

# OPEN BIBLE STUDY

## Divorce and Remarriage Two Major Views - Which is Right? You Study - You Decide

### Lesson No. 1 of 4



The following are the two main positions in a nutshell:

**I. God designed divorce to end a marriage so the divorced woman could go be another man's wife. Though faithfulness is encouraged and unfaithfulness is sinful, God's basic law regarding marriage and divorce has not changed.**

**II. Divorce frees one to marry only if the person initiates the divorce because his/her spouse committed adultery. Otherwise, after a divorce, celibacy is the only answer to being in fellowship with God.**

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*After reading the questions below, along with the scripture that is noted, please circle Yes or No. If you are not sure leave it blank and come back to it later.*

1. Would you be delighted to learn that the Bible does not teach preachers should look into the previous marriages of converts or new members, make judgments and impose celibacy? Yes/No

2. Would you be elated to learn that though you and/or your loved ones have been told you are living in adultery you are really both legally and scripturally married? Yes/No

3. Do you understand the meaning of the word *prejudice* and know what effect it can have on the efforts of brethren to agree on biblical issues? Yes/No (Source #1)

4. Were the earthly teachers who have influenced your thinking on Bible issues inspired in their teaching? Yes/No

6. Should you be like the Bereans who "sought the scriptures daily" to see if the things the apostles taught them were true? (Acts 17:11) Yes/No

6. Is it possible to draw a wrong biblical conclusion if said conclusion is made based upon one passage and before a thorough study is made of all related scriptures? Yes/No

7. Must we consider all passages relating to a subject, and consider the circumstances and the meaning of words, to assure we truly understand an obscure (difficult or controversial) passage? Yes/No

8. In our efforts to learn who is eligible for marriage must we consider all related passages on the subject? Yes/No
9. Are you willing to follow good hermeneutics to learn from the Bible who has a right to marriage? Yes/No [Source #2]
10. If the conclusion one is considering on an issue has unacceptable consequences, is it good hermeneutics to accept said conclusion or not to reject it when these consequences become apparent? Yes/No
11. Is it safe to conclude that the truth on a Bible issue is the view of the preacher or family member you respect most? Yes/No
12. Should you do your own studying and make up your own mind based upon what is most reasonable and logical from ALL the evidence available to you? Yes/No
13. In studying the question "Who has a right to marriage?" is it important to consider whom Jesus was addressing (Jewish men under the Jewish dispensation) as well as the particular problem unique to them? [Source #3] Yes/No
14. In his epistles, did Paul teach the need for husbands and wives to be faithful? (Eph. 5:22; 5:25; Colossians 3:18, 19) Yes/No
15. Did Moses define divorce when he gave the command to men (who were intent on sending away their wives) to "write a certificate of divorce, put it into her hand and send her out of the house"? (Deut. 24:1-2) Yes/No
16. If a man merely sent his wife out of the house would it be accurate to say he *divorced* her according to the Law? Yes/No
17. Are you aware of any teaching in the New Testament that defines divorce? Yes/No
18. Has God's definition of divorce changed? Yes/No
19. Did Jesus say "What therefore God has joined together let not man put asunder"? (Matt. 19:6) Yes/No
20. Since "let not" does not mean "cannot" is it prudent to dogmatically assert that the above text teaches that divorce is not authorized? Yes/No
21. Under the Law of Moses, could a Jewish man divorce his wife according to the instructions God gave Moses? Yes/No
22. Do the Scriptures anywhere indicate that a man who divorced a wife was ever questioned regarding his reason for the divorce? Yes/No
23. Even if the man's actions were sinful was the woman free to "go be another man's wife" Yes/No
24. Under the Law, were those who were guilty of adultery to be put to death? (Lev. 20:10) Yes/No
25. Could a man take back a wife after she married another? (Deut. 24:4) Yes/No
26. Do some preachers give the divorced the option of going back to their spouse, even after have married another, rather than being compelled to a life of celibacy? Yes/No
27. Is the action above contrary to Moses' Law? (Deut. 24:4) Yes/No

