - a. Under Moses' law the **first husband** could not **take back a wife**, he had put away (Dt. 24:4). What about God and Israel; **could He take her back**?
  3. Isn't it obvious that **divorcement** here is not according to **the teaching of the law**, but rather according to **God's original law of marriage**?

11. Argument #11: *Jesus ruled against divorce when he said, "from the beginning it hath not been so" (Mt. 19:8)*

a. Explanation:

b. Refutation:

- 1) When Jesus used these words, He was **not outlawing** divorce for the cause of **fornication**
- 2) He was outlawing divorce "**for any cause**"
- 3) God's will from the beginning was **opposed** to divorce for **just any cause**
- 4) But Jesus clearly states that **divorce for fornication** is an **exception** to God's law on marriage (Mt. 19:9)

12. Argument #12: *Marriage is indissoluble*

a. Explanation:

- 1) "When Jesus said, "**let not man put asunder**" (Mt. 19:6), He was saying that no man had **a right** to cause **an end** to any marriage"

b. Refutation:

- 1) Yes, this is **God's general law** -- divorce is **sinful**
- 2) But Jesus gave **one exception** to that general law Mt. 19:9
  - a) Chart: "What Does It Mean?"
  - b) "**I before e**, except after c as in receive"

- c) Please consider other “**exception passages**” (cf. Mt. 12:39; 13:57; 18:3; Lk. 13:3, 5; Jn. 3:3, 5; 6:44; 8:24; 19:11; Acts 8:1; 26:29; Rom. 13:8; 1 Cor. 7:5; 14:28; 1 Tim. 5:19)
- 3) “**Let not**” does not mean **cannot** but **should not** (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; Mt. 19:6; Mk. 10:9)
- 4) This argument **arrays one verse against another**, and we must not do that
- 5) When Jesus used these words, He was **not outlawing** divorce for the cause of **fornication**

13. Argument #13: *The exception clause only gives the innocent person the right to divorce the guilty person, but not the right to marry someone else*

a. Explanation:

- 1) The exception clause applies only to the first verb “**divorces**,” not both verbs “**divorces**” and “**marries**”

b. Refutation:

- 1) Perhaps the first way to respond to this idea is to note that even those who do not believe people today can divorce and remarry admit that **Mt. 19:9 permits remarriage**
- a) **Bro. George T. Jones** is a Christian who today is most often associated with the idea that **an innocent person cannot remarry after a divorce for fornication**, but even Bro. Jones admits that **Mt. 19:9 gives the innocent the right to remarry**---he just thinks **it only applied to the Jews** before Pentecost
- b) Why do the strongest opponents of remarriage after divorce for fornication admit that **Mt. 19:9 permitted it for someone?** Because that is clearly what is **necessarily implied** by Jesus’ words
- 2) Yes, the **exception** “for sexual immorality” **applies to the first verb** “divorces.” That’s the only application that makes any sense
- a) One does not **remarry** “for sexuality immorality”; he **divorces** “for sexual immorality”
- 3) If the exception clause allows **divorce for fornication**, it must also allow **remarriage**, or Jesus’ statement **makes no sense**
- a) Jesus doesn’t say: **Divorce = Adultery**
- b) Jesus says: **Divorce + Remarriage = Adultery**
- c) The construction of Mt. 19:9 contains a **compound predicate**: he (1) **puts away** his wife AND (2) **marries** another
1. It is a compound predicate connected by the **copulative conjunction AND** which connects words or phrases of **equal rank** cf. Mk. 16:16

2. 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**
  - d) “Whoever divorces his wife **for fornication**” is an **incomplete statement** unless you continue to read “**and shall marry another [does not] commit adultery**”
- 4) Objection: “Why not suppose that Jesus is simply saying someone is permitted to **divorce for fornication**, though they are **not permitted to remarry**?”
  - a) Chart: “Why Not Suppose...?”
  - b) Chart: “What Does It Mean?”

14. Argument #14: *There never really is an “innocent party” in any divorce*

- a. Explanation:
- b. Refutation:
  - 1) **Who** says so, and **how** do you know? I believe that this is simply a **false** and **arbitrary** statement
  - 2) Now when I say that, I’m not denying that in many divorces there **may not be an innocent party**
  - 3) But to say that there is **never an innocent party** is an arbitrary, blanket statement without **proof** and **contrary** to the Scriptures
  - 4) Such a statement **makes nonsense** of Jesus’ statement in Mt. 5:32
    - a) Jesus clearly implies that a man **does not cause** his wife to commit adultery if he puts her away for fornication
    - b) Obviously Jesus envisioned a case where a man was **not partly guilty** of the sin for which he put away his wife
  - 5) Furthermore, if **every husband** of every woman who commits adultery is **partly to blame**, why didn’t God specify a **punishment** for the guilty husband in the OT
    - a) God decreed that the **adulterer** and the **adulteress** be **punished** (Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:22)
    - b) But God decreed **no such punishment** for the **adulteress’ husband**
  - 6) Furthermore, the Bible does not **attribute blame** to the mate of an adulterer/ adulteress

- a) **Bathsheba** committed adultery with David, but not even a **hint of blame** is attached to **Uriah** for Bathsheba's sin (cf. 2 Sam. 11 & 12)
  - b) **Gomer**, the wife of the prophet Hosea, committed adultery, but **no blame** is attached to **Hosea** for her unfaithfulness (Hos. 3:1-3)
  - c) When **the Jews** committed spiritual adultery with idols **was Jehovah partly responsible?** (cf. Ezek. 16:6-8, 15, 31-32)
- 7) It is **grossly unfair** to the **godly husbands and wives of unfaithful companions** to burden them with **false accusations**
- 8) It is certainly true that there are **no perfect marriages**, because there are **no perfect people**. But we cannot argue that because someone is **imperfect**, he/she is in any way **responsible** for his/her mate's **fornication**
- 9) So **the argument** that there is **no justifiable ground for divorce** because there is **never an innocent party** is **fallacious** and must be **rejected**

15. Argument #15: *The exception is given to men, not women*

a. Explanation:

- 1) Since the passages containing the exception (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9) speak of a **man divorcing his wife** and **not vice versa**, a woman does not possess the right to divorce her unfaithful mate for fornication

b. Refutation:

- 1) If a **wife's sexual immorality** allows a man to **divorce** her and **remarry**, why wouldn't a **husband's sexual immorality** allow a woman to **do the same thing**?
- 2) Matthew and Mark are dealing with the **same occasion**
- 3) Jesus addressed the words in Mark's account to **his disciples** in a **private meeting**
- 4) Jesus recognized **the equality** of **man** and **woman** in regard to divorce. Why would He not recognize **their equality** with regard to **the exception**?
- 5) The **differences in wording** are best explained by the **differences in the audience**
  - a) **Matthew** wrote primarily to a **Jewish audience**
    - 1. **Jewish divorce rights** applied only to **the man** (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 15:7:10)
  - b) **Mark** wrote primarily to a **Gentile audience** with a **Roman background**
    - 1. **Roman law** made **no distinction** between men and women
- 6) Different accounts may be **complementary** and **supplementary** without being **contradictory**
- 7) Once an **exception** has been given to a **universal rule**, it pertains at **all times** even though not always **expressly stated**



- a) Matthew and Mark both give the **general rule** regarding divorce and remarriage
  - b) Mark shows that the rule applies equally to **men** and **women**
  - c) Matthew includes the **divine exception**
  - d) Thus, Mark did not have to **repeat the exception** for it to pertain to **the same rule** he cites
- 8) 1 Cor. 7:10-15: The **restrictions bound** (v. 10-11, 12-13) and **the liberty granted** (v. 15) are the same for either **man** or **woman**
- 9) The **masculine gender** is often used in the NT when instruction was given and **no distinction** between man and woman was **intended in application**
- a) Is it wrong for **a man to be angry with his brother**, but not wrong for a woman? (Mt. 5:21-22)
  - b) Is it wrong for **a man to lust after a woman**, but not wrong for a woman to lust after a man? (Mt. 5:27-28)
  - c) Should we **“turn the other cheek” to a man**, but not to a woman? (Mt. 5:38-42)
  - d) Will Jesus **confess men** who confess Him, but not women? (Mt. 10:32-33)
  - e) If **a sister sins against us**, should we follow a different procedure than if it's a brother? (Mt. 18:15-17)
  - f) Will **a man who exalts himself** be humbled, but not a woman? (Mt. 23:12)
  - g) Should we **restore an erring sister** with a different spirit than we restore an erring brother? (Gal. 6:1)
  - h) Is it right for **a man to take the water of life freely**, but not a woman? (Rev. 22:17)
  - i) When a **put away husband marries again**, does he commit adultery?
    1. **No passage specifically says so.** The only way you can reach this conclusion is to assume that **what is true of a put away wife is also true of a put away husband**
    2. If it is reasonable to assume that **what is true of a put away wife is also true of a put away husband**, even though that's not specifically mentioned in any passage, why shouldn't we conclude that **what is true of a husband who divorces his wife for fornication is also true of a wife who divorces her husband for fornication**, even though that's not specifically mentioned in any passage?

16. Argument #16: *The no-remarriage view “makes the negative reaction of the disciples (Mt. 19:10) more understandable”*

a. Explanation:

b. Refutation:

- 1) The **negative reaction** of the disciples is still **perfectly understandable** if Jesus grants **one exception** as opposed to **no exceptions**

17. Argument #17: *The right of remarriage after divorce is only an inference*a. Explanation:b. Refutation:

- 1) Jesus taught by **implication**
  - a) To **reassure** John the Baptist (Mt. 11:3-5)
  - b) To teach the Sadducees about the **resurrection of the dead** (Mt. 22:31-33; Lk. 20:37-40)
  - c) To teach the Pharisees about the **humanity** and **deity** of the Messiah (Mt. 22:41-46)
  - d) To teach the Pharisees about **divorce** (Mt. 19:3-6)
- 2) Whatever Jesus has **definitely implied**, we **must necessarily infer** (Mt. 15:10-11, 15-18; 16:5-12)
- 3) Whatever Jesus has **definitely implied**, we **can necessarily infer** (Eph. 3:3-6; 5:17)
- 4) However, we must **be careful** since it is possible to **infer** something that has **not been implied** (Jn. 21:20-23)
- 5) Furthermore, **unanimous contrary evidence** in other passages does not **invalidate** whatever is **clearly implied** in one passage
  - a) Obey Government (Acts 5:29)
  - b) Causes adultery (Mt. 5:32)
  - c) Jesus did no mighty work in Nazareth (Mt. 13:58; Mk. 6:5)
  - d) Apostles take nothing for journey (Mt. 10:9; Mk. 6:8; Lk. 9:3)
18. **Twice** Jesus mentions an **exception** to God's law on marriage (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9), and **once** is enough
19. I believe that the advocates of this position have adopted it because of their firm belief in **the sanctity of marriage** and their abhorrence of **the sin of divorce**, and I commend them for this
20. But in fleeing from **Babylon**, we must not run past **Jerusalem** and wind up in **Rome**
21. The advocates of the "no grounds for divorce" doctrine have **gone too far**
  - a. They have tried to **close a door** that God **left open**, and we have **no right to do that**
22. This doctrine is **false**, and it must be **rejected** and those who teach it must be **reproved** by those who love God and His word and the souls of men

## B. The “Guilty Party”<sup>27</sup> May Remarry

### 1. Argument #1: *If one is free, then both are free*

#### a. Explanation:

- 1) When the divorce is on the grounds of **fornication** the **innocent** may **remarry**. The reason that he may remarry is that **no marriage bond exists**. If that is so, the **guilty cannot be bound** by that which **does not exist**, therefore, if the **innocent is free, the guilty must be**. Stated in other words, they are **bound** to each other. When that **bond is loosed** for the innocent (as implied in Mat 19:9), the **guilty** is of necessity **loosed also**, and thus **free to marry**, 1 Co 7:27-28 (*Except For Fornication*, Lewis Hale, 10, 19, 22, 24, 28, 35)
- 2) **Marriage** involves a **binding** or **tying together** of two people
- 3) If the innocent party puts away the guilty party, they are **not bound** to one another anymore
- 4) If the marriage bond is **broken for one**, it is **broken for the other**
- 5) Therefore, both parties can **remarry**
- 6) If one (i.e. the innocent party) is **set free**, and thus allowed to **remarry**, then the other (i.e. the guilty party) is **also free**
  - a) *Illust.*: If two people were **roped** or **tied together** and one was **freed**, the other would also **be free**

#### b. Refutation:

- 1) Marriage is **not the bond**; therefore it is just not true that if **one is free**, then **both are free** Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:39
  - a) *Note*: It was not **Paul’s primary purpose** to teach on the subject of **marriage, divorce, and remarriage**. He refers to **God’s general law** on marriage to **illustrate** the primary point that **law has dominion over a man only as long as he lives** (Rom. 7:1)
    1. The **exception** that Jesus gives to the general law on marriage (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9) is **not considered** in this passage (Rom. 7:1-3), because it was **not germane** to the point that Paul was illustrating
  - b) Paul says that a woman “**that hath a husband**” is “**bound**” to that husband
    1. The phrase “**that hath a husband**” (*hupandros*) pertains “**to being legally bound to a man in marriage, married....**” (BDAG, 1029)
    2. The word “**bound**” (*deo*) means “**to bind, tie, fasten**; 1. prop....with acc. of pers. **to bind, to fasten with chains, to throw into chains....**2. metaph....b. to bind, i.e. **put under obligation, sc. of law, duty, etc....**with dat. of pers...to be bound to one...of a wife, Ro. vii. 2...of a husband, 1 Co. vii. 27....” (Thayer, 131)

<sup>27</sup> When I use the term “guilty party,” I simply mean the spouse who committed fornication and nothing less. When I use the term “innocent party,” I simply mean the spouse who did not commit fornication, nothing more.

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3. Thus, this word is used in **two senses**
    - a. It is used of a **literal binding** (cf. Mt. 14:3; 21:2; 22:13; 27:2; Mk. 5:3-4; Acts 22:5; 24:27)
    - b. It is used of a **metaphorical binding** (Mt. 16:19; 18:18; Acts 20:22; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:27, 39; 2 Tim. 2:9)
    - c. When Paul used the term here, he was obviously not talking about a **literal tying, binding, or fastening**
  - c) Paul says that a woman who has a husband is bound **“by law”**
    1. Thus, this is **not a literal or physical binding** but rather a **spiritual and legal binding**
      - a. The argument that **“if one is free, then both are free”** is generally illustrated in terms of some kind of **physical binding** (i.e. ropes or handcuffs)
      - b. We must remember that **illustrations do not prove**; they only **illustrate**. And to **properly illustrate**, they must **fit the facts** of the case
      - c. While it is reasonable to assume that if **one partner is free from a physical binding, the other is also free**, it is certainly possible to conceive of even a physical binding where this is not true
        1. *Illust.*: If a farmer in the olden days **removed one ox** from a yoke and **left the other ox in the yoke**, that ox is not free
      - d. Once again, the **“bond”** that Paul speaks of here is not a **physical binding** but rather a **legal binding**
      - e. And a **legal binding** may certainly **release one party and not the other**
    2. And this fact comports with the way the word is **defined** by the lexicographers
    3. **The law** under consideration here is **not the Mosaic law** of the Jews or **the civil law** of the Gentiles, because both of these laws allowed a woman to **remarry** while her first husband was still living (cf. Dt. 24:1-4)
    4. This law is **God’s law on marriage** established in the very beginning (Gen. 2:24)
  - d) Paul says that a woman who has a husband is bound by law **“to her husband”**
    1. Obviously, Paul is contemplating at the outset a **relationship that is lawful** in the eyes of God, because **God’s law** would certainly **not bind** one to a **sinful relationship**
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- a. **Herod** was **not “bound”** by God’s law to Herodias (Mk. 6:18)
2. So, Paul is talking about a **lawful marriage** here, not an **sinful marriage**
- e) Paul says that a woman who has a husband is bound by law to her husband **“for as long as he lives”**
  1. Again note that Paul does not say that a woman is bound to her husband for **as long as**:
    - a. They continue to **love** each other
    - b. There are **no irreconcilable differences** between them
    - c. They **remain married** to each other
    - d. He **does not marry somebody else**
  2. Paul says that she is **bound by law** to her husband for **as long as he lives**
- f) Paul says that if the husband dies, the woman is **“released from the law of her husband”**
  1. The word **“released”** (*katargeo*) means **“4. to cause the release of someone from an obligation (one has nothing more to do with it), be discharged, be released.”** (BDAG, 526)
  2. The **“law of the husband”** simply refers to **the law** which **bound her** to her husband
  3. We might have expected Paul to say that at the **death of the husband**, the woman is **loosed from her husband**, but that is not what he says. The emphasis here is upon the **legal obligation to God’s law** which **binds one to one’s mate** for as long as that person lives
- g) Paul says that if while the husband lives, a woman be **“joined”** to another man, **she shall be called an adulteress**
  1. The phrase **“be joined”** is translated from a Greek verb (*ginomai*) which has **many different shades of meaning** but which basically means **“to become....5. to become, be made, ‘in passages where it is specified who or what a person or thing is or has been rendered, as respects quality, condition, place, rank, character’....ginesthai** with Cases; α. with the gen. to become the property of any one, to come into the power of a person or thing....β. With the dat...to become a man’s wife, Ro. vii. 3 sq....” (“Thayer, 115-117)
  2. Please note that **the second relationship** that Paul refers to in this passage is **an actual marriage**, even though it is **not an approved marriage**

- a. Paul is not contemplating **just a “live-in” relationship**. This fact is suggested by **the definition** of the word that Paul uses and by **the context** in which it is found
1. The **woman’s relationship** with the second man would have been **right** if her **first husband** had been **dead**. Thus, they were **not just “living together”**; they were **actually married**
    - a) Chart: “Joined” #1
  2. The fact that the **same word** (*ginomai*) is used to describe the **Christian’s relationship with Christ** (Rom. 7:4) also suggests that the word denotes **“marriage”** unless we are to conclude that our relationship with Christ is **just a “live-in” relationship**
    - a) Chart: “Joined” #2
3. Under **these circumstances**, this woman becomes an **adulteress**, not because she is **still really married** to her first husband and **not really married** to the second man, but because she is **married** to him while she is **bound by law** to her first husband
- a. **Adultery** is normally defined by the lexicographers to mean **“to have unlawful intercourse with another’s wife...,”** (Thayer, 417) and this **definition** is **accurate as far as it goes**, but the Bible definition is **more precise**
  - b. According to this passage, **adultery** means to have **voluntary sexual intercourse** with someone who is **bound by law to another**
4. Furthermore, this passage teaches that this woman **remains an adulteress** as long as her **first husband lives** and she is **married to the second man**
- h) Paul says that if the husband dies, **she is “free” from the law**, so that she is **no adulteress**, though she be **joined** to another man
1. The word **“free”** (*eleutheros*) means “free....2. free, exempt, unrestrained, not bound by an obligation....*apo tinou*, free from i.e. no longer under obligation to, so that one may now do what was formerly forbidden by the person or thing to which he was bound, Ro. vii. 3....” (Thayer, 204)
  2. Please note that **what was wrong** while the **first husband lived** is **right after his death**
    - a. Chart: “It Must Be Marriage”
- i) Thus, one is **bound by law to his mate**, as long as that **mate lives**; therefore one is **only free to remarry** when one is **loosed from law**. So the real question is **“Who is loosed from law?”**
1. God’s general law on marriage teaches that **remarriage is adultery**

