

LESSON TWO - MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

STUDY OF MATTHEW 5:32 AND MATTHEW 19:9

(Jerry Fite)

INTRODUCTION:

In this lesson we investigate Jesus' two statements regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage as recorded in Matthew. These two passages are unique, for they contain the exception clause: "for fornication". We will see how the exception effects God's general rule for marriage from the beginning.

I. MATTHEW 5:32 " '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.' " (ASV).

- A. "but I say" - Jesus is contrasting what God allowed in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 ("it was said also , v.31) with Jesus' law.
- B. The action being contrasted is divorce - "put away"
 1. Deut. 24: 1-2 - man who was to "put away his wife" was to give her a bill of divorcement , sending her out of his house - she could be another man's wife.
 2. Jesus teaches that one who "putteth away his wife" , shares blame in her adultery which occurs in her next marriage.
 - a) WITHOUT the exception clause: " ' but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife maketh her an adulteress..."
 - b) Force of exception clause: everyone who puts away his wife "for the cause of fornication" does not share in the blame for her next adulteress relationship. (cf. Romans 7:3).
 3. "maketh her an adulteress" - "whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery"
 - a) KJV. "causeth her to commit adultery"
 - (1) some manuscripts have _____ , the pres. inf. of _____
 - (2) Harper - Bagster says, "to commit or be guilty of adultery" and cites Matthew 5:32.
 - b) Matt. 5:32a: "an adulteress" - _____ first aorist, inf. passive of _____
 - c) Matt. 5:32b: - "committeth adultery" - _____ , third person, sing. present, middle, of _____
 - d) "whosoever shall marry her... committeth adultery" is additional context, and leads us to believe "causeth her to commit adultery" or "maketh her an adulteress" assumes remarriage on her part.
 - e) The "whosoever" that marries the divorced woman is inclusive of those who have never been previously married .

II. MATTHEW 19:9 - " 'And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.' " (ASV)

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A. Context:

1. Pharisee's trying question: " Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"
 - a) Rabbinical teachings regarding the "cause" for divorce - Deut. 24:1-4
(1) The Mishna: "10. the school of **Shammai say:** A man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her, for it is written, *Because he hath found in her indecency in anything* And the school of **Hillel say:** [He may divorce her] even if she spoiled a dish for him, for it is written, *Because he hath found in her indecency in anything.* R. **Akiba** says: Even if he found another fairer than she, for it is written, *And it shall be if she find no favour in his eyes...*" (.p. 321).
 - b) The Pharisee's question was designed to entrap Jesus.
2. Jesus' answer:
 - a) Jesus indicts their ignorance of God's original law for marriage (Gen. 2:24) - "Have ye not read?"
 - b) God "...from the beginning made them male and female, and said for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife ; and the two shall become one flesh" (v. 4-5).
 - (1) Because of "male and female" then marriage instituted by God for intended purpose.
 - (2) "leave" - "break ties with genetic home, but not abdicate responsibilities there" (Robert Turner, A Study Of Marriage and Divorce) (cf. I Tim. 5:4).
 - (3) "cleave" "prop. to glue, glue to, glue together, cement, fasten together;" (Thayer, p. 353).
 - (a) Implies faithfulness to his or her companion in marriage.
 - (4) "one flesh" - sexual relation (I Cor. 6:16, 7:2) plus the additional "oneness" of two beings.
 - c) Divorce is sinful: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (v.6).
 - (1) "joined" means "to fasten in one yoke, yoke together" (Thayer, p. 594).
 - (2) "put asunder" - "to separate, divide, part, put asunder... to separate one's self from, to depart; a. to leave a husband or wife: of divorce 1 Co. vii 11,15... b. to depart, go away..." (Thayer, p. 674).

- (3) When God has joined or bound the husband and wife together, man has no right to divorce his mate for any cause . "Sin is lawlessness" (I Jn. 3:4).
- B. Pharisees recognize difference between Deuteronomy 24 and "the beginning" (v. 7-8).
1. Moses "suffered" man to put away his wife (Deut. 24).

