

The Lord's Discourse on Divorce

Matthew 5:31,32

Understanding the divorce clauses (31)

- Why does Jesus say, "It was heard..." when mentioning the seventh commandment?
 1. He is dealing with the t_____ understanding of Deuteronomy 24:1-4.
 2. There were two schools of thought on divorce in Jesus's day:
 - a. The school of Hillel – a man can divorce for a___ offense (even burning a meal – the Talmud gives this as an example).
 - b. The school of Shammai – a man can divorce only over s_____ offenses.
 3. Matt 19:3 records the Pharisees trying to find out which school of thought Jesus held to – Jesus showed them how they misunderstood the divorce clauses in the L_____ of Moses.
- Analyzing Deut 24:1-4 in the KJV
 1. Verse 1 – if a married man discovers his wife in sexual immorality *let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.*
 - a. According to the above wording God is c_____ divorce ("Let him" = a command – Lk 9:23; 1 Cor 14:28)
 - b. The Pharisees understood this law as a command as seen in Matt 19:7. But Jesus said that it was not commanded but p_____ because of hard hearts (Matt 19:8)
 2. Verse 2 – After the wife leaves the house, *she may go and be another man's wife.* – This contradicts Jesus's teaching in Matt 5:32 which states that anyone who marries a divorced woman is committing a_____.
 3. Verses 3,4 – the remarried woman can never remarry her original husband even if the second marriage is dissolved.
 4. So Jesus would say the KJV translation is wrong.
- Analyzing Deut 24:1-4 in other versions (including the NKJV)
 1. Verses 1-3 is a big "if" clause covering a h_____ situation (IF a man discovers immorality in his wife, and IF it displeases him, and IF he legally divorces her and kicks her out of the house, and IF she leaves and marries another man, and IF that marriage is dissolved by death or divorce)
 2. Verse 4 is the Law – the woman cannot r_____ her original husband.
 3. Therefore, nowhere in the Old Testament is divorce seen as a law but only as a s_____.

Understanding what divorce causes (32b)

- Why does Jesus address a man who divorces his wife and not a woman who divorces her husband?
 1. A woman could not l_____ divorce her husband according to both Jewish and Roman law.
 2. Therefore, we can a_____ Jesus's words to both husband and wife since it is legal for anyone to divorce.
- The wording of all translations are basically the same – if a man legally divorces his wife for any reason (except sexual immorality) he c_____ her to commit adultery. There are two dictionary forms of the Greek verb for committing adultery. Jesus uses both those forms in verse 32.
 1. One form is _____ used in the active sense
 - a. “Active” means that the s_____ of the sentence is doing the action (e.g. Johnny jumps.)
 - b. This word is used in the last part of verse 32 – the man is c_____ adultery by marrying a divorced woman.
 2. The other form _____ be used in an active or a passive sense depending upon the ending that is attached to it. It can ONLY be understood in the passive sense in the middle of verse 32.
 - a. “Passive” means that the subject of the sentence is r_____ the action (e.g. Johnny is being jumped.)
 - b. How can a man by wrongfully divorcing his wife cause adultery to be put upon her?
 - 1) In Jewish society people seldom divorced for trivial reasons but _____ because of sexual immorality.
 - 2) Therefore, it was a _____ that a divorced woman was guilty of adultery.
 - 3) If a man divorces his wife for a reason OTHER THAN sexual immorality, Jewish society's assumption would be w _____ - this is how adultery would be put upon the woman.

Understanding the exception clauses (32a)

- Jesus gives one exception – unchastity (KJV – fornication; NIV – sexual immorality)
 1. The Greek word is where we get our word p_____
 - a. It generally means any sexual activity outside the bounds of m_____.
 - b. It may carry a specific meaning only if the c_____ demands it (which it does not in this verse).
- There are exceptions that Jesus does not deal with here (next week).