# OPEN BIBLE STUDY

## Divorce and Remarriage Two Major Views - Which is Right? You Study - You Decide

### Lesson No. 2

1. Did Paul deal with marital issues, including the question "Who may have a spouse?" (1 Cor. 7:1, 2) Yes/No
2. Was Paul inspired to answer for God? (1 Cor. 14:37) Yes/No
3. Did Paul command any who would object to some (either a man or a woman) having a marriage to "let them marry"? Yes/No
4. Does Paul, in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, speak of the need for sexual relations in marriage? Yes/No
5. Was the reason Paul gave for allowing every man and woman to have a spouse so they could avoid fornication? (1 Cor. 7:1, 2) Yes/No
6. Did Paul indicate that some do not have the gift of celibacy? (1 Cor. 1:6-7) Yes/No
7. Since some do not have the gift of celibacy, i.e. "cannot contain" (1 Cor. 7:9), are we taking away God's tool to help people avoid fornication if we tell someone who has no marriage that he/she has no scriptural right to marriage? Yes/No
8. Was the apostle speaking to the "unmarried" when he said, "It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn"? (verses 8-9) Yes/No
9. When Paul wrote "let them marry" (1 Cor. 7:8) was he speaking of the "unmarried and widows" who "cannot contain"? Yes/No
10. In the definition of "unmarried" does Webster include those who are divorced? Yes/No [source #4]
11. Is one who has been *divorced* "unmarried," i.e., without a spouse? Yes/No
12. Did God say "it is not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18)? Yes/No
13. From what is recorded in 1 Cor. 7:26-35, should we conclude that Paul contradicts God, who said that it is not good that man should be alone? Yes/No
14. Was the reason for speaking of being as "virgins" (celibate) "good" because of persecutions, which he spoke of as "the present distress"? (verse 26) Yes/No
15. Is the word *divorce* mentioned in verses 10 and 11 of 1 Corinthians 7? Yes/No [Source #5]
16. In view of what we have learned from Deuteronomy 24:1-2 regarding the definition of divorce, is it prudent to conclude that a legal divorce has taken place when one "leaves" or "departs," resulting in a mere separation? Yes/No
17. Can you produce a scripture where Paul mentions a "reason" (exception) for divorce? Yes/No
18. Since the language and context of verse 11 of 1 Corinthians 7 is that of mere separation, should the phrase "remain unmarried" be construed to mean a legal divorce has taken place? Yes/No

19. In view of the fact that the command to “remain unmarried” is not limited to those “guilty of adultery” (as it is asserted that Jesus taught, should this passage be used in an effort to show that Paul is teaching the requirement of celibacy? Yes/No

20. Since Paul's instruction in verse 11 is to "reconcile" or "go back to your husband" is this evidence that he is not addressing those who have been divorced? Yes/No

21. In view of the context (verses 10-11), the meaning of *depart*, and the fact that no mention is made of an exception (fornication), is it unreasonable to conclude that Paul is addressing couples that have merely separated, rather than divorced? Yes/No [source #6]

22. Since Paul's instruction for those *separated* was to “remain unmarried” or, as some versions say, “remain as you are” (in the separated state) or be reconciled, is it reasonable to insist that this text applies to those divorced, rather than separated, teaching that the divorced must remain celibate? [source #5]  
Yes/No

23. Did Paul admonish the *married* (“bound”) to stay together? (verse 27) Yes/No

24. Did Paul give “advice” that was not to be considered as God's teaching regarding who may marry?  
(1 Cor. 7: 25, 26, 40) Yes/No

25. Was Paul's teaching to “remain unmarried” or “remain as you are” (separated but not divorced, due to the “present distress”), a command for all time? (1 Cor. 7:26)  
Yes/No

26. Is one who has been scripturally/legally divorced “loosed” (1 Cor. 7:27) as per verse 27? (source #7). Yes/No

27. Did Paul say to the men who were “loosed,” “But and if you marry, thou hast not sinned”? Yes/No

28. Does verse 28C explain why Paul gave advice contrary to God's teaching (regarding who may marry) under normal circumstances? (See also verses 26 and 35) Yes/No

29. Did Paul give a command to let “any man” marry if his virgin was of age and he was having difficulty “behaving” himself? (1 Cor. 7:36)  
Yes/No

30. Does Paul address virgins (verses 25-26) and give his advice that it would be better to continue in that state? Yes/No

31. In view of the fact that Paul is dealing with how religious teachers are to respond to “any man” who needs marriage, as opposed to dealing with virgins (whom Paul had addressed previously), does verse 36 necessarily imply that the *man* is a virgin?  
Yes/No

32. In saying “the wife is bound by the law” (marriage law) to her husband as long as he remains alive (verse 39), did Paul mean that divorce does not end a marriage and free the parties to marry? (Deut. 24:1-2).  
Yes/No

33. When a woman's husband dies, is she told she must not marry a divorced person, as were priests of Old Testament times? (1 Cor. 7:39; Lev. 21:13-14) Yes/No

34. Would the requirement for priests to marry virgins assure that a woman they married was not merely *put away* by another man but was indeed free? Yes/No

35. Were all men forbidden to marry a woman who was divorced? (Deut. 24:1-2)? Yes/No

# OPEN BIBLE STUDY

## Divorce and Remarriage Two Major Views - Which is Right? You Study - You Decide

### Lesson No. 3

1. Are there any instances in the New Testament of men of God asking questions or addressing concerns regarding someone's past or present marriage?

