

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE (IV)

Erroneous Teachings Concerning Divorce and Remarriage (Part 1)

Introduction

- 1) On nearly every religious subject, there are erroneous perversions and false teaching by men
 - a) Justification by works of law (Gal. 1:6-7; 2:16)
 - b) Jesus did not come in the flesh (2 Jn. 7)
 - c) No resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:12)
 - d) Resurrection is already past (2 Tim. 2:17-18)
 - e) Doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:14-15)
 - 2) Concerning divorce, there were differences among the Jews (Matt. 19:3)
 - a) School of **Shammai** – divorce is unlawful except in cases of serious immorality
 - b) School of **Hillel** – divorce is lawful for nearly any cause
 - c) Debate as described in the Mishnah (oral law): *The School of Shammai says a man should not divorce his wife unless he has found her guilty of some immoral behavior as it is written, “because he finds something indecent about her.” The School of Hillel, however, says that a man may divorce his wife even if she has merely ruined his food as it is written, “because he finds something indecent about her.”* (Gittin 9:10)
 - 3) There are false theories and unscriptural arguments believed and taught among brethren today
 - a) The following are among those that have been the most popular and the most divisive
- I) Non-Christians not amenable to (under the authority of) the law of Christ**
- A) Argues that the law of Christ only for Christians, like the Law of Moses was only for Jews
 - 1) Therefore, it is argued that non-Christians today, like Gentiles of old, are not under the covenant of God (sometimes called “kingdom/covenant law”)
 - B) No such distinction in New Testament! Wrong to make parallel what is not parallel
 - C) Gentiles of old were under the judgment of God by a law “written in their hearts” (Rom. 2:14-15)
 - 1) Now all men will be judged by the words/law of Christ (Jn. 12:48; Acts 17:30-31)
 - D) What law condemned the Corinthians of adultery **before** they were Christians (1 Cor. 6:9, 11)?
 - 1) It is the same law of Christ that condemns all who commit adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18; Heb. 13:4)
 - E) All men today are amenable to (under the authority and judgment of) the law of Christ
- II) Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18 part of Old Testament, not New Testament**
- A) It is true that Jesus was speaking during the time of the Law of Moses in these passages
 - B) But Jesus went about “preaching the gospel of the kingdom” of heaven which was “at hand” (Matt. 4:23, 17; cp. Mk. 1:14-15; Lk. 16:16)
 - C) “I say to you” indicates expression of the law of Christ, not Moses (Matt. 5:32; 19:9)
 - D) The Holy Spirit brought to the apostles’ remembrance all things Jesus said to them (Jn. 14:26)
 - 1) Why was this necessary if Jesus’ teaching was not part of New Testament revelation?
 - E) Paul references the teaching of the Lord Jesus as New Testament teaching (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- III) Baptism washes away past unlawful marriages and sanctifies a present adulterous marriage**
- A) Baptism does wash away past sins, but it does not make a previous sinful activity a righteous activity

- 1) If living as a thief, cannot continue living in thievery; if living in an adulterous relationship, cannot continue living in adultery (1 Cor. 6:9-11; “such were some of you” – repented and changed)
- B) Repentance does not change the law of God, but must be followed by a change from sinning (Lk. 3:8, 12-14; Jn. 8:11; Acts 26:20; Rev. 9:21)
- C) If unlawfully divorced, must remain unmarried or be reconciled to first mate (1 Cor. 7:10-11)

IV) Adultery in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 refers to covenant-breaking, not sexual infidelity

- A) Argues that adultery is the dual act of divorcing and remarrying, not ongoing sexual infidelity
- B) Adultery is the defiling of the marriage “bed” (Heb. 13:4; ongoing action of sexual infidelity)
 - 1) Woman caught in adultery was caught “in the very act” (Jn. 8:4 – not act of divorcing, but the sexual act)

Conclusion

Brethren are not divided over what the Bible says, but over human theories and false teachings. There will be areas of disagreement over judgments made concerning difficult situations, but when the principles taught in God’s word are violated, error must be exposed, refuted, and influential teachers named.

“The effect of divorce and remarriage upon this age and upon the church is frightening. Those false teachers who try to justify it and promote it among brethren are making havoc of the church, and they are holding the gospel in unrighteousness. Defending false teachers on any subject bears serious consequences... Unity is of God, divisions are of men (1 Cor. 15:33). When one keeps the doctrine of Christ, he is in fellowship with God and with all who walk by the same rule. False doctrines create strife and divisions which cause souls to be lost in eternity.” (H. E. Phillips, *The Effect of Defending False Teachers on Divorce and Remarriage*, Guardian of Truth, January 2, 1992)

Next lesson will examine these teachings:

The put-away fornicator can remarry

Believer may remarry if deserted by unbelieving mate

Second putting-away (mental divorce)

Use of pornography and online sexual activity as a scriptural cause for divorce