

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

(IF YOU HAVE LEFT THEM)

This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth:
and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.
²⁷ For the LORD of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?
and His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

Isaiah 14:26-27 The BIBLE

Glen C. Robertson

WE OCCASIONALLY HEAR the phrase, "A marriage made in heaven." In fact, all first-time marriages are made in heaven (regardless of whether or not heaven is pleased with them, II Cor. 6:14). What man records on earth, vindicating for men what has been consummated on earth, has already been noted and finalized in heaven.

4 And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Matt.19:4-9 (Matt. 5:32) The BIBLE

This passage outlines the three major points concerning marriage and divorce, for the Christian to know and remember: 1) v. 5 "Twain shall be one flesh," joined for life, and inseparable; 2) 6 "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man(/woman) put asunder:" no-one has the right to divorce, (through sex with someone other than their original spouse). This is adultery, and a great sin, as it gives the spouse Divine permission to divorce. 3) v. 9 "Whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery:" (no-one has any right to create just cause for someone else's divorce). This too is adultery.

In Greater Detail: 1) Marriage is established in God's eyes by the act of sexual intercourse, (verses 5-6). Man's practice of performing a ceremony for a wedding is necessary to a) Seal with an oath one's commitment to lifelong faithfulness and exclusivity; b) Give a witness of that to the world. The oath is indeed made to both partner and world (and is thus similar to baptism), and to act outside of that oath and witness is to break the oath, and to offend both God and man. (*Note: while love is a great help in, blessing to, and commandment in marriage, as Eph. 5:25 and Col. 3:19, it is in no place mentioned as a requisite for marriage: i.e., it is not an absolute necessity to the institution, and its absence or lack can in no way be used as an excuse for separation nor divorce.) Only death (Rom. 7:1-3) or adultery by the other partner (Matt. 5:32, 19:9) breaks the obligation. 2) The marriage act, "sex," is not merely, "an act

between two consenting adults," but an act which God in heaven recognizes as man's acceptance and fulfillment of the institution that He alone has designed and established: marriage. In other words, the union through sexual intercourse is established not as much on earth as it is in heaven- it is a heavenly institution! Man, thus, has no right to modify nor annul it: it is God's work, and God's property: ("...What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Matt. 19:6 3) The act of a person's putting away their spouse has no bearing at all on whether they are still man and wife: in God's eyes they are married until death (unless because one of the two marries someone else by performing sexual intercourse with someone other than their original spouse. At that point God gives the offended spouse permission to officially and publicly, and in God's Eyes, declare their marriage terminated.) * The idea that remarriage is permitted if the divorce occurred before salvation has absolutely no support in Scripture. The passage,

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

II Cor. 5:17 The BIBLE

...is often given in support of this idea. This misinterpretation both cheapens the institution of marriage and seeks to justify the sins of unBiblical remarriage and of trying to find, "loopholes," to, "get around," God's holiness. The verse in fact speaks of the person, not of a new history or reality. No matter what colour is the new heart, history itself is eliminated only in fantasy. God forgets the sin but nevertheless requires the prison inmate, for instance, to complete his prison sentence. Salvation would in no way justify a prison break on the grounds that the inmate is, "a new creature." Spiritual identity in the new Christian is changed; his physical and historical reality does not change. Only accepting and honestly dealing with truth and reality will complete the new person and enable him to be honest with God in repentance and to grow and mature in grace.

Separation

I Cor. 7:10 reads,

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

Even separation is wrong. It brings a saw to the base of the tree of marriage and is a flirtation with the sin of divorce. Marriage is intended by God to be "for better or for worse." It is evident, however, that there will be times at which it is necessary- absolutely necessary- for the couple to be separated, probably for the sake of the safety of one or the other, or, under mutual consent, and for a very limited time. (This cannot be taken as an excuse for divorce, which, we have seen, is not an option.) The Word of God recognizes this comparatively rare necessity, and so makes provision, with a warning,

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

I Cor. 7:11 The BIBLE

It is a serious thing to give one's spouse even just a bill of divorce: the Bible warns that this might easily convince the spouse that they are in fact freed from the marriage, and able to remarry, hence committing adultery. Therefore, if there is to be separation of the spouses, despite the fact that that is unScriptural, the Bible says that it is to be done without a manmade, so-called divorce.