2. The **only exception** is if **divorce** occurs because of **fornication**
3. The exception is only given to the **one who divorces his mate** for fornication
4. The exception is **not given to a “put away” person**, and the **guilty party is a “put away” person**
5. There is **nothing inherent in the bond** which demands that **both must be freed if one is freed**
  - a. *Maurice Barnett*: “**Obligations of law or duty can be one way obligations**. Two people can be separated, the marriage gone, and an obligation still exist on the part of one of the parties. (‘this is the basis of alimony in our society). **The terms marriage and bond are not synonyms. Marriage refers to relationships, bond refers to obligation.**” (Bold emphasis added, “Barnett-Cheatham Discussion On Divorce And Remarriage,” *The Gospel Anchor*, June 1979, 5:10:304)
  - b. *Gene Frost*: “There is a **contractual binding**. When one vows, or makes a contract (or covenant), he is bound to the terms of it. His own **violation** of the contract does not make it **void**, nor **releases him** from it. And as long as he **lives contrary** to his vow, he is **guilty**. So it is with marriage. There is a **covenant**: each **vows** to come into a relationship with the other for life. He will have **no other mate** so long as the other lives. These vows are **before God** who **yokes** them. John is in a yoke which he vows he will share with no one else than Sue, and Sue with none other than John. **Death** of a mate **frees one from the yoke** so that he **may be yoked with another**. (The **one exception is marital unfaithfulness** which permits the **release of the non-guilty**.)  
 “Contracts in which one party may be released from its obligations while holding the other to his vow contain a **‘non-competition’ clause**. For example, an **athlete** signs a contract with a club in which he promises to **play exclusively** for that club for a stipulated time. Should he **violate his contract** by failing to appear for the sport activities, the club may **hire another athlete** to replace him. **The club is released** from the obligation to **pay or use** the athlete because he is guilty of violating his word. But **the athlete is not released** so that he may now join another club! He has forfeited his right to play!” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage Is Honorable*, 25-26)
- j) From all that we’ve said so far, it should be obvious that there is a **difference** between being **“married”** and being **“bound”**
  1. *Maurice Barnett*: “Marriage refers to a **particular kind of relationship** between a man and a woman, which may or may not be **acceptable** to God. It might be an **adulterous marriage**, but it is **still ‘marriage.’** Bond refers to a **particular responsibility** God holds a man to in regard to a certain woman, and a woman to a certain man. The **relationship** (marriage) may **end** but God still holds them **accountable** in regard to the other person.” (Bold

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emphasis added, "Unbelievers And God's Law On Marriage: 1 Corinthians 7:15," *The Gospel Anchor*, Nov., 1983, 10:89)

2. Chart: "The Marriage & The Bond"

k) Thus, people **marry** and **divorce**; God **binds** and **discharges!**

1. The word "**marriage**," as it is used in the Bible, refers to the **relationship** that exists between a particular man and a particular woman

2. The word "**divorce**," as it is used in the Bible, refers to the **dissolution** of the marital relationship

3. Either of these actions can occur **with or without God's approval**, and yet He **recognizes** that they have occurred

4. The word "**bond**," as it is used in the Bible, refers to the **responsibilities** that God imposes upon those who **marry lawfully**, and it includes both **constraints** and **restraints**

a. The **husband** is **constrained** by God's law to:

1. **Love** his wife (Eph. 5:25-33)

2. **Live** with her according to **knowledge** and **honor** her as the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7)

3. **Provide** for her (1 Tim. 5:8)

4. Satisfy her **sexual needs** (1 Cor. 7:1-5)

5. Etc.

b. The **wife** is **constrained** by God's law to:

1. **Love** her husband (Tit. 2:4)

2. Be **submissive** to his will (Eph. 5:22-24)

3. **Rule** the household (1 Tim. 5:14)

4. Satisfy his **sexual needs** (1 Cor. 7:1-5)

5. Etc.

c. Furthermore, both **husband** and **wife** are **restrained** by God's law from having **any other marriage partner** while the first mate lives 1 Cor. 7:39

1. While the husband is alive, a wife is **bound**

2. When the husband dies, the wife is **free** to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord

3. Therefore, as long as a wife is **bound**, she is not **free** to be married to whom she will

4. In other words, she is **restrained**



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5. The word **“discharge,”** as it is used in the Bible, refers to the **release** from the **obligations of law and duty** imposed by God upon those who marry lawfully
- a. God **frees** one from the **“bond”** only if one’s marriage partner **dies** (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39) or is **put away for fornication** (Mt. 19:9)
- l) Therefore, being **“married”** is not the same thing as being **“bound,”** and being **“divorced”** is not the same thing as being **“discharged”**
- m) Furthermore, the terms **“husband”** and **“wife,”** as they are used in the Bible, do not necessarily refer to **one’s current marriage partner**
1. The word **“wife”** is used in the Bible to refer to:
    - a. A **concubine** (Gen. 16:3; 25:1, 5-6 & 1 Chr. 1:32, Jud. 19:1-5, 7, 9; 20:4)
    - b. A **betrothed person** (Dt. 20:7; 22:23-24; Mt. 1:18-20, 24; Rev. 19:7)
    - c. A **bride** (Jud. 14:15-16, 20)
    - d. A **widow** (Ruth 4:10; 1 Sam. 27:3; 30:5; 2 Sam. 2:2; 3:3; 2 Sam. 11:26; 12:9-10, 15)
    - e. One who is **“married” to another** (Jud. 15:1-2; 1 Sam. 25:44; 2 Sam. 3:14-16; Mt. 14:3-4; Mk. 6:17-18; Lk. 3:19; 1 Cor. 5:1)
  2. The Bible teaches that one may be **“unmarried”** and still have a **“husband”** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- n) Thus, there are **five possible conditions** in which one may find himself
1. One may be **unmarried** and **unbound**
    - a. The **single** (1 Cor. 7:8-9)
    - b. The **widowed** (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:8-9, 39; 1 Tim. 5:14)
    - c. The **“innocent party”** who has “put away” the “guilty party” for fornication (Mt. 19:9)
  2. One may be **married** and **bound**
    - a. The **scripturally married** (Mt. 19:5-6; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39)
  3. One may be **unmarried** and **bound** to another
    - a. The **unscripturally divorced** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
    - b. The **“guilty party”** who has been “put away” for fornication (Mt. 19:9)
  4. One may be **married** to one and **bound** to another
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- a. The **unscripturally divorced and remarried** (Rom. 7:2-3; cf. Mk. 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1)
5. One may be **married** and **unbound**
- a. The **“third party”** who is married to someone who is **bound** to another (Mt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Lk. 16:18b)
- o) Objection: “The Bible never says that anyone is **‘bound to God’** in marriage”
1. That is **true**, but the Bible does say that one is **“bound by law”** and can be **“free from the law”** (Rom. 7:2-3)
  2. While the specific expression, **“bound to God,”** is not found in the Bible, the concept that **God has an ongoing role** in marriage is Biblical
- p) Objection: “If **both parties are not free** after a divorce because of fornication, then the **innocent party** who remarries is then **married to two people at the same time**”
1. No, the **innocent party** is **married** and **bound by law** to his **second wife**; the **guilty party** is **unmarried** but still **bound by law** to her **first husband**
  2. This objection ignores the fact that **God** has the power to **declare** the **innocent party free from restraint** while still **holding** the **guilty party** under **restriction** not to remarry
- q) Objection: When the **innocent party remarries**, **two women** (i.e. the guilty party and the second wife) would be **“bound” to the same man**, and therefore obligated to **satisfy the sexual needs** of the same man
1. We must remember that the **“bond”** involves both **constraints** and **restraints**
  2. While there are some situations and circumstances that might make it **impossible** for one to **fulfill** the normal **constraints** of the marriage “bond,” they do not in any way **release** one from the **restraints** of the marriage “bond”
    - a. One who is **mentally ill** may not be able to fulfill the normal **constraints** of the marriage “bond,” but he is **not released** from the **restraints** of the marriage “bond”
    - b. One who is **physically incapacitated** may not be able to fulfill the normal **constraints** of the marriage “bond,” but he is **not released** from the **restraints** of the marriage “bond”
    - c. One who is **separated** from his mate (i.e. an **MIA**, a **POW**, a **convict**) cannot fulfill the normal **constraints** of the marriage “bond,” but he is **not released** from the **restraints** of the marriage “bond”
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- d. One who is **divorced** from his mate cannot fulfill the normal **constraints** of the marriage “bond,” but he is **not released** from the **restraints** of the marriage “bond”
1. The “**guilty party**” may not **satisfy the sexual needs** of the former mate, because **sexual activity** is to take place within **marriage** (Heb. 13:4), and the two are **no longer married** to one another
  2. But the “**guilty party**” is still **restrained** from having **any other marriage partner** as long as the first mate lives 1 Cor. 7:39
- r) Objection: “If it is true that the **innocent party can remarry** but the **guilty party cannot**, then a put-away fornicator could not even **remarry his original (innocent) spouse**”
1. The **presumption** in all of the passages that discuss remarriage following a divorce and the clear indication in some is that a “**put away**” **person commits adultery** when he/she **marries someone other than the first mate** cf. Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:3
  2. And the apostle Paul teaches that **a divorced couple may reconcile** 1 Cor. 7:10-11
  3. This objection is **irrelevant** and **immaterial**, because it provides absolutely **no proof** that the **guilty party may remarry**
- s) Objection: “If **both parties are not freed to remarry** at the time of a divorce for fornication, then the **death of the innocent party would free two women to remarry** (i.e. the guilty party and the second lawful wife)
1. **Yes**. That seems to be what Paul teaches Rom. 7:2-3
- t) Objection: “If **both parties are not freed**, then the **guilty party would be bound to another woman’s husband** when the innocent party remarries
1. **Yes**, the guilty party is **bound** (restrained) by law as long as the **original spouse lives** Rom. 7:2-3
- 2) There is **no authority** for the “**guilty party**” who has been put away for fornication to **remarry**
- a) The Bible teaches that **to act without authority is sin** (2 Jn. 9-11)
  - b) God’s **silence** is not **permissive**, but **prohibitive** cf. Heb. 7:14
  - c) Jesus has **authorized** the **innocent party** to put away his/her mate for **fornication** and **remarry** Mt. 19:9
  - d) But there is **no passage** that **authorizes** the **put away fornicator to remarry**
    1. *Harold Comer*: “The real argument to me says that the **general rule of marriage** is that **no one may divorce and remarry**. The **only exceptions** to that are those who specifically are **granted** the

right of divorce and remarriage. In Matthew 19:9, it is the **‘putting away’ party**, i.e. **the innocent party**, who is given authority to divorce and remarry. The **innocent** may **divorce** and **remarry** not because the **marriage is broken by the fornication**, but because their **divorce** and **remarriage** is **specifically allowed or authorized** by God. That says that **the limitations of marriage still bind the ‘guilty party’** as they still bind everyone else, since all the rest of us remain under the general rule prohibiting divorce and remarriage. **The guilty party is given no exception** and therefore there is **no authority for divorce and remarriage** on the part of anyone except the innocent ‘putting away’ party.” (Bold emphasis added, The Godly Family In A Sick Society, Florida College Annual Lectures, 1979, 58)

- e) To say that **no passage specifically forbids** the guilty party to remarry is **not authority**
1. There is no passage that **specifically forbids**:
    - a. **Instrumental music** in worship to God
    - b. **Mt. Dew** and **popcorn** for the Lord’s Supper
    - c. **Counting beads** and **burning incense**
    - d. Etc.
- 3) Furthermore, Jesus **condemns** the **remarriage** of a **put-away person** as **adultery**
- a) Chart: “Remarriage Is Adultery”
  - b) Chart: “The Remarriage Of A Divorced Person”
  - c) And the **“guilty party”** who is divorced for fornication is a **put away person**. What passage grants **an exception** to the guilty party?
    1. Objection: “In the second clause, **Jesus is not talking about a woman who has been put away for fornication**; He’s talking about the **same woman** who was put away in the first clause, and **that woman was not put away for fornication**. Jesus only prohibited marrying **“her”** that is **put away for some reason other than fornication**
      - a. The first clause, including the exception phrase, speaks of **one woman who is put away for either of two reasons** (i.e. **not for fornication** and **for fornication**). The second clause refers to the **same woman**, regardless of the reason
      - b. Furthermore, the pronoun **“her,”** upon which this whole argument is based is **totally absent** from the Greek in this verse!
      - c. *Tim Reeves*: “The Greek of the verse simply has **one word**, *apolelumenen*, a **participle** used as a **substantive** (noun). The literal translation of it would be **‘a having been put away one (feminine),’** hence **‘a having been put away**

**woman.** Note Marshall's interlinear translation: '**a dismissed [woman]**' (Matthew 5:32), and '**a woman having been dismissed**' (Luke 16:18). This substantive in the Greek is self-explanatory; it neither needs, nor can have, an antecedent to qualify it. Even the English of the KJV does not require that '**wife**' be the antecedent of '**her,**' for it defines her as '**her which is put away.**' If one were to ask, '**Her who?,**' the answer would be '**Her who is put away.**' There is **no validity** to this pronoun argument....

"*Apolelumenen* is a **perfect passive participle** that is used **substantively** (as a noun). This term is **feminine** in gender, hence the translation '**woman.**' Significantly, it is **anarthrous**; there is no definite article ('the') to specify **any certain divorced woman**. Considering these features, a literal rendering would be: '**a having been dismissed one (feminine).**' Properly it is '**a**' and not '**the**' divorced woman." (Bold emphasis added, "May The Put-Away Fornicator Remarry?," *Is It Lawful: A Comprehensive Study Of Divorce*, 299-300)

1. "It [Matthew 5:32b] states unqualifiedly that **to marry a dismissed wife is adultery**" (Bold emphasis added, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, 1:110)
  2. *Maximillian Zerwick*: "And he who **marries a divorced woman commits adultery**" (Bold emphasis added, *An Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, p. 61, quoted in Tim Reeves, "May The Put-Away Fornicator Remarry?," *Is It Lawful: A Comprehensive Study Of Divorce*, 301)
2. **Objection**: The **second clause** (Mt. 19:9b) is **not genuine** but rather an **interpolation**; so it **does not prove** that the "**guilty party**" commits **fornication** when he/she remarries
- a. *Note*: One **cannot logically make this argument** and some of the **other arguments** that are made in an effort to justify the remarriage of the guilty party
  - b. It is true that **the remarriage clause** (Mt. 19:9b) is **not found** in **some Greek MSS**; and therefore, it is **omitted** in some English versions (e.g. NASV; NIV; RSV)
    1. *Aleph* (Sinaitic)
    2. *D* (5th-6th cen.)
    3. *L* (8th cen.)
    4. *C* (5th cen., corrected by at least three readers)
  - c. The fact that the **remarriage clause** (Mt. 19:9b) is **not found** in **some MSS** does not mean that it is **spurious**
    1. *Harry A. Sturz*: "Making **textual decisions** on the basis of how **three or four 'old' uncials read should be abandoned** because they **do not give a complete picture** of the second century traditions." (Bold emphasis added, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism*, 65, quoted in Donnie Rader, *Divorce And Remarriage: What Does The Text Say?*, 27)

- d. But the **remarriage clause** (Mt. 19:9b) is **found** in the **majority** of the Greek MSS
  1. *P<sup>25</sup>* (4th cen.)
  2. *B* (Vaticanus)
  3. *C* (original copy)
- e. It is **retained** in the **Majority text** and in some of the **most reputable English translations**
  1. The **48 scholars** who translated the KJV thought it belonged in the text
  2. The **101 scholars** who translated the ASV thought that there was enough evidence for including it in the text
  3. The **scholars** who translated the NKJV thought it was genuine
  4. *A. Lukyn Williams*: “The clause is **wholly omitted** by [*Aleph*] and some other manuscripts, and some modern editors, as Westcott and Hort. But it has **very high authority in its favour**.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Gospel According To Matthew,” *The Pulpit Commentary*, 245)
- f. But even if this clause is **not genuine** in Matthew 19:9, it doesn’t matter because there is **no question** that it is **genuine** in **other passages** (Mt. 5:32; Lk. 16:18), and its **teaching** is **corroborated** by the apostle **Paul** (Rom. 7:3)

2. Argument #2: *The exception phrase applies to both clauses of Mt. 19:9*

a. Explanation:

- 1) The phrase “**except for fornication**” is **elliptical** in the second clause; that is, though it does not actually occur there, it is **implied**
- 2) The **guilty party can remarry**, because the **exception clause** in the first part of the passage also **applies** to (and could be **inserted** in) the second part of the passage (Mt. 19:9)
- 3) So, in effect Jesus is saying: “Whosoever marries her that has been put away, **except for fornication**, commits adultery”

b. Refutation:

- 1) This argument **applies** the **exception phrase** to the second clause where it is **not found** and **doesn’t belong**
  - a) There is **no reason to believe**, from the **grammar** or the **context**, that the **exception phrase** should be **applied** to the **second clause** also
  - b) There is **every reason to believe** that the **exception phrase** should **not be applied** to the **second clause**
    1. The dictionary defines an “**ellipsis**” as: “1. *Grammar*. The omission of a word or words necessary for the complete

syntactical construction of a sentence but not necessary for understanding it; for example, *Stop laughing* for *You stop laughing.*” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*)

2. Grammatically, the **second clause** is an **independent clause**; it does not depend on the first clause (containing the exception) to complete its meaning
  3. Therefore, there is **no justification** for **applying** a phrase from one clause to another, because the **second clause** of Jesus’ statement **stands grammatically complete** as it is, **without any hint of ellipsis**
- c) Those who make this argument must first *assume* that Jesus *meant* to teach **what they teach**, and then they must **postulate an ellipsis** in order for what **Jesus actually said to fit their theory**
  - d) But the fact that **Jesus did not say** what they want Him to say demonstrates that **their theory is wrong**
  - e) To **apply** the **exception phrase** to the **second clause** is like looking for a **black cat** in the middle of a **coal pile** in the **pitch black darkness** of **midnight** that **isn’t there**
- 2) This argument also **changes the grammatical function** of the **exception phrase** when it is applied where it doesn’t belong
    - a) It is **grammatically impossible** for the **exception phrase** to **modify** both the first and the second clause at the same time
      1. *Tim Reeves*: “[T]he grammatical construction clearly shows that the phrase, **‘except for fornication,’** is used **adverbially**, that is, it **modifies the verb ‘put away’** in the first clause. **It does not modify ‘whosoever,’** nor **‘his wife,’** but only the action of ‘putting away.’ It does not even modify the following verb **‘marrieth another,’** because Jesus obviously would not say that one who ‘marrieth another, except for fornication, committeth adultery.’ To take this adverbial phrase and try to make it **modify ‘her that is put away’** in the second clause would require a different construction. The Greek term *apolelumenen* (‘her that is put away’) is a **participle**, and while participles usually have the characteristics of a verb, here it is **used substantively** (as a noun). This substantive use is better rendered **‘a having been put away woman.’** For the exception phrase to modify this substantive would require it to be used **adjectivally, not adverbially**. Since it is used only one time in this sentence **it cannot, grammatically,** be both an **adverb** and an **adjective** at the same time. For it to have a parallel usage in the second clause it would have to **modify a verb**. The only verbs in that clause are **‘marries’** and **‘commits adultery,’** and it would not make good sense to apply the exception to either of them....Based on laws of grammar, therefore, **the exception cannot possibly be implied in the second clause** so as to qualify ‘her that is put away.’” (Bold emphasis added, “May the Put-Away Fornicator Remarry?,” *Is It Lawful: A Comprehensive Study of Divorce*, 295)

