

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

GOD'S LAW OF MARRIAGE:

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

by Elder Bob Allgood

“Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from THE BEGINNING it was not so. And I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for FORNICATION, and shall MARRY another, commiteth ADULTERY: and whoso shall MARRIETH her that is put away doth commit ADULTERY.” Read Matthew 19:3-12 & Mark 10:2-12

Recently I began to try and teach my little flock what the word of God has to say about Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage. It is difficult to find a family that has not been affected directly or indirectly by an unstable or unscriptural marriage or divorce. I am sure there are some, but I could not think of many as I began to write this article. Therefore, please remember that the things which must be said in order to be true to God's Word, are said in love and understanding. Much of what is published in the next article has been published in The Cords of Truth before. I did not see any reason to change much of what I said several years back.

First let me say that "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" is a vital, but complex part of the overall subject of THE FAMILY. Rash judgments, hasty assumptions and emotional rhetoric should be set aside in favor of godly wisdom and spiritual understanding of God's Word. Personal opinions must give way to what Holy Scripture teaches. Neither the desires of the flesh, human reasoning, nor church tradition should be the governing factors to establish our doctrinal position ---- but rather "What saith the Lord". "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" and "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it". There are five (5) subjects in this text. to be considered.

1. MARRIAGE: A Biblical marriage is between a man and a woman. **MEMBERS OF THE SAME SEX CAN NOT BE HUSBAND AND WIFE** according to Scripture. AND **"LIVING TOGETHER"** by **MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX** does not constitute a legitimate marriage according to Scripture. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman "Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband". We do not know if this woman had five husbands by way of divorce and remarriage or by death and remarriage, but we do know that the one she "now hast" is not her husband. A "live-in" relationship is not an honourable marriage.

2. DIVORCE: Which is also called the "putting away" of a wife or husband. Divorce is more than "separation" from a spouse. Divorce was first allowed by Moses, due to the hardness of the hearts of the children of Israel, but from the beginning it was not so. In future issues we will examine what is called by some "a Scriptural divorce and an Unscriptural divorce".

3. FORNICATION: Which is in our text referring to "Illicit Sex", including premarital sex, and is the only grounds set forth by Christ for a divorce that prevents the sin of adultery. Fornication is a sin ! Fornication is not always the same as Adultery, although the two are similar. See Matt. 15:19, I Cor. 6:9, Gal. 5:19.

4. ADULTERY: Which is in this text referring to "illicit sex between two that are married". Adultery is a sin ! Adultery and Fornication are two different sins, but very similar in nature. Adultery is a forgivable sin, subject to repentance. However some people can get bound in a perpetual state of "adultery" by an "Unscriptural Divorce and Remarriage".

5. REMARRIAGE: Which is the "taking of another spouse" after the first spouse has been "put away, departed or died". The Bible teaches of "Scriptural Remarriage" and "Unscriptural Remarriage".

Much is being said today about a "breakdown of family values and morals". It is one of the greatest problem confronting us as a nation as we head into the 21st century. Evidence of this can be seen in the more than 16 million single parents; the continual rise in the teenage pregnancy; and the more than 1.5 million abortions performed each year. Also consider the rise in teenage crime and drug use; the abuse of the welfare system and the work ethics. But there is another alarming fact, and **FEW SELDOM SPEAK OUT ABOUT IT**. The divorce rate now runs well above fifty percent (50%) of all marriages performed. The percentage would be higher but many couples do not enter into a legal marriage. They simply "live together" in their own man-made **TRIAL MARRIAGE**, with a mutual understanding that if they are not totally satisfied, they can call it quits anytime. Such a practice is unscriptural, ungodly and an abomination in God's sight. Scripture says "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

Mankind has not become more sinful in the 20th Century than he was in the 1st Century. People today are not more wicked than they were in the days of Noah before the flood. In those days "God saw that the wickedness of

man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually". This condition began to exist after "men began to multiply on the face of the earth", (Gen. 6:1,5). We have more people "on the face of the earth" today, than ever before in history - therefore we have more "sin and wickedness" than ever before. But sin, like leaven, if left unchecked or uncontrolled grows and spreads, until it leavens the whole lump. AND there is another factor to be added in. Scripture says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection - lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (I Tim. 3:1-7).

Our forefathers were by no means "sinless", but they had strong religious convictions and high moral principals. They were not all Primitive Baptist but most had a belief in God and a sense of Right and Wrong. Those strong beliefs were passed down through the years BY FAMILY TEACHINGS, and were reinforced in the churches and public schools, UNTIL RECENTLY WHEN THIS SEEMS TO HAVE ALMOST STOPPED. I can now look back and see a great change in family values and morals that has taken place over the past 50 years. As a boy growing up in a small town in central Florida, I seldom heard the word "divorce" and "abortion and drugs" were unheard of. They may have existed in big cities, but I never knew about it. My Mother and Father, who were married for 58 years, never took me to any kind of a church while I was growing up, so I didn't know the difference between a Christian or a Heathen. But they tried to teach me not to lie, steal or cheat; to respect the property of others; to mind my manners in public and at home, and to behave myself around girls; and to respect my elders. I would have been a better person had I obeyed.