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- a) , third person, singular, first aorist, middle of
- "to give over, leave to the entire trust or management of ...hence, to permit, allow, suffer." (Harper Analytical Lexicon, p. 162).
 - b) because of "hardness of heart" in doing what was not intended from the beginning, legislation was given to discourage frivolous divorce (for every cause). The law offered the woman of that time some protection.
 - c) The law **allowed (tolerated)** divorce, but did **not approve** it.
 - (1) "Casuistic Law" : "if"... "then"
 - (2) Does not necessarily mean approval - "If you throw away the records, then you can pay for them to be replaced, or replace them yourself."
 - (3) Read Acts 14:16, 17:30, Rom. 2:4, 9:22, 2 Pet. 3:9; Study Rom. 3:25-26.
 - d) "Uncleanness" or "Unseemly thing" in Deut. 24:1
 - (1) It was not...
 - (a) fornication, because this was punishable by death (Deut. 22:13-21).
 - (b) suspicion of adultery because God provided a test (Num. 5: 11-31).
 - (2) Could be:
 - (a) unbecoming exposure - nakedness (Gen.9:22-23, Ex. 20:26)
 - (b) Bareness - (Gen.42:9,12)
 - (c) Lack of sanitation - (Deut. 23:14).
2. Jesus: "but from the beginning it hath not been so."
- a) "It was not permanently so, no matter what was once "suffered." Jesus says HERE IS TRUTH, in the beginning, and from the beginning. I SAY UNTO YOU (Matt. 7:28-29) (Robert Turner A Study of Marriage and Divorce. p. 2).
 - (1) "Whosoever" -- as broad as "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...whosoever sinneth hath not seen him" (I Jn. 3:6).
 - (2) shall put away his wife -- to whom he was to "cleave".
 - (3) except for (her) fornication -- violation of the marriage basis that was "from the beginning," inherent in "cleave."
 - (4) and marry another -- "cleave," "one flesh" sexually with another,
 - (5) committeth adultery -- immoral sexual relationship,
 - (6) and he that -- whether previously married or not,
 - (7) marrieth her when she is put away -- in the above context,

- (8) committeth adultery -- same kind of adultery as above.
- b) Jesus's teaching consistent with, and promotes God's intention in marriage from the beginning (Gen. 2:24).
- c) Reaction to Jesus' teaching of Matthew 19:
 - (1) Disciples understood the strictness of Jesus' statements - "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." (v.10).
 - (2) Comments of "eunuchs" shows the sexual aspect of marriage is clearly being considered by Jesus.

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C. Exception clause: "except for the cause of fornication"

1. Goes with the putting away in first independent clause which has its own subject, verb and modifiers. (chart: by Glen Burt - THE EXPOSITORY REVIEW, Vol. 2; No.12; Dec. 1983)

2. "Except" has force of "if and only if" (Matt. 18:3; Jn. 3:2,5; Lk.13:3; Matt.19:9).
 - a) Jesus is saying if and only if you put away your wife for fornication will your second marriage **not** be an adulterous relationship.
 - b) Luke 16:18 - " Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery..."

QUESTIONS:

1. Matt. 5:32 gives authority for remarriage. (T) (F)
2. Matt. 5:32 teaches one is free from sin for divorcing his wife for causes other than fornication?
3. According to Matt. 5:32, when is a divorced wife made an adulteress?

4. The Pharisees asked Jesus about the lawfulness of one _____ his wife for _____ in order to _____ Him.
5. What was Shammai's teaching on divorce?

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6. What was Hillel's teaching on divorce?
7. Jesus' first reaction to the Pharisee's question was astonishment of (a) their ignorance of Deut. 24 (b) their ignorance of God's original law of marriage (Gen. 2:24) (c) their willingness to understand the will of God concerning marriage.
8. What does the word, "cleave" mean?
9. What teaching of Jesus must one ignore to believe a man can divorce his wife for any cause, remain unmarried and still be sinless?
10. When Moses "suffered" putting away in Deut. 24:1-4, he (a) commanded it (b) allowed it with approval (c) allowed it by tolerating it.
11. In Matthew 19:9 Jesus is teaching that the only cause for putting away in Deut. 24:1 is "fornication." (T) (F)
12. In Matthew 19:9, Jesus' words "committeth adultery" in marrying another is considering sexual sin. (T) (F)

13. The "cause for fornication" qualifies (a) the putting away (b) the remarriage in Matthew 19:9.

14. What force has the "exception" in Matthew 19:9 and 5:32?

15. How many can become guilty of adultery due to the consequences of one putting away his wife for causes other than fornication?