2. *Leonard Latkovski* (Professor of Classic Languages, Bellarmine College, Louisville, KY): “In Matt. 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**. 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 second marriage continues to exist adultery continues to exist.” (Bold emphasis added, quoted in Donnie Rader, *Divorce And Remarriage: What Does The Text Say?*, 32)
  3. *Dr. Harry Sturz* (Greek Dept., Biola College, La Mirada, CA): “In my opinion, the phrase, **‘except it be for fornication,’** applies to **the first clause but not to the last.**” (Bold emphasis added, quoted in Donnie Rader, *Divorce And Remarriage: What Does The Text Say?*, 33)
  4. *Donald A. Drury, M.A.* (English Dept., Long Beach City College): “The modifying clause (except it be for fornication) **applies only to the first person mentioned**, in the first half of the sentence. It **does not apply**, grammatically or syntactically, to the person (‘whoso marrieth her who is put away’) in the second half of the sentence.” (Bold emphasis added, quoted in Donnie Rader, *Divorce And Remarriage: What Does The Text Say?*, 33)
  5. *Donnie Rader*: “**The exception phrase cannot grammatically modify both the first and last clauses** of Matt. 19:9. As it **modifies the first clause**, it is an *adverbial* phrase (qualifying ‘shall put away’). This cannot be done grammatically! I wrote to Bruce M. Metzger asking him, **‘Does the exception clause (“except it be for fornication”) modify the phrase “and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery”?’** His answer was **‘no, it qualifies the preceding clause.’**” (Bold emphasis added, “May the Guilty Party Remarry? Divorce, Remarriage and Fellowship,” *Searching The Scriptures*, n.d., 101)
- b) Objection: The exception clause **“unless they repent”** (Rev. 2:22-23) **applies to both the clauses** that precede and follow it
1. Reply: The construction is **not parallel**. The **exception clause** can apply to both the preceding and following phrases as an **adverbial phrase**
  2. If the **exception clause** is applied to both phrases in Mt. 19:9, it must function in the first phrase as an **adverbial clause** modifying the verb “shall put away” and in the second phrase as an **adjectival phrase** modifying “her that is put away”; and that is **grammatically impossible**
  3. The same phrase cannot serve as both an **adjective** and an **adverb** at the same time
3. Argument #3: *Jesus merely changed the cause of divorce, not the effect of divorce which allows both parties to remarry*
- a. Explanation:
    - 1) The OT law of **divorce** (Dt. 24:1-4) allowed **divorce for “any cause,”** and it allowed **both parties to remarry** (except each other)



- 2) Jesus **did not change the effect of divorce** (i.e. that both parties could remarry) **only the cause of divorce**. Instead of **divorce for “any cause,”** He only allows **divorce for fornication**
- 3) **Divorce**, however, is **still divorce**. After **divorce**, neither man nor woman are still **married people**, therefore, **both are free to marry another**, though one has been put away for fornication
- 4) *Bob Melear*: “In Matt. 19 Jesus said that which was allowed under the law **for every cause is NOW allowed for ONLY ONE CAUSE**. What was allowed under the O.T.? **A divorce which released BOTH to marry again!** Therefore, **GOD ALLOWED THIS for fornication NOW!** Jesus didn’t change the **EFFECT**, only the **CAUSE for the EFFECT!**” (Bold emphasis added, “Melear-Williams Debate,” *Torch*, 12:68-69, quoted in Tim Reeves, “May the Put-Away Fornicator Remarry?,” *Is It Lawful: A Comprehensive Study of Divorce*, 295)

b. Refutation:

- 1) This whole argument is based upon **assumption** and **assertion**, not Scriptural proof
    - a) To say that Jesus merely changed the **cause** of divorce, not the **effect** of divorce is **assertion**. Where is the **proof**?
  - 2) The OT’s teaching concerning divorce was a reflection of what God **tolerated** not what God **commended** or **commanded** Mt. 19:8
  - 3) Furthermore, **Jesus went back before the law to the very beginning** in order to express God’s will on marriage; so there is **no ground for claiming** that Jesus **allowed anything to continue** that was **based on the Mosaic law** relating to divorce and remarriage
  - 4) The NT clearly reveals **who has the right to marry** (or **remarry**)
    - a) Chart: “Those Who May Marry”
  - 5) A “put away person,” whether a fornicator or not, is not given **permission** to remarry
  - 6) **Authority is the real issue**, not the **definition** of “**divorce**”
    - a) The **put away fornicator** is **forbidden** to **remarry**, *not* because he/she is **still married** to his/her first mate, but because Jesus said that he who **marries a put away person** commits **adultery**
    - b) The woman in Dt. 24 could **remarry** because **God did not forbid her remarriage**. But **Jesus does forbid the remarriage** of a **put away person**
    - c) The issue on Mt. 19:9 is not whether the **divorced fornicator is still married**. The issue is whether **Jesus authorizes a put away person to marry another**
4. Argument #4: *Unmarried people cannot commit adultery*
- a. Explanation:
    - 1) *Major Premise*: Only a **married person** can commit **adultery**

- 2) *Minor Premise*: Divorced people are **not married**
- 3) *Conclusion*: Therefore, a divorced person who remarries **cannot commit adultery**

b. Refutation:

- 1) This argument would **logically mean** that **no divorced person** could **commit adultery** (unless he **married someone** who was also **married to someone else** and thus committed **bigamy**)\*
- 2) But Jesus used the word **“adultery”** in the very way that this argument says it cannot be used Mt. 19:9
  - a) Jesus said that when a man who **puts away his wife** (thus becoming unmarried) **marries another**, he commits **adultery**, and surely He has the right to define his own terms
- 3) It is just not true that **one must be married to commit adultery** Rom. 7:2-3
  - a) **Adultery** is normally defined by the lexicographers to mean **“to have unlawful intercourse with another’s wife...,”** (Thayer, 417) and this definition is **accurate as far as it goes**, but the **Bible definition is more precise**
  - b) According to this passage, **adultery** means to have **sexual intercourse** with someone who is **bound by law to another**
  - c) So, it is possible for **unmarried people** to **commit “adultery”** if at least one of them is **“bound” by God’s law to somebody else**
- 4) The word **“marry”** is being equated with the word **“bound,”** but they are not equal
  - a) One can be **married** and **not bound**
    1. **Herod and Herodias** (Mk. 6:17-18)
  - b) One can be **bound** and **not married**
    1. The **adulteress woman** (Rom. 7:1-3)
- 5) If the **divorce is for fornication**, the one who **puts away the guilty party** is **released** from the **bond** or **yoke**, but the **guilty party** is **not released**
  - a) The **guilty party** must **suffer the consequence** of her sin. She is **still bound** but **cannot enjoy the benefits** of the marriage relationship, because she has been **put away**
    1. *Illust.*: The man who commits a **felony** can serve his prison term, be **forgiven**, but he still loses the **right to vote** or **hold public office**
- 6) This **binding** is a **legal binding** (i.e. a binding by law), not a **physical binding**, and in **legal bindings**, one party can be **free** and the other **still obligated**

- a) *Illust.*: The **athlete** who signs a **contract** to play exclusively for a club, but then **violates** that contract. The club is **not required** to **pay** or **use** him, but he is **not free** to go elsewhere
- 7) No passage **releases** a **put-away-person** from the bond
- a) The text says that one who **marries** a **divorced woman** commits **adultery**. The text does not say **WHY** she was divorced.
- b) If she was **divorced** for her **fornication**, and it is **adultery** to **marry her**, this would destroy this position, for being **divorced for fornication** would have **freed both** her mate and her
- 8) For God to **release** the **guilty fornicator** when He does not **release** the **innocent bread burner** is an **absurdity**
- a) It is **utterly inconceivable** that God would extend the **right of remarriage** to a **woman guilty of fornication**, while He **denies that right** to a **woman innocent of that sin**
- b) If the **innocent party unjustly put away** is **not allowed to remarry** certainly the **guilty fornicator** would **not have the right**
- 9) No **sinner** has the right to **benefit from his sin**. This would happen if this position were true
- a) Objection: What about **David** and **Bathsheba**?
- b) Response:
1. Uriah was **dead**, so Bathsheba was no longer **“bound”** to him
  2. Marriage was a way for David to **provide** for Uriah’s widow
  3. David lived at a time when God **tolerated** some things (Levirate marriage, polygamy, concubinage, etc.) that He **no longer tolerates**
- 10) God **“joins”** a couple together. There are **two bonds** that need to be **broken**. The one to the **spouse** and the one to **God**
- 11) The **innocent party** has the **“right” to break the bond** because of the **sin** of the other party, and so is **free to remarry**
- 12) **“Bound”** involves:
- a) **Constraints**
- b) **Restraints** (1 Cor. 7:39)
5. Argument #5: *Fornication automatically severs the marriage (and the bond)*
- a. Explanation:
- 1) *Lloyd Moyer*: “Any time one **puts away** his marriage companion **without fornication** (illicit or unlawful intercourse) and **marries** another, that person commits **adultery** when he has sexual intercourse (Matt. 19:9), and if the one who has been put away **marries**, he is caused to commit **adultery** also (Matt. 5:32). This is true because the **first marriage** has **not been**

**dissolved** by illicit or unlawful intercourse. That is why **adultery** is committed the **first time** one **cohabits** with any other than the person to whom he was first married. It is a case of a **married person** having **unlawful sexual intercourse** with someone other than husband or wife. We have already shown that by the **very act** (unlawful sexual intercourse) the **first marriage is defiled**, made **unclean**, or **‘adulterated.’** By this act **the first marriage ceases to be** that which God ordained. It is no longer the **two people being ‘one flesh’**; it has become **three people being one flesh** and God did not ordain this nor will he tolerate it. That **first marriage** has been **destroyed** by the sin of **fornication** (illicit or unlawful sexual intercourse). Since the **first marriage has ceased to exist**, how is it possible to **adulterate** that which **does not exist**? Though adultery was committed when they first joined themselves together in intercourse because they were still the husband or wife of someone else, **subsequent sexual intercourse** between them is **not adultery**. They are no longer the **husband or wife** of someone else. They are sinners because they have committed adultery. And by this sin of adultery they caused their previous marriage to be **dissolved.**” (Bold emphasis added, Frost-Moyer Exchange On Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage, 9)

- 2) If a man **divorces** his wife for any reason other than fornication and then **marries** another, the **first time** they have sex, they commit **adultery**
- 3) That first act of adultery **severs** the original **marriage bond**, so he is **no longer bound** to his first wife
- 4) Therefore, all subsequent sexual intercourse is **not adulterous**
- 5) He must **repent** of his **initial adultery**, but he can continue to **live** with his second companion without sin

b. Refutation:

- 1) This is just **not true**
- 2) Paul states that a woman is an **adulteress**, not because the **first marriage still exists** but because she is **still bound by law** to her first husband
- 3) **“Marriage”** is not the **“bond”**
- 4) She **remains an adulteress**, not until her first marriage is **dissolved** by unlawful sexual intercourse, but as long as **her husband lives**
- 5) The **potential consequences** of this argument are frightening:
  - a) If one’s wife on any occasion were to become **unfaithful**, his **bond** with her would be broken, and she would no longer be his **legitimate wife**
  - b) As long as she continues this **secret affair**, he has **no right to her**. All relations with her are **adulterous**
  - c) He could, according to the theory, in total ignorance of her sin and the “broken bond” continue **committing “adultery”** with her over a period of years, believing her to be his legitimate wife, and **die** with that **stain of adultery on his soul**.

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- d) He dies, never having had sexual relations with anyone other than his wife, and yet **dies an adulterer**
  - e) He not only would have committed the sin in **ignorance**, he could not have **possibly known** that he was committing sin without her confession
  - f) In fact, according to the **logical consequences** of the theory, no man or woman could on any given occasion **know with absolute certainty** that he has a **right** to his own **companion** in marriage.
  - g) If **fornication dissolves the marriage** so that it no longer exists, once fornication takes place, how can the **innocent party now divorce** someone they are not **married** to?
- 6) The **wording** of Mt. 19:9 renders this position **impossible**
- a) The person **“putting away”** and **marrying** another commits **adultery**; also the one **“put away,”** if she **marries** again, commits **adultery** -- adultery results in **both actions**
  - b) The word joining the two clauses is not “or” but **“and”**
  - c) The theory under consideration would say, that if either had **married again**, the other **could not be committing adultery**, for the **bond** with the first companion would have been **severed** by that person’s marriage and subsequent fornication
- 7) No, **fornication** does not automatically sever the **marriage bond**; it only gives the **“innocent party” the right to divorce**
- 8) It is **only divorce** that **ends the marriage**, and if that **divorce is for fornication**, the **“innocent party” may remarry** without committing adultery
- 9) Questions:
- a) Do those who accept this theory believe that a man by **one adulterous act**, both **severs** a former marriage and **consummates** a new one?
  - b) **When does God join** the two in the new marriage
    - 1. At the time of the **ceremony**?
    - 2. At the time when they **commit adultery**?
    - 3. At the time when they **next have sexual relations**?
- 10) The act of fornication did not dissolve:
- a) **Philip’s bond** (Mk. 6:17-18)
  - b) **The Corinthian’s bond** (1 Cor. 5:1)
  - c) **The woman’s bond** (Rom. 7:3)

6. Argument # 6: *The put away fornicator may remarry, because an unmarried person has the right to have a mate (1 Cor. 7:2)*

a. Explanation:

- 1) *Major Premise:* An unmarried person has the **right to have a mate** 1 Cor. 7:2
- 2) *Minor Premise:* The put away fornicator is an **unmarried person**
- 3) *Conclusion:* Therefore, the put away fornicator **may remarry**

b. Refutation:

- 1) This argument assumes that **every unmarried person** has the **right** to have a mate
- 2) But **other passages** clearly reveal that **certain unmarried people** do not have **the right** to have a mate
  - a) The person who **puts away** his/her mate for some reason other than fornication (Mt. 19:9a; Lk. 16:18a; Rom. 7:3)
  - b) The person who is **put away** (Mt. 5:31-32)
  - c) The person who **marries a put away person** (Mt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Lk. 16:18b)
- 3) Expressions like **“each man”** or **“every man”** must always be understood in light of their **immediate context** and the **overall context** of Scripture
  - a) Chart: “Every Man”
- 4) Furthermore, this passage gives a man **permission** to have “his **own** wife,” not somebody else’s
  - a) It was not lawful for **Herod** to have **his brother’s wife** (Mt. 14:4; Mk. 6:18)
  - b) One may be **“bound” by God’s law** to someone even though the **“marriage” has been dissolved**
  - c) And no one has the **right to marry** anyone who is **“bound” by God’s law** to **someone else** Rom. 7:2-3

7. Argument #7: *Paul gives a “divorced” person permission to remarry without sin (1 Cor. 7:27-28)*

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”**
- b) *A. T. Robertson*: “**Bachelors** as well as **widowers** are included in *λελωσαι* [*lelusai*] (loosed, perfect passive indicative of *λυω* [*luō*]).” (Bold emphasis added, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, n.p.)
  - c) *BDAG*: “b. fig. *free, set free, release*... *λέλωσαι 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

8. Argument #8: *The NT is silent with respect to the guilty party*

a. Explanation:

- 1) “The guilty party is not even **under consideration** in the passage, therefore he/she may remarry”

b. Refutation:

- 1) The answer to this argument is perhaps best stated in the form of a **syllogism**
  - a) *Major Premise*: Whoever **marries a “put-away-person”** commits **adultery** (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:3)
  - b) *Minor Premise*: The “guilty party” is a **“put-away-person”**
  - c) *Conclusion*: Therefore, whoever **marries the “guilty party”** commits **adultery**
    1. If **remarriage** is **adultery** for the **“third party”** who marries a put away person, then it is also **adultery** for that **put away person**
    2. In this case, **“what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose”**
    3. Jesus **does not qualify** which **put away persons** may not remarry
    4. Jesus **does not give an exception** to the rule that **prohibits marrying a put away person**
- 2) If the **guilty party** is not under consideration in this passage, how can this passage be used to **justify remarriage**?
  - a) This is like **“institutional” brethren’s** use of Gal. 6:10 and Jas. 1:27
- 3) The Bible is **silent** about the **guilty party remarrying**

4) When God says **nothing**, He means “**No**”!

9. Argument #9: *Repentance is not penance*

a. Explanation:

- 1) To insist that the put away fornicator **remain unmarried**, despite having repented, is like imposing the Roman Catholic sacrament of “**penance**”
- 2) Thus, if the fornicator has **repented** and **ceased fornication**, he need serve **no further “penalty”** such as celibacy

b. Refutation:

- 1) **Repentance is not “penance,”** but it is **turning away from sin** and complying with the will of God cf. Lk. 19:8
- 2) “**Penance**” is not the issue. The issue is **whom** did Jesus **authorize** to be **remarried**?
  - a) The one who **divorces** his mate for **fornication** is given **permission** to remarry
  - b) **No such permission** is given to one who is **put away**, for any reason, including fornication
- 3) The **put away fornicator** may not **remarry** because Jesus said it would be **adultery** Mt. 19:9; Lk. 16:18

10. Argument #10: *Forgiveness frees the former fornicator to remarry*

a. Explanation:

- 1) He or she who is **forgiven** is no longer a **fornicator** cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11

b. Refutation:

- 1) Certainly the **penitent fornicator is forgiven** when his/her repentance is genuine
- 2) But a **put away fornicator** is a **put away person**, and Jesus said that whoever **married a put away person** committed **adultery**
- 3) If an **exception** were granted to the “put away person,” that would be different; but such an exception has **not been granted**
- 4) Furthermore, Paul said that a woman is **bound by law** to her **husband** as long as **he lives**, and if she **marries** someone else during that time, she is an **adulteress** Rom. 7:2-3

11. Argument #11: *If the single fornicator may marry, the put away fornicator should be able to remarry*

a. Explanation:

b. Refutation:

- 1) The issue is not who is **more sinful**, the **single playboy** or the **previously married philanderer**

- 2) Neither is the issue that which would **seem pleasing** or **fair** to our human reasoning or emotions cf. Isa. 55:8-9
  - 3) The issue is: **What did Jesus say?**
  - 4) The single fornicator has not made any **marriage vows**
12. Argument #12: ***If the “guilty party” cannot remarry, then the innocent party would have power over the life of the “guilty party” to sentence him/her to a life of celibacy***
- a. Explanation:
  - b. Refutation:
    - 1) No, **God** is the one who **sentences** the guilty party to a **life of celibacy**
    - 2) Furthermore, it is the **“guilty party”** who is to **blame** for his/her own predicament
    - 3) The way of the transgressor is **hard** (Pr. 13:15)
13. If the **“guilty party” may remarry**, then:
- a. **God’s judgment is harder** on the **one unjustly put away** than on the **one justly put away**
    - 1) **Who can believe** that a person **divorced without just cause** is **forbidden** by God to **remarry**, but **divorced adulterers** may **enter a second marriage** with God’s blessings?
    - 2) This position **puts a premium on fornication**. If you want to **remarry** **commit fornication**, because **“a little fornication makes everything all right”**
  - b. This seems to **put a premium on sin** cf. Gal. 6:7-8; Pr. 13:15
    - 1) Reply: What about **David and Bathsheba**? He got to keep her
    - 2) Response:
      - a) Uriah was **dead**, so Bathsheba was no longer **“bound”** to him
      - b) Marriage was a way for David to **provide** for Uriah’s widow
      - c) David lived at a time when God **tolerated** some things (Levirate marriage, polygamy, concubinage, etc.) that He **no longer tolerates**
  - c. This position would **logically encourage people to commit fornication** to get out of unpleasant marriages
  - d. This theory has **God putting greater penalty** on **“lesser sins”** (trivial grounds for divorce) and **lesser penalty** on **“greater sins”** (fornication) cf. Rom. 2:6; Lk. 12:47-48; Jn. 19:11; Mt. 23:23
  - e. **Wife-swapping** could be **acceptable**
    - 1) *Donnie Rader*: “To illustrate let’s suppose we have **two married couples** in the local church: Jack and Jill; Tom and Jane. **Jack** commits **fornication**

with **Jane**. Thus both are **put away** by Jill and Tom. All would agree that **Tom and Jill could remarry**. In this case they **marry each other**. Now...**Jack and Jane could marry each other**. Both couples could be **accepted into fellowship**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Divorce And Remarriage: What Does The Text Say?*, 95)