Kids in my town did the things that most unconverted teenagers do while sowing their wild oats. If my Daddy had known the things I did in secret as a teenager, I would still not be able to "sit down" while I write this article. No, we were not perfect. But nobody ever carried guns to school. Nobody ever got knifed or shot in the classroom. Nobody ever beat up a teacher. Nobody ever sold drugs on the campus. There were no gangs on the streets. All of us could read, write and do arithmetic. Most of us graduated. None of the girls ever had an abortion. I remember only two girls who left school because they got pregnant -- and each one married the boy who was the father of the child. Back then such an event was called a "shotgun wedding" - Today schools pass out condoms !!

A SOCIAL BREAKDOWN in family values and morals doesn't just immediately occur overnight. The stage was set in the 1940's, 50's and 60's and most people didn't know it. THE LEAVEN WAS COOKING AND EXPANDING AND SOCIAL SIN WOULD SOON BECOME MORE OPENLY ACCEPTABLE. For Evil men and seducers were waxing worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. Consider these bits of evidence and their influence on the family and church: (1) The United Nations was organized in 1945 where the pagan god ZEUS sits in the lobby. (2) Television was invented in the 50's. (3) The National & World Council of Churches were formed in the 50's. (4) New PERVERSIONS of the Bible were

published; the market is now flooded with them. (5) Education began to deteriorate in the 50's under the leadership of the NEA; Phonics was removed from school curriculum; New Math was added. Prayer and Bible reading were outlawed from the classroom and replaced with HUMANISM; Before long many students could not read, write or do arithmetic; and many of the parents were too busy to notice and many did not care. (6) Television began to steal away family time and activity; Sports became more important than church or education; Most living rooms soon became the stage for violence, crime and SEX, SEX, SEX. (7) Ungodly music was gradually introduced; first Rock N' Roll, next the Beatles; then the Hippies, the Beatniks, Peaceniks and LOVE-INS with the HARD ROCK, ACID ROCK and HARD METAL. (8) Ungodly music and drugs soon engulfed many of our young people. (9) Family discipline deteriorated and almost disappeared. (10) Immodest dress came in with the Short Skirts, Mini Skirts and Bikinis. (11) Permissive Behavior was not only tolerated, but encouraged; Slogans like "Burn Your Bra", "We've Come A Long Way Baby" and "IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT " were echoed across our land. (12) Teenage Virginity was scorned in High Schools and all but disappeared. (13) Materialism and the love of money engrossed our nation and our families; the more we had the more we wanted; Parents became too busy satisfying their own selfish desires to be concerned about their children. (14) The Equal Rights and Women's Liberation Movements were formed and "no fault" divorce due to "incompatibility" sky-rocketed; Couples began to simply live together. (15) Teenage pregnancy increased; "Abortion" became the acceptable answer under the motto of "PRO-CHOICE". Instead of teaching "abstinence" everyone encouraged "SAFE SEX"; Schools passed out "condoms" ! (16) MORE THAN TWENTY FIVE [25] MILLION ABORTIONS HAVE BEEN PERFORMED IN THE NAME OF "FREEDOM OF CHOICE". (17) The Homosexuals, Gays and Lesbians now march in the streets under the banner of "FREEDOM OF CHOICE" or "GAY RIGHTS" and say "God made me this way"! I could go on and on. Read Romans 1:21-32 and II Timothy 3:1-5.

Has all of this affected The Churches of Christ ? You better believe it has ! The crisis of the world has overflowed into the churches. It is not uncommon to find in a "church of the religious world" where a Deacon married the Song Leaders' wife, and the Pastor married the Deacons former wife, and a Sunday School teacher is now married to the Song Leader and on and on. THIS IS WHY WE DO NOT HEAR THE "MINISTERS" OF THOSE CHURCHES SPEAKING OUT AGAINST UNBIBLICAL DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE. The condition is tolerated without condemnation. But the crisis has also crept into the Churches of Jesus Christ, (i.e. into Primitive Baptist Churches). We are now seeing some UNBIBLICAL Marriages, Divorces and Remarriages recognized by some Primitive Baptist families and churches WITHOUT CONDEMNATION. Some Primitive Baptist ministers now perform weddings whereby they legally bind a man and woman in a perpetual unholy state of adultery. Brethren, such things ought not to be so ! This is not a blanket condemnation, but if the shoe fits, wear it. Is it not time to shuck the corn down to the kernel ? Have we departed from what God teaches about Marriage and Divorce ? This subject will not be pleasant and comforting to the flesh, but may God give me grace to speak the truth in Christ Jesus, and give each of you grace to receive it.

