

LESSON SIX - MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE "ARE ADULTEROUS MARRIAGES WASHED AWAY AT BAPTISM ? "

(by Jerry Fite)

INTRODUCTION

When two people come to the Lord to be saved from their sins and they realize their marriage is unscriptural, must they end their marriage upon repentance and baptism, or does repentance and baptism take away their sins, and they may remain married?

I. WHAT DOES REPENTANCE DEMAND?

A. Repentance Defined:

1. "Repent ye" (Matthew 3:2 - "to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins" (THAYER'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, P. 405)
2. Robertson - "John did not call on people to be sorry, but to change their mental attitudes and conduct" (WORD PICTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, Vol. I, p.24)
3. Vine - "In the N.T. the subject chiefly has reference to repentance from sin and this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God" (VINE'S EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, Vol. III, p. 281).
4. In short, repentance is the change of mind toward sin coupled with the turning from sin.

B. Bible Examples:

1. Repentance has appropriate fruits - "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8).
2. What Matthew 12:41 calls the action of *repentance*, Jonah 3:10 describes as *turning from their evil way*.
3. A change of mind AND change of life - Son repented and "went" (Matthew 21:28-29).
4. When no change occurs - no repentance (Rev.9:20-21, 2Cor.12:20-21).
5. Repentance demands the act of sin must cease!
 - a) If you repent of :
 - (1) idolatry, it must cease.
 - (2) Stealing, it must cease.
 - (3) drunkenness, it must cease.
 - (4) murder, it must cease.
 - (5) adultery, it must cease.

II. THE REDEFINING OF "ADULTERY"

- A. "Adultery" is unlawful sexual intercourse.

- B. Some define it not as unlawful "sexual activity" but as "covenant breaking" or "breaking wedlock".
1. Two things involved: the "unlawful divorce" then the "marrying another"

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- a) Same kind of reasoning demands that in Matthew 5:32 "adultery" is one who is unlawfully put away. In reality, the text assumes much more: marrying another and cohabiting.
2. Such a definition of "sexless" adultery does not fit with Bible examples:
 - a) Did the man in Matthew 5:28 fantasize about "breaking covenant" or was "a sexual relationship" on his mind ?
 - b) Was the woman taken in the act of adultery guilty of the act of divorcing and remarrying another (John 8:4)?
- C. Some say you cannot "live in adultery", but adultery is committed the first time the couple has sex (thus dissolving the first marriage). All subsequent sexual acts are not adultery.
 1. Teaching conflicts with Bible:
 - a) "committeth adultery" is in the present tense - "Continued action".
 - b) Bible teaches one can live in such sins as "fornication" (Col.3:5-7) - "ye lived in these things".
 - c) The woman continues to be an adulteress as long as her husband lives (Rom.7:3-4).
 - D. If an act is adultery before repentance, then the same act is adultery after repentance and baptism.
 1. If not, then the Christian is released from obligation to the law of God.

III. DOES BAPTISM WASH AWAY UNLAWFUL MARRIAGES?

- A. Baptism washes away sin (Acts 2:38, 22:16), but does not change an unlawful deed into a lawful one:
 1. If it does, then:
 - a) Homosexual marriages (legal today in Colorado) is holy after baptism???
 - b) Polygamy (common in Africa) is holy after baptism???
- B. Repentance demands homosexuality, polygamy and unlawful marriages cease.
 1. Homosexuality ceased among Christians in Corinth (I Cor. 6: 9-11).
 2. Have own husband, have own wife (Eph. 5:33, I Cor. 7:2).
 3. Herod and Herodias had to separate (Mark 6:17-18).

QUESTIONS:

1. Repentance is (a) sorrow for sin (b) the change of mind about sin (c) the change of mind and conduct toward sin.
2. When the people Nineveh repented they _____ from their _____.

3. When there is no _____ in one's life you then know there has been no _____.

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4. Adultery means (a) the first unlawful sexual act, (b) to break wedlock or the covenant, (c) to have unlawful sexual intercourse with another's wife.
5. If in Matthew 19:9 adultery is "putting away" + "marrying another" what is adultery in Matthew 5:32?
6. "Committeth adultery" in Matthew 19:9 is present tense which denotes continual action. (T) (F).
7. Can the second marriage be adultery if the first marriage has ended?
8. HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER:
(A) Breaking up a happy marriage (though an adulterous one) is imposing penance which demands restitution. The Man in Matthew 18:23-25 was forgiven of his debt and not required to pay any back.
- (B) When David was forgiven for committing adultery with Bathsheba he was allowed to continue living with her. Why can't two people guilty of adultery be forgiven and continue to remain in the same relationship?
- (C) There is no command, example or necessary inference in the Bible demanding the separation of adulterers.

9. The arguments being made for two adulterers to remain in the same marriage will also justify the _____ and _____ .
10. Baptism washes away sin but does not change an unlawful deed into a lawful one. (T) (F)
11. What is the real issue in this lesson?