14. But the **guilty party may not remarry** because:
  - a. God has **not given** the **guilty party permission** to remarry
  - b. God has **condemned** the **remarriage** of a **put away person** as **adultery**, and the **guilty party** is a **put away person**

### C. Divorce For The Kingdom Is Permissible

1. Bible teaching on MDR can be **briefly summarized** as follows:
  - a. The Law:
    - 1) Marriage is to be **lifelong**
    - 2) Divorce is **sinful**
    - 3) Remarriage is **adultery**
  - b. The Exception:
    - 1) The exception is **not the rule**
    - 2) The exception is **divorce for fornication**
    - 3) The exception is **divorce by the innocent party**
2. However, some preachers are now saying that **divorce for the kingdom** is also permissible
  - a. In a sermon entitled “**When Is Divorce A Sin?**,” one preacher [Mike Willis] argued that **divorce** is permissible, even mandatory, for reasons other than fornication:
    - 1) [Mike Willis]: “[O]ne has an **obligation to stay in his marriage** until and unless his responsibilities to his mate interfere with his responsibilities to God. He **must leave ‘for the kingdom of heaven's sake.’**” (Bold emphasis added, “When Is Divorce A Sin?” 3)
    - 2) Then he offered the following **scenarios** to illustrate his point:
      - a) “A person may have to divorce his mate to **break an unscriptural marriage** (Matt. 19:9). In this case, one is divorcing for the kingdom of heaven's sake.”
      - b) “A person may have to leave his mate to **become or remain a Christian** (Luke 18:29-30; 1 Cor. 7: 15; Matt. 10:34-48; Luke 14:26). In this case, one is divorcing for the kingdom of heaven's sake.”
      - c) “A person may be in a marriage relationship in which his **mate runs up bills** which he has no intention of paying. In this case, one's responsibility to God to pay one's bills would demand that he not be supportive of his mate's ungodly behavior (Rom. 13:8).”
      - d) “A mate may be **abusive to the children** (beating). A person has a responsibility to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of

the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4). To fulfill that responsibility, may require him to leave his mate to provide for the children.”

- e) “[T]here are some cases in which one must leave to have **physical and emotional health**. One's obligation to serve God would require him to preserve his physical and emotional well being.”
  - f) “Sometimes a couple becomes **so alienated** from each other, the hostilities have reached such a point, that they must live apart.”
- 3) [Mike Willis]: “The Scriptures do not teach a person that he must become a **doormat** to his partner to **keep the marriage together**. A person who becomes another's doormat will do more to destroy his mate's love and respect for him than about anything else he can do. A person has to **maintain his own self-esteem to have proper Bible love**. One is to love his neighbor ‘as himself’ and the husband is to love his wife ‘as his own body’ (Matt. 22:39; Eph. 5:33).” (Bold emphasis added, “When Is Divorce A Sin?,” 3)
- b. Another preacher [Maurice Barnett], who doesn’t go quite this far, argues for **“divorce for the kingdom”** if your mate’s **persecution prevents** you from being a Christian
3. Argument #1: Paul allows divorce for other reasons than fornication as long as there is no remarriage

a. Explanation:

- 1) 1 Cor. 7:10-11: <sup>10</sup> Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to **depart** from her husband. <sup>11</sup> But even if she does **depart**, let her **remain unmarried** or **be reconciled** to her husband. And a husband is not to **divorce** his wife.
- 2) **The parenthesis** in this passage indicates that following a divorce, **remaining unmarried** or **being reconciled** are both **viable** and **permissible options**
  - a) *Mike Willis*: “In the circumstance under consideration by Paul, the woman is left with **two options: Remain unmarried** or **be reconciled** to her husband. The two options are **not unequal options** such as ‘Live in obedience to the Lord’ or ‘live in disobedience to the Lord.’ **The two options are not limited** as if the text said, ‘Be reconciled to your husband but, *in the event that reconciliation is impossible*, remain unmarried.’ Consequently, **the inspired apostle gave her two options which leaves her standing acceptable in the eyes of the Lord**. She may **remain unmarried** or she may **be reconciled** to her husband. Making reconciliation the primary obligation is an interpretative spin put on the passage that is not warranted by the text.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 29-30)
  - b) *Mike Willis*: “If one wishes to affirm that her act of departing from her husband is **sinful**, how can he allow her to **‘remain unmarried’**? If her act of obtaining her divorce is a sin, willfully remaining in that sin is also sinful. But the apostle said that she could **remain unmarried**. Did he mean that she could **stay in sin**? Obviously not!” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 30)
  - c) *Mike Willis*: “No one who holds the ‘fornication is the only cause for divorce’ position has been able to describe a situation in which a

woman might **'depart'** from her husband and be instructed to **'remain unmarried or be reconciled** to her husband' **without charging the woman with sin, which Paul did not do.**" (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 31)

- d) **"Let her remain"** (*meno*) is a **present imperative** indicating continuing action
1. Notice how this term is **used elsewhere** (cf. 1 Cor. 7:20, 24; Heb. 13:1; 1 Jn. 2:24)
  2. Response: In the passages cited, the conditions referred to are **not sinful**; but that is **not the case** in 1 Cor. 7:10-11
- 3) When Paul says "Now to the married I command, yet not I but **the Lord** . . ." He is referring to something that **Jesus had already said**
- a) Do not **depart** or **divorce**
    1. Jesus had already **forbidden divorce** (cf. Mt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-9)
  - b) If you depart, **remain unmarried or be reconciled**
    1. Jesus had already talked about **persecution** from family (cf. Mt. 10:21, 34-38; Lk. 21:16)
    2. Jesus had already talked about **leaving** family relationships (cf. Mt. 19:27-29; Mk. 10:28-30; Lk. 18:29-30)
    3. Response: We can **unequivocally prove** that Jesus had already **forbidden divorce** (cf. Mt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-9); it is just an **assumption** to say that Jesus had already said something about **the material** that is contained in **the parenthesis** in this passage
- 4) Paul's statement in the parenthesis, "But even if she does **depart**, let her **remain unmarried or be reconciled** to her husband," indicates that he recognized that sometimes Christians will **divorce** because one's mate has been guilty of **some other sin** than fornication (See *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 28-29)
- 5) 1 Cor. 7:10-11 is **parallel** to 1 Cor. 7:5-6

b. Refutation:

- 1) There are basically **two different interpretations** of 1 Corinthians 7:10-11
  - a) The First Interpretation: "**Don't divorce**, but if you divorce (for the kingdom's sake), then you may **remain unmarried** (without sin) or **be reconciled** to your husband"
  - b) The Second Interpretation: "**Don't divorce**, but if you divorce, then you may **remain unmarried** (if reconciliation is not possible -- don't make matters worse by remarrying and thus committing adultery) or **be reconciled** to your husband (if reconciliation is possible)"
- 2) Both of these interpretations are **inferences**. Paul does not **explicitly state** either conclusion
  - a) Note: The **parenthetical material** in each view is **inference**

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- 3) Since both of these interpretations are **inferences**, we must **ask**:
- a) Which one of these interpretations is a “**necessary inference**” (*i.e.* the only certain conclusion)?
    - 1. If an inference is “**possible**” but not “**necessary**,” it should not be **taught** and it cannot be **bound**?
  - b) Which one of these inferences is in **harmony** with **explicit Bible teaching**?
    - 1. **Explicit Bible teaching** must always **take precedence** over **man’s inferences**
    - 2. **Man’s inferences** must be **judged** in the light of **explicit Bible teaching**, not vice versa
- 4) The only way that any interpretation/inference can be **correct** is if it is in **harmony** with the **totality of pertinent Bible teaching**
- 5) Which of these two interpretations/inferences is in harmony with **everything else** that the Bible teaches about **divorce**?
- a) We’ve already **established** from the Bible that:
    - 1. **God Said Nothing About Divorce In The Very Beginning** (Gen. 2:18-25; cf. Mt. 19:4-6)
    - 2. **Divorce Is A Treacherous Act** (Mal. 2:13-16)
    - 3. **Jesus Condemned Divorce** (Mt. 19:3-8; Mk. 10:2-9)
    - 4. **Paul Forbids Divorce** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
    - 5. **Divorce Makes One A Covenant-Breaker** (Pr. 2:16-17; Mal. 2:14; Rom. 1:28-32)
    - 6. **Divorce Casts A Stumbling Block** (Mt. 5:31-32; Lk. 17:1-2; Rom. 14:13, 21; 1 Cor. 10:31-33)
    - 7. **Divorce Reneges On Marital Responsibilities** (1 Cor. 7:3-5; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)
  - b) The **second interpretation** is in **harmony** with this Bible teaching
  - c) The **first interpretation** is **not**
    - 1. If Paul **permits divorce** in the parenthesis of this passage, then he **contradicts**:
      - a. **Malachi** (Mal. 2:15-16)
      - b. **Jesus** (Mt. 19:4-6)
      - c. **Himself** (1 Cor. 7:10a, 11b, 12-13)
- 6) Which of these two interpretations/inferences is in harmony with **everything else** the Bible teaches about **sin** and the **remedy** for sin? (Answering **six other questions** will help us answer this question)

a) Does Paul **forbid** divorce? **Yes!** 1 Cor. 7:10, 11b

b) Is it **a sin** to do what the Bible **forbids**? **Yes!**

1. Lev. 5:17: <sup>17</sup> “If a person **sins**, and commits any of these things which are **forbidden** to be done by the commandments of the LORD, though he does not know it, yet he is **guilty** and shall **bear his iniquity**. (cf. Lev. 4:2, 13, 22, 27)

## 2. Achan

a. God told the Israelites **not to take the spoils** of Jericho (Josh. 6:17a, 18-19)

b. Achan **took** of the accursed things (Josh. 7:1)

c. God called that **sin** (Josh. 7:11)

## 3. Israel

a. Dan. 9:11: <sup>11</sup> Yes, all Israel has **transgressed** Your law, and has **departed** so as **not to obey** Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have **sinned** against Him.

4. Objection: Paul does not **charge** the wife who departs with **sin**

a. Response: Yes, it’s true Paul does not **explicitly charge** the wife with sin, but does that mean she is **not guilty** of sin?

1. Is **Abraham’s half-truth** about Sarah being his sister (Gen. 12:13, 19; 20:2, 5, 9-13) ever **explicitly identified as sin** by God?

b. Response: Later in 1 Corinthians 7, when Paul wanted to make it clear that **doing something different** than what he commanded (he uses the imperative mood) **was not sin**, he specifically **said so** (cf. 1 Cor. 7:27-28). There is **no such indication** in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

c) Must one **repent** to be **forgiven** of sin? **Yes!**

1. Acts 3:19: <sup>19</sup> **Repent** therefore and **be converted**, that your sins may be **blotted out**, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

2. Acts 8:22: <sup>22</sup> **Repent** therefore of this your wickedness, and **pray** God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be **forgiven** you.

3. Are there **any examples** in Scripture of anyone being **forgiven without repentance**?

d) Does **repentance** require the **cessation** of sin? **Yes!**

1. 2 Chr. 7:14: <sup>14</sup> if My people who are called by My name will **humble** themselves, and **pray** and **seek** My face, and **turn from**



**their wicked ways**, then I will **hear** from heaven, and will **forgive** their sin and **heal** their land.

2. Pr. 28:13: <sup>13</sup> He who **covers** his sins will not prosper, But whoever **confesses** and **forsakes** them will have mercy.
3. Isa. 55:6-7: <sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. <sup>7</sup> Let the wicked **forsake** his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him **return** to the LORD, And He will have **mercy** on him; And to our God, For He will **abundantly pardon**.
4. Rev. 9:20-21: <sup>20</sup> But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, **did not repent** of the works of their hands, **that they should not** worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. <sup>21</sup> And **they did not repent** of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.
5. (cf. 1 Ki. 8:46-50; 2 Chr. 6:36-39)

e) Does repentance require **restitution**? **Yes!**

1. This is taught in the **OT** Ex. 22:5-12; Num. 5:5-7; Ezek. 33:14-16
2. This is taught in the **NT** Lk. 19:8; Rev. 9:20-21

3. Questions:

- a. If you **steal a car** and want to be forgiven, can you repent and **keep the car**?
- b. If a **homosexual** wants to be forgiven, can he repent and **stay in his homosexual relationship**?
- c. If someone is in an **adulterous marriage** and wants to be forgiven, can he repent and **stay in that relationship**?
  1. John the Baptist told Herod Antipas that it was **not lawful** for him to **have** his brother's wife (Mt. 14:4; Mk. 6:18)
  2. How could Herod have been **forgiven**? **Repentance**
  3. What would **repentance** have **required**? Herod would have had to **not have** his brother's wife
- d. If someone **divorces** his mate unscripturally and wants to be forgiven, can he repent and **not seek reconciliation**?

f) Is restitution always **possible**? **No!**

1. **David** could not bring Uriah back to life, but he could repent and be forgiven?
2. **Paul** could not undo his persecution of Christians, but he could repent and be forgiven?

3. **Reconciliation after divorce** may not be possible, because an ex-mate is **unwilling**

7) Objection: Nothing is said about **repentance** and **restitution** in this passage

a) That's true, but the Bible clearly teaches that **repentance is a prerequisite to forgiveness**

b) Therefore, even though this passage does not specifically mention repentance, it must **take repentance for granted**

1. Sometimes Bible passages **take things for granted** that are **not mentioned** in the passage

a. Mt. 5:32: <sup>32</sup> But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality **causes her to commit adultery**; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

1. The divorced wife's **subsequent remarriage is taken for granted** in this passage even though it is **not specifically mentioned**

2. *Maurice Barnett* acknowledges this when he says: "In Matthew 5:32, the put away woman **remarries** and thus **commits adultery**, as does the man who marries her. The husband must share the guilt for putting her in that position, provided she does **marry another**. However, what if she **does not remarry**? I know of such cases. She remains celibate; she has **not committed adultery**. He has **not made her an adulteress** because **no adultery has been committed**. What if a man puts away his wife without fornication but does not remarry, nor does the put away woman? Neither one has committed adultery." ("Barnett's Second Negative," *The Barnett-Watts Debate*, 16)

c) We recognize that **this is the case** in many other passages (cf. Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21)

d) The words "**repent**" and "**repentance**" are not found anywhere in 1 Corinthians, but the **concept of repentance** is certainly there

1. 1 Cor. 6:9-11: <sup>9</sup> Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And such **were** some of you. But you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

e) And the Corinthians understood that Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians **required repentance**, even though it was not specifically mentioned, because **that's what they did**

1. 2 Cor. 7:8-11: <sup>8</sup> For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. <sup>9</sup> Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that **your sorrow led to repentance**. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. <sup>10</sup> For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. <sup>11</sup> For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What **diligence** it produced in you, what **clearing** of yourselves, what **indignation**, what **fear**, what **vehement desire**, what **zeal**, what **vindication**! In all things you proved yourselves to be **clear** in this matter.
- 8) Therefore, in light of all that the Bible says about the **sinfulness of divorce** and the **requirements of repentance**, it is not reasonable to believe that Paul **permits** divorce, immediately after he **forbids** it, as long as one remains **unmarried**

a) This is an example of “**contingency legislation**”

1. Everyday examples:

a. “Let not the driver run the red light: but and if he run the red light, let him pay the fine or go to jail.”

1. That statement **does not give permission** to run the red light
2. It **prohibits such** and **states the alternatives** which the driver faces should he violate the command

2. Bible examples:

a. **1 John 2:1** is similar in its grammatical construction

1. John commands that believers “**sin not**”
2. Then he states **a contingency** in the event that someone does sin
3. But does this imply that John is giving anyone **permission to sin**?

b. **Galatians 5:14-15** is similar in its grammatical construction

1. Is it OK for me to “**bite and devour**” Christians so long as I’m careful not to be consumed?

c. **James. 3:13-14** is similar in its grammatical construction

1. Is it OK for me to have “**bitter envy and strife**” so long as I don’t glory in it or lie against the truth?

d. **Romans 11:18** is similar in its grammatical construction

1. Is it OK for me to “**boast against the branches**” as long as I remember that “**the root supports**” me?

9) Paul is not saying: “**Don’t divorce, but if you do, it’s really all right as long as you don’t remarry**”

a) This statement does not **approve, authorize, or allow** divorce

b) Just because **two options** are **mentioned** (i.e. remain unmarried or be reconciled), that does not mean that **both options** are **equally acceptable**

1. Rev. 3:15-16: <sup>15</sup> “I know your works, that you are neither **cold** nor **hot**. I could wish you were **cold** or **hot**. <sup>16</sup> So then, because you are **lukewarm**, and neither **cold** nor **hot**, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

2. Is being “**cold**” an **acceptable option** just because it’s mentioned in this passage? **No**. Jesus wants us to be “**hot**,” but being “**cold**” is better than being “**lukewarm**”

10) Paul is saying: “**Don’t divorce, but if you do, don’t make matters worse by remarrying**”

a) Those who divorce have but **two alternatives**:

1. **Reconciliation** with their mate (if possible)

2. **Resignation** to a life of celibacy (if reconciliation is not possible)

a. The word “**remain**” (*meno*) is in the **present tense**

11) Question: “**Why does Paul say ‘remain unmarried or be reconciled’ if divorce is sinful?**”

a) Because Paul realizes that **reconciliation may not always be possible**

b) If reconciliation is **possible**, it must be **pursued** (repentance demands that)

c) If reconciliation is **not possible**, one can repent of sinful divorce and remain unmarried trusting God to forgive, just as He forgives **the penitent murderer** who cannot bring back the life he has taken

12) It is nothing but **bald-faced assumption** to argue that the wife **departs** because her husband has been guilty of **some other sin** than fornication. A wife could **divorce** her husband simply because she chooses to **disobey** Paul’s commandment!!!

a) There is not even a **hint** in this passage that the wife **departs** (divorces) because her husband has **committed sin**, much less **sin that prevents her from serving God faithfully** – thus allowing her (as some argue) to **divorce “for the kingdom”**

13) 1 Cor. 7:10-11 is **not parallel** to 1 Cor. 7:5-6

a) Chart: “1 Cor. 7:5-6 // 1 Cor. 7:10-11”

4. Argument #2: *Jesus allows divorce for the kingdom’s sake as long as there is no remarriage*

a. Explanation:1) Jesus taught that **persecution** would come from **family members**

- a) Mt. 10:21: <sup>21</sup> “Now brother will **deliver up** brother to death, and a father his child; and children will **rise up against** parents and cause them to be **put to death**.
- b) Mt. 10:34-38: <sup>34</sup> “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to ‘set a man **against** his father, a daughter **against** her mother, and a daughter-in-law **against** her mother-in-law’; <sup>36</sup> and ‘a man’s **enemies** will be those of his own household.’
- c) Lk. 21:16: <sup>16</sup> You will be **betrayed** even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will **put some of you to death**.