“And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, MADE (builded) he a woman, and brought her unto man. And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man”. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be ONE flesh.” Read Genesis 2:18-24

“Have ye not read, that HE which MADE them at the beginning MADE them male and female, And said (GOD SAID) "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain (two) shall be ONE flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but ONE flesh. WHAT THEREFORE GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER, LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER". Read Matthew 19:3-12

“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be ONE flesh. THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY: BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH”. Read Ephesians 5:22-32

God's Ordinance or Law (or Vow) of Marriage is recorded in each of these passages, which provide three witnesses to the truth from the beginning to the end. If you want to understand any doctrine from the Word of God I think you must start "in the beginning" and follow it through "to the end". Unless we understand God's Law of Marriage, as taught in the beginning, and taught as The Great Mystery Concerning Christ and His Church, which points us to the end, we will never properly understand what God's Word teaches about the seriousness of divorce and remarriage.

Please notice that Jesus Christ says in Matthew 19:4-5 that it was God who said the words recorded in Genesis 2:24. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be ONE flesh.” Jesus quotes it, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain (two) shall be ONE flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but ONE flesh.”. Paul confirms this same truth with words almost identical to those of Christ in Eph. 5:31, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be ONE flesh”. These words follow the Marriage Vow spoken by Adam in Gen. 2:23. In Romans 7:2 Paul refers to this principle as “The Law”, and I will add, of Marriage. “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband”.

THE UNION (bonding or cleaving) BETWEEN ADAM AND EVE, AS ORDAINED OF GOD, STANDARDIZES GOD'S INTENT AND PURPOSE IN MARRIAGE. THE UNION OF ADAM AND EVE, AS ORDAINED OF GOD, TYPIFIES GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE CONCERNING "CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH". What was taught IN THE BEGINNING, sets forth the basic principals for marriage and divorce which we should follow today. Jesus taught and upheld these principals; as did Paul the Apostles. It was the Pharisees who had departed from God's Ordinance and allowed "divorce for every cause". Jesus said "BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS OF YOUR

HEARTS", Moses allowed divorce. Moses allowed divorce only in the case where premarital sex or "some uncleanness" was discovered. Read Deut. 24:1-4 and compare it to Hebrews 13:4. Then, Jesus said "BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO".

If men truly "loved their wives as Christ loved the church", the wife, as the church, would have no desire to depart from the bridegroom. Marital problems would be resolved in the spirit of Love and Submission. Today, HUSBANDS and WIVES are putting away their spouses for every cause, simply because the worlds legal system allows it. Children of God are to obey the laws of the land, but when those laws conflict with the Word of God, we OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN. The law of the land allows Idol Worship. Are God's children then to practice Idolatry, simply because it is allowed by the law of the land ? God forbid !

There are many doctrinal and practical aspects to this subject which must be considered separately and in their proper order. Too many times we try to jump into the middle of a subject and swim both ways at the same time. This results in "confusion", of which God is not the author. So as previously stated, rash judgments, preconceived ideas and hasty conclusions should be set aside until all aspects of the subject matter is examined. This is not easy doctrine and some may consider it "hard sayings". Jesus said, "All men can not receive this saying, save they to whom it is given", and "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matt 19:10-12). Turn our attention TO THE BEGINNING which POINTS TO THE END.

Scripture teaches that there is an "Eternal or everlasting covenant" made by God with Himself before the foundation of the world wherein God chose and determined to redeem unto Himself an elect people from every kindred, tribe, tongue, people, and nation. God had made choice of this people in Christ, before the foundation of the world and God promised eternal life to them before the foundation of the world. God also prepared for them a kingdom before the foundation of the world that they would inherit in time and in eternity. Read - Gen. 3:15, Gen. 12:1-3, Gal. 3:6-29, Eph. 1:1-14, I Pet. 1:2-12, II Tim. 1:7-12, Titus 1:1-3, Heb. 13:20-21, Matt. 25:31-34. If you believe that God offers eternal life to whoever chooses to accept or reject it, you probably will not understand GOD'S LAW (or Vow) OF MARRIAGE.