Yes/No

2. In the case of the "man who had his father's wife" and Herod's situation of marrying his brother's wife (Matt. 14:3-4; 1 Cor. 5:1; Lev. 20:21), was *illegality* the issue?

Yes/No

3. Was either of the men in the above example forbidden to have a marriage?

Yes/No

4. In view of the fact that 3,000 people were baptized on Pentecost, that divorce was rampant, that apparently no inquiries or investigations were made regarding anyone's right to have a marriage, are the actions of preachers today (who seek to break up marriages and impose celibacy) justified by the Scriptures? (**Source #14**)

Yes/No

5. Does the apostle Paul give any hint in any of his writings that a divorce must be for the cause of adultery before it ends a marriage and frees the parties to marry?

Yes/No

6. Since Paul answers questions that Christians asked regarding "who may marry" would it seem reasonable and useful for teaching purposes as well as for obtaining and maintaining unity that Paul would clearly teach the same thing Jesus taught? Yes/No

7. Is it good hermeneutics to hold to a position that has Moses teaching what God did not want, Jesus teaching contrary to Moses, Paul teaching contrary to Jesus and Christians teaching what is unfair and unjust, and makes God appear to be the same? (Prv 17:26) Yes/No

8. Is imposing celibacy on the innocent "righteous judgment"?

(John 7:24) Yes/No

9. Was God's wife divorced for adultery? (Jer. 3:8,) Yes/No

10. After the divorce, was God still married to Israel? (Hos 2:2) Yes/No

11. Was God's wife, who was divorced for adultery, allowed to marry again?

Yes/No (careful)

12. When writing to the Romans was Paul addressing people who knew the Law?

(Rom. 7:1-4) Yes/No

13. Would those who knew the Law be aware that a divorced woman "may go be another man's wife" (Deut. 24:1-2)? Yes/No

14. Would Paul address his audience as those who "know the Law" and then turn around and teach something contrary to the Law?

Yes/No

15. Did Paul speak of death as ending a marriage (and the marriage law that was binding) to illustrate the death of the Jewish Law, which would no longer be binding? Yes/No

16. Did Paul say Jews (those who knew the Law), who were “dead to the law” (Rom 7:3) may “be married to another” (Christ, verse 4)? Yes/No

17. Are the Jews who come to Christ married to him? Romans 7:4 Yes/No

18. Since Israel was put away for adultery, and thus “the guilty party” in the divorce, must we conclude that Jesus commits adultery in this marriage? Yes/No

19. Should we conclude that divorce ends a marriage and frees the parties, which would allow Israel to marry Christ? Yes/No

20. Did Paul classify “forbidding to marry” as “doctrines of devils”? (1 Tim 4:1-4) Yes/No

21. If God had forbidden Israel to marry would the action benefit God’s plan to save the lost or actually benefit the devil whose doctrine is designed to hinder God’s efforts to save? (1 Tim. 4:1-4) Yes/No

22. If one argued that Israel (Jews) have been divorced and therefore not eligible to marry Christ would such teaching be accurate? Yes/No

23. If a teacher or elder today does the same thing in principle as Paul was speaking of in the text noted above, is the teacher or elder guilty of the sin of which Paul spoke? Yes/No

24. In view of the teaching of Paul, regarding who may have a spouse, can you now be open to the possibility that Jesus may not have actually taught that those who have been divorced commit adultery in marrying another, but rather that he was speaking of those who were merely separated? Yes/No

25. Consider the two scenarios below:

a) A woman is permanently separated from her husband, but not legally divorced. She marries another man. Both commit adultery. (Mt. 5:31, 32)

b) A woman is legally divorced from her husband (Deut. 24:1-4). She marries another man. According to Moses’ teachings she is justified.

