

Studies Regarding

Divorce

and

Remarriage

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"BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO"

The question is frequently raised, "May a Christian put away his wife (or her husband) for the cause of fornication and then marry another?" This is indeed a most important question. It warrants much more consideration than it often receives among our brethren, for we have increasingly allowed trends of a permissive society to dictate our behavior.

Instructions which relate to this question are found in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, where

Paul taught that in event of departure the partners of a marriage were required to either "remain unmarried or be reconciled." These were the only two options. No other provision is mentioned or is even alluded to in inspired writings directed to the New Testament church.

The next question which arises concerns the application of Matthew 5:32 and Mt. 19:9, where Jesus Himself used the terms "saving for the cause of fornication" and "except it be for fornication." It is to be readily admitted, of course, that if Jesus provided for an exception to Christians, then such must indeed be taught and allowed. The problem in understanding the matter lies in determining:

To whom was Jesus addressing His comments?
What was the exception to which He referred?

TO WHOM WAS JESUS ADDRESSING HIS COMMENTS?

The last three and one-half years prior to the establishment of the Christian era was surely a time of transition. That which had been "added" to the promise, the Law (Gal. 3:19), was about to be superseded by "the beginning" (Acts 11:15) of a grand and final age not limited by the old Law. During this transition period many preparatory provisions are to be noted in Jesus' teachings and actions. These are such as:

Authority and humility among the disciples (Mt. 20:25-28)
The communion (Mt. 26:29)
The great commission (Mt. 28:19-20).

Some of Jesus' teaching was directed to matters which applied at that time and which had no continuing application. These consisted of such as:

Preparation for the Passover (Luke 22:9-13)
Offering for cleansings (Mark 1:40-44)
Offering at the altar (Mt. 5:23-24)
Observance of the Ten Commandments (Mt. 19:16-22)
Adherence to the old Law (Mark 1:40-44).

Then there were those situations where Jesus clearly admitted the application of the old Law but demonstrated a principle which would prevail in the Christian era:

Woman taken "in the very act" of adultery (John 8:3-11).

In both Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 Jesus' comments were clearly made and applied to those who were acquainted with Moses' teaching. To have taught contrary to the law then in force would have made Jesus at variance with His own teaching in which He said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Mt. 5:18). Had Mt. 5:32 (which mentions an exception and which some say was a new law) not applied to those to whom He was speaking, then Jesus would have been teaching and making applicable a new law before all had been fulfilled.

To pursue this just a bit further, every contrast made by Jesus in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5, 6, and 7) had its basis in Old Testament writings:

"Ye have heard...but I say unto you...whosoever is angry" (v. 21-22),
found in Lev. 19:17.

"Ye have heard...but I say...whosoever looketh on a woman" (v. 27-30),
found in Job 31:1 and Proverbs 6:25.

"It hath been said...but I say...saving for the cause of fornication" (v. 31-32),
found in Deut. 22 and 24.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said...but I say...swear not at all"
(v. 33-37), found in Ex. 20:7 and Deut. 6:13, 10:20.

"Ye have heard...but I say unto you...turn to him the other also" (v. 38-42),
found in Isa. 50:6, Ex. 21:23-25, Lev. 24:20, Lam. 3:30, Proverbs 20:22, Deut. 15:8-11, Proverbs 25:22.

"Ye have heard...but I say...love your enemies" (v. 43-48), found in Lev. 19:18, Proverbs 25:21-22, Exodus 23:4-5.

As these observations demonstrate, Jesus' remarks regarding an exception were made and were applicable only to those then living under the old Law.

WHAT WAS THE EXCEPTION TO WHICH JESUS REFERRED?

In both Matthew 5:31 and 19:8, Jesus acknowledges what had been commonly understood from Moses' writings in Deut. 24:1-4, the putting away of wives by a writing of divorcement. But in Mt. 19:8 Jesus further states that what Moses suffered was because of "the hardness of your hearts." It was not God's desire, but rather what God permitted because of their hardness of heart. This is comparable to God suffering Israel to have a king (1 Samuel 8) and to the time of ignorance referred to in Acts 17:30. Of the putting away of companions, Jesus states in verse 8, "But from the beginning it was not so." In view of this direct statement by Jesus, we reach three necessary conclusions:

God has never approved of divorce and remarriage
Such was permitted only because of the hardness of men's hearts
It was something "suffered" against God's will.

How can we possibly understand, then, that Jesus in the very next verse authorized what He had just condemned? The "saving for the cause of fornication" and "except it be for fornication" must be understood, therefore, to have some other application. Since Jesus was speaking to those who knew the Law and were inquiring as to its meaning, He was certainly not going to teach something contrary to the Law. He said, in effect, that what Moses suffered was not what God intended from the beginning. It was not what God had required in Deut. 22:13-30, where God's provision was to "put away evil from among you" by stoning (Deut. 22:21, 22, 24). The writing of divorcement allowed in Deut. 24 appears to have been a later provision suffered "because of the hardness of your hearts" (Mt.19:8).

The exception referred to by Jesus was not at all to permit divorce and remarriage. He spoke of marriage as a permanent bond entered into for life and dissolvable only by death (Mt. 19:3-6). The exception of which Jesus spoke was for fornication, which when committed, was punishable by death. Upon the death of the fornicator, the remaining companion to that marriage could remarry. Why

could he do so? Because the marriage had been dissolved by the death of the fornicator. This cannot be effected during the Christian era, of course, because of our instructions against violence and unto peace. Such a situation during the Christian era should be handled in accord with Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 7:10-11, "Remain unmarried or be reconciled."

WHEN AN UNBELIEVER DEPARTS

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes of the believer who is married to an unbeliever. In verse 15 of chapter 7 he says, "But if the unbelieving departs, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God has called us to peace." If it be that the bondage of which Paul speaks is marriage, then the believer has an exception and may again marry while his first companion still lives. But this is simply not so! The bondage referred to by Paul is the injunction he had just made in verses 12 and 13, "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him." Verse 15 acknowledges the fact that if the unbeliever will not remain with the believer, then the believer is under no obligation to Paul's previous instructions in verses 12 and 13. You cannot live with someone who is determined not to live with you; and this is emphasized by the conclusion of verse 15, "But God hath called us to peace."

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE PRIOR TO BAPTISM

Another question also often raised concerns the status of those who were divorced and remarried before they became Christians. Where do they stand in the Christian community?

