

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Mental Divorce...?

*By: Jerry Fite*

**W**hat does “mental divorce” mean to you? There is a particular view of divorce and remarriage that has warranted this label. For example, if John and Sue divorce one another, and the scriptural cause of fornication is not the reason for the divorce; later, when either John or Sue commits fornication, some believe that the one who has not committed sexual sin has then a scriptural right to put the other away and marry another. Because the literal sending away in divorce had already taken place, the next “divorce” is merely a “mental” action. Since the literal sending away in divorce was not for the cause of fornication, a new marriage for either party is unscriptural (Matthew 19:9).

“Mental divorce” theorists say that God did not “recognize” the first divorce because it was not for the cause of fornication. In reality, God does not “approve” of the unscriptural divorce (Matthew 5:32, 19:6, 9) But that does not mean it did not actually happen before “God’s eyes”, allowing for a mere “mental divorce” to be done weeks or months later.

Two Greek words are used

in the New Testament to convey divorce. “APOLUO” means to “send away” or “let loose” or “let go”. Regarding the marriage relationship, the word is used in connection with the “sending away” that occurs when one literally sends their mate away from their home. The Jews had Old Testament legislation in mind, which described divorce that occurs when one is sending the wife away from the house, when they asked Jesus about divorce (Matthew 19:3,7, Deuteronomy 24:1-2). Jesus did not change the context for putting away when he expressed His new law concerning divorce (Matthew 19:8,9). The word “CHORIZO” means “to separate”, “depart” or “put asunder”. It is used by Paul regarding divorce when he with the Lord’s authority says, “that the wife depart not from her husband” (I Corinthians 7:10). This literal departing from one’s mate in divorce is in mind when Jesus, using the same word says, “Let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6).

Fornication must be the cause for one sending his or her mate away, if it is a scriptural divorce (Matthew 19:9). The idea of putting away, or sending one’s mate away without such cause, and later, after their former mate com-

mits fornication, one has the right to now divorce and remarry is authorized only in the mind of the “mental divorce” theorists.

There are some putting the label of “mental divorce” on another facet of divorce that is not warranted, and is prejudicial. If one guilty of committing fornication initiates divorce proceedings against his or her mate innocent of such sin, some believe that the innocent party cannot remarry for they are “put away”. To say at this time of the literal “sending away” the innocent can also cross file for divorce and be free to remarry, because the divorce is for the cause of fornication is not a “mental divorce” theory.

Jesus legislated concerning the “cause” of putting away, not concerning specific legal proceedings for scriptural putting away. A mate may have been beaten to divorce court, but at this time frame of sending one away, one cross filing for divorce with the understanding that it is for fornication is not a “mental divorce”. This “one” divorce is connected with the physical sending away. It is not a mere “mental” action.