Is the conclusion of scenario “a” true? Yes/No

Is the conclusion of scenario “b” true? Yes/No

26. Did Jesus deal with the problem of men’s putting away their wives but not giving them a certificate of divorce? (Mark 10:5) Yes/No

27. If Jesus did not deal with the problem noted above, can we conclude that the men (who could have more than one wife) who sent out a wife to make it on her own committed no sin? (Mark 10:11) Yes/No/N/A

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### Lesson No. 4

1. Does Deuteronomy 24:1-4 provide God's definition of what constitutes a divorce that allows the woman to marry another? Yes/No
2. Did Jesus live a life free from sin? Yes/No
3. If Jesus had taught things contrary to the Law of Moses, which would have been sinful, could he still be the sinless Savior? Yes/No
4. Did the Jews think Jesus had the right to change the Law of Moses from "a divorced woman may go be another man's wife" to "you must initiate the divorce for adultery--otherwise the divorce is not a divorce and subsequent marriage is adultery"? Yes/No
5. Since Jesus was addressing the Jews specifically regarding their sin, is it reasonable to conclude that his teaching did not apply to them? (Matt. 19:3-12) Yes/No
6. If one today commits the sin Jesus condemned in the text above, is he guilty of adultery? Yes/No
7. Before Jesus said anything about Jewish men's putting away their wives did he make it clear that he was not intending to change the Law on anything? (Matt. 5:17-32) Yes/No
8. In view of the teaching found in Deuteronomy 24:1-2, and the fact that Jesus' teachings were not intended to change the Law, is it reasonable to conclude that Jesus' teachings may have been misconstrued by today's disciples regarding what action results in adultery? Yes/No
9. Did the Jews try to ensnare Jesus in his words? (Luke 20:20-26) Yes/No
10. Since the Jews did not charge that Jesus was contradicting Moses regarding the marriage law, is it reasonable to conclude that what he taught must have been in harmony with Moses' teachings? Yes/No
11. Can a valid argument be made by asking a question, such as the one above? (Gal. 5:11) Yes/No
12. Since it is evident that Jesus did not contradict the Law, regarding who may marry, must we conclude that it is possible that Jesus actually was teaching something different from what has been commonly attributed to him? Yes/No
13. Under the law that was in effect while Jesus lived, were the Jews allowed to have more than one wife? (Ex. 21:10; Deut. 21:15; 2 Sam 5:13) Yes/No
14. Does the word "adultery" sometimes mean something other than sexual relations outside marriage? (Mark 10:11; Jer. 3:9) Yes/No
15. It is true that the adultery spoken of by Jesus was WITH a woman in a new marriage rather than AGAINST the woman the man put away? (Mark 10:11) Yes/No

16. Were the Jewish men *commanded* to give the bill of divorcement to the women whom they wanted to divorce? (Deut. 24:1-4; Mark 10:5) Yes/No

17. Under the Law, if a woman was *put away* (sent out of the house) but not given the bill of divorcement, would she commit adultery if she married another? (Matt. 5:31, 32) Yes/No

18. If a man married a woman who had not been legally divorced, but had only been *put away* (put out of the house), would he be guilty of adultery? Yes/No

19. Could the reason the man above would be guilty of adultery be because the woman was still married? Yes/No

20. In view of the idea that a woman sent away (*apoluoed*) could not marry another and would have to “get by as best she could,” would the action taken by her husband be treachery or “adultery against her”? (Jer. 3:8; 9:2) Yes/No

21. Would a woman’s being *sent away* by her husband be worse for her than being divorced, in which case she would receive a bill of divorcement that allowed her to “go be another man’s wife”? Yes/No

22. Since it is apparent that a woman may be “sent away, put away, repudiated, dismissed,” which is the meaning of *apoluo* (sometimes translated “divorce”) is it possible for a woman to be *put away* but not divorced? Yes/No

23. If we construe Jesus’ teachings to actually be condemning those divorced to a life of celibacy, are we causing the same hardship as was inflicted on the women by Jews who

refused to allow them to have a marital relationship? Yes/No

24. The Greek word translated “put away” in Matthew 19:9 is *apoluo*. Several trusted versions (including the ASV, Darby, and Young’ Literal) never translate *apoluo* as divorce. Does the fact that some translators, primarily the newer ones, translated *apoluo* as *divorce* prove Jesus was talking about the legal procedure that actually released the women? [All versions and all translators are fallible.] (source #8) Yes/No

25. Since Jesus may not have been talking about the legal procedure known as *divorce*, should we look for a logical explanation for what he meant when he said “except it be for fornication”? Yes/No

26. If a man *apoloued* a woman after learning that the relationship was unlawful--because of circumstances such as she was his “brother’s wife” or his “father’s wife”--would he be guilty of committing adultery “against her” if he put her away and did not give her the certificate of divorce? Yes/No

27. Did the disciples think Jesus was saying marriage is not good? (Matt. 19:10) Yes/No

28. Is it reasonable to think that the disciples concluded that it would be better not to marry a wife (from gk. *gune*, meaning woman) if the relationship would be illegal and therefore “fornication”? Yes/No

29. Is it reasonable to think that the disciples understood Jesus to have been speaking of *legal divorce* and therefore contradicting Moses’ teaching? Yes/No

[Please go to **source #14** and answer the last question on the page.]