2) Jesus taught that we must **love Him more** than anyone else

- a) Mt. 10:37: <sup>37</sup> He who **loves** father or mother **more than Me is not worthy of Me**. And he who **loves** son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.
- b) Lk. 14:26: <sup>26</sup> “If anyone comes to Me and does not **hate** his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, **he cannot be My disciple**.

3) Jesus taught that those who **leave** family members will be **blessed**

- a) Mt. 19:27-29: <sup>27</sup> Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have **left all** and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” <sup>28</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has **left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life**.

1. Note: “**Or wife**” is **omitted** in the NU Greek text

- b) Mk. 10:28-30: <sup>28</sup> Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have **left all** and followed You.” <sup>29</sup> So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has **left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s,** <sup>30</sup> who shall not receive a **hundredfold** now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with **persecutions**—and in the age to come, **eternal life**.
- c) Lk. 18:28-30: <sup>28</sup> Then Peter said, “See, we have **left all** and followed You.” <sup>29</sup> So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has **left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,** <sup>30</sup> who shall not receive **many times more** in this present time, and in the age to come **eternal life**.”
- d) The word “**left**” (*aphiemi*) is the same word that in other passages refers to **divorce** (1 Cor. 7:11, 12, 13)

- e) Jesus **commends** and promises to **bless** those who **leave** these things **“for My name’s sake”** (Mt. 19:29), **“for My sake and the gospel’s”** (Mk. 10:29), or **“for the sake of the kingdom of God”** (Lk. 18:29-30)
- 4) *Maurice Barnett*: “[I]f parents, children, brethren, or any other relationships are **keeping a person from serving God**, a man **can**, even **must**, **break the relationship; he must ‘leave’ them**. God comes first when looking at parents, children, brethren, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, etc. It should be the same for those who are married.” (Bold emphasis added, ““Reply To Pat Donahue.” *Gospel Anchor*. February, 1993, 54)
- 5) *Mike Willis*: “The Scriptures teach that one is **obligated to stay** in a marriage unless his doing so **prohibits him from living as a Christian.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 23)
- 6) *Mike Willis*: “The Bible recognizes that there are circumstances in which a person **must leave a marriage in order to become or be a Christian.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 23)
- 7) *Mike Willis*: “If one **must leave** his marriage in order to **be faithful to Christ**, he has the **God-given right and obligation** to do so.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 23)
- 8) *Mike Willis*: “These Bible verses [Mk. 10:34-38; Mt. 19:28-29; Lk. 14:26; 18:29-30, ksk] prove that there is at least **one reason for leaving a marriage in addition to fornication** -- to be faithful in one's service to God as a Christian. One may **leave his mate ‘for the kingdom of heaven's sake.’**” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 24)
- 9) *Mike Willis*: “I can only justify a woman's departing from her husband in those circumstances in which she **cannot live as a Christian within the marriage**. And I can imagine **several circumstances** in which that may occur, but all of them involve the mate being involved in conduct that is contrary to the Lord's command (for example, in cases where the husband is **beating** the wife and children, cases where one mate is bringing **pornography, drugs, and alcohol** into the home, thus creating a situation in which one cannot bring up his children in the ‘nurture and admonition of the Lord,’ etc. [1 Cor. 7:14-16].)” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 29)
- 10) *Mike Willis*: “The Bible provides authority for one to **leave** a marriage in order to **be obedient to God**. He has the **right to divorce** and **live alone** in the event that he **cannot serve God** while in that marriage.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 31)
- b. Refutation:
- 1) The passages cited that mention **persecution** from family members say nothing about **leaving** or **divorcing**, and those that mention **leaving** say nothing about **persecution** from family members
  - 2) **Loving** Jesus more than anyone else (Mt. 10:37) and **“hating”** family members (Lk. 14:26) is not something we *may* have to do; it is something we *must* do. However, this **does not nullify** what Jesus teaches elsewhere about **divorce** (cf. Mt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11, 12, 13)
  - 3) The word *aphiemi* means **different things** in different contexts

- a) While *aphiemi* sometimes refers to **divorce**, it usually does not refer to **divorce** (cf. Mt. 4:11). Notice the different ways it is translated in the NKJV:
1. **“Forgive,” “forgave,” or “forgiven”** (49:146)
  2. **“Left”** (39:146)
  3. **“Leave,” “leaves,” or “leaving”** (15:146)
  4. **“Let”** (12:146)
  5. **“Allow” or “allowed”** (6:146)
  6. **“Permit” or “permitted”** (4:146)
  7. **“Alone”** (3:146)
  8. **“Forsook”** (3:146)
  9. **“Divorce”** (3:146)
  10. **“Let him alone”** (2:146)
  11. **“Let...alone”** (2:146)
  12. **“Sent...away”** (1:146)
  13. **“Neglected”** (1:146)
  14. **“Leaving...undone”** (1:146)
  15. **“Yielded up”** (1:146)
  16. **“Let...have”** (1:146)
  17. **“Go”** (1:146)
  18. **“Cried out”** (1:146)
  19. **“Laying aside”** (1:146)
- b) It is a fundamental error to take **one definition** of a word, that means **different things** in different contexts, and apply it to **every context** or apply it in contexts where a particular definition **does not fit**
1. Illust.: “This morning I took my money out of my piggy **bank**, went fishing on the river **bank**, looked up and saw a plane **bank** to the right before landing, and then went to town and deposited my money in Sun Trust **Bank**”
- c) The **JW’s** make that mistake with the terms **“spirit”** and **“soul”**
1. While those terms can and do refer to **“physical life”** in some contexts (Gen. 1:20, 24; 2:7; Acts 20:9-10), they also refer to other things:
    - a. **Breath** (Job 41:21; Isa. 3:20)
    - b. **Persons** (Ezek. 18:20; Acts 2:41-42)

- c. **Spiritual** life (Mt. 10:28; Jas. 1:21)
- d. Etc.
- 4) When *aphiemi* means **divorce**, the term refers to more than mere **spatial separation**, it refers to the **dissolution** of marriage
- a) 1 Cor. 7:10-11: <sup>10</sup> Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to **depart** [*chorizo*] from her husband. <sup>11</sup> But even if she does depart, let her remain **unmarried** or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to **divorce** [*aphiemi*] his wife.
1. *Chorizo* and *aphiemi* are **synonyms** in this passage
  2. Please note that when a wife **departs** [*chorizo*], she becomes **“unmarried”**
  3. Therefore when a husband **divorces** [*aphiemi*] that means he too is **“unmarried”**
- b) Mere **spatial separation** between a husband and wife, is not the same thing as **divorce**
1. When Moses **sent Zipporah away** (Ex. 18:1-5), there was **spatial separation** between them, but they were **not divorced**
- 5) *Aphiemi* cannot mean **“divorce”** in the passages cited
- a) Peter says that he had **“left”** [*aphiemi*] **“all”** (Mt. 19:27; Mk. 10:28) or **“our own”** (Lk. 18:28), but he had certainly not **divorced his wife**
1. 1 Cor. 9:5: <sup>5</sup> Do we have no right to take along a **believing wife**, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and **Cephas**?
- b) Do we **“divorce”** houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or lands?
- c) Does the same term mean **more than one thing** at the same time?
- 6) If these passages authorize **“divorce for the kingdom”** to **escape persecution**, why does Jesus say that **leaving “for My sake and the gospel’s”** would be accompanied by **“persecutions”** (Mk. 10:28-30)
- 7) This interpretation results in Jesus **commending** in these passages what He **condemns** in others (Mt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:10-11); thus **contradicting** Himself
- 8) Furthermore, **“divorce for the kingdom’s sake”** is based on the fallacious assumption that one person can **keep another person** from **faithfully serving God**
- a) A mate might **keep you from doing certain things** (e.g. assembling with the saints), but he cannot **keep you from serving God faithfully**
  - b) **Paul** was terribly **mistreated** and his **imprisonments** kept him from doing certain things (e.g. assembling with the saints, traveling to preach, etc.), but **none of these things kept him from serving God faithfully** (2 Tim. 4:6-8)



- c) What does Jesus say to **three women** living in the first century?
1. A woman living in **Smyrna**
    - a. Rev. 2:10: <sup>10</sup> Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. **Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**
  2. A **female slave** with a cruel master
    - a. 1 Pet. 2:18-21: <sup>18</sup> Servants, **be submissive** to your masters with all fear, not only to **the good** and **gentle**, but also to **the harsh**. <sup>19</sup> For this is **commendable**, if because of conscience toward God one **endures grief, suffering wrongfully**. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example**, that you should **follow His steps**:
  3. A wife with a cruel **husband**
    - a. 1 Pet. 3:1-2: <sup>1</sup> Wives, likewise, **be submissive** to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.
    - b. *David Watts, Jr.*: “Are we to believe that to the woman at Smyrna God says, ‘**Be faithful until death,**’ and to the slave woman God says, ‘**Submit even to the harsh,**’ but to the wife with a cruel husband God says, ‘**You can’t be faithful. Divorce him?**’” (“Watt’s First Affirmative,” *The Barnett-Watts Debate*, 5)
- d) Objection: In these three scenarios, those involved **had no choice**. There was **no way of escape**. But in marriage, **divorce** provides a **way of escape**
1. This **begs the question**, assuming the very thing that must be **proven**
  2. Does God **permit** divorce for **abuse** or **persecution**? That’s the question that must be answered, and the **passages** that are commonly appealed to **do not prove** that He does
- e) No one can ever **stop** a Christian from **faithfully serving God**, no matter how **difficult the circumstances**
1. Objection: Jesus said that the scribes and Pharisees **kept some from entering** the kingdom (Mt. 23:13; Lk. 11:52), so someone **can prevent** another from faithfully serving God
    - a. Jesus is talking about “**entering**” the kingdom, **not faithfully serving after one has entered** the kingdom

- b. Furthermore, the scribes and Pharisees hindered people by their **deceptive teaching**; but if people will **“take heed”** (Mt. 16:6, 12; 24:4) and **“let no one deceive”** them (1 Jn. 3:7; Col. 2:4) they **don’t have to be deceived**
    - c. Finally, just because someone *can prevent* another from faithfully serving God does not prove that anyone *must be prevented* from faithfully serving God
  - 9) Finally, will the advocates of **“divorce for the kingdom”** allow **non-Christians** to divorce if they find themselves in **difficult** and **dangerous** marriages?
    - a) Since they are not Christians, how could they **“divorce for the kingdom”**?
    - b) So are **Christians** allowed to do something that **non-Christians** are not allowed to do?
      - 1. If we’re going to make the emotional argument that it’s unreasonable to require Christian to just **“stay and take it,”** will we make that same argument for **non-Christians**?
      - 2. If so, then we’re not just talking about **“divorce for the kingdom”** are we? We’re talking about **permissible divorce** for all **difficult** and **dangerous** marriages for **everyone**?
- 5. Argument #3: Paul implies that if your mate is not willing to live with you, then you can divorce him/her
  - a. Explanation:
    - 1) 1 Cor. 7:12-13: <sup>12</sup> But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is **willing to live with him**, let him **not divorce** her. <sup>13</sup> And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is **willing to live with her**, let her **not divorce him**.
    - 2) [Maurice Barnett]: “Paul says that if the unbeliever is **content to dwell** with the believer, the Christian is **not to leave**. *That implies* that if the unbeliever is **not content to dwell** with the Christian, then the Christian *can leave*.” (Bold emphasis added, “1 Cor. 7:10-11,” *Gospel Anchor*, February, 1993, 117)
    - 3) [Maurice Barnett]: “However, Paul presents another contingency statement here [1 Cor. 7:12-13, ksk]. It is ‘If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is **content to dwell** with him, let him **not leave** her.’ This **implies** that if she is **not content to dwell** with him, that **he can leave**. The **point of conflict** between them is **the faith of the believer**. The unbeliever is not willing to live with that and is, in effect, driving the believer away. Any separation is because of spiritual matters.” (Bold emphasis added, “1 Cor. 7:10-11,” *Gospel Anchor*, February, 1993, 118)
    - a) In other words, if your mate is not content to **dwell with you peaceably** because you are a **Christian**, but he/she **won’t leave**, then you can **divorce** your mate and **remain unmarried**
    - 4) [Maurice Barnett]: “However, in the Lord’s instruction, the only way besides **fornication** that one can leave his spouse is when that spouse

**stands in the way of his or her mate serving God.** We cannot forsake God to please our mates. If, in order to serve God, anyone **must separate** from the husband or wife, then it is exactly **what he should do!** That is what I Corinthians 7:11 is about, based on what the Lord said in Luke 18:29-30, and other passages.” (Bold emphasis added, “1 Cor. 7:10-11,” *Gospel Anchor*, February, 1993, 120)

5) Refutation:

- a) Paul **explicitly says** that if an unbelieving mate **is content to live** with you, **don’t divorce**
- b) This argument is nothing more than an **inference**; but it is not a **necessary inference** (i.e. the only possible conclusion)
- c) It is possible to **erroneously infer things** that are **not implied**
  1. Jn. 21:22-23: <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, **“If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.”** <sup>23</sup> Then this saying went out among the brethren that **this disciple would not die.** Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, **“If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?”**
- d) A **conditional statement** does not always imply its **converse**
  1. Chart: “What Does Paul Imply?”
  2. Response: Sometimes this is **correct**, but other times it is **not** (cf. Jn. 7:17; 8:31, 51; Rom. 10:9)
  3. Reply: Any **inferences** we draw from 1 Corinthians 7:12-13 must be in **harmony** with the **explicit teaching** of Scripture on the subject of **divorce** (cf. Mt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- e) Paul **explicitly tells** the Christian what he/she is to do if the unbeliever is **not content to dwell** with him/her
  1. 1 Cor. 7:15: <sup>15</sup> But if the unbeliever **departs, let him depart**; a brother or a sister is **not under bondage** in such cases. But God has called us to peace.
    - a. Paul says: **“let him depart”** (i.e. let him divorce you)
    - b. He doesn’t say: **“send him away”** (i.e. divorce him)
      1. *Mike Willis*: “Although a Christian **cannot initiate** [bold italics mine, ksk] the divorce, he is not required to stay married to the unbeliever against the unbeliever’s wishes. For the believer and unbeliever to live together, both must consent to living together (*suneudokeo*); one person cannot maintain a marriage if the other does not want to maintain it. The Christian is not obligated to beg and plead (as if he were a slave) with the unbeliever to maintain such a marriage.” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 191-192)

6) Can we **violate** the will of God in order to **serve** Him?

- a) Rom. 3:8: <sup>8</sup> And why not say, **“Let us do evil that good may come”?**

—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say.  
Their condemnation is just.

6. Argument #4: ***Divorce for fornication only necessarily means that one must stay in a marriage no matter what***

a. Explanation:

- 1) The “**divorce for fornication only**” view means that a Christian must stay in a **difficult** and **dangerous** marriage to the **point of death**
  - a) *Mike Willis*: “Brother Bragwell does not believe that one can divorce his mate for any reason except fornication. Should a divorce occur for any other reason, the one initiating that divorce is guilty of sin, regardless of how abhorrent that the mate's conduct might be. .... The conclusion that I draw from this is that brother Bragwell believes that a woman who **divorces** her husband who is **beating her and the kids** (even to the point of breaking bones and threatening one's life) **is guilty of sin. I disagree with this**, not on emotional grounds but on the basis of the need to properly apply Bible principles.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 22)
  - b) *Mike Willis*: “The conclusion is that the doctrine ‘fornication is the only cause for divorce’ leads one to the logical conclusion that a person is morally obligated to **stay in a marriage** even if it means that he **cannot serve God** while in that marriage and even if it means that she or the children will be **beaten to death** in that marriage.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 26)
- 2) *Mike Willis*: “Suppose the non-believer **beat his mate unmercifully** and **beat the children** until he **broke their bones**, and then begged the wife not to divorce him. **How many times must the wife and children endure such a beating before divorcing the man? Must she wait until he kills one of the children or the mate? I do not believe that is what the Bible teaches.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 26)
- 3) *Mike Willis*: “The application of the principle that one might have to leave his family relationships in order to serve the Lord can be illustrated by the following. A parent has a God-given responsibility to provide a home in which **the physical and spiritual needs** of his children are met (1 Tim. 5:8; Eph. 6:1-4). Think of some of the situations which develop in communities near us. A young six-year-old boy took a white plastic bag filled with the ‘**flour which Daddy sells**’ to first grade for show and tell. The teacher recognized that **the ‘flour’ was cocaine** and called the police. When the parents heard about it, they fled. Later the mother returned so that she could have custody of her child. The dilemma which she faced was this: If she **stayed** with the father in the house in which drugs were being used and sold, the state would **take her children** from her custody and put them in a foster home. If she **divorced** the father, she could **keep her children**. What should she do? Here is a real life circumstance in which a mother might have to **divorce her mate in order to provide what her children need spiritually.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 27)
- 4) *Mike Willis*: “[W]e err in automatically blaming the one whose **marriage has been destroyed by the sinful conduct of the spouse** when that person has **reached the end of his/her ability to tolerate sinful behavior** and files

civil papers for divorce.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 21-22)

- 5) *Mike Willis*: “When a divorce happens, sometimes the innocent person has **suffered sinful conduct committed against himself/herself**, until finally that person has **reached the end of the rope**. In his/her desperation, the person decides that living alone is a better alternative than the continued abuse which he/she is suffering. When the innocent person then acts to **remove himself/herself** from the marriage, a brother who knows full well that this person is innocent of marital misconduct will charge the suffering mate with sin for ‘breaking up the marriage.’ **What injustice and slander! The one who broke up the marriage is the one whose sinful conduct drove away the innocent mate**. The only alternative such brethren give the mate is this: **Stay in the marriage and suffer whatever you have to suffer, even if it means the physical death of oneself or of the children!** Jesus recognized that a good shepherd lays down his life to defend his sheep; how much more should a parent provide a safe haven for his children! Not only does the parent have a **right to provide a home** where he can **bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord**, he has the **obligation to do so**. In some circumstances, **his obligations to the Lord may compel him to leave his wife.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 32)

b. Refutation:

- 1) **Emotional stories** about **difficult** and even **dangerous** marital circumstances do not establish **Bible authority**
  - a) *David Watts, Jr.*: “When brethren write of innocent women victimized by an **abusive husband**, a man who brings **drugs** and **alcohol** into the family, a wife who **ruins the family's finances** through gambling, etc., and attempt to use such sad stories to sway brethren - it is just another failing attempt to **use emotions to justify what Bible authority does not permit.**” (Bold emphasis added, “Only One Cause for Divorce,” 9)
- 2) God’s word does not allow divorce for **any reason except fornication** (sexual immorality) Mt. 5:32; 19:9
  - a) Paul uses similar language to exclude **any other gospel** but the gospel of Christ (Gal. 6:8-9)
- 3) I do not believe, however, that this means that you have to stay there and passively let your mate **“beat you to a pulp.”** There are things you can do to protect yourself
  - a) You can **leave the house** temporarily (cf. Acts 9:23-25)
  - b) You can **defend yourself**
  - c) You can **call the police** (cf. Acts 22:23-29; 25:10-11)
  - d) You can **press charges** and have your mate put in jail
  - e) You can get a **“restraining order”** against your mate
  - f) You can **inform brethren** and let them practice **“church discipline”** (Mt. 18:15-17)

g) Etc.