It is very simple and very easy for us to take a position which conforms to the acceptance of society; to defend what our children, grandchildren, or family are doing; to look at verses of Scripture in such a way as to find permission for allowing those things which we prefer. It is so easy for us to look at passages in the Bible regarding this issue, and other issues as well, with tinted glasses. If my glasses are green, I'll see everything green. If I look at the Bible with certain perspectives in mind, chances are I'll see it that way. What we need to do is to look at the Bible clearly, without tinted glasses. Let's see what we find.

The book of Mark, chapter 6 and verse 18, records the bold truth spoken by John to Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." For this condemnation John's head was cut-off. Why did John condemn Herod? It was because Herod had taken his brother's wife. If God did not recognize the marriage of those who were not His children, then why should John have ventured to suggest something which would unnecessarily result in the loss of his head? If Herod and Herodias were in the world anyway, not subject to God's law anyway, then why should John have subjected himself to their wrath? This action of John, done with deliberation and in accord with God's will, shows to the contrary that God DOES recognize the marriage of those not His children.

Consider 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. The setting is found in verse 2. Paul is writing to the church at Corinth, a city which lay on the west side of the Greek peninsula and far removed from where the Jews were normally found in abundance. He says, "Ye know that ye WERE Gentiles." Those to whom he was writing had not been God's people. They were not even Jews. He says, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led." We are reading about a people who had been pagan. They had not been God's people and had recognized no allegiance to God's law or His provisions.

With this background, now look at chapter 6, beginning with verse 9. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, not abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Notice carefully the next verse.

"And such WERE some of you." Before they became Christians, some of the Corinthians were fornicators and adulterers. If they were not subject to the law of God, how could they have been fornicators? How could they have been adulterers

If God's law regarding adultery did not apply to them? Paul correctly referred to them as fornicators and adulterers at a time before they became Christians.

Whether or not they are aware of it, God's law does apply to those who are outside His kingdom.

Speaking of marriage Jesus said, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 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? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mt. 19:4-6). Speaking of divorce, He said, "From the beginning it was not so" (verse 8). Thus Jesus referred to the basis of marriage as "from the beginning," and in doing so He pointed His listeners to Genesis 2:18-25. The beginning did not concern itself with Jew or Gentile, those in the family of God or those outside. Marriage "from the beginning" had to do with the entire human race! It still does!

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN FOLLOWING GOD'S WILL

To submit to the Lord's will often presents a difficult challenge, for the immediate consequence sometimes appears so devastating. Surely it was a time of great difficulty when the men of Judas who had "taken strange wives of the people of the land" found it necessary "to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them" (Ezra 10:2-3). It was no doubt a painful decision for Abraham to prepare for the sacrifice of his son, yet he obeyed his God (Gen. 22). Centuries later the writer of Hebrews tells us of Abraham's reward for making the proper decision (11:17-19, 13-16).

I certainly do not know all the answers; and I must frankly admit that handling problems which arise regarding divorce and remarriage requires patience, understanding, and a generous portion of God's mercy. Permit me to share with you an answer which will apply in principle to so very many difficult situations.

My dear sister in Christ,

How good and yet how sad it was to receive your telephone call just now. Good in that I appreciate so very much your concern and friendship. Good, too, in that I feel it a genuine honor to be the object of your confidence. But how sad that your lingering problem has not dissipated. It is a blessing, however, when unpleasant matters must come to an end and one can proceed with God's purpose which unquestionably lies ahead for those who determine to serve Him.

The employment opportunity at Columbia certainly seems to have been presented at an opportune time, but in reality I feel that it would be a sad mistake to take this job. Even though at present there might be a

certain relief in "getting away from it all," there are so many factors which demand you stay and shoulder your responsibilities with the determination I know to be in you. There is the security of your present position, the influence you can and seriously need to exert on your children, involvement with a faithful congregation of the Lord's church, and the presence and support of those dear friends such as Patti and her family. There is consolation, too, in knowing that time seems to be a marvelous healer of wounds.

While you wanted and would continue to put forth every effort to have a happy marriage, this could be accomplished only if your husband would also work toward this same good end. If this is not to be (and his actions certainly indicate it is not), then you must accept the inevitable and forge ahead. You cannot waste what can still be a useful and beautiful life - and I know you don't intend to.

While remarriage is not even a consideration for the Christian, there are so many areas in which one's life can be fulfilling and most rewarding. You have already considered at least one of them, for you mentioned to me attending to older women who were in need. What a really useful place you will find, too, in just a few years when your grandchildren come along. Consider several women whose lives found such usefulness that God saw fit to mention them in His word.

Anna (Luke 2:36-38), the prophetess, who served the Lord diligently. She was now about eighty-four years old and had apparently been a widow all but seven years since the time of her virginity.

Tabitha or Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43) who "was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did." She was mourned at her death, and Peter brought her back to life again.

Especially Naomi (Book of Ruth) who was influential in the life of Ruth, the Moabitess. Naomi left her land, Bethlehem-Judah, in the company of her husband and her two sons. After ten years and the deaths of her husband and both sons, she returned saying, "Call me not Naomi [pleasant], call me Mara [bitter]: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi [pleasant], seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" (1:20-21).

The lovely end of the story is found in the fact that through the good influence of Naomi there was a marriage between Ruth and Boaz, which resulted in the birth of Obed, who became the father of Jesse, who became the father of King David. Prior to this pleasant conclusion, however, and before they could have known what it would be, "The women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed" (4:13-17).

But the marvelous, final conclusion of this lovely true story is that thirty generations after the marriage of Ruth and Boaz, and through the same line of descent, was born Jesus, the Messiah (Matthew 1:5-16). It was through the difficulties which befell her that Naomi enjoyed the grand privilege of figuring so effectively in the ancestry of the Saviour.

I feel very strongly the Lord's influence in my own life and can confidently look in the past and see how He has used many things, some unpleasant and distasteful, to achieve His good purpose. If you could but look ahead, no doubt the same would be your conclusion about the hand of God in your own life. It is such an honor to be able to discuss these matters with you. I do hope that these comments might be of help and assurance. Please feel free at any time to call if you feel I can be of some help. The greatest source of strength, of course, is the Lord and His will to be present in every difficulty you face.

APPLICATION OF JESUS' TEACHING

There is no question but that Jesus taught the truth and displayed in His life ever-lasting principles of righteousness and humble obedience to the heavenly Father. His example commands our attention and reminds us that we should "walk in the steps of the Master."