# Sources

## #1

### Definition of Prejudice:

(1) : preconceived judgment or opinion (2) : an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge  
**Merriam-Webster**

## #2

### Definition of Hermeneutics:

–*noun* ( used with a singular verb )

1. the science of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures.
2. the branch of theology that deals with the principles of Biblical exegesis.

Biblical hermeneutics is the science of knowing how to properly interpret the various types of literature and the various passages relating to Bible topics, found in the Bible. This is the purpose of biblical hermeneutics - to help us to know how to interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

## #3

### Jewish Women in Chains

by Norma Baumel Joseph

[In discussion with brethren on a certain list regarding my {r.w.} stating that the Jewish men were “putting away” their wives and not divorcing them (as per Deut 24:1-4), the reply was that what I said was untrue. It was truly amazing how they took up for the Jews. In doing some internet surfing I ran across an article, “Jewish Women in Chains,” that indicates that what I was teaching is still being practiced today.]

Jewish divorce, like any other, can be simple or complicated; a release or a tragedy; straightforward or a swindle. It can set people free to resume or reinvent their lives, or it can embroil individuals and families in a never-ending cycle of abuse. The intent of rabbinic Judaism was to ensure a tolerable disengagement. Regrettably, the current implementation of the halakhic (Jewish legal) system does not meet that minimal standard.

Many individuals, women and men, rabbis and volunteers, have labored to maintain a fair practice. And in some cases it does work.

However, the biblical account of divorce found in Deuteronomy, while accepting marital breakups, establishes a procedure that is at the heart of the problem. "When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it comes to pass that she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found some unseemliness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorce, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife." (Deuteronomy. 24: 1-2) Clearly, the man is the initiator, the actor. And while rabbinic law established that there need be no grounds for divorce other than mutual consent, it enforced the structured order of the verse: the male is the active legal principle. He must initiate, author, and give the document to her. She receives it and only then is free to resume control.

While in most cases Judaism's tolerant acceptance of divorce enables a decent split, in too many situations this male prerogative becomes the means for extortion, vengeance and affliction--certainly not a biblical ideal. Thus, although her consent to the divorce is necessary, the woman is still at the mercy of the man. In the course of the development of Jewish law, many improvements have been incorporated into the system in an attempt to limit the man's unilateral power and prevent the misery. The rabbis were aware of and sensitive to women's vulnerability. But... A Jewish divorce requires a get, a document that a man freely gives to his wife and she must voluntarily accept. Without this document neither partner may remarry according to Jewish law. Today, this affects Conservative, Orthodox and all Israeli Jews. The Reform movement often relies on local civil divorce courts and the Conservative movement has empowered its central court to intervene and act unilaterally to effect a divorce when there are insurmountable problems.

But throughout Israel and in the Orthodox community outside of Israel, the pattern of insisting on the biblical directive has left too many women agunot. An agunah is a woman who cannot remarry because her husband is unable or unwilling to give her a get. The term literally means "anchored" or "tied down" and is first found in verb form in the biblical story of Ruth (1:13).

The original talmudic use of the word was limited to cases in which the man had disappeared and literally could not act as a legal instrument in the Jewish divorce proceedings. Recently, popular usage has expanded the term to apply to all cases of women who are unable to remarry because their husbands will not acquiesce and give the divorce document.

The problems for women within this system are obvious. Procedurally dependent on her husband and on a rabbinic court, her future children also become pawns in this tug of war. If a woman without a get gives birth, her newborn children will be considered the product of an adulterous union and hence be categorized as mamzerim, Jews who are not allowed to marry other Jews. There is no remedy. To be sure, both a man and a woman can be found guilty of adultery, but the category depends on the marital status of the woman only. The applicable result is that the woman suffers the most from an incomplete divorce: not only from the possible consequences for future children, but in being chained to a marriage that has for all intents and purposes ended.

The irony is that if the Jewish process of divorce was established to set one free, even to encourage remarriage, the current reality is one in which the process itself has created a group of people who are not free. And the numbers and problems are increasing--but the numerical dimensions of this issue should not become the primary consideration. Our social activism should not become a matter of counting heads. Where there is injustice, we are commanded to pursue justice. I personally know many silenced women suffering the fate of an anchored life. Their stories, not their numbers, are our call to action.

For Jewish society today, for all of us, divorce constitutes a major moral problem. Not because of the increase in numbers or because of the guilt of either party, but because of the inequities of the process and the indifference of the larger community. People no longer married, no longer living together, are still tied to each other. Bound together and abandoned. The credibility, viability, and continuity of Judaism are on the line.