4) Objection: What passage would allow an abused wife to **leave the house** but **not obtain a divorce**?

a) *Mike Willis*: “If you say she has the right to **leave** but **not to obtain a divorce**, what Scripture will you use to make that distinction? There is **no Bible verse** that says one may obtain a **separation** but not a **divorce**! Every argument that one might make against her obtaining a divorce can also be made against a separation.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 26)

b) *Mike Willis*: “Where do we find this distinction between **legal separation** and **civil divorce** in the word of God? What Scripture allows her to appeal to the **police department** for personal protection yet prohibits her from appealing to the **court system** for legal protection? Can she only appeal to **Caesar's police**, but not appeal to **Caesar's court** (Acts 25:11; Rom. 13:3-4)?” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Causes of Divorce and the Role of Government in Divorce*, 31)

c) Response: There is no passage that **prohibits** a wife from **leaving** the house for **protection**, and there are passages that indicate that one may **flee** from **persecution** or **danger** (cf. Mt. 2:13; 10:23; 24:16; Mk. 13:14; 21:21; Acts 9:25). However, there are passages that clearly teach that **divorce is sinful** (Mt. 19:6; Mk. 10:9; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11, 12, 13)

5) Where is the passage that **authorize divorce** in cases of abuse?

a) Mt. 5:32: <sup>32</sup> But I say to you that whoever **divorces** his wife for **any reason** except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

b) Can we **violate** the will of God to **protect** ourselves? Rom. 3:8

c) Could an abused wife **murder her husband** while he is asleep to protect herself from future inevitable abuse?

7. The concept that one may “**divorce for the kingdom’s sake**” is **patently false**

a. The word of God **condemns divorce** unless it is for the cause of **fornication**

8. “Divorce for the kingdom’s sake” **opens a Pandora’s box** that no one can close

a. Proponents of this theory tell us that they are not advocating **divorce for trivial reasons**

b. But:

1) Just what would constitute **non-trivial reasons**?

a) Profane and vulgar language

b) Pornography

c) Emotional abuse

d) Lying

- 2) **Who is to decide?**
  - 3) What if something seems **trivial to me** but **non-trivial to someone else**?
  - 4) Who could **take issue** with the decision? On what grounds?
9. “Divorce for the kingdom’s sake” rightly teaches that **God must come first** before all other relationships, but it ignores the fact that we must **obey what God says** about all our relationships to **truly put God first**
- a. When Jesus says: “Therefore what God has **joined together**, let not man **separate**” (Mt. 19:6), I **cannot put God first** if I **don’t obey** this command
10. God’s **strict law** on marriage, divorce, and remarriage can be **difficult to obey** sometimes, but is it any more difficult than:
- a. What God required of **Abraham**? (Gen. 22:1-2)
  - b. What God required of **Jeremiah**? (Jer. 16:2)
  - c. What God required of **Ezekiel** (Ezek. 24:15-18)
  - d. What God required of **Hosea**? (Hos. 1:2-3; 3:1-3)
  - e. What Jesus required of the **rich young ruler**? (Mt. 19:21)
  - f. Etc.

#### D. “Mental Divorce” Is Permissible

1. If Jack and Jill are **married** and Jack **divorces** Jill for some reason other than fornication, and then sometime later Jack **marries** Jane, does that give Jill the scriptural right to **biblically “put away”** Jack for fornication and marry Jim?
  - a. Many sincere Bible students would say “**Yes!**”
  - b. It’s argued that if **the “divorced” person** didn’t **want the “divorce,”** did everything that could be done to **keep the first marriage together** but to no avail, and then later after the civil “divorce,” **the first mate “marries” someone else**, the innocent “divorced” person may then [biblically] **“put away” the first mate for fornication and remarry.** (Weldon Warnock, “May The Guilty Party Remarry?,” *Searching The Scriptures*, Nov. 1985, 26:536)
2. This interpretation of Biblical teaching has been called by some **“the mental divorce position.”** It would perhaps be more accurately described as **“the post-civil-divorce biblical putting away position”**
  - a. I know that the advocates of this view **object** to this terminology and that they believe that **more is involved** in biblical “putting away” than a **mere thought**
  - b. I’m using the term “mental divorce” **accommodatively** as a short-hand term, because it’s rather unwieldy, to refer to **“the post-civil-divorce biblical putting away position”**
  - c. If someone can suggest a **more concise term** that properly describes this view, I will be happy to adopt it
3. Argument #1: *A “civil divorce,” for any reason other than fornication, is not really a biblical “putting away”*

- a. When this question was first being discussed and debated among brethren (the 1980's), the argument that was being made at that time to defend Jill's right to remarry was that **Jill was not really a "put-away-person."** It was argued that an **unscriptural civil divorce** had absolutely **no meaning or significance** in the eyes of God. In other words, it did not constitute a **"putting away"**
- 1) *Ken Cheatham*: "Suppose a woman innocent of any wrong doing is divorced by her ruthless husband. We know that **God does not recognize such a divorce.** Even though a 'civil divorce' has been obtained it is unscriptural and **does not dissolve the marriage in God's sight.** Then suppose that the husband marries another, and thus commits adultery (Matt. 19:9). What action may be taken by the innocent wife?...Jesus in Matthew 19:9 gives every married person the right to put away their adulterous mate. When an innocent woman is divorced, **this divorce is, in the sight of God 'no divorce.'** **He does not recognize it! The innocent woman is still married in God's sight and the husband who 'divorced' her is still married to her in God's sight. Their marriage has not been dissolved and as far as God is concerned she is not 'put away' (apoluo).** When her husband remarried he committed adultery. I contend that **the innocent may then 'put away' her husband.** Reason? That is exactly what Christ said she could do!" (Emphasis added, "Barnett--Cheatham Discussion on Divorce and Remarriage," *The Gospel Anchor*, June 1979, 5:301)
  - 2) *Weldon Warnock*: "But someone asks: 'What about a woman who is put away (divorced) by a man simply because the man no longer wanted to be married? Fornication is not involved and the woman repeatedly tried to prevent the divorce, but to no avail. After a couple of years the man marries another woman. Is the 'put away' woman then free to marry? She certainly is, if she puts away her husband for fornication. She would have to do this **before God in purpose of heart** since the divorce has already taken place, legally speaking. She could not go through the process of having a legal document charging her husband with 'adultery,' but God would know . . ." ("May The Guilty Party Remarry?," *Searching The Scriptures*, Nov. 1985, 26:536)
  - 3) The argument:
    - a) If Jack "divorces" Jill unscripturally, they are **not actually divorced in the eyes of God** (only *apparently* divorced in the eyes of man)
    - b) Thus, if Jack "marries" Jane, he is **not actually married in the eyes of God** (only *apparently* married in the eyes of man)
    - c) Therefore, Jill may then **scripturally and actually "put away" Jack in the eyes of God for fornication** (even though they are already *apparently* divorced in the eyes of man), and may **scripturally and actually marry Jim in the eyes of God.**
  - b. I will be the first to admit that this concept **seems reasonable and logical**, at least on the surface. In fact, the **fundamental presupposition** behind it is one that I at one time believed, though I did not take it to its **logical conclusion.** But I now believe that **this concept is false for a number of reasons**
  - c. Jesus stated **the general rule** regarding divorce and remarriage with these words: "Whoever **divorces** his wife and **marries** another commits **adultery**; and whoever **marries** her who is **divorced** from *her* husband commits **adultery**" (Lk. 16:18)



- d. There is **only one exception** to this general rule: if the “putting away” is for the cause of fornication, remarriage is not adultery (Mt. 19:9)
- 1) It must be noted, however, that the NT consistently makes a **distinction** between **the one who does the “putting away”** and **the one who is “put away,”** and **this exception is only given to the one who does the “putting away”** (whatever that entails); it is never given to the one who is “put away”
    - a) Chart: “Remarriage Is Adultery”
  - 2) Every passage in the NT that mentions **the remarriage of a “divorced” person** to someone other than that person’s first mate, while the first mate is still living, describes that relationship as **adultery** (Mt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Lk. 16:18b; Rom. 7:3a)
    - a) Chart: “Remarriage Of A Divorced Person”
    - b) And the Scriptures mention **no mitigating circumstances** that would change this
      1. There is no indication that it **makes a difference** whether:
        - a. The divorced person **consented to the divorce** or not
        - b. The divorced person **still considered himself/herself married** or not
        - c. The divorced person was **innocent** or not
        - d. The divorced person’s mate **remained single or remarried**
        - e. Etc.
- e. Logically, the only way that the remarriage of an innocent “divorced” person can possibly be justified is to argue that **the innocent “divorced” person is not really a (biblically) “put away” person at all**
- 1) Chart: “Fundamental Argument”
  - 2) Chart: “Fundamental Argument (Applied To Scenario)”
  - 3) That was the **fundamental argument** that was made several years ago
- f. That **fundamental argument** is based upon a faulty fundamental presupposition
- 1) The **fundamental presupposition** behind the **fundamental argument** is that one **CANNOT** really divorce and remarry except for fornication
    - a) *Ken Cheatham*: “As far as God is concerned **one is ‘not divorced’ except it be for fornication.**” (Emphasis added, “Barnett--Cheatham Discussion on Divorce and Remarriage,” *The Gospel Anchor*, June 1979, 5:299)
    - b) *Marshall Patton*: “Remember, to deny this divine right to such a person on the grounds of her being a put away person overlooks the fact that **such putting away is futile** and dethrones divine authority and enthrones human authority.” (Emphasis added, “Patton--Phillips Debate,” *Searching The Scriptures*, March 1987, 28:342-343)

- c) *Ron Halbrook*: “And so, in conclusion from this, we learn that **an unscriptural divorce releases neither party from marriage. When you have an unscriptural divorce, as men count it, it’s not so with God. That bond is still in tact.** And that little piece of paper is nothing in the sight of God. Just as well use it as Kleenex and blow your nose and drop it in the toilet. It doesn’t mean a thing to God. God’s law rules over the laws of men.” (Sermon preached in Wilkesville, OH, June 14, 1990)
- 2) We can restate the **fundamental presupposition** in several different ways
- If it’s not **lawful**, it’s not **legitimate** (genuine)
  - If it’s not **approved**, it’s not **actual**
  - If it’s not **permissible**, it’s not **possible**
  - If it’s not **right**, it’s not **real**
- 3) Now I firmly believe that if this **fundamental presupposition is correct**, then the **fundamental argument logically follows** and the “mental divorce” position should be accepted
- 4) But the question is: “**Does the Bible really support this fundamental presupposition?**” **No**, it does not!
- The passages in the NT that condemn **divorce and remarriage**, without mentioning anything about an exception (Mk. 10:10-12; Lk. 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10-11), clearly imply that **divorce actually occurs** even when **God does not approve of it**
    - When **the exception is not mentioned**, how could those who heard Jesus’ statements possibly have known that He was **speaking accommodatively** (i.e. of “divorces in the eyes of men but not in the eyes of God”)?
  - But there is **one statement** in the NT that clearly highlights the fallacy of this presupposition, perhaps better than any other (Mt. 19:6; Mk. 10:9)
    - When Jesus made this statement, did He mean that man **cannot** put asunder or that man **should not** put asunder what God has joined together?
      - Isn’t it obvious that when Jesus made this statement, He meant that man **should not** put asunder what God has joined together rather than that man **could not** put asunder what God has joined together?
    - Why **would** Jesus have said that man **should not** put asunder what God has joined together if he **could not** do it in the first place?
    - The very fact that Jesus commands us not to do this implies that we have the **power** but not the **permission** to do it
    - I am convinced that this statement alone **proves beyond a reasonable doubt** that the **fundamental presupposition** behind this position **cannot possibly be correct**

- 
- a. Chart: “Not Right But Still Real”
  - b. Chart: “What Jesus Should Have Said”
  - c. Chart: “Let Not....”
- c) The Bible speaks of marriage and divorce as being either **right** or **wrong, approved** or **unapproved, lawful** or **unlawful, permissible** or **prohibited**, but it never speaks of marriage and divorce as being either **real** or **unreal, actual** or **apparent, “in the eyes of God”** or **“in the eyes of man”** as do the proponents of this position
1. Even when a marriage is disapproved by God, it is still a **marriage**
    - a. The Holy Spirit tells us that Herod **“married”** Herodias, even though it was **unlawful** (Mt. 14:3-4; Mk. 6:17-18; Lk. 3:19)
      1. Whether it was an unlawful relationship because of **adultery** as some contend or because of **incest** as others contend or **both**, the Holy Spirit still referred to this relationship as **“marriage”**
      2. It was not **right**, but it was still **real**
      3. There is no evidence in the context that Jesus was **speaking accomodatively**
      4. Furthermore, the fact that Herodias is called **“Philip’s wife”** does not mean that she was still really married to him and not really married to Herod
        - a) The term **“husband”** (*aner*) is simply the Greek word for **man,**” and the term **“wife”** (*gune*) is simply the Greek word for **“woman.”** The precise meaning of these terms must be determined by **the context**
        - b) The terms **“husband”** and **“wife”** are not always used in Scripture to refer to **one’s current marriage partner**
          - 1> Chart: “Wife”
  2. Even when a divorce is disapproved by God, it is still a **divorce**
    - a. *Jeff Belknap*: “Such putting away – sinful behavior which ‘causeth’ another ‘to commit adultery’ – is certainly not ‘approved’ by God; however Jehovah does **acknowledge** this sin whenever it transpires (cf. Jer. 3:20a; Mal. 2:14-16; Mt. 5:32; 19:6, 9; Rom. 7:2-3; I Cor. 7:11, 15), as well as imposes the consequences for such disobedience.” (The Misrepresentation of “Biblical Putting Away”)
    - b. The apostle Paul says that when a wife **“departs”** from her husband, no matter what the reason, she is **“unmarried”** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)

1. “Depart” (*chorizo*):

- a} *Thayer*: “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)
- b} The word was often used in **marriage contracts** in the Greek papyri (BDAG, 1095)
- c} This is **the same word** that Jesus used when He said that man is not to “**put asunder**” what God has joined together (Mt. 19:6; Mk. 10:9). Therefore, Paul teaches that divorce is **possible** even though it is not **permissible**
- d} The word “**depart**” (*chorizo*) is used as a synonym of the word “**divorce**” (*aphiemi*) (1 Cor. 7:11)

2. “Unmarried” (*agamos*):

- a} *BDAG*: “**an unmarried man/woman**: of both 1 Cor 7:8...Of men vs. 32...of women...1 Cor 7:34...of divorced women 1 Cor 7:11....” (5)
- b} This word is used four times in the same context (1 Cor. 7:8, 11, 32, 34), and yet some would have us believe that it does not really mean unmarried in verse 11

3. A **marriage** is a **marriage** is a **marriage** is a **marriage**! It may be **right** or **wrong**, but it is still a marriage. And the same thing is true of **divorce**. Something may be **wrong** and yet still be **recognized**, by both God and man, as **real**

4. Jesus consistently used the same terms “**put away**” (*apoluo*) and “**marrieth**” (*gameo*) whether the activity was lawful or unlawful

- a. But the proponents of this position, perhaps unconsciously, have Jesus **using the same terms in different senses in the same passage**, depending upon whether or not the exception clause is applied

1. Chart: “Did Jesus Mean What He Said?”

2. When the exception clause is not applied, they tell us that Jesus is speaking **accomodatively**

3. But when the exception clause is applied, they tell us that Jesus is speaking **actually**

b. Did our Lord **equivocate** in His use of these terms?

- 1. These interpreters have Jesus speaking out of both sides of His mouth at the same time -- **accomodatively** in one

instance and **actually** in another. This is not **sound exegesis**

2. Can we not see that whatever the terms “**put away**” (*apoluo*) and “**marrieth**” (*gameo*) mean when fornication is involved, they mean when fornication is not involved? If not why not???

a) *Louis Berkhof*: One of the rules of literary interpretation states that “a word can have but one fixed meaning in the connection in which it occurs.”

(Principles Of Biblical Interpretation, 75, quoted in Gene Frost, “Accommodative Divorce,” Gospel Anchor, Jan. 1987, 13:131)

b) One might as well argue that **the fornication** mentioned in Matthew 19:9 is **not real** because it is without God’s approval as to argue that **unscriptural divorce and remarriage are not real** because they are without God’s approval. But who is willing to make that argument?

c) Did the Pharisees and the disciples know that at times Jesus **did not really mean what He said** and at other times He did?

