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## Marriage and Divorce

What the Bible Really Teaches About Marriage & Divorce:

To all the holy brethren, beloved of God, and called to be saints; scattered abroad yet united in the truth, sanctified in Christ Jesus and preserved in God our Father; grace, mercy, and peace be unto you, with love multiplied, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In the pure love of Christ Jesus I write unto you, and with exceeding great joy because of the excellency of his name, which joy I extend to you all, even as you already know that in his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Inasmuch as with great joy and consolation I write this epistle unto you all, it is also with gravity, and the grief which the Holy Ghost spake of in Solomon, saying,

"In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."  
(Ecclesiastes 1:18).

So, it seemed good and necessary to the Holy Ghost to address the general assembly of the saints, with the fellow elders and bishops which are called to the ministry of Jesus Christ to the church, concerning an issue of great importance to God, and to his people, and which is both highly controversial and widely misunderstood; and although it is, by the grace of our God, evidently set forth in scripture, still it (or rather the perversion thereof) is killing multitudes of God's people and sealing them unto destruction. And yet it is not because God's word doesn't make it clear, but only because rebellion causes spiritual blindness.

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts..."  
(Romans 1:24)

"...an heretick...is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."  
(Titus 3:10,11)

"...hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not."  
(Isaiah 6:9)

The reason for the concern about this issue is exemplified by an excerpt from a little booklet called, "Articles of Faith of the United Pentecostal Church International: What We Believe and Teach", which states:

*"When this sin [fornication] has been committed, the innocent party may be free to remarry only in the Lord. Our desire being to raise a higher standard for the ministry, we recommend that ministers do not marry again."* (page 13, par. 1).

What is our concern? It all centers around one little word, which is very simple, yet widely

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misunderstood.

"*fornication* - n. sexual intercourse between unmarried persons." (Webster's Dictionary)

Because of the perversion of the understanding of this word in the scripture (and its outright omission in the new age bible per-versions), millions of people are perishing in the sin of adultery, while they live happy, contented, and deceived lives; under the leadership of ministers who share their deception and condone their rebellion (Romans 1:32, 2 Timothy 4:3,4, etc...).

This popular plague of deception is centered around the unscriptural concept that, if your spouse is found to be sexually unfaithful to you (i.e. commits adultery), that act gives you the right before God to put away that spouse and marry another.

But where is this teaching in the scripture?

Nowhere.

These poor deceived souls (fooled only by their own rebellion) derive this doctrine from a perversion of basically 4 passages of scripture...

- The first is **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**, which the religious hypocrites of the first century misunderstood then just as they do now.

(Mind you-when I say hypocrites-I speak not of those who are babes and unlearned, but of those who should know better but are blinded to the truth by their own theology.)

***"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.***

***And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD; and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."***  
***(Deuteronomy 24:1-4)***

We can see by the conversation in Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10:2-12 that the pharisees had no understanding of the verses of scripture they were quoting.

Our first indication is their motive, which, according to scripture, was not to know the truth, but only to tempt the Lord (Matthew 19:3, Mark 10:2). Secondly, especially evident in Mark's gospel, when Jesus asked them, "What did Moses command you?" they forgot all about Genesis 2:23,24, and went right to their carnal (mis)understanding of Deuteronomy 24:1-4; which is again evidenced by the Lord's reply in verse 5, ***"For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept."***

But to the diligent seeker, passages like Jeremiah 3, Hosea 3, Ezekiel 16, etc..., plus the clear

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revelation of this issue in the New Testament, make it perfectly clear that God, in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, was not giving his married men permission to divorce their wives; but rather, in his perfect righteousness, was making manifest in the Hebrew scriptures his own provision to put away his own people Israel for their uncleanness and hardness of heart, by instituting the **betrothal period** (which was previously unknown to men), into the marriage law, which provided for a period of time for the love and faithfulness of the bride to be proven before the sealing, or consummation, of the marriage, and for the bridegroom to have the right to put her away if she was found not to be a virgin, even up until the time of the actual sexual consummation (Deuteronomy 24:1).

- The second and third passages which are misused to pervert God's truth in this matter are **Matthew 5:32 and 19:9**.

***"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."***

***"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."***

The phrase, "**except for fornication**" is so simple, and yet so widely misunderstood.

Jewish people understood fornication back then; many still do today.

Fornication is just what Webster's says it is, and it always and only involves unmarried persons. So, how can this be? Why is this "exception" found only twice in the Bible, and only in Matthew's gospel?

Well, Matthew's gospel was written and sent originally to specifically the Jewish people; Mark to the Romans, Luke to the Greeks. Jewish people understood what this "exception" was because of their wedding tradition (which came from God himself), specifically the period of time during a marriage called the betrothal period. During the betrothal period, the couple was considered husband and wife, yet had not actually consummated the covenant by the shedding of blood in sexual union (marriage).