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

Matt. 5:32 The BIBLE

if a reconciliation is possible, it is to be pursued. By Matt. 5:32 (above) it is evident that, if one's marriage is annulled by the other's adultery, by which they have, in effect, married another, one is allowed to remarry. Even then, however, he should first try to reconcile, as God, his Example, is the Forgiver.

Nothing that has been said in this message is new to most Christians. And, most likely, to almost all Christians, everything that has been said in this pamphlet was at one point what they believed; circumstances, however, have changed the beliefs of many. By some, this change in belief is attributed to "corrected beliefs through experience in the real world;" others feel that their circumstances "are different from the rest," they claim extenuating circumstances. Some refuse to now believe that the Bible means what it, "appears to say;" some simply ignore what the Bible says, doing what they want because they find it easier that way. A few Christians have never submitted their heart and believed what the Bible says on this matter, but, to most, what the Bible says is what they therefore believe (or at one time believed). A change in heart, belief, and action in these Christians has come only as they have, "gone through the fire," and tried to survive as best they could. Their hearts are scarred and hurting. And, tragically, they're also hardened. Pain, loneliness, injustice, or abuse, however, provide no valid excuse in God's eyes for committing any sin, least of all, murder, rape, or adultery, (Matt.19:9). God is a God of comfort, and offers His solace especially to those who will serve Him with a pure heart, who bow before Him undefiled in heart or in deed.

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

...

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Heb. 3:12-15, 18,19 The BIBLE

God calls upon anyone who has at one time been divorced, at any time in the past, no matter how distant, for any reason at all other than adultery on the part of the other spouse, to humble themselves before Him and repent. Also, to renounce the sin and the possibility of ever doing it again. This is not simply to dredge up painful memories or to put a guilt trip upon ourselves but to combat the fact that, once divorced, it is so much easier to commit it a second time- the difficult first step of willingness has been overcome. And we must recognize and repent of the sin, which is otherwise harboured within us.

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Rev. 2:2-5 The BIBLE

13 And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.

14 "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife (/husband) of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

15 "But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then, to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.

16 "For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

17 You have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them," or, "Where is the God of justice?"

Malachi 2:13-17 The BIBLE NASV

IF YOU HAVE LEFT THEM

Repent and enter into peace with God!

SEPARATION IS THE first step, and the dress rehearsal for divorce, often leading to divorce, and, as such, is sin. It is the tentative, "trying the waters," toward actually divorcing. It is sin.

There are rare occasions on which, with mutual agreement, a couple might feel that they need time alone. This is understandable. But, the departure of one or both of the spouses from the marriage situation is against God and against His intentions for the family.

There may also be rare occasions on which a person might have to flee a literal physical danger in their home. This, "physical danger," would not be any of the multitudinous excuses to leave one's spouse labeled by today's society as, "abuses," but would be actual, "physical danger."

Such separation, however, would justify neither divorce nor remarriage. Divorce, even that, "divorce," recognized only by society (not by God) would imply that the two parties would be free, in God's eyes (the only legitimate Authority), to re-marry, and would probably even encourage it!

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

Matt. 5:32 The BIBLE

God tells us that, while we are commanded not to separate, if we do so, we are not to remarry, but to remain single or be reconciled to our spouse.

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

I Cor. 7:11 The BIBLE

Therefore:

- a) If we have departed from our spouse we are commanded by God to return.*
- b) If return is impossible because of physical danger we are commanded to remain single.*

- otherwise:

1) We are disobeying God.

15 If ye love Me, keep My commandments.

John 14:15 The BIBLE

2) It is quite possible that one of the very reasons that our spouse married was to keep themselves from sexual sin!

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

I Cor. 7:2 The BIBLE

5 Defraud ye not one the other (*don't deprive your spouse of sex*), except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

I Cor. 7:5 The BIBLE

We run the risk of either committing adultery ourselves or of inciting our spouse to do so. And THAT is a serious offense!

6 But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the (*person*) by whom the temptation comes!

Matt.18:7 The BIBLE (RSV)