

Divorce & Remarriage Excerpts from Matthew

Part I “God the Divorcee”

Divorce →

What is driving this study?

1. Our upcoming study in Matthew

2. Recent discoveries

- a) Dead Sea Scroll fragments dealing with divorce*
- b) Newly discovered Jewish divorce certificates*
- c) Over 200 Aramaic, Greek, & Latin marriage & divorce papyri*
- d) Rabbinic literature dated to the 1st century*
- e) Hundreds of Samaritan documents including marriage contracts*

3. Personal reasons

Divorce

Traditional church teaching:

1. There are no grounds for divorce

- a) Argument is Jesus words allowing divorce for adultery were only for the Jews (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9)
- b) And Paul's words about deserting unbelieving spouses was only for Romans of his day (I Cor. 7)

2. There are only 2 grounds for Biblical divorce

- a) Adultery – allowed by Jesus (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9, Mark 10:2-12)
 - b) An unbeliever spouse deserting you allowed by Paul (I Cor. 7)
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History at a glance:

- *Women started out quite unprotected*
 - *God puts the Torah in place which in this area strove to protect women in marriage in particular*
 - *And the Rabbi's then reinterpreted it in Jesus' day which once again removed the protections for women*
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Issue # 1: What the Bible does NOT SAY

Matt. 19:3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested Him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" [4] He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, [5] and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? [6] So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." [7] They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" [8] He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. [9] And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

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Issue # 1: What the Bible does NOT SAY

1)The Bible never says, "Those whom God has joined, no man CAN separate"

His actual words were, "What therefore God has joined together, LET no man separate"

2)In the Imperative Mood = NEVER means you cannot but rather should not

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Issue # 2: Who is at fault?

Who sins in a divorce? (Meaning in the act of divorcing)

- 1) Is it the person who files for divorce?
 - 2) Or is it the person who causes the divorce?
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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

The Old Testament paints the vivid picture of God & Israel in a marriage

- *God marries Israel at Mt. Sinai*
 - *God then carries His bride across the threshold of the Jordan*
 - *There He gave her food (milk & honey), clothing (wool/shelter), & of course He loved and was faithful to her (all 4 of these will come up shortly FYI)*
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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

God is a victim even though in this sense God carries out the divorce
(in our language God files for divorce)

Thus we have our answer – who is at fault? Who sins in the ACT of a divorce?

- *The victim is not the sinner here*
 - *The person who sins is the one that BREAKS THE VOWS*
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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

*Matthew 19:6 = This is the person that Jesus is addressing when He says,
"Those whom God has joined, no one SHOULD separate"*

- *The "causer" not the victim that calls a spade a spade sins*
 - *This means it is not the divorce that is the sin - It is breaking the vows that are made before God that is the sin*
 - *If this is not the case then God Himself sinned which is impossible*
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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

Jer. 3:6-8 The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: "Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? [7] And I thought, 'After she has done all this she will return to me,' but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. [8] She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.

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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

So what does our empathetic God do?

➤ *Through the Torah...He protects!*

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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

2) *Certificate of Divorce = Product of The Divorcee's pain (Deut. 24:1-4)*

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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

2) *Certificate of Divorce = Product of The Divorcee's pain (Deut. 24:1-4)*

Deut. 24:1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,

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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

2) *Certificate of Divorce = Product of The Divorcee's pain (Deut. 24:1-4)*

- a) The Torah recognized that our sinfulness can end a marriage
 - b) AND it made sure that women in particular didn't suffer more than they already had
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God & Israel as our backdrop: 3 necessary table setters

1) *God is a divorcee*

2) *Certificate of Divorce = Product of The Divorcee's pain (Deut. 24:1-4)*

- a) We **MUST** distinguish between marriage break-up which is **ALWAYS WRONG** (The sinful breaking of our vows)
 - b) And divorce which is the legal recognition that a marriage **HAS ALREADY BROKEN UP**
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Closing summary:

- 1) God gets divorce better than anyone because HE is a divorcee and thus in His deep empathy, love, and care as a Divorcee AND FATHER wants to protect people
 - 2) Initiates the Certificate of Divorce, not to approve of divorce, but rather to call a spade a spade and protect the victim from the person that broke the marriage vows by giving them rights
 - 3) Makes our question clear...the one that sins is the one that breaks the marriage vows
 - 4) He adds more rights for the victim than just adultery which we will tackle next week
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