5. *Maurice Lusk*: “It is the contention of this writer that it is a flagrant violation of language and reasoning to argue that **a person is divorced and yet married to the person from whom he/she is divorced. A person may be divorced unscripturally, but he/she is yet divorced; and a person divorced from another person is not married to that person.** This business of insisting that one may be divorced ‘in the eyes of men’ and not divorced ‘in the eyes of God’ is nonsense. God may not approve of a given action (divorce or whatever), but that does not mean that the action does not occur because God does not approve of it. **A divorce without scriptural grounds is yet a divorce and renders the person divorced ‘unmarried.’** The argument being advanced here is that: ‘**All actions not approved of by God become non-actions or actions which do not occur.**’ If this is the case, then is it legitimate in any sense to speak of an action as having occurred when in actuality it did not occur? It is far better to take the language of a given text as meaning what it says (i.e. **married means married, divorced means divorced**), than to play this game of semantical gymnastics wherein words do not mean what they mean.” (Emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage In The Teachings Of Jesus And Paul*, 44-45)

5) The idea that **an innocent “divorced” person is not really “put away” is just not true**

a) When one is divorced for any reason (scriptural or unscriptural), one becomes a “**put away**” person, and Jesus says “**he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery**” (Lk. 16:18b; cf. Mt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Rom. 7:3a)

- b) *Jeff Belknap*: “To argue that the civil court doesn’t have the ‘right’ to put away is moot, because *neither* does the disobedient spouse, yet Jesus acknowledged that men will do so anyway (cf. Mt. 19:6). The **man** in Matthew 19:9 who unlawfully puts away his wife has violated the Lord’s prohibition by using whatever authorities and/or procedures are applicable and necessary to accomplish **his** transgression (I Jn. 3:4).” (*The Misrepresentation Of "Biblical Putting Away"*)
- 6) Objection: “Jesus’ statement ‘Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery **against her** [i.e. the first wife]...’ (Mk. 10:11-12) proves that an innocent ‘put away’ person is not really ‘put away’”
- a) This interpretation contradicts the way that the Bible consistently uses the term “**put away**” (*apolo*), as we have already demonstrated
- 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. *Alexander Balmain Bruce*: “The *ep auten* 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.” (Marcus Dods, “The Synoptic Gospels,” *The Expositors’s Greek Testament*, 409)
  2. 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” #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**
- g. Divorce is more than a **mental act**
- 1) **Joseph** was minded to put Mary away, but he had not done so just by thinking about it Mt. 1:19
  - 2) If divorce can be **mental**:
    - a) What about **“mental marriage”**?
    - b) What about **“mental adultery”** (Mt. 5:27-28)
    - c) Could one be **“mentally divorced”** and **not know it**?
4. Argument #2: *As long as the bond of marriage exists (Rom. 7:2-3; Mk. 10:11), the innocent party always has the right to “put away” (i.e. repudiate) the guilty fornicating mate*
- a. Quotations:
    - 1) *Kenneth Chumbley*: “The only reason why this remarriage can be regarded as adulterous is that **the first marriage is still in God’s sight regarded as inviolate. Illegitimate divorce does not dissolve the marriage bond** and consequently the fact of such divorce does not relieve the parties concerned from any of the obligations incident to marriage. They are still in reality bound to one another in the bonds of matrimony and a marital relation or any exercise of the privileges and rights of the marital relation with any other is adultery’ (Murray, 25). God, not a civil court or the couple involved, has the final say about marriage and divorce. **A marriage is not over until He says it’s over....**” (Emphasis added, *The Gospel Of Matthew*, 105)
    - 2) *Ron Halbrook*: “The passage [Mt. 19:9] explains which divorces and remarriages God will accept as valid under the terms of his law and which He will not accept. If a person sinfully and wrongfully rejects or puts away

his mate, **his action is a farce** so far as changing the obligations he has to that mate under God's law. In terms of God's law, **the man is still bound to his mate so long as he lives**. If he has unlawful sexual relations with another (whether before or after he wrongfully puts away his true mate), his true mate has scriptural grounds to reject or put him away. ...if he commits adultery (before or after his action in the courts of man), there is something else to be said by divine law..." (Emphasis added, Ron Halbrook, "Notes and Thoughts For Further Study," 1986)

- 3) *Ron Halbrook*: "Next, a man may have enough regard for social convention that he will not go to bed with the 'cute little thing' he wants rather than his wife; therefore, he may divorce his wife, then marry the 'cute little thing,' thus going to the bed of adultery. Once again, **the original marriage bond stays intact under divine law** until he commits adultery against his wife; **his legal steps do not dissolve the bond put in place when God joined them together** (Matt. 19:9). Since his true wife remains faithful to the marriage bond, she & she alone has the right to repudiate the marriage under divine law. She may scripturally do so even when she is not able to do so legally because of legal steps taken by the treacherous husband." (Ron Halbrook, E-mail Letter, Feb. 1998)
- b. As we analyze this argument, the first thing that needs to be recognized by all is that this argument is an **inference**
- 1) There is not a **single, solitary passage** in all the Bible that **explicitly states** that as long as the bond of marriage exists, the innocent party always has the right to "put away" (i.e. repudiate) the guilty fornicating mate
  - 2) This means that if this argument is valid, it is because it is **definitely implied** in a passage or a combination of passages (properly harmonized with one another), not because it is anywhere **explicitly stated** in Scripture
- c. Now, there can be no doubt that the Bible teaches us by **implication**
- 1) **Jesus taught by implication** to
    - a) Reassure **John the Baptist** that He was the Messiah (Mt. 11:3-5)
    - b) Teach the **Sadducees** about the resurrection of the dead (Mt. 22:31-33; Lk. 20:37-40)
    - c) Teach the **Pharisees** about the humanity and deity of the Messiah (Mt. 22:41-46)
    - d) Teach the **Pharisees** about divorce (Mt. 19:3-6)
  - 2) **Jesus taught on MDR by implication**:
    - a) **The Pharisees asked a question**: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?" (Mt. 19:3)
    - b) **Jesus quoted two OT passages**: "Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning '*made them male and female,*' [Gen. 1:27] and said, '*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh*' [Gen. 2:24]?" (Mt. 19:4-5)



- c) **Jesus inferred a conclusion:** “So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mt. 19:6)
- d. So **the Bible clearly teaches by implication.** It even teaches on the subject of marriage and divorce by implication
- 1) This necessarily means that:
    - a) Whatever God has **definitely implied** on any subject, including the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, we must necessarily infer (cf. Mt. 15:10-11, 15-18; 16:5-12)
    - b) Whatever God has **definitely implied**, we can necessarily infer (cf. Eph. 3:3-6)
- e. But we must never forget that it is certainly possible for men to **infer** things that the Scriptures do not **imply** cf. Jn. 21:20-23
- 1) Chart: “Implications W/O Implications”
  - 2) There is no passage in all the Bible that explicitly teaches that there is **only one person in the Godhead**
    - a) However, Oneness Pentecostals read the passages that talk about **one God** (cf. Dt. 6:4; Isa. 44:6; 1 Cor. 8:4; Jas. 2:19; et al.), and they infer that there is only **one person** in the Godhead
    - b) To do that, however, they ignore or explain away all the passages that clearly and explicitly indicate that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are **three, distinct, divine, persons**
    - c) The Oneness Pentecostals **infer** that which is **not implied** in the Scriptures
      1. Theirs is certainly a **possible inference** (they’ve made it), but it is not even a 4<sup>th</sup> cousin to a **necessary inference**, and in light of all that the Bible says about the nature of the Godhead, it is not even a **reasonable inference**
      2. In fact, their conclusion is so unreasonable, it must be rejected as false by those who will accept all that the Bible teaches about the nature of God.
  - 3) There is no passage in all the Bible that explicitly mentions **infant baptism**
    - a) However, Paedobaptists read about the **household baptisms** in the NT (cf. Acts 10:44-48; 16:15, 31-34; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16), and they infer **infant baptism**; but they infer that which is not implied in the Scriptures
      1. They make **unwarranted assumptions** about the households that were baptized
        - a. All of the households were made up of **married people**
        - b. These married people had **children** (cf. Acts 10:7)

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- c. At least some of these children were **infants**
  - d. These infants were **present** (cf. Acts 16:14)
  - e. These infants **needed baptism** (cf. Mt. 18:3; 19:14)
  - f. When the **household was baptized**, that automatically included **every member of the household** (cf. 1 Sam. 1:21-22)]
2. They also ignore the fact that **infants cannot do** what these baptized households did
    - a. The household of **Cornelius** feared God (Acts 10:2), heard the word (Acts 10:44; 11:13-14), received the word (Acts 11:1), spoke in tongues (Acts 10:44-46), received the command to be baptized (Acts 10:48)
    - b. The household of **Lydia** heard the word (Acts 16:14) and they were encouraged by Paul and Silas (Acts 16:40)
    - c. The household of **Crispus** believed on the Lord (Acts 18:8)
    - d. The household of the **Philippian jailer** heard the word of the Lord (Acts 18:32), believed the word (Acts 18:31, 34) and rejoiced (Acts 18:34)
    - e. The household of **Stephanas** ministered unto the saints (1 Cor. 1:16; 16:15-16)]
  3. Again, theirs is certainly a **possible inference** (they've made it), but it is not even a 42<sup>nd</sup> cousin to a **necessary inference**, and in light of all that the Bible says about the households that were baptized, it is not even a **reasonable inference**
  4. In fact, their conclusion is so **unreasonable**, it must be rejected as false by those who will accept all that the Bible teaches about baptism.
- 4) There is no passage that explicitly teaches the doctrine of **“once saved always saved.”**
    - a) However, Calvinists read the passages that talk about the **security of the believer** (cf. Jn. 5:24; 6:37; 10:27-29; et al.), and they infer the **impossibility of apostasy**; but they infer that which is not implied in the Scriptures
      1. They ignore or explain away the abundant evidence that it really is possible for a **true Christian to fall from grace** (Gal. 5:4) and **lose his salvation** (Heb. 2:1-4; 6:4-2 Pet. 2:20-22; et al.)
      2. In light of all that the Bible teaches on this subject, the Calvinists' conclusion about **eternal security** must be rejected as false by those who will accept all that the Bible teaches on the subject
  - f. Now I've gone to great lengths to illustrate with these three examples that it is possible for people to **infer** that which the Scriptures **do not imply**, because I

believe with all my heart that **many sincere brethren are doing precisely that** when it comes to the scenario described above

- 1) There is no passage in all the Bible that explicitly teaches that as long as the **bond of marriage** exists, the innocent party always has the right to “**put away**” (i.e. repudiate) a guilty fornicating mate
  - a) However, those who argue for what has been accommodatively called “**mental divorce,**” or more precisely described as a “**post-civil-divorce-biblical-putting away,**” read passages that talk about the continued existence of the “**marriage bond**” after a civil divorce (Rom. 7:2-4; Mk. 10:11), and they infer that the innocent party always has the right to “put away” (i.e. repudiate) a guilty fornicating mate
    1. To do that, however, they must ignore or explain away the clear and explicit teaching of Jesus that “**whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery**” (Lk. 16:18b; cf. Mt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Rom. 7:3a)
      - a. They are guilty of the same kind of **fallacious reasoning** as the Oneness Pentecostals, the Paedobaptists, and the Calvinists, because they ignore other pertinent information on the subject. Thus, **they infer what the Scriptures do not imply**
      - b) If an innocent party can **actually be “put away”** for some reason other than fornication (and PCDBPA advocates are now admitting this possibility), one cannot **logically argue** that an innocent party always has the right to “**put away**” (i.e. repudiate) a guilty fornicating mate and marry another, because that ignores the fact that Jesus says “**whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery**” (Lk. 16:18)
  - g. **Explicit teaching** must take precedence over **implicit teaching**
    - 1) In fact, the **definite implications** in Scripture can only come from **explicit statements**
    - 2) And **necessary inferences** can only come from **definite implications**
    - 3) Whatever **inferences** we might draw from the Scriptures can only come from **ALL** of the **explicit teaching** of the Bible that bears upon the subject at hand (properly harmonized together)
  - h. Does the **explicit teaching** of the NT about MDR make **definite implications** that lead to the **necessary inference** that as long as the bond of marriage exists, the innocent party always has the right to “put away” (i.e. repudiate) the guilty fornicating mate?
  - i. Let’s consider the passages one by one that bear on the subject of MDR
    - 1) **Lk. 16:18**
      - a) “Whoever [Jack] divorces his wife [Jill] and marries another [Jane] **commits adultery**; and whoever [Jim] marries her who is divorced [Jill] from *her* husband [Jack] **commits adultery.**”

- b) Does this verse give **anyone** the right to “put away” **anybody** for **any reason at any time**?
- c) According to this verse, if Jack divorces Jill? both he and Jill **commit adultery** when they remarry anyone else. It’s just that simple!
- d) If there are **any exceptions** to this, we will have to learn about them from **some other passage**, because this passage mentions no exceptions

## 2) Mk. 10:11-12

- a) “<sup>11</sup>So He said to them, “Whoever [Jack] divorces his wife [Jill] and marries another [Jane] **commits adultery against her** [Jill]. <sup>12</sup>And if a woman [Jill] divorces her husband [Jack] and marries another [Jim], she **commits adultery**.”
- b) There’s no help for Jill in the first part of this verse, because it says absolutely nothing about **Jill and her rights after she has been divorced** by Jack
- c) There is certainly no help for Jill in the last part of this verse, because it says that **if she divorces Jack and marries Jim, she commits adultery**
- d) Does this verse give **anyone** the right to “put away” **anybody** for **any reason at any time**?

## 3) Rom. 7:2-3

- a) “<sup>2</sup>For the woman [Jill] who has a husband is **bound by the law** to *her* husband [Jack] as long as he lives. But if the husband [Jack] dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. <sup>3</sup>So then if, while *her* husband [Jack] lives, she [Jill] marries another man [Jim], she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband [Jack] dies, she [Jill] is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man [Jim]” (Rom. 7:1-3).
- b) Now then, let me simplify this even more
  1. “**Jill is BOUND BY THE LAW to Jack** as long as **Jack** lives. But if **Jack** dies, **Jill** is released from the law of **Jack**. So then if, while **Jack** lives, **Jill** marries **Jim**, **Jill** will be called **AN ADULTERESS**; but if **Jack** dies, **Jill** is free from that law, so that **Jill** is no adulteress, though **Jill** has married **Jim**.”
- c) What does this passage teach us about **the Jack & Jill scenario** described above?
  1. First, it teaches that Jill is **bound by the law** to Jack
    - a. This is not a literal or physical binding but rather a **spiritual and legal binding**
    - b. The law under consideration here is not the **Mosaic law** of the Jews or the **civil law** of the Gentiles, because both of

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these laws allowed a woman to remarry while her first husband was still living (cf. Dt. 24:1-4)

- c. This law is **God's law on marriage** established in the very beginning that says: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24)
2. Second, it teaches that Jill is bound by the law to Jack **as long as Jack lives**
    - a. Paul does not say that Jill is bound to Jack as long as:
      1. They continue to **love each other**
      2. There are **no irreconcilable differences**
      3. They remain **married to each other**
      4. Jill doesn't **marry somebody else**
      5. Jack doesn't **marry somebody else**
    - b. Paul says that Jill is bound to Jack for as **long as he lives**
    - c. If there are **any exceptions** to this, we will have to learn about them from **some other passage**, because this passage mentions no exceptions
  3. Third, it teaches that if Jill marries Jim while Jack is still alive, she will be **called an adulteress**
    - a. She will be called an adulterer, not because she is **still really married** to Jack, but because she is still **"bound by the law"** to Jack and she **marries Jim**
    - b. This clearly demonstrates that it is possible for someone to be **"bound by the law"** to one person and **"married"** to another
      1. Thus, **the "bond"** is one thing and **"marriage"** is something else
      2. The "bond" refers to the **legal responsibility** that God imposes upon those who marry with His approval
      3. "Marriage" is the **human relationship** that exists between a husband and his wife
  4. Fourth, it teaches that if Jack dies, Jill is **no adulteress**, although she has married Jim
- d) But what does this passage say about **Jack and his rights after Jill has married Jim? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!!!**
    1. It tells us that Jill is an **adulteress**
    2. It tells us that Jill is still **bound by law** to Jack, but it doesn't say anything about Jack

- a. **Is Jack still bound by law to Jill?** The passage doesn't say
  - b. **Does Jack now have the right to "put away" Jill for fornication?** The passage doesn't say
  - c. The passage **doesn't say anything about Jack and his rights**
- e) So there is no **explicit statement** in Rom. 7:2-3 that gives Jack the right to "put away" Jill for fornication, following her marriage to Jim
- 1. In fact, there is no **explicit statement** in Rom. 7:2-3 giving **anyone** the right to "put away" **anybody** for **any reason at any time!**
  - 2. If that right exists, it will have to be found in **some other passage**; it's not in this one
- f) Well, is there a **definite implication** in Rom. 7:2-3 that gives Jack the right to "put away" Jill for fornication, following her marriage to Jim?
- 1. How can there be when this passage says absolutely nothing about **Jack and his rights**, and it says absolutely nothing about **anyone** having the right to "put away" **anybody** for **any reason at any time?**
  - 2. There's got to be **information** before there can be an **implication**, and there's got to be a **definite implication** before there can be a **necessary inference**
  - 3. There is **no information** about Jack and his rights in Rom. 7:2-3, much less **an implication**

#### 4) Mt. 5:31-32

- a) <sup>31</sup>"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever [Jack] divorces his wife [Jill], let him [Jack] give her [Jill] a certificate of divorce.' <sup>32</sup>But I say to you that whoever [Jack] divorces his wife [Jill] for any reason except sexual immorality causes her [Jill] to commit adultery; and whoever [Jim] marries a woman who is divorced [Jill] commits adultery.
- b) Does this verse give **anyone** the right to "put away" **anybody** for **any reason at any time?**

#### 5) Mt. 19:9:

- a) "And I say to you, whoever [Jack] divorces his wife [Jill], except for sexual immorality, and marries another [Jane], commits adultery; and whoever [Jim] marries her who is divorced [Jill] commits adultery."
- b) None of the other passages in the NT give **anyone** the right to "put away" **anybody** for **any reason at any time** (cf. Mt. 5:31-32; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3)
- c) This passage gives **one person** the right to "put away" his mate for **one reason**

1. That **one person** is the one who **divorces his mate** (not the one who is divorced)
  2. That **one reason** is **fornication** (not any other reason)
- d) In the scenario described at the beginning of this lesson, **Jack** is the one person who divorced his mate (**Jill**), and he divorced her for **some reason other than fornication**. Therefore, according to Jesus, **both Jack and Jill will commit adultery** if they remarry someone else
  - e) Unfortunately, too many people read Mt. 19:9 as if it said: **“If fornication has occurred, the innocent party may remarry following a divorce without committing adultery”**; but that’s not what it says
  - f) It says: “...whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”
  - g) It contemplates an **“innocent mate” putting away a “guilty mate,”** because that mate has committed **fornication**.
  - h) If the PCDBPA position were correct, Jesus should have said: “... whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery **unless her first husband has already married another.**”
- j. Those who make this argument do so on the basis of **an inference**
- 1) It is certainly a **possible inference** (they’ve made it), but it is not even a 42<sup>nd</sup> cousin to a **necessary inference**, and in light of the **explicit statement** of Jesus that “whoever marries her who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery” (Lk. 16:18), it is not even a **reasonable inference**
  - 2) In fact, their conclusion is so **unreasonable**, it must **be rejected as false** by those who will accept all that the Bible teaches on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage
  - 3) The **explicit statements** of scripture must take precedence over any **inferences** that we might draw, and our inferences must harmonize with all the explicit statements of scripture
    - a) Otherwise we put the proverbial **“cart before the horse”**
- k. It is certainly true that following an unscriptural civil divorce, **the ‘bond’ still exists** (Rom. 7:2); but nowhere does the NT say or imply that because the bond still exists an **innocent divorced mate** may then **Biblically “put away”** her unfaithful spouse
- 1) *Jeff Belknap*: “Where is the **book, chapter and verse?** The entire construction of this doctrinal theory is nothing but a **house of cards built on the sand** (Mt. 7:26).” (Bold emphasis added, “Jesus’ Emphasis In Matthew 19:9”)
  - 2) What the NT teaches is that as long as a **“marriage” remains intact**, an “innocent party” may **biblically “put away”** the “guilty party”

1. The issues are these:

1) Does a man have the **ability** to divorce or “put away” his wife for some reason other than fornication?

a) Jesus clearly implies that man has the **power** (although he does not have God’s **permission**) to “separate”/“put asunder” what God has joined together Mt. 19:6

1. He has **the ability** to dissolve a marriage relationship, with or without, **God’s approval**

2) If a man divorces his wife for some reason other than fornication, is she **really divorced**?

a) **Jesus** says she is Lk. 16:18

b) **Paul** says she is 1 Cor. 7:10-11

3) If a man divorces his wife for some reason other than fornication, what are **the consequences**?

a) Jesus clearly teaches that any subsequent remarriage for either party is **adultery** Lk. 16:18

b) This is true despite the fact that the “**bond**” still exists. In fact, this is precisely why a **subsequent remarriage** to someone else is **adultery**

1. God releases someone from the bond when:

a. His **mate dies** (Rom. 7:1-3)

b. An innocent mate **divorces** a guilty mate **for fornication** (Mt. 19:9)

2. If a divorce is obtained for some reason other than fornication, both partners remain “**bond**” by God’s law to one another “**till death do us part**”

m. For this argument to be valid, there must be a passage (or passages) that contain **all the constituent elements** of the argument, but there is no such passage

1) Illust.: Institutional brethren try to justify church benevolence to non-Christians by appealing to various NT passages, none of which contain all the necessary constituent elements

a) Chart: “Church Benevolence: Non-Christians:

2) “Mental Divorce advocates” make the same mistake

a) Chart: “What We Have?”

b) They **incorporate the “bond”** into passages that do not mention it

5. Argument #3: “**Jesus did not prescribe any specific civil or legal procedure.**” *Apoluo* (i.e. ‘divorce’ or ‘putting away’) **does not necessarily involve any civil procedure**”