The proliferation of unsettled cases has convinced many individuals and organizations to come forward. There are solutions and vehicles for action. Social awareness and education are the first steps. In the necessarily incomplete list that follows, there are numerous groups and resources available. Some organizations have taken on the task of working with individual cases, others have promoted educational formats. Working within both the secular and Jewish systems, activists have initiated both civil and halakhic remedies.

#### #4

### Definition of *UNMARRIED*

not married:

*a* : not now or previously married

*b* : being divorced or widowed **Merriam-Webster**

#### #5

### Different Versions of 1 Cor. 7:10-11

*Waymouth*

Or if she has already left him, let her either **remain as she is** [separated, r.w.] or be reconciled to him; and that a husband is not to send away his wife.

*Montgomery*

(Or if she has already left him let her either **remain as she is**, or be reconciled to him), and also that a husband is not to put away his wife.

*New Life Bible*

but if she does leave him, she should not get married to another man. It would be better for her to **go back to her husband. The husband should not divorce his wife.** [Instead, he is married to her and should seek to get her back, r.w.]

#### #6

### Scholar's Comments on 1 Cor. 7:10-11

*STRONG* (as quoted from *SwordSearcher*):

[Grk. 5563] *chorizo* (kho-rid'-zo) from 5561; to place room between, i.e. part; reflexively, to go away:--depart, put asunder, separate.

Below, is a comment from Robertson that seems clear he thought Paul was talking about "separation" when he spoke of *departing*:

*Robertson's Word Pictures*: "But and if she depart....If, in spite of Christ's clear prohibition, she get separated...."

Another highly respected scholar, below, speaks about the language and the context regarding the phrase, "let her remain unmarried":

Bloomfield [*The Greek New Testament*]:

From the use of *καταλλ* [reconcile] and the air of the context it is plain that the apostle is not speaking of formal divorces, affected by law, but separations whether agreed on or not, arising from misunderstandings or otherwise.

**JFB:**

**But and if she depart** — or 'be separated.' If the sin of separation has been committed, that of a new marriage is not to be added. (Mt 5:32).

## #7

### Meaning of "Loosed" (1 Cor. 7:27)

**Thayer:**

1b) of a husband and wife joined together by the bond of matrimony

1b) of the bond of marriage, divorce

## #8

### Versions on Matt. 5:32

Below are versions that are consistent in NOT translating *apoluo* as divorce in Mat 5:32:

(ASV) but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is PUT AWAY committeth adultery.

(Bible in Basic English) But I say to you that everyone who puts away his wife for any other cause but the loss of her virtue, makes her false to her husband; and whoever takes her as his wife after she is PUT AWAY, is no true husband to her.

(Darby) But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except for cause of fornication, makes her commit adultery, and whosoever marries one that is PUT AWAY commits adultery.

(DRB) But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery: and he that shall marry her that is PUT AWAY, committeth adultery.

(KJ3 Literal Translation Bible) 32 But I say to you, Whoever puts away his wife, apart from a matter of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever shall marry the one put away commits adultery.

(LITV) But I say to you, Whoever puts away his wife, apart from a matter of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever shall marry the one PUT AWAY commits adultery.

(MKJV) But I say to you that whoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever shall marry her who is PUT AWAY commits adultery.

(Worldwide English) But I tell you, no man may send away his wife unless she has committed adultery. If he does send her away, he is making her commit adultery. And if a man marries a woman who has been sent away from her husband, he commits adultery.

(World English Bible) But I tell you that whoever puts away his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries her when she is put away commits adultery.

(Wuest) Whoever marries her who has been dismissed commits adultery.(WYC) But I say to you, that every man that leaveth his wife [that every man that shall leave his wife], except (for) [the] cause of fornication, maketh her to do lechery, and he that weddeth the forsaken wife, doeth adultery.

(Youngs Literal Translation) But I—I say to you, that whoever may PUT AWAY his wife, save for the matter of whoredom, doth make her to commit

adultery; and whoever may marry her who hath been PUT AWAY doth commit adultery.

There is no stronger evidence of a proper translation of a word than what is rendered by respected translators. The ASV is the most respected for accuracy and reliability. Also, a few of the other versions noted above are highly respected and quoted from often. It is primarily the new versions, which are known for unfaithfulness to the original language, that in some instances render *apoluo* as divorce in at least some passages.

## #9

### Meaning of Word Translated “Wife”

[Grk. 1135] *gune* (goo-nay')

probably from the base of 1096; a woman; specially, a wife:--wife, woman. **Strong**

## #10

### Authorities on the Meaning of *Apoluo*

*Wuest* (Word Studies)

Mark 10:11—"The words 'to put away' are *apoluo*, literally, 'to release.' When used in connection with divorce, it means 'to repudiate.'"