But Jesus lived, died His sacrificial death, and was resurrected during the era of the Old Testament - prior to the advent of Christianity. Christianity came into its full bloom and glory some fifty days later (Acts 1:3-8, Acts 2, Acts 11:15). While many principles of His teaching are age-less, as were many of those of the old Ten Commandment law, and are to be found in the New Testament (Romans 13:9), we cannot follow in the Christian era EVERY-THING taught by Jesus. To do so would be to observe that which is not now applicable.

In Matthew 19:17, for an example, Jesus told the rich, young, ruler to "Keep the commandments." Then in verses 18-19 Jesus explained the commandments to be the Ten Commandments as given by Moses. As correct as this was in the day of Jesus, we cannot in our day teach this same doctrine, for the age of the old law has ceased.

In telling the ten lepers to "Go shew yourselves unto the priests" (Luke 17:14) and the one leper in Matthew 8:4, "Shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded," Jesus was clearly operating within the jurisdiction of the old law as given in Leviticus 14:1-32, especially verses 2, 3, 4, 10. We cannot in our day teach and encourage any one to follow Jesus' instructions based upon these Old Testament instructions.

Since Jesus in referring to "saving for the cause of fornication" (Matthew 5:32) and "except it be for fornication" (Matthew 19:9) was likewise referring to the old law and its application. The very nature of the questions asked Him in Matthew 19:3 and 7 clearly show that Jesus was

responding to inquiries regarding Moses' law. We cannot, therefore, correctly apply His teaching in these instances to our day.

Harry Cobb, Revised May 24, 2001

GOD'S LAW THROUGH MOSES IN CONTRAST WITH THE LAW OF CHRIST

The law of God given through Moses applied for almost 1,500 years and ceased to be applicable when it was fulfilled. Jesus explained this in Matthew 5:18 when He said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." This fulfillment came on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2, a time and an event predicted by Jesus in Luke 24:47-49 and spoken of by Peter in Acts 11:15 as "the beginning."

Jesus actually lived, taught, died, arose, and ascended during the era of the Old Law. This was a transition period in which Jesus attempted to persuade the people to respect and obey the law of God then in effect and at the same time prepare for the approach of His new kingdom (the church) and the new law which would pertain to that new kingdom. This is evident in numerous passages such as:

Matters retained in the Old Law

Offering for cleansings (Mark 1:40-44)

Taught obedience to the Old Law (Mark 10:17-21)

Prepared for observing the Passover (Luke 22:9-13)

Teachings applicable during the era of the church

Baptism in name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19-20)

Absence of prestige among Christians (Matthew 20:25-28)

Approach to settling problems (Matthew 18:15-17)

Communion at which He would be present in His new kingdom (Matthew 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:16-18)

As this was a transition period and the new could not yet be effected while the old remained in force, the distinction must be determined by:

1. The context in which the passage is found
2. That which was recorded from Acts 2 forward, for Jesus promised the Holy Ghost would "teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).
3. Principles which Jesus taught (often in allegorical language) which prepared for understanding of His then coming kingdom.

THE SUBJECT OF MATTHEW 19 IS SIMPLY A QUESTION REGARDING THE OLD LAW OF MOSES

In Matthew 19:3 the Pharisees asked Jesus a question which concerned their time and the law under which they then lived, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Jesus' answer referred them to "the beginning" (v. 4-6) and emphasized God's eternal law, not only during the time of Moses, but from creation.

Not content with Jesus' answer, the Pharisees pointed to Moses allowing a "writing of divorcement" (v. 7). To this Jesus replied that God had permitted Moses to allow, "because of the hardness of your hearts," that which God did not intend (v. 8). Then He added, "But from the beginning [from creation] it was not so."

Then Jesus proceeded to explain that Moses' law required stoning of the adulterer (Deuteronomy 22). This was the exception which permitted the husband to marry another wife, for the adulteress was now dead. Otherwise he would be committing adultery himself. If putting away was done by divorce, then whosoever married the woman put away would also commit adultery because he would have married another man's wife. Stoning, consequently, prevented all this from happening and was the solution to the problem of adultery.

Deuteronomy 24 recorded the allowance of Moses, it completely did away with God's original intent, and it was to this the Pharisees were referring.

A comparable situation is where God allowed Israel to have a king contrary to His wise provision (1 Samuel 8:5-22) . There are many other instances where Israel went astray from God's will and where He, against His righteous will, suffered their disobedience. Eventually Israel was captured in 587 B.C.

by Babylon, carried away for seventy years, and never regained their independent status. Neither God nor Jesus approved of what God allowed Moses to permit, but it was suffered because of their hardness of heart.

CONTRAST BETWEEN DEUT. 22 AND 24

Matthew 19:9

Contrast between Deut 22 and Deut 24

Deut 22 required STONING:

Of wife found not to be a virgin (13-21)

Of those involved in adultery (22)

Of betrothed virgin in city and involved man (23)

Of man who forced betrothed virgin in the field (24-27)

Deut 24 permitted WRITING OF DIVORCEMENT:

"That she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her" (1).

Jesus explained that the provision of Deut 24 was permitted (contrary to God's intent) "because of the hardness of your hearts" (Mt 19:9).

Although they knew that the teaching of Deut 22 did not allow divorce but required stoning, those Pharisees who tempted Jesus were using Deut 24 to permit divorce for "EVERY CAUSE."

They had asked, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for EVERY CAUSE?"

Jesus' answer:

He disallowed Moses' provision of Deut 24, stating that "from the beginning it was not so" (v. 8).

He referred to Deut 22 as to only provision for dissolving a marriage - that of stoning in event of fornication (v. 9).

This understanding is evident in Paul's writings in 1 Cor 7. In this

very in-depth writing on marriage, Paul failed to list fornication as an exception. If this were the SINGLE exception, is it not highly unlikely that he would have failed to make mention of it?

Harry Cobb, July 14, 2000

COMPARATIVE UNDERSTANDING OF "EXCEPT" AND "SAVING"

Let it be clearly understood that these passages stand correct and agreeable as translated. These reworded sentence structures are given simply to show the correct meaning and application of similar word structures in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9.

"Except" and "saving" mean in these passages exactly what they mean in other similar passages; that is, something contrary to the rule. But the meaning should always be determined by the context and the background understanding - never by what might be socially accepted.

Esther 4:11 -

"All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days."

"Except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre (as a sign of acceptance), "that he may live."