- a. *Tim Haile*: “An objective evaluation of the various biblical texts where *apoluo* is used will convince any honest reader that the use of this word does not necessarily involve or require **any particular action or procedure, whether civil or cultural**. They simply aren’t inherent in the word itself. We shall see that the only thing inherent in the meaning of the word *apoluo* is **the right of a person to do a particular thing, or act in a particular way.**” (“Putting Away The Myths About ‘Putting Away’”)
- b. Demonstrating that the word *apoluo* often or usually involves **no civil or legal procedure** does not prove that it **never involves such**
- 1) Illust.: The word *pneuma* usually means “**spirit**,” but in at least one passage, it means “**wind**” (Jn. 3:8)
- c. If *apoluo* means “**repudiation**,” in the pertinent MDR passages, not civil or legal “divorce,” a man still has **the ability** to “repudiate” his mate for reasons other than fornication (Lk. 16:18)
- 1) *Jeff Belknap*: “No matter what we boil the definition of ‘put away’ down to, once that procedure (whether repudiation, civil divorce or jumping over a broom handle backwards) has been enacted against a mate, they **have been** put away. No, they **have not been** ‘loosed’ from God’s restrictions, but they **have been** put away in the sense that the Bible speaks of as ‘put away’ in Matthew 5:32b; 19:9b and Luke 16:18b, and are thus bound by the restrictions Jesus imposed on the ‘put away.’” (*The Misrepresentation Of “Biblical Putting Away”*)
  - 2) So even if we grant for the sake of argument that *apoluo* does not necessarily involve civil or legal procedures, that fact is **completely irrelevant**
    - a) If *apoluo* means “**repudiation**,” there can be no doubt that by the time a **civil divorce** has been granted, “**repudiation**” **has occurred**
- d. **The issues** are these:
- 1) Does a man have **the ability** to “divorce” or “repudiate” his wife for some reason other than fornication (regardless of the procedure he follows)?
    - a) The NT clearly teaches that he does Mt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:10-11
    - b) The assumption that if it’s not **right**; it’s not **real** is an **invalid assumption**
  - 2) Does a **divorced person** (i.e. someone who has been divorced) have a **God-given right to remarry**?
    - a) The NT clearly teaches that he/she does not unless:
      1. The **first mate dies** (Rom. 7:2-3)
      2. He/she **reconciles with the first mate** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
      3. The **marriage was unlawful** to begin with
6. Argument #4: ***There is no sequence in Mt. 19:9***
- a. But there **has to be a sequence** in the passage

- 1) There is a **sequence** if the exception clause is not applied
    - a) How can you have a mate to “put away” unless there is a **marriage**?
    - b) How can you “marry another,” unless there has been a **divorce**?
    - c) How can you “commit adultery,” unless you **marry another**?
    - d) Here’s the sequence in the passage: (1) **Marriage**; (2) **Divorce**; (3) **Remarriage**; (4) **Adultery**
  - 2) There is a **sequence** if the exception clause is applied
    - a) How can you have a mate to “put away” unless there is a **marriage**?
    - b) How can you “put away” your mate for fornication unless your mate has already committed **fornication**?
    - c) How can you “marry another,” unless there has been a **divorce**?
    - d) Here’s the sequence in the passage: (1) **Marriage**; (2) **Fornication**; (3) **Divorce**; (4) **Remarriage**; (5) **No Adultery**
    - e) How can someone marry “her who is divorced,” unless there has been a **divorce**?
  - 3) The only reason that some have **trouble seeing a sequence** in Mt. 19:9 is because the sequence that is obviously there does not harmonize with their **inference that the innocent party always has the right to “put away”** (i.e. repudiate) the guilty fornicating mate.
  - 4) For Mt. 19:9 to give Jill the right to “put away” Jack and remarry in the scenario described above, Jesus should have said: “...whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery **unless her first husband has already married another.**” But of course, Jesus didn’t say anything like that.
7. Argument #5: *If two must agree to get married, two must agree to get divorced*
- a. Who says so? Where does the Bible **explicitly state** that or **definitely imply** that?
    - 1) Where is the book, chapter, and verse to support that assertion?
  - b. The Bible talks about **one person divorcing another person**. It doesn’t say anything about:
    - 1) Whether the person being divorced **wants** the divorce, **agrees** to the divorce, **fights** to keep the marriage together, etc.
  - c. Some questions:
    - 1) Did **Jacob** agree to marry Leah? Was he still married to her after he discovered Laban’s deception? (cf. Gen. 29:15-30)
    - 2) Does the **guilty fornicator** have to agree to the divorce before the innocent party can really “put away”?

a) If it takes **two to get married** and it takes **two to get divorced**, why wouldn't this be the case?

8. Argument #6: *There is no difference between the "marriage" and the "bond"*

a. But the apostle Paul clearly **makes a distinction** between the two -- "**marriage**" is not "**binding**" Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:39

1) Note: It was not **Paul's primary purpose to teach on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage**. He refers to **God's general law on marriage** to illustrate the primary point that **law has dominion over a man only as long as he lives** (Rom. 7:1)

a) **The exception** that Jesus gives to the general law on marriage (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9) is **not considered** in this passage, because it was **not germane** to the point that Paul was illustrating

2) Paul says that a woman "who has a husband" is "**bound**"

a) The phrase "**who has a husband**" (*hupandros*) means "lit. 'under the power of or subject to a man') **pert. to being legally bound to a man in marriage, married....**" (BDAG, 1029)

b) The word "**bound**" (*deo*) means "to bind, tie, fasten; 1. prop....with acc. of pers. to bind, to fasten with chains, to throw into chains....2. metaph....b. to bind, i.e. put under obligation, sc. of law, duty, etc....with dat. of pers...to be bound to one...of a wife, Ro. vii. 2...of a husband, 1 Co. vii. 27...." (Thayer, 131)

3) Paul says that a woman who has a husband is bound "**by law**"

a) Thus, this is not a **literal or physical binding** but rather a **spiritual and legal binding**

b) And this fact comports with the way the word is defined by the **lexicographers**

c) **The law** under consideration here is not the **Mosaic law** of the Jews or the **civil law** of the Gentiles, because both of these laws **allowed a woman to remarry** while her first husband was still living (cf. Dt. 24:1-4)

d) This law is **God's law on marriage** established in the very beginning (Gen. 2:24)

4) Paul says that a woman who has a husband is bound by law "**to her husband**"

a) Obviously, Paul is contemplating at the outset a relationship that is **lawful in the eyes of God**, because God's law would certainly not bind one to a sinful relationship

1. Herod was not "**bound**" by God's law to Herodias (Mk. 6:18)

b) So Paul is talking about a **lawful marriage** here

5) Paul says that a woman who has a husband is bound by law to her husband "**for as long as he lives**"

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- a) Again 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**
- 6) Paul says that if the husband dies, the woman is **“released from the law of the husband”**
- a) The word **“released”** (*katargeo*) means **“4. to cause the release of someone from an obligation (one has nothing more to do with it), be discharged, be released....”** (526)
  - b) The **“law of the husband”** simply refers to **the law which bound her to her husband**
  - c) We might have expected Paul to say that at the death of the husband, the woman is **loosed from her husband**, but that is not what he says. The emphasis here is upon **the legal obligation to God’s law** which binds one to one’s mate for as long as that person lives
- 7) Paul says that if while the husband lives, a woman be **“joined”** to another man, **she shall be called an adulteress**
- a) The phrase **“be joined”** is translated from a Greek verb (*ginomai*) which has many **different shades of meaning** but which basically means “to become....5. to become, be made, ‘in passages where it is specified who or what a person or thing is or has been rendered, as respects quality, condition, place, rank, character’ ...*ginesthai* with Cases; α. with the gen. to become the property of any one, to come into the power of a person or thing....β. With the dat...to become a man’s wife, Ro. vii. 3 sq....” (“Thayer, 115-117)
  - b) Please note that **the second relationship** that Paul refers to in this passage is **an actual marriage**, even though it is not **an approved marriage**
    1. Paul is not contemplating just a **“live-in” relationship**. This fact is suggested by **the definition of the word** that Paul uses and by **the context** in which it is found
      - a. **The woman’s relationship with the second man would have been right** if her first husband had been dead. Thus, they were not just **“living together”**; they were actually married
        1. Chart: “Joined” #1

- b. The fact that the same word (*ginomai*) is used to describe **the Christian's relationship with Christ** (Rom. 7:4) also suggests that the word denotes **"marriage"** unless we are to conclude that our relationship with Christ is just a "live-in" relationship
1. Chart: "Joined" #2
  2. Chart: "It Must Be Marriage"
- c) Under these circumstances, this woman becomes **an adulteress**, not because she is **not really married to the second man**, but because **she is married to him while she is bound by law to her first husband**
1. **Adultery** is normally defined by the lexicographers to mean "to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife....," (Thayer, 417) and this definition is accurate as far as it goes, but **the Bible definition is more precise**
  2. According to this passage, **adultery** means to have **sexual intercourse with someone who is bound by law to another**
- d) Furthermore, this passage teaches that this woman **remains an adulteress** as long as **her first husband lives and she is married to the second man**
- 8) Paul says that if the husband dies, **she is "free" from the law**, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man
- a) The word **"free"** (*eleutheros*) means "free....2. free, exempt, unrestrained, not bound by an obligation....*apo tinou*, free from i.e. no longer under obligation to, so that one may now do what was formerly forbidden by the person or thing to which he was bound, Ro. vii. 3...." (Thayer, 204)
  - b) Please note that **what was wrong** while the first husband lived **is right** after his death
- 9) From the considerations above, it should be obvious that there is a difference between being **"married"** and being **"bound"**
- a) *Maurice Barnett*: "Marriage refers to a **particular kind of relationship** between a man and a woman, which may or may not be acceptable to God. It might be an adulterous marriage, but it is still 'marriage.' Bond refers to a **particular responsibility** God holds a man to in regard to a certain woman, and a woman to a certain man. The relationship (marriage) may end but God still holds them accountable in regard to the other person. [Emphasis mine, ksk]." ("Unbelievers And God's Law On Marriage: 1 Corinthians 7:15," *The Gospel Anchor*, Nov., 1983, 10:89)
  - b) Chart: "The Marriage & The Bond"
  - c) If **"married"** means **"bound,"** why is she not bound to two men, since the text plainly says that she married another man (while her husband was still living)?
- 10) Thus, people **marry** and **divorce**; God **binds** and **discharges**!

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- a) The word “**marriage,**” as it is used in the Bible, refers to **the relationship** that exists between a particular man and a particular woman
  - b) The word “**divorce,**” as it is used in the Bible, refers to **the dissolution of the marital relationship**
  - c) Either of these actions can occur **with or without God’s approval,** and yet He recognizes that **they have occurred**
  - d) The word “**bond,**” as it is used in the Bible, refers to the **responsibilities** that God imposes upon those who marry lawfully, and it includes both **constraints** and **restraints**
    1. The husband is **constrained** by God’s law to:
      - a. **Love** his wife (Eph. 5:25-33)
      - b. **Live** with her according to knowledge and honor her as the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7)
      - c. **Provide** for her (1 Tim. 5:8)
      - d. **Satisfy** her sexual needs (1 Cor. 7:1-5)
      - e. Etc.
    2. The wife is **constrained** by God’s law to:
      - a. **Love** her husband (Tit. 2:4)
      - b. **Submit** to his will (Eph. 5:22-24)
      - c. **Rule** the household (1 Tim. 5:14)
      - d. **Satisfy** his sexual needs (1 Cor. 7:1-5)
      - e. Etc.
    3. Furthermore, both husband and wife are **restrained** by God’s law from having any other marriage partner while the first mate lives 1 Cor. 7:39
      - a. While the husband is alive, a wife is **bound**
      - b. When the husband dies, the wife is **free** to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord
      - c. Therefore, as long as a wife is **bound,** she is not **free** to be married to whom she will
      - d. In other words, she is **restrained**
  - e) The word “**discharge,**” as it is used in the Bible, refers to **the release from the obligations of law and duty** imposed by God upon those who marry lawfully
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1. God **frees** one from the “bond” only if **one’s marriage partner dies** (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39) or is **put away for fornication** (Mt. 19:9)
- 11) Therefore, being “**married**” is not the same thing as being “**bound**,” and being “**divorced**” is not the same thing as being “**discharged**”
- 12) Furthermore, the terms “**husband**” and “**wife**,” as they are used in the Bible, do not necessarily refer to **one’s current marriage partner**
- a) The word “**wife**” is used in the Bible to refer to:
    1. A **concubine** (Gen. 16:3; 25:1, 5-6 & 1 Chr. 1:32, Jud. 19:1-5, 7, 9; 20:4)
    2. A **betrothed person** (Dt. 20:7; 22:23-24; Mt. 1:18-20, 24; Rev. 19:7)
    3. A **bride** (Jud. 14:15-16, 20)
    4. A **widow** (Ruth 4:10; 1 Sam. 27:3; 30:5; 2 Sam. 2:2; 3:3; 2 Sam. 11:26; 12:9-10, 15)
    5. One who is “**married**” to **another** (Jud. 15:1-2; 1 Sam. 25:44; 2 Sam. 3:14-16; Mt. 14:3-4; Mk. 6:17-18; Lk. 3:19; 1 Cor. 5:1)
  - b) The Bible teaches that one may be “**unmarried**” and still **have a “husband”** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- 13) Thus, there are **five possible conditions** in which one may find himself
- a) One may be **unmarried** and **unbound**
    1. The **single** (1 Cor. 7:8-9)
    2. The **widowed** (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:8-9, 39; 1 Tim. 5:14)
    3. The “**innocent party**” who has “put away” the “guilty party” for fornication (Mt. 19:9)
    4. A **former “third party”**
  - b) One may be **married** and **bound**
    1. The **scripturally married** (Mt. 19:5-6; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39)
  - c) One may be **unmarried** and **bound** to another
    1. The **unscripturally divorced** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
    2. The “**guilty party**” who has been “put away” for fornication (Mt. 19:9)
  - d) One may be **married** to one and **bound** to another
    1. The **unscripturally divorced and remarried** (Rom. 7:2-3; cf. Mk. 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1)
  - e) One may be **married** and **unbound**

1. The **“third party”** who is married to someone who is bound to another (Mt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Lk. 16:18b)
9. The “mental divorce” position has **other problems** as well
    - a. It assumes that there can be **more than one “putting away”** -- one **“in the eyes of man”** and the other **“in the eyes of God”**
      - 1) But Jesus speaks of **only one**
    - b. It assumes that the innocent “put away” person **has something to “put away”**
      - 1) The term **“put away”** (*apoluo*) means: **“5. to dissolve a marriage relationship, to divorce τὴν γυναῖκα one’s wife, or betrothed....”** (118)
      - 2) The Bible speaks about **“putting away” a person**, but after the first marriage has been dissolved, there is **no one for the innocent person to let go, send away, or dismiss**
      - 3) The innocent mate **cannot dissolve the marriage relationship**, because that has **already been dissolved**, and he **cannot dissolve the “bond,”** because **only God can do that**
    - c. It changes **the Lord’s order** in Matthew 19:9
      - 1) If we take the passage **at face value** the proponents of this position change the Lord’s order:
        - a) The Lord’s Order: **M F D R**
        - b) Man’s Order: **M D R F**
      - 2) If we grant for the sake of argument that the only **actual** divorce is an **approved** divorce, the proponents of this position change the Lord’s order in Matthew 19:9b
        - a) The Lord’s Order: **D R A**
        - b) Man’s Order: **R A D**
      - 3) The Bible teaches that fornication must be the **cause** for divorce, not the **consequence** of divorce
      - 4) If we cannot **change the Lord’s order in Mark 16:16**, we cannot **change the Lord’s order in Matthew 19:9**
  10. The “mental divorce” position, I suspect, is largely based upon **human feelings and emotions**
    - a. The arguments that I have made thus far, I believe, demonstrate that the position that an innocent “divorced” person may remarry while the first mate is still living rests upon a **faulty presupposition**. But I believe that this presupposition is largely based upon **human feelings and emotions**
    - b. Some seem to have assumed as a foregone conclusion that **God would never require an innocent person to live in celibacy**. But this is just not true. 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



- 1) What of the innocent wife whose husband suffers from **some physical or mental illness** that makes it impossible for him to be a husband to her?
  - 2) What of the innocent wife whose husband has been **incapacitated by an accident**?
  - 3) What of the innocent wife whose husband is **an MIA, or a POW, or a convict** serving a life sentence without parole?
  - 4) What of the innocent wife who has **been divorced**, through no fault of her own, and her first husband **never remarries**?
- c. These are **innocent**, but God's law does not allow them to **remarry**
- 1) Quite frankly, it does not **seem fair** to me, but that does not **change God's law**
- d. Objection: "Fornication was not involved in those situations, and it is in this situation!"
- 1) Fornication on the part of one's mate does not give one **the right to remarry**; it gives one **the right to divorce one's mate**
  - 2) It is only **divorce for fornication** that gives one **the right to remarry**
  - 3) When an innocent person is "put away," there are at least **two reasons** why he may not remarry
    - a) First, **the divorce was not for fornication**, and this is the only scriptural grounds for divorce and remarriage
    - b) Second, **the right to remarry following divorce is not given to a "put away" person** as long as the first mate lives
- e. Objection: "If the innocent 'put away' person cannot remarry when the first mate commits adultery by marrying again, then **man's law takes precedence** over God's law"
- 1) *Weldon Warnock*: "I cannot accept the position that the **law of God** in this matter is **regulated** by and **contingent** upon the civil laws of fallible man." ("Divorce And Remarriage' Response," *Searching The Scriptures*, March, 1986, 27:61)
  - 2) Once again, this argument assumes that if the divorce is not **right**; it's not **real**, and I have already demonstrated that this presupposition is not true
  - 3) But **God's law is not regulated by and contingent upon man's law** in this situation. God's law specifically says, "**and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery**" (Lk. 16:18b)
- f. Objection: "I just can't believe that God would require an **innocent divorced person to remain unmarried** when his/her first mate marries someone else"
- 1) This is nothing more than an **emotional argument**
    - a) Chart: "Emotion Is Not Scripture"
  - 2) We must remember the painful truth that **life is not always fair** (Eccl. 9:11-12; 10:5-7)

- 3) Sometimes **the innocent suffer**, because of **the sins of others** (cf. Ex. 20:5; 1 Ki. 21:29)
  - 4) 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)
  - 5) But if God built a **hedge** around the innocent so that they never suffered, many would serve God out of **convenience** and not **conviction** (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6)
  - 6) **My heart goes out to the innocent who must suffer**, because others have not respected God's law on marriage. But **I cannot change God's law**. I can, however, assure them that **the glory to be revealed** in the next life "beyond the sunset" will more than make up for **their sacrifice and suffering in this life** "under the sun" (Rom. 8:18)
11. The "**Mental Divorce**" **position is false** because:
    - a. As long as one's first mate lives, a "**put away**" **person cannot remarry anyone else without committing adultery**
    - b. And even an **innocent "put away" person** is still a "**put away**" **person**
  12. Chart: "Differences Between Us"

### 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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<sup>28</sup> The literature in scholarly journals on the subject of MDR is voluminous, and the journal articles that I have consulted hardly scratch the surface. *David Instone-Brewer*: "A recent search on the American Theology Library Association bibliographic database of academic publications in the area of Religion found more than one thousand articles and book reviews since 1970 that contained the word 'divorce' or 'remarriage' in the title." (268-269).

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