*Wuest Translation*

And having come to Him, Pharisees kept on asking Him whether it is lawful for a man to repudiate a wife, putting Him to the test. Matthew 5:32: Whoever marries her who has been dismissed commits adultery.

*Thayer* says *apoluo* means "to dismiss from the house, to repudiate..." (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 66).

Later in the definition "divorce" is noted, but that definition is apparently included because some think the context of Matthew 1:19 indicates that Joseph was "of a mind to" actually divorce his spouse.

Actually, they were not married and therefore the example of Joseph in no way justifies including "divorce" in the meaning of this text. So, by just looking at the definition, the reader is left to wonder if Mr. Thayer was not confused. He correctly defines the word but then states that it is "used of divorce." But note what he said: "The wife of a Greek or Roman may divorce her husband." The Greeks and Romans, who had little knowledge of God's teachings on divorce, may well have used *apoluo* (put away) when speaking of divorce, but that is not the primary meaning, according to Thayer. Jesus would understand and use the phrase "put away" as not being a scriptural divorce. This is evident from the question he asked those who sought to entrap him: "What did Moses command you?"

*Bagster's Analytical Lexicon:*

*Apoluo*. Put away: To let go; to let loose; to send away.

[This definition was taken from an article published in *Truth Magazine*. Some have noted that their version of Bagster's work includes divorce.]

*George Lamsa's Translation of the New Testament*

Matthew 5:31: It has been said that whoever divorces his wife, must give her the divorce papers. 32 But I say to you, that whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is separated but not divorced, commits adultery.

Mr. Lamsa is not completely consistent in his thinking because he translated *apoluo* as divorce twice in this verse and only once translated it correctly as *separated*. However, he makes it quite clear that the meaning, according to the context, is that marrying a woman that has been *separated* from her husband but has not received the "bill of divorcement" results in adultery, which I believe is correct.

The three versions below miss it on the meaning of *apoluo*, but correctly explain the exception that Jesus gave:

*New Jerusalem New Testament*

Matthew 5:32: But I say this to you, everyone who divorces his wife, **except for the case of an illicit marriage** [emphasis added], makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

*New American with Apocrypha*

Matthew 5:32: But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

*Holman Christian Standard*

Matthew 5:31-32: It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce. 32 But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, = fornication, or **possibly a violation of Jewish marriage laws** [emphasis added] causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

A margin note in *The Geneva Bible*, translated from the Textus Receptus in 1599 (years before the KJV), concerning the term "put away" said, "**that is, was not lawfully divorced**" (emphasis added).

Why is this worthy of note? It gives support to the idea that Jesus was talking about men merely *putting away* their wives and *not* divorcing them lawfully.

Below we have two scholars indicating one may be *put away* but not divorced. Jamison Fausset Brown quotes Horsley.

*Jamison Fausset Brown*

"[Isaiah 50:1] HORSLEY best explains (as the antithesis between "I" and "yourselves" shows, though LOWTH translates, "Ye are sold") I have never given your mother a regular bill of divorcement; I have merely "put her away" for a time, and can, therefore, by right as her husband still take her back on her submission; I have not made you, the children, over to any "creditor" to satisfy a debt; I therefore still have the right of a father over you, and can take you back on repentance, though as rebellious children you have sold yourselves to sin and its penalty (1Ki 21:25)."

## #11

### Authorities on the Meaning of the English Words "Put Away"

Below are some English online dictionaries that *do not* include *divorce* in their definition of "put away": *Wordnet Dictionary*, *The Collins English Dictionary*, *Your Dictionary*, *Web Dictionary*, *The Free Dictionary (Farlex)*, *AudioEnglish*, *Mnemonic Dictionary*, *Word Web*, *Definitions.net*, *Synonym.com*, *Allwords.com*, *Macmillan Dictionary*, *About.com*, *Answers.com*, *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, *Kids.net.au*, *Lexic.us*, *UsingEnglish.com*, and *Bing*.

When I did the web search for the phrase "put away," in June of 2010, I did not find a single authority that even mentioned divorce. This is significant because *apoluo* is properly translated "put away," and in the English language "put away" does not mean divorce. This means that the "exception clause" found in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 does not forbid the "divorced" to marry, but only the "put away"—those who are merely separated and thus still married.

## #12

### The Present Distress

**1 Corinthians 7:26-27** - This is good for the present distress - While any church is under persecution. For a man to continue as he is - Whether married or unmarried. St. Paul does not

here urge the present distress as a reason for celibacy, any more than for marriage; but for a man's not seeking to alter his state, whatever it be, but making the best of it.