"Except it be for fornication" (the cause for which she will have been stoned to death), "and shall marry another..."

Matthew 12:29 -

"Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house."

"Except he first bind the strong man?" (thus rendering him incapable of resistance) "and then he will spoil his house."

"Except it be for fornication" (the cause for which she will have been stoned to death), "and shall marry another..."

2

Matthew 26:42 -

"He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

"If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it" (the very purpose for which I came to this earth), "thy will be done."

"Except it be for fornication" (the cause for which she will have been stoned to death), "and shall marry another..."

Luke 9:13 -

"But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

"Except we should go and buy meat for all this people" (in which case there will be ample).

"Except it be for fornication" (the cause for which she will have been stoned to death), "and shall marry another..."

John 3:3 -

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"Except a man be born again" (by which he will have complied with the will of God), "he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"Except it be for fornication" (the cause for which she will have been stoned to death), "and shall marry another..."

1 Cor 14:7 -

3

"And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?"

"Except they give a distinction in the sounds" (which distinction is necessary in making a determination), "how shall it be known what is piped or harped?"

"Except it be for fornication" (the cause for which she is stoned to death),

"and shall marry another..."

Amos 9:8 -

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD."

"Saving that I will not" (as I propose to do with Israel) "utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD."

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication" (the sin for which she shall have been stoned),

"causeth her to commit adultery" (because, being alive, she will likely seek another mate).

FORNICATION AND ADULTERY

The term "fornication" used in 1 Corinthians 5:1 carries forth the meaning of illicit sexual intercourse. It is to be noted that even though the term fornication was used, the word "wife" shows this situation to involve a married party. Fornication is the general act of improper sexual relation whether committed by married persons or unmarried, while adultery is the specific act of fornication when it involves married people.

This is also noted in Revelation 2:20-21 where Jezebel is spoken of as committing fornication, while verse 22 terms this very same act as adultery. Fornication is used when referring to the sinful act, whether committed by single or married persons, while adultery is fornication committed by married people. This act involving married people may also be termed as fornication, for adultery is simply a term used to refer to a specific form of fornication. The context may be useful in determining whether to refer to a specific act as fornication or adultery. 1 Corinthians 7:2, for instance, refers to fornication when speaking of those who have not yet married. 1 Corinthians 6:9 used both terms to denote those who will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Even though both terms were used, this does not show them to be permanently separated, but rather allows for inclusiveness and completeness.

Genesis 24:16 refers to Rebekah as both a "virgin" and "neither had any man known her." Different words, but exactly the same meaning; both used in supporting the fact that Rebekah had not engaged in sexual relation. In Genesis 29:10 Rachael is spoken of as the daughter of Jacob's mother's brother and this explanation is used three times.

This usage is similar to both fornication and adultery being used in the same sentence. The fact that they are both used in the same sentence does not alter the fact that fornication in general in nature, while adultery is a specific form of fornication.

Harry Cobb, August 14, 2007

REDUNDANT STATEMENTS

In view of both fornication and adultery being used in the same sentence, some understand this to make a distinction between them:

“Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate”
(1 Cor 6:9).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness...” (Gal 5:19).

But other passages use this same type of redundancy without indicating a distinction; to the contrary to indicate a sameness.

“And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her” (Genesis 24:16).

“And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother” (Genesis 29:10).

Contrary to what several brethren advance (perhaps due to definition inherited from past misunderstanding), adultery is simply a specific type of fornication. This is made clearly evident in two passages.

In 1 Cor 5:1 the condemned sin under consideration was fornication, improper sexual conduct. Yet in the last word on verse 1 one of the persons involved was a “wife.” The sin was fornication, but in this case it is specifically termed “adultery” because it involved a violation of the marriage relationship.

In Rev 2:20-21 the improper acts of Jezebel are referred to as

fornication, while in verse 22 the specific term used was "adultery."

Harry Cobb, August 21, 2007

1 CORINTHIANS 7

The Relationship between a man and a woman was also a concern among early Christians, for Paul's answer to those at Corinth who had inquired about these matters is recorded in 1 Corinthians 7.

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me..." (7:1).

I God's Intent in the Marriage Relationship (1-2)

II Husband and Wife Responsibility (3-5)

III Paul's Wise Insight into Christians Placing Devotion to God Before Even Permissible Tendencies (6-9)

Further explanation of his comments in verse 1.

IV Paul Comments on Several Categories into Which Marriages (or the Absence of Marriage) May Fall

A. Marriage of Two Christians (10-11).

"Let not..." (10) viewed in light of Mt 19:7-8,

"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."

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead,

she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom 7:1-3). 2

It is clearly evident that we recognize this principle, for in almost EVERY wedding the statement is made, "Do you take... for as long as ye both shall live?"

But the Lord has wisely foreseen the possibility of difficulties arising and had made provision:

Paul states these two alternatives (11):

"Let her remain UNMARRIED" (11a)

"Or be RECONCILED unto her husband" (11b)

Verse 11c states that it equally applies to both husband and wife.

B. Marriage of Believer to an Unbeliever (12-16).

1. Being married to an unbeliever is not grounds for dissolving the marriage. Paul gives instructions (12-13).

He explains:

A. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the [believing] wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the [believing] husband" (14a).

B. "Else were your children UNCLEAN..." (14b).

2. It is affirmed by some that God does not recognize the marriage of sinners.

To the contrary, God recognizes even a sinner who is attempting to conform to His standards. Consider Cornelius in 1 Corinthians 10. But

3

Herod was condemned by John for living in adultery with his brother Philip's wife (Mt 14:1-12).

"It is unlawful for thee to have her" (v. 4).

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 speaks of "Idolaters...fornicators...adulterers...drunkards" not inheriting the kingdom of God. Then Paul says in verse 11, "And such were some of you."

How could they have been ADULTERERS if God had not recognized their marriage as sinners?

3. But what if the UNBELIEVER does not consent to dwell with the believer?

"A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases" (15).

Some brethren appear to rejoice at this comment, for they feel they have found a way of escape from an unwanted relationship. How sad it is that some so seriously twist God's beautiful word.

While marriage is the general subject under consideration, the specific responsibility referred to is that of verses 12-13 where Paul enjoined upon the Christian to "dwell" with the unbeliever. If the unbeliever simply will not permit this, then the Christian is not under "bondage" to THIS obligation; not free from the bondage of marriage!.

