

Divorce - the Revised Version

Introduction:

- A. The growing controversy
 - 1. Differing views around for years – little effect because of rarity of divorce
 - 2. Certain factors in recent years have forced it to the forefront:
 - a. The tremendous increase in cases of MDR in congregations.
 - b. The number of prominent brethren publicly espousing “unorthodox views.”
 - c. The keener realization of the consequences of getting it wrong – soul destroying adultery.
 - 3. The more recent discussions have centered around about five questions:
 - a. Are aliens subject to God’s marriage law?
 - b. Is adultery a sexual act or is “breaking the covenant?”
 - c. Does Paul give an additional exception to that of Jesus for divorcing and remarrying?
 - d. Are there multiple scriptural reasons for divorce if one does not remarry?
 - e. What role, if any, does society and government have in marriage and divorce?
- B. In this lesson, I plan to limit my discussion to the last two questions:

I. Are There Multiple Scriptural Reasons for Divorce?

- A. What did Jesus say? (Matt. 5:32; Matt. 19:3-8; Mark 10:2-13)
- B. Did Paul say anything differently? (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
 - 1. Both said do not divorce – Paul does deal with the exception nor did Jesus in Luke and Mark.
 - 2. Both deal with consequences of post-divorce behavior.
 - a. Jesus says remain unmarried or adultery results.
 - b. Paul says remain unmarried or be reconciled
 - c. No essential difference in the two.
 - 3. Neither says it is OK to divorce as long as you remain unmarried.
- C. What about divorcing “for the kingdom of God’s sake?”
 - 1. A relatively new concept.
 - 2. A look at the “proof texts.” (Matt. 10:34-38; 19:28-29; Lk. 14:26; Lk. 18:29-30; 1 Cor. 7:12-15)
 - a. Jesus tells what one must do to become a disciple – not what might have to do (Lk. 14:23)
 - b. Peter left all without forsaking his wife and family (Luke 18:28)
 - c. Paul is not giving permission for believer to initiate divorce.
- D. What about.....?
 - 1. Physical and mental abuse? – (Acts 23:16ff)
 - 2. Divorce only relief available in 1st century?

II. Are Civil Marriages and Divorces Irrelevant to Real Marriages and Divorces?

- A. Three God-ordained institutions – Church, Home (Marriage), State.
 - 1. Church is spiritual and eternal in nature.
 - 2. Marriage and government are temporal and social in nature.
 - a. Form of government left to each society.
 - b. Ratification of marriage left to each society.
- B. The nature of marriage.
 - 1. Defined and ordained of God in the Beginning (Gen. 2:24)
 - 2. A Covenant (Mal. 2:14) – must be ratified (Gal. 3:15)
 - 3. Means of ratification differs from time to time and society to society, but must be ratified.
 - 4. Neither a covenant or its nullification is a private or mental act.
- C. Much “marrying and giving in marriage” and “taking of wives” in scriptures – no specific procedures.
 - 1. When a specific is mentioned differed often from others.
 - 2. Herod had married brother’s wife – by what procedure? (Mark 6:17)
- D. The distinction between “real” marriages and divorces and “apparent” is modern nor biblical.

1. Bible recognizes “marriages” in various cultures and societies as “real.”
2. Some were unlawful (according to God’s law) but real none the less.
- E. The consequences of by-passing civil and societal requirements is chaos.
 1. Back seat marriages.
 2. Mental divorces.
 3. Makes a joke of Matt. 19:9 – impossible to apply.
- F. Governments and societies determine when people are married and/or divorced.
- G. God determines if each marriage or divorce meets his approval – according to his law.

Conclusion:

- A. God’s will on marriage is simply stated.
- B. Man has complicated it and caused controversy.
- C. We had better get it right, because souls are at stake.