(See Matthew 1:18-20, speaking of Joseph and Mary as husband and wife, although their wedding had not occurred yet.)

Jesus told the pharisees,  
"...but from the beginning it was not so."  
(Matthew 19:8)

...because when the marriage law was given in the beginning (Genesis 2:23,24), although it was given as a type of God's marriage to man by his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, at that time the bride had not yet begun to exist.

Israel is the bride, or wife, of God (Jeremiah 3:14, Ezekiel 16:8, Hosea 1:2, 2:16, John 3:29), and did not exist until God called Abraham, out of whom came Isaac, and then Jacob, who is Israel.

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Before the law was given by Moses (a Levite of the nation of Israel), there was no betrothal period in the marriage law. But, when the bride (Israel) came to be, and was delivered from Egypt and was

"...baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea..."  
(1 Corinthians 10:2),

...they were entered into covenant with the God of Israel - a marriage covenant. And, because of their inherent unfaithfulness and stubbornness, God instituted the betrothal period into the marriage law, to keep the hard-hearted and unclean from entering into the eternal covenant of marriage with him; just as he "drove out the man" (Adam) from the garden of Eden, and the tree of life, after he had sinned against God,

"...lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever..."  
(Genesis 3:22-24).

So we can see that the institution of the betrothal period, which first began to be spoken by the mouth of Moses (Exodus 22:16, Deuteronomy 20:7, 22:23-26) was given by the God of Israel to guard against the unclean and hard-hearted (unbelieving) among the nation of Israel entering into permanent, eternal covenant rest with him in marriage; and was manifested in the law by providing the bridegroom the opportunity to preserve his integrity in Israel by proving his betrothed to be a virgin indeed, and faithful, before accepting her into the life-long, binding covenant of marriage.

**According to the Bible, the only time that fornication can occur in a marriage relationship is during the betrothal period.** After the wedding has occurred, sexual unfaithfulness is not called fornication, but adultery. And although adultery is a very serious and deadly sin, there is not now, nor has there ever been any provision by God in his word to divorce and remarry for this or any reason, once a marriage has been consummated!

The ONLY provision for remarriage is the physical death of the spouse.  
"...but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband."  
(Romans 7:2)

"...but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married..."  
(1 Corinthians 7:39)

Are fornication and adultery the same thing?

No. They are not.

(See Mark 7:21, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Galatians 5:19, etc...)

Yes, sometimes fornication is called adultery in the Bible (during a betrothal period),

...but adultery is NEVER called fornication!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- The fourth passage the false teachers (mis)use is **1 Corinthians 7:15:**

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"But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace."

...but the Greek word *douloo*, translated "*under bondage*", is not the same as the word *deo*, translated "*bound by the law*", in verse 39 of the same chapter:

"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth..."

He meant what he said. We are called to peace, not cruel slavery. We are not commanded by God to try to force an unwilling, unbelieving spouse to stay with us. If that spouse wishes to depart, the scripture says, "let him depart".

But nowhere in the Bible does God ever say that that person is not still your spouse. On the contrary - as long as he (or she) is still alive, you are bound by the law of marriage. (Genesis 2:24, Romans 7:2,3, Luke 16:18, 1 Corinthians 7:39, etc...)

It is Bible truth that the institution of marriage between a man and his wife is given to us by the God of creation to typify, or illustrate, to us the nature of his redemptive plan, which itself is a marriage; and it is also Bible truth that if Satan can successfully deceive the Israel of God to the end they will not understand or keep the sanctity of marriage between a man and his wife, they will most surely lose sight of the sanctity of the covenant of marriage between them and their God.

As it is written:

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"  
(Psalm 11:3)

and,

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust also in the least is unjust also in much.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?...

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

(Luke 16:10-12, 18)

Satan used "the counsel of Balaam" (Numbers 25:1, 31:16) to destroy multitudes among Israel in the wilderness around 3,500 years ago, and he is still using it today to destroy multitudes in the churches:

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

(Revelation 2:14)

Brethren, millions of happy, born-again people are in rebellion, married to other people's wives

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and husbands, and living in open adultery before God and men.

And they are ***NOT*** going to inherit the kingdom of God.

(Exodus 20:14, 1 Corinthians 6:9,10, Galatians 5:19-21)

This has been by no means an extensive exposition of this most fundamental Bible doctrine. But it is given for the purpose of exhortation (if any had previously thought otherwise) and instruction, which is what we have the infallible word of God for.

As it is written;

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

(2 Timothy 3:16)

And, if this doctrine is already believed and taught among you, I praise God for you, because I am persuaded that you are the remnant who truly love Jesus Christ our Lord, and tremble at his word.

Jesus is coming soon, as a thief in the night.

"Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

(Revelation 16:15)

Watch and pray, beloved!

Farewell.