V Abiding in One's Calling (17-24)

Becoming a Christian does not alter or require change in matters which are compatible with Christianity:

Circumcision (18-20)

4

Servitude (21-24)

There would be a clash of principle, however, for one to continue as:

Thief

Prostitute

Adulterer

VI Absence of Marriage (25-40, as well as 6-9)

1. Virgins (25-38)

Paul reasons in view of "present distress" (26).

"For a MAN so to be" thus includes men as well as women, for Paul is here referring to the state of virginity (26).

"Loosed from a wife" does not require the cause to be divorce (27). Comparable usage in Rom 7:2 clearly shows the cause of being loosed to have been DEATH.

"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is LOOSED from the law of her husband."

Marriage is NOT encouraged under such conditions (28).

Pressure under such circumstances(29-32)

2. Paul's encouragement of celibacy (32-36 and 6-9).

Virgin used as a state of being rather than as it is now so commonly used to refer to a young, virgin girl.

"For a MAN so to be" (26).

Verses 36-38 refers to a person's own state, not to a virgin to whom he is attracted.

5

VII Widows (39-40)

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14).

Live so as to later merit respect, and if need be, support.

1 Timothy 5:3-6

1 Timothy 5:9-16

Examples:

Naomi (Ruth 4:13-17)

Anna (Luke 2:36-38)

Age 84. Lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, thus likely about 59 years a widow.

Contrasts:

"It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house" (Proverbs 25:24).

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10). Then verses 11-31, if desired.

VIII "But You Left Out Something!"

I don't think so.

"You left out Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, thus you left out part of God's provisions."

I only taught what Paul taught to the early church. Did he also leave out something?

Let us look at the matter.

6

Mt 5:31-32, "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 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."

Mt 19:9, "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."

Explanation:

In Mt 7:12 Jesus said, "THIS is the law."

Other notes

In Mt 19:8 Jesus referred to God's allowance through Moses during the dispensation of the Law, but referred to "the beginning" as God's proper design. Jesus never even hinted at an exception for the Christian age.

Mt 19:9, "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."

"Except it be for fornication" again refers to the old Law.

Deut. 24 is where Moses made allowances not permitted earlier by God, and this is where Jesus was referring to when He said in Mt 19:8, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."

This is comparable to God allowing Israel a king even though it was contrary to His desire (1 Samuel 8).

7

Acts 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

In Deut. 22,

1. Prior to the allowed disregard of God's earlier requirements, and
2. To which Jesus referred when He mentioned exception
3. Stoning to death was required for EVERY immoral act:
 - A. Woman found not to be a virgin at marriage (13-21). "The men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die."
 - B. Adultery (22). "Then they shall both of them die" ...so shalt thou put away evil from Israel."
 - C. Fornication with a betrothed virgin (23-24). "Ye shall stone them with stones that they die...so thou shalt put away evil from among you."
 - D. Fornication with a virgin not betrothed (28-29). Marriage required, for no marriage obligation was violated.
4. With view to the required DEATH BY STONING of those guilty of marriage immorality, which death naturally brought an end to the marriage, Jesus very plainly

and clearly taught that with this exception any OTHER cause for remarriage would CONSTITUTE 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" (Mt 19:9).

"NOT UNDER BONDAGE"

1 Cor 7:15, "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."

The clause in this verse which no doubt raises the question is, "A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases."

Some would explain this statement to mean that a believer in Christ, whose unbelieving spouse has departed from the marriage, is free and no longer bound to that marriage. To remove this verse from its proper context (its surrounding, related verses) might permit one to understand Paul's teaching to allow dissolving of such a marriage. A proper view of the matter under consideration, however, teaches just the opposite.

In verses 12 through 14 Paul discusses the marriage where one is a Christian and the other is not. He instructs the believer to not leave the unbeliever, for that relationship is recognized as a marriage even though one is an unbeliever. He explains that if this were not so, then the children to this marriage would be considered as illegitimate. He continues in verse 16 to show that by remaining with the unbeliever, the Christian might be able to influence and convert the unbeliever.

Then Paul reasons that the unbeliever is not content and departs the marriage. He states that the believer "is NOT UNDER BONDAGE in such cases." But we ask, under bondage to what? The answer is certainly not marriage, for that would clash with the entire tenor of the chapter. But the believer in such cases is not under bondage to that which Paul has just said was his responsibility - that is, to live with the unbeliever.

Paul had just instructed the believer to live with the unbeliever; but now, since that cannot be done, he explains understandably that the believer is not under obligation to do that which is not now possible. In accord with verse 11, the unbeliever must "remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband."

We must not attempt to read into a passage what may be socially acceptable but that which is not permitted by God.

Harry Cobb
March 2, 2000

"LET EVERY MAN ABIDE IN THE SAME CALLING"
1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Becoming a child of God changes and requires change in many things regarding the "*old man*" one used to be and the new man who must now "*walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4-6).

His change allows him to now enjoy:

Freedom from his sins

A new relationship with God, Christ, and other believers

Assembling on the first day with fellow-Christians

But he must also change (1 Cor 6:11):

Immoral traits such as fornication and adultery,

Personal habits which need to be controlled such as loosing

one's temper, foul speech, and drinking to excess,

Involvements which would harmfully reflect upon Christ or

His church

Working as a bartender

Operating a night-club.

But the Christian May Remain in Some Things as He Was

There are situations wherein a Christian may "*ABIDE in the same calling.*" Since the old Law does not now apply (Heb 10:9), there are some things which are not now required. Circumcision is one of those things (1 Cor 7:18-19).

It is not necessary that a circumcised Christian seek to become uncircumcised. He may simply remain as he is since circumcision does not violate

Christian principles. In accord with Paul's judgment, Timotheus was circumcised (Acts 16:1-3), Titus was not (Gal 2:2-5), and Paul submitted to those who would have been offended had he not agreed with circumcision (Acts 21:21-26).

While it is not required by God, if one chooses to refrain from eating pork he may continue this personal preference and "*abide*" in the preference which was his at his calling. If he wishes to refrain from eating ANY flesh, that is his decision, for eating flesh is not required by God (Rom 14:1-3).

But Some Things May be Changed

2

There are some things which do not require change but which could be changed if opportunity were presented. One of those to which Paul referred was being a "*servant*" or slave (1 Cor 7:21-23). Of this situation Paul wrote, "*Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God*" (1 Cor 7:24). But he also provided, "*If thou mayest be free, use it rather*" (verse 22). This provision could include anything not contrary to the principles of Christianity.