### **John Wesley Explanatory Notes**

## **13**

### **Definition of Adultery**

Referring to the definition of *adultery*, Foy Wallace Jr. wrote:

"The word *adultery* in New Testament usage does not necessarily refer to the sinful physical [sexual] act, it is not restricted to the one way of violating the bond. In the four passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the term *adultery* is given the sense of ignoring the bond, of which a man is guilty who formally puts away his wife unjustifiably and regards himself unhitched."

*The Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State*, p. 42.

## **14**

### **Foy Wallace Jr. Speaks Of Imprudent Action**

"With no course of action legislated, revealed or prescribed, we cannot make one without human legislation. The course of some preachers in demanding separations and the breaking up of family relations, and the refusal to even baptize certain ones whose marriage status does not measure up to their standard of approval, is a presumptuous procedure. It reveals the tendency to displace God as the Judge of us all, and a preacher ascends to the bench. More than teaching the moral principles involved, the preacher has no course of action revealed, and to establish one would result in human legislation, more far reaching in evil consequences than the moral effects of divorcement limited to the persons involved."

*The Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State*, p. 41.  
Foy Wallace

## **Problems with the Traditional Teaching on MDR**

The doctrine that divorced people are ineligible for marriage, which is contrary to the teachings of the apostle Paul but nonetheless commonly believed, has numerous scriptural and hermeneutical problems and has unacceptable consequences. This doctrine has served and continues to serve the devil well.

### **The traditional doctrine:**

- 1) Denies the right of some to marry. This makes them easy prey for various temptations.
- 2) Requires the breaking up of homes, in cases involving a second marriage for at least one of the partners.
- 3) Denies Paul's teaching that those who are *loosed* from a spouse may marry.
- 4) Discourages evangelists because a majority of prospects for conversion will be lost (after much effort and time is expended) when told they must break up their homes, live celibate and forget sex the rest of their lives.
- 5) Makes God and Christianity appear to be unjust by punishing even those innocent of marital sin and making it appear that it is God's doing.
- 6) Causes many who want to follow Jesus to reject him.
- 7) Causes many who have obeyed the gospel to turn away from Jesus.
- 8) Causes division in churches and discord among brethren.
- 9) Results in fornication when some "cannot contain" because marriage, God's means to help us "avoid fornication," is forbidden for certain ones deemed "not eligible" for marriage (1 Cor 7:2, 9).

10) Has been the cause for an enormous amount of time to be expended by Christians that could otherwise be used in spreading the gospel.

11) Promotes a meritorious works based salvation, rather than a grace based salvation (one must suffer and do penance to earn salvation).

12) Denies God's statement that it is not good for man to be alone.

13) Makes not only initiating divorce an unforgivable sin, unless it is initiated for fornication, but makes being divorced by another an unforgivable sin.

14) Encourages a race to the courthouse to be the one to "put away" the other first so as to "have a right to remarry"—thus actually promoting and encouraging divorce.

15) Tends to a deterioration of certain important intellectual faculties because biblical hermeneutics have to be ignored or rejected.

16) Makes God's word appear to have a loophole whereby the cunning and powerful may avoid celibacy, yet remain in fellowship with the "church," after murdering their spouse, which is a forgivable sin.

17) Makes the Bible appear to be contradictory as it requires the assumption that Moses taught what God did not want, then Jesus contradicted Moses, then the apostle Paul contradicted Jesus when he said to let the unmarried marry (1 Cor 7:8, 9), and then Paul contradicted himself.

18) Requires the belief that Jesus transgressed the Law by changing it from "The divorced may marry" to "The divorced may not marry," from which it must then be concluded that the New Testament is not inspired and Jesus was not the Son of God.

19) Denies the words of both Jesus and Paul, who said some cannot remain celibate. The fact that Jesus mentioned eunuchs indicates that some can and some cannot remain celibate.

20) Elevates the Law of Moses over the gospel of Christ in that Moses freed the woman to marry again while Christ leaves her like an animal chained and deserted with no one to meet her needs and with no hope of finding anyone.



**Is truth more important to you than human tradition? Yes/No**

**Which of the two positions noted on the front page of lesson one is most believable when good hermeneutics are applied? One has the problems noted above. The other has only one problem--it contradicts tradition.**

**Position # 1  Position # 2   
You Decide.**

Remember, only the truth can may you free. John 8:32-36

The true follower of Christ will not ask, "If I embrace this truth, what will it cost me?" Rather he will say, "This is truth. God help me to walk in it, let come what may!"

—A.W. Tozer