

MARRIAGE & DIVORCE---WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE SAY? (2)

By Keith Greer

As we have studied previously, God's marriage law was "from the beginning". God has always expected that when one man and one woman are joined by Him in marriage, they are to remain married for life.

We can read in Malachi 2:16 that "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." So, where do some of us get the idea that God has changed His mind about divorce or about what marriage should be?

Whenever we study a subject from the scriptures, we must look at the "big picture" and examine all that the Bible says on that subject. **THE SCRIPTURES HARMONIZE PERFECTLY**, and we all should agree that God's book plainly says, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Corinthians 14:33) When one draws any conclusion from one scripture that violates another passage, we must re-evaluate our thinking. The Bible does not contradict itself!

God instituted marriage "from the beginning." We know this by reading not only what Jesus said in Matthew 19, but also by reading the original account in Genesis 2:21-24. As Christians, we obviously are under the law of Christ, but we study the Old Testament because "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4) By looking at "the big picture" from the beginning, it is easy to see what God intended for marriage to be and to also see that He hates divorce.

In the New Testament, there are five passages which deal with the subject of divorce and remarriage:

(1) Matthew 5:32

(2) Matthew 19:3-9

(3) Luke 16:18

(4) Romans 7:2-3

(5) 1 Corinthians 7

Did God change His mind about divorce from the Old Testament to the New Testament? What did Jesus have to say about it?

The Jews of Jesus day were, for the most part, divorcing for virtually any cause. "The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason? And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the

beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate. They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away? He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 19:3-9)

What information can we gain by these verses? The ONLY way that one can put his mate away, and not be guilty of adultery, is for the cause of fornication.

What if we put our mate away for another reason? What about the one who is put away for fornication? Can they remarry with God's approval? We must take Jesus at HIS word. One drawing any other conclusion is arguing from a "silence of the scriptures," that is very risky indeed! (Cont.) ***