As It Concerns Marriage

While these comments apply in principle in a general sense, they were made in regard to the matter of marriage. In that context Paul wrote, "*But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches*" (verse 17). As in many other passages, examples are used to illustrate the truth under consideration and to show its proper application.

Peter referred to the flood in speaking of baptism (1 Pet 3:20-21),

Jesus used "*the lilies of the field*" in showing God's concern for His people (Mt 6:28-30), and

Paul in teaching about tongues spoke of the trumpet giving "*an uncertain sound*" (1 Cor 14:8).

These conditions regarding circumcision and being a servant serve to illustrate the various positions in which one may find himself when called by the gospel.

But under no circumstance is Paul suggesting that one remain in an IMPROPER marriage relationship! If this was what Paul was saying, then also:

A bartender could continue as a bartender,
A nightclub operator could maintain his business,
A Moslem with four wives when converted to Christianity
could retain his four wives.

This passage DOES NOT teach nor does it ALLOW one to continue in an unscriptural marriage relationship - regardless of what may be fashionable in the society among whom we live.

Should one's marital status be improper and not in accord with God's will, then he must cease that relationship.

Should one's marriage relationship be approved of God, even though it
3

be to an unbeliever, then he must "*seek not to be loosed*" (verse 27).

It remains an acceptable marriage (1 Cor 7:14).

If one is unmarried, then he must not consider it necessary to be married

(verse 27), for under certain conditions (verse 26) it might be best that one remain single (verse 26).

Paul is simply saying that becoming a Christian does not require a change in matters which are already in accord with the will of God. Those matters which are not acceptable to God must, of course, be changed.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 7:25 – 40

These verses are acknowledged by Paul as his own judgments, but he qualifies them by stating that he had “obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful” (25, also 6, 12, 40).

It Should be Noted

1. Five times in these verses Paul comments on the advisability of remaining unmarried:

1. “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”
7. “I would that all men were even as I.”
8. “To the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even and I.”
25. “It is good for a man so to be.”
40. “She is happier if she so abide.”

He realizes and acknowledges the fact that God intended marriage and he even recommended that young women marry and bear children (1 Tim 5:14), but in this context Paul is teaching the value of putting spiritual values first.

2. The word *virgin* refers to one who has never had sexual relations. Most passages where this word occurs refers to women, but it is not and we must not limited the word to women. Revelation 14:4 refers to men who “were not defiled with women; for they are virgins” (Strong 3933, parthenos).

3. It is essential that we do not limit our understanding of Scripture to our own inherited traditional views, regardless of long established and from whom they were received. Several instances:

Camel instead of rope (Mt 19:24, Mark 10:25, Luke 18:25), as translated from Aramaic.

Lord's day (Rev 1:10) understood as Sunday instead of day of the Lord (Ps 118:22-24, Mt 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17)).

Verse 25

Virgins are subject of discussion, but verse 26 refers this to "*a man.*"

Paul explains his reasoning in view of "*the present distress.*" 2

This was likely written about 56 A.D., some fourteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and of which Jesus predicted in Mt 24:15-22. In His prediction Jesus described the conditions which would be best endured if:

They fled into the mountains

Entered not again into their house or returned
to take their clothing

Women were not with child or nursing

Their flight be not in Winter nor on the Sabbath.

There was to be a terrible time of anguish, loss, and extreme difficulty.

Verse 27

Having explained that it would be best for a man to remain as a virgin,

Paul advises a man who is married not to seek to be free from that marriage.

Even though it might be dangerous for him, the husband and father has a prior obligation; he must remain "wherein he was called" (20, 24).

If a man is free from a wife (perhaps his wife had died), it would be best that he not seek another.

"Loosed" does not imply divorce, for that would be contrary to the entire tenor of this chapter!

It would include one separated from his wife
as suggested in verse 11.

It would certainly include death of a spouse.

Verse 28

But there would be no sin in getting married, even for a virgin.

Paul is simply advising against possible problems which could arise due to "*the present distress.*"

Verses 29-31

Paul suggests extreme hardship of stress, pain, anguish, and difficulty anticipated as a consequence of impending persecution. Things which would require strength and determination to endure.

3

Verses 32-35

In general, but especially in view of "*the present distress,*" those who are unmarried have less involvement and responsibility than one with a wife or husband and children.

Verse 36

With this verse we must disregard inherited tradition and view with an unbiased mind what is actually involved. The various versions differ greatly and clash drastically on the following verses.

Let us understand that a version is not necessarily a translation, but rather an interpretation and a human commentary.

Although several versions insert the idea and even the words "virgin daughter" in the text, such is not in the least under consideration! The word "daughter" is not found in the original language.

Under consideration is the state of virginity. Note the exact wording from the Greek text,

"But if anyone behaves uncomely to virginity his thinks, if he be beyond prime, and so it ought to be, what he wills let him

do, he does not sin: let them marry" (Berry, page 448).

Paul is simply saying that if a man is living an unmarried life and later has the desire and decides to marry, let him proceed to do so.

Verse 37

In this verse Paul restates his earlier persuasion that it is best for one to remain unmarried. The original language states,

"But he who stands firm in his heart, not having necessity, but authority has over his own will, and this has judged in his heart to keep his own virginity, well he does" (B., 448).

Verse 38

4

In the customary wedding ceremony the question, "Who giveth this woman to be married?" is a corruption of verse 38, "He that giveth her in marriage doeth well."

Again the subject is virginity, not a virgin daughter. The King James twice adds to this verse the word "she," but this was not in the original text. Note the original Greek,

"So that also he that gives in marriage well does; and he that not gives in marriage better does" (Berry, page 448).

This refers to his own state of virginity; not to a virgin daughter. Paul is again emphasizing the ideal of attending "upon the Lord without distraction" (verse 35).

Verse 39-40

In agreement with what he wrote the Romans in 7:1-3, Paul states without exception that marriage is a lifetime condition. Upon the death of either spouse, however, the living may remarry.

That a widow marry "*only in the Lord*" is usually understood to mean only another Christian. Having experienced the give-and-take in marriage, she would surely not desire to be united with one whose principles were not Christian.

