

## **Matthew 19:3-12**

*By Ron Boatwright*

Concerning Jesus in Matthew 19:3 we read, "The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?'" They, as men are today, were only looking for a loophole and were not interested in the truth. Jesus says in Matthew 19:4-5, "And He answered and said to them, have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." In this quotation Jesus is referring to Genesis 2:24 in which God ordained the first institution, marriage. Marriage was instituted by God in the beginning for all mankind. God's law on marriage is for all people. It was not just for Adam & Eve because it says "a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife." Adam & Eve did not have a father and mother to leave. The marriage relationship replaces the parental relationship. "The two shall become one flesh"—so that the husband is so much joined to his wife as he is to his own body.

In Matthew 19:6 Jesus says, "So then they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." The pair becomes one flesh so the husband and wife become one body. Can you divide one flesh? "Therefore what God has joined together let not man separate." What does this mean? No man has the right or the authority to separate what God has joined together. God did the joining and only God can do the unjoining. No man, body of men, civil government, etc. has the authority to dissolve marriage contrary to the decrees of God.

Jesus continues in Matthew 19:8-9, "But from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." Jesus is putting things back the way they were in the beginning: one man for one wife for life. "And I say unto you", Jesus is speaking with authority. "Whoever"—Jesus restores God's original plan for marriage and applies it to all people. God's law on marriage, divorce, and remarriage is binding on all people just as it was in the beginning. "Whoever" includes all married persons who put away their spouses.

Why does one commit adultery when he divorces his wife and marries another? Webster defines adultery as "Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and a woman not his wife or between a married woman and a

man not her husband." So even though one has married a second wife, he commits adultery each time he has sexual intercourse with her since in the eyes of God he is still bound to his first wife. "Commits adultery" is translated from the Greek word MOICHATAI. This is a verb in the present tense, the force of which is continuous action. It means "keeps on committing adultery."

There is a new theory developed by men that says that adultery is only "point action". This new theory which allows one to divorce his spouse for any trivial reason, then pledge not to do it again, and then enter into a new marriage. This makes an absolute mockery out of the Lord's teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. What are the consequences of this new theory? The sad part about this is all the many souls that are going to be lost because of this false teaching, both of the participants and their teachers. It is not worth losing our souls by trying to console someone and make them feel comfortable in their lost condition.

Matthew 19:9b "And whoever marries her that is divorced commits adultery." Why? Because in God's eyes her new husband is having intercourse with someone else's wife. That person is still under obligation and bound to his or her first spouse "as long as he lives" (Romans 7:2-3). What Jesus says in this verse is straight forward, quite simple, and is not complicated. But men have worked to make it complicated. They have made an absolute mockery out of the Lord's teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It is because they have rejected the Lord's teaching on it and as 2 Peter 3:16 says, "Which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction." People have only one of two choices, either accept it or reject it. Rejecting it will have eternal consequences.

In Matthew 19:10 "His disciples said to Him, If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry." Why did the disciples react the way they did? What are the disciples saying? They seemed to feel the Lord was excessively strict. The apostles' ideas on marriage, divorce, and remarriage were shattered. They were saying Lord if the teaching is going to be this strict it would be better to remain celibate for the rest of one's life. Jesus in the next two verses is basically saying in many cases they were correct.

Jesus then says in Matthew 19:11-12, "But He said to them, all cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: for there are eunuchs who were born from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made

themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it." Jesus says there are some who make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Some people will have to live a celibate life to keep from living in adultery if that person really wants to go to Heaven. Some people will accept what the Lord says and some will reject it to their own destruction. But a person in an adulterous marriage has got to make the decision to either stay in it and spend an eternity in Hell or get out of it and live a celibate life so he can go to Heaven. Some will make the right decision and some will not.

In our immoral society more than one out of every two marriages end in divorce. A person getting married is more likely to get a divorce than to stay married. Adulterous marriages have become accepted in today's society and they have also been accepted in the Lord's church. People have tried to find a way around what the Bible says by looking for some loop-hole in a effort to find justification for those living in the sinful and lost state of adultery. We cannot but help to have compassion for them, but in our compassion we dare not change Biblical teaching lest we also loose our own souls. In Mark 8:38 Jesus says, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this **adulterous and sinful generation**; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Not only was it an adulterous and sinful world when Jesus walked upon the earth, but it continues to be just as adulterous and sinful today. Many people in the Lord's church are going to be lost in eternal punishment because of their adultery.

This is a very serious matter because every adulterer and adulteress will spend forever and ever in the eternal burning fires of Hell (1 Corinthians 6:9-11,& Galatians 5:19-21). And if we have taught them that it is all right to live in adultery, we will most likely be in Hell with them. This is very sobering. Eternity is too serious a matter.