

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

[Using KJV, NKJV, NIV]

[Revised February, 2006-ekb]

God instituted marriage and was the first marriage celebrant, *Gen 2:20-25*. **Marriage is God's plan for men and women, *Mat 19:4,5,6*. He created man and woman** for the purpose of marriage and the bringing forth of children, *Gen 1:28, Mal 2:15*.

The godly marriage relationship of a Christian husband and wife, is a picture of the union between Christ, the Bridegroom and His Bride, the Church, *Jn 3:29, 2Cor 11:2, Rev 19:7-9, 21:2, 2Cor 6:15-17, Eph 5:25-32*. The covenant union of the Christian husband and wife, is therefore of the highest significance, for it signifies this eternal union. God hates divorce, because it destroys the covenant of marriage, which is the basic building block of the Body and Bride of Christ.

In *Malachi 2:13,14*, it says that, at that time, Jehovah, ("LORD"), no longer paid attention to, or recognised, the sacrifices and offerings of His people. This was because the Lord had seen **the unfaithful and treacherous behaviour of the men towards the wives of their youth. The man's wife was his partner**, and he was joined to her by **the covenant of marriage**.

The Lord makes a man and a woman one in marriage, and in flesh and spirit they are His. This is because **the Lord is looking for godly children**. The Lord says take heed to your spirit and do not act treacherously towards the wife of your youth, *Mal 2:15*.

"I hate divorce", says the Lord. "I hate a man covering himself, (or his wife NIV) with violence," says the Lord Almighty. So take heed to your spirit and do not act treacherously, *Mal 2:16*.

Moses permitted divorce in the time of his leadership, *Deut 24:1-4*, **because of the hardness of the hearts of the people, *Mat 19:7,8*, but this was not God's intention from the beginning, v8.**

The Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" *Mat 19:3*. Jesus replied that God, in the beginning, made them male and female. So a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. They will no longer be two but one, **So what God has joined together, man must not separate, *Mat 19:4-6*.**

So the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why then did **Moses allow** divorce?" *Mat 19:7, Deut 24:1-4*. Jesus replied, "**Moses allowed** this because your hearts were hard," *Mat 19:8,7*, but this was not God's original intention for marriage.

Jesus then explained that anyone that divorces his wife, except it be for sexual immorality/marital unfaithfulness, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery, *Mat 19:9*.

***1Cor 7:10-16* is another important passage on this topic.**

v10,11 speaks about a Christian married couple. **If a believing couple separate, they are to remain unmarried**, (unless the separation was due to sexual immorality as mentioned in *Mat 19:9*). Where there is a separation, **every effort must be made towards reconciliation**, through humility, confession, openness, honesty, repentance and forgiveness. Reconciliation, wherever possible, is to be the desired objective, *Hosea 2:14* and *all of chapter 2*. Divorce is a major block in any process of reconciliation. Divorce and remarriage prevents all future divine intervention and reconciliation in a marriage. Divorce and remarriage locks in the breach of covenant for life. "For this reason God hates divorce because it destroys the covenant of marriage, which is the building block of the Body and Bride of Christ."

V12-16 looks at the situation of a married couple **where only one is a Christian believer**. If the unbelieving spouse is happy to remain in the marriage, **then let there be no separation**. Hopefully the unbelieving spouse will be won to the Lord, *1Pet 3:1, 1Cor 7:16*.

However if the **unbelieving partner departs, then let him depart, *1Cor 7:15***. A believing brother or sister is not under "bondage" in such cases. God has called us to peace. The believing spouse is not under bondage to hold the marriage together at all costs. The unbeliever may be an idolator and causing extreme conflict.

On the issue of remarriage of the believing spouse, who is now left alone, we must be guided by *Mat 19:9*, as our standard. If the unbeliever, who has departed, forms a sexual relationship another person, *Mat 19:9* applies to this. If the unbeliever who has departed, does not form a sexual relationship with another person, then *Mat 19:9* applies to this also. (There are very many possibilities which may occur.)

However it is wise for the remaining believer to pray regularly with several mature godly church leaders for the strength and guidance of God, and to pray sincerely and earnestly for the spouse who has departed. (Such a verse as *Acts 26:18* could be a good verse to pray.)

The Bible makes it clear **that a believer is to marry another believer, and not an unbeliever, *1Cor 7:39, 2Cor 6:14-18***. God's intention for marriage is the bringing forth of godly offspring, and for this, **it is necessary for both husband and wife to be believers, *Eph 6:1-4***. The Word of God makes it clear that a widow is free to remarry, *1Cor 7:39, Rom 7:2*, a believer. (*Ruth 1:9, 4:13*)