Speaking in general, but certainly in principle to marriage, Paul wrote in 2 Cor 7:14, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*"

For the fifth time Paul repeats his conviction that the widow, as well as anyone else, would do well to content themselves to remain unmarried so as to serve "*the Lord without distraction.*"

Harry Cobb, August 23, 2007

"YE HAVE HEARD...BUT I SAY UNTO YOU"

Matthew 5

The key to understanding these contrasts is in Jesus' introduction found in verse 17,

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

<u>Verse</u>	<u>"Ye have heard" and/or</u>	<u>"But I say"</u>	<u>Old Test. Ref.</u>
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"It hath been said"

21-22	"Thou shalt not kill"	"Whosoever is angry"	Lev 19:17
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27-28	"Thou shalt not commit adultery"	"Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust"	Job 31:1 Proverbs 6:25
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31-32	"Shall put away his wife...writing of divorcement"	"Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication"	Deut 22 Deut 24 Mt 19:8a Jesus emphasized
	what O.T. had		earlier taught!

33-34	"Thou shalt not forswear thyself"	"Swear not at all"	Ex 20:7 Deut 6:13 Deut 10:20
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38-39	"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"	"Resist not evil... turn to him the other also"	Isaiah 50:6 Lam 3:30 Prov 20:21-22 Ex 21:23-25
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43-44	"Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemies"	"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you"	Lev 19:18 Prov 25:21 Ex 23:4-5
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Jesus in these passages taught nothing that had not ALREADY been taught. The fact is that Jesus was not teaching a new law or making a contrast between the old and the new. In these six contrasting statements He was pointing out their disregard for the spirit of the law of God which existed at that time.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5 - 7

The intent of this study is to show that Jesus' sermon on the mount was directed to and intended to handle issues concerning those who were living under the scope of the Law of Moses. While many of the principles therein taught certainly were to later apply to those who were to live under the Christian era, even as did many of God's restrictions and provisions since the Garden of Eden, He was NOT at that time instituting a new law. As will be evident in a close observation of Mt. 5 - 7, several verses could apply ONLY to those under Moses' law. Had Jesus intended to institute a new law, those listening were not told of it. The six comments made by Jesus in verses 17 - 48 were clearly based upon passages existing in the Old Testament, and in none of them did He make a change - He rather pointed out their disregard for the spirit of the law.

Chapter 5

- 3 "Poor in spirit" - Psalms 51:17, Prov. 16:19, Isaiah 57:15.
- 4 "Mourn...shall be comforted" - Isaiah 61:2-3.
- 5 "Meek...shall inherit" - Psalms 37:11.
- 6 "Hunger and thirst after righteousness" - Isaiah 32:17.
- 7 "Merciful...shall obtain mercy" - Ps 41:1, Ps 109:12a, 16a.
- 8 "Pure in heart" - Psalms 15:1-2.
- 9 "Peacemakers...children of God" -
- 10 "Persecuted for righteousness" -
- 11 - 12 "Revile you, and persecute you, and say...evil" - Neh. 9:26.
- 13 "Ye are the salt" - Lev. 2:13, 2 Kings 2:19-21.
- 14 "Ye are the light" - Prov. 4:18.
- 15 - 16 "Candle under a bushel"

17 - 20 Jesus sets the stage for following remarks, which are arranged in six segments. Five of these begin with "Ye have heard and one begins with "It hath been said." Jesus emphasizes contrast between the attitude which the Jews DID have and that which they SHOULD HAVE had (verse 20).

21 - 22 "Ye have heard...but I say unto you...whosoever is angry" - Lev. 19:17. 2

What council was under consideration? Certainly not a council under the Christian era! Emphasize verse 17.

23 - 26 Application.

23 - 24 Gifts before the altar? Not a New Testament altar!

25 - 26 Prov. 25:8.

27 - 30 "Ye have heard...but I say...whosoever looketh on a woman" - Job 31:1, Prov. 6:25.

31 - 32 "It hath been said...but I say...saving for the cause of fornication" - Deut. 24, Deut. 22, Matthew 19:8a.

33 - 37 "Ye have heard that it hath been said...but I say...swear not at all" - Exodus 20:7, Deut. 6:13, 10:20.

38 - 42 "Ye have heard...an eye for an eye...but I say unto you...turn to him the other also" - Isaiah 50:6, Exodus 21:23-25, Lev. 24:20, Lam. 3:30, Prov. 20:22, Deut. 15:8-11, Prov. 25:22.

43 - 48 "Ye have heard...love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy...but I say...love your enemies" - Lev. 19:18, Prov. 25:21-22, Ex. 23:4-5.

45 - Job 25:3b.

Chapter 6

1 - 18 On doing good things because of praise.

6 "Enter into thy closet" - attitude seen in 2 Kings 4:4-5, 33.

9 "Our Father" - Malachi 2:10, Jer. 3:19.

10 "Thy kingdom come" - Daniel 2:44, Mt. 3:2 (John), Mt. 3:17 (Jesus), Luke 9:27.

11 "Daily bread" - Proverbs 30:8b.

12 "As we forgive our debtors" -

Application of this principle, verses 14-15.

13 "Lead us not into temptation" - Psalms 19:13
"For thine is the kingdom..." - 1 Chronicles 29:11. 3

16 - 18 Fasting, was a common practice - Ezra 8:21, Esther 4:16,
2 Samuel 12:15-17.

19 - 34 "Lay not up...treasures" - Proverbs 23:4-5, Psalms 104:11.

"But seek ye first" (v. 33) - 1 Kings 3:11-13.

Chapter 7

1 - 5 "Judge not..." -

6 "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs" - Prov. 9:8,
Prov. 23:9.

7 - 12 "Do ye even so to them; FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS"
Lev. 19:18.

13 - 14 "Strait gate...narrow is the way" -

15 - 20 "By their fruits ye shall know them" -

21 - 27 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord" - Ps 78:34-37.

Application, verse 24-27.

"A NEW COMMANDMENT"

Was the New Testament law given and taught by Jesus prior to the beginning of the Christian Era in Acts 2 ? Some who believe that Jesus did so give and teach a new law refer to John 13:34 as evidence,

"A NEW commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Jesus mentions this commandment at least two more times:

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

"These things I command you, that ye love one another" (v. 17).

But was this in fact a NEW commandment?

It had been commanded in the Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18).

EXPLANATION

In many instances we note that the Bible is its own best interpreter; and this principle is true in this instance.

John writes in 1 John 2:7, "I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning."

He continues, "Again, a new commandment I write unto you..." (v. 8).

Then he adds, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light..." (v. 10).

Note that John says he is NOT writing a NEW commandment, but then he proceeds to term his writing "a NEW commandment."

This is not a contradiction, but rather a way of repeating what had already been said and placing needed emphasis upon it.

Thus with Jesus' statement in John 13:34. He was RENEWING a commandment

which had earlier been given in the Law but which needed to be repeated for emphasis.

Harry Cobb, September 12, 1999

GREEK WORDS DEFINED

Passage	Strong's Numbers
Matthew 5:32 Divorced	630 "to free fully...release...divorce... put (send) away...release"
Matthew 5:32, Matthew 9:19 Marry , marrieth	1060 "to wed...marry"
Matthew 9:8, 9 Put away	630 "to free fully...release...divorce... put (send) away...release"
Matthew 9:9, 1 Cor 5:1 Fornication	4202 "harlotry (include. adultery and incest); fig. idolatry:-fornication"
Rev 2:22 Adultery	3431 "adultery"

Contrary to what several brethren advance (perhaps due to definition inherited from past misunderstanding), adultery is simply a specific type of fornication. This is made clearly evident in two passages.

In 1 Cor 5:1 the condemned sin under consideration was fornication, improper sexual conduct. Yet in the last word on verse 1 one of the persons involved was a "wife." The sin

was fornication, but in this case it is specifically termed "adultery" because it involved a violation of the marriage relationship.

In Rev 2:20-21 the improper acts of Jezebel are referred to as fornication, while in verse 22 the specific term used was "adultery."

To illustrate this understanding further, we are all Americans; a general descriptive term. Yet you are a Tennessee American, Wayne Moore is a Georgia American, and Dana is an Alabama American. We may all be referred to as Americans, but when we wish to be specific, we may designate ourselves as Tennesseans, Georgians, or Alabamians.

The illicit immoral act is fornication, but when that act involves married persons fornication may specifically be referred to as adultery.

ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS

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Bound	1 Cor 7:27	deo	S 1210 Thayer 131	To bind, be in bonds To be bound to one
Bound	Rom 7:2	det	S 1210	Same
Bondage	1 Cor 7:15	douloo	S 1402 Thayer 158	Bring into bondage To be under bondage
Loosed	1 Cor 7:27	lusin lusin	S 3080 Thayer 384	To be loosed A loosing of any bond
Loosed	1 Cor 7:27	luo	S 3089 Thayer 384	Dissolve, loose A loosing of any bond
Free	1 Cor 7:39	eleutheros eleutheros	S 1658 Thayer 204	Free, at liberty Liberty
Freed	Rom 7:3	eleutheros	S 1658 Thayer 20	Free, at liberty Free from
Divorce	Mt 5:32	apostasion	S 647 Thayer 67	Separative, divorce Bill of divorce
Divorce	Mt 19:7	apostasion	S 647 Thayer 67	Separative, divorce Bill of divorce
Put away	Mt 5:32	apoluo	S 630 Thayer 65	Put away, divorce To dismiss from the house
Put away	Mt 19:7	apolusai	S 630 Thayer 65	To dismiss from the house

Because he continues to be married to a living wife.
"And whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Because the woman put away by divorce rather than stoning continues to live and continues to be another man's wife.

Regulations pertaining to marriage and separation during the Christian age are found in Paul's letter, 1 Corinthians 7. The idea of divorce was not God's intent and is not permitted among His people today.

Harry Cobb, April 3, 2004

OBSERVATIONS REGARDING DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

The mission of John the baptist was:

To turn the people of God back to God

Isaiah 40:3-5 (Luke 3:4-6, Mt 3:3, John 1:23)

Malachi 4:5-6 (Luke 1:17)

To prepare for the coming of the Messiah

Malachi 3:1 (Mark 1:2-3, 7-8)

To announce and prepare the people for the coming kingdom

Luke 1:17, Mt 3:2

Jesus continued that part of John's mission yet future:

To announce and prepare the people for the coming kingdom

Mark 1:14-15, Mt 4:17

These grand missions were not fulfilled until

Jesus had been sacrificed (John 19:30, Col 2:14)

The kingdom had come in fact (Mt 5:18, Acts 2:47, Acts 11:15)

There is no record where Jesus ever broke or taught against any of the Old Law.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass for the law, till all be fulfilled" (Mt 5:17-18).

But then Jesus continued, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Verse 19).

Had Jesus changed the law or taught contrary to it, He would have condemned Himself. He did, however, encourage obeying the spirit of the law rather than the letter only. In this He added strength and beauty to obeying God's will.

These Observations Notwithstanding

there is no question but that Jesus knew and prepared in His teaching for the coming of His kingdom and the Christian era. Much of that teaching was allegorical, for to have taught in detail would have clashed with the old law and not been understood.

Jesus' comments in John 6:53-56 surely refer to the communion which His disciples would observe on the first day of the week.

His instructions in Mt 20:25-28 surely govern our attitude in Christian leadership.

It appears to me that Jesus' rebuke of Peter in taking the sword is an indication of what He intended for the people of His kingdom (Matthew 26:52-54).

Jesus plainly indicated that the communion would be observed in His coming kingdom (Mt 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:18).

Jesus' teaching in principle, as do many of the Psalms and Proverbs, apply to us as they have to all ages.

But Specifics of the Old Law Do Not Apply to Our Day

That is what Matthew 19:9 is - a specific which did not continue into the Christian teaching. Jesus had been questioned about the law of Moses by those who knew that they were then living under the jurisdiction of that law. They specifically asked, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" (7).

Jesus then explained, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives." He then added, "But from the beginning it was not so" (8). Divorce was never God's intent, even from the beginning of His creation.

The Jesus restates the Law,

"And I say unto you"

Not something new or contrary to what had been God's intent all along, but simple a reiteration of that which was so!

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication”

The consequence of adultery under the Law (God’s law before He suffered the putting away) was stoning (Deut 22). Thus, stoning continued to be God’s original requirement and the exception (death) mentioned by Jesus for which the man could marry again.

“And shall marry another”

If the wife was not stoned as God’s original will required, the wife was yet alive and continued to be the man’s wife.

“Committeth adultery;”

Because he continues to be married to a living wife.

“And whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

Because the woman put away by divorce rather than stoning continues to live and continues to be another man’s wife.

Regulations pertaining to marriage and separation during the Christian age are found in Paul’s letter, 1 Corinthians 7. The idea of divorce was not God’s intent and is not permitted among His people today.