We know that God is righteous and without sin. A Holy and Righteous "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13). We know that God is just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. We know that THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST has been declared for the remission of sin through His blood (Romans 3:20-26). We know the "eternal purpose of God" is to redeem unto Himself a people that God foreknew and predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-33). We know from these facts that God foreknew that man would sin. We know that God created Adam without sin. We know there was no sin before Adam sinned, and we know that Adam did sin, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men -" (Rom. 5:12). We know that God was not and is not responsible for that sin. Now KNOWING THESE THINGS, let us go back TO THE BEGINNING.

In the beginning we find TWO binding principles. The first was where God gave Adam "The Law of Sin and Death" (Gen. 2:16-17, Rom. 8:1-2). The second was The Principle OR The Vow of Marriage (Gen. 2:18, 21-24). The Law of Sin and Death was given to Adam before God MADE Eve from a rib taken from Adam's side. The Vow of Marriage was given to and made by Adam after that, but before Eve was beguiled by the Serpent, and before Adam knew Eve in a physical sense, (see Gen. 4:1). In The Law of Sin and Death, God said to Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof THOU SHALT SURELY DIE" (Gen. 2:15-17).

God then said "It is not good that the man should be alone". Only one who is blind in this area or one who is a heretic would take this to mean that God is teaching that man should cleave to another man or an un-scripturally divorced woman simply because IT IS NOT GOOD THAT MAN SHOULD BE ALONE. God forbid! Furthermore, there was not found a help meet for man, even among all the beast of the field, including dogs. That old saying that "A Dog Is Man's Best Friend" comes from the pits of hell. Next only to God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, a man's wife is his best friend and HELP MEET (an aid and companion to assist and succor him in the time of need). So God MADE woman for man and Man made the Vow of Marriage. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and SHALL CLEAVE unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:23-24, Matt 19:4-6, & Eph. 5:30-32). That "CLEAVING" means to bond and to stick to, with an adhesive power far greater than super glue - it is called "LOVE".

Then in Genesis 3 we read where Eve was Beguiled by Satan's subtilty. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 11:3 that "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty". That word BEGUILED means that she was "wholly seduced". If I understand this correctly, and I believe I do, this is why Paul said of Eve, "the woman being deceived (Seduced) was in the transgression". What "transgression" did Eve commit? She committed a transgression - the Bible says so - unless we are going to cut it out. It was not the transgression that brought "sin into the world, and death by sin" - No, it was the sin of Adam that did that. Some believe that Eve committed the act of spiritual (not physical) "adultery or fornication" (whichever term you wish) with the devil himself. That may sound like too strong of a description, but it could be true. Can any language too strongly describe the sinfulness of mankind, whose righteousness is as filthy rags.

We know, from Genesis 3:2-3, that Adam had conveyed The Law of Sin and Death to his wife Eve. Adam "who was first formed" and who "was not deceived" and being the Federal "head of his wife", is responsible for the fall of the human race, while, Eve, "the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (II Tim 2:13-14). Eve "Saw that the (forbidden) tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, SHE TOOK OF THE FRUIT THEREOF, AND DID EAT - (Gen. 3:6) Pause! Move no further in your mind and think about this for a moment. There is a Type (better yet an Anti-type) developing that will point you to Christ and his Church. Paul said so! Whether we like it or not, there are some lessons to be learned here about Marriage. Jesus said so! Will we

be like the Pharisees who had not read or had completely disregarded what God said IN THE BEGINNING. What was the situation at this very moment in time ?

ADAM WAS NOT DECEIVED. Furthermore there is not a word in Scripture that proves Adam was standing next to his wife when she was deceived. That may be man's vain imagination. Eve was "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones - even as "we are members of his body (the body of Christ), of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30). God had joined them together and "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder". Could Adam have said "God make me a new woman - this one is dead because of this transgression"? Could Adam have said "God this woman is guilty of Fornication or Adultery, I want to put her away". I don't know, but I don't think so. These are foolish and vain questions anyway. Just as vain and foolish as the question, "What if Adam had not sinned"? **ADAM DID SIN** - It makes no difference "What if he had not sinned". OR any other foolish question.

God did not cause Adam to sin. Adam is fully responsible for his own sin. God had given Adam the just Law of Sin and Death. Afterward he had made a woman for Adam and gave Adam a Vow of Marriage that was unbreakable. Adam had to make a choice and either way he would become disobedient. Did God force Adam to sin ? God forbid ! Adam could break the "LAW OF SIN AND DEATH" which says "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die". But how could Adam break "THE VOW OF MARRIAGE" which says "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder". Does this make God unjust and responsible for sin ? God forbid ! Adam could not redeem his Bride, but he could die with her.

As I see it **ADAM CLEAVED TO HIS BRIDE.** Adam willingly and knowingly became disobedient **WHEN EVE GAVE** (of the fruit) **ALSO TO HER HUSBAND WITH HER, AND HE DID EAT.** Adam was "with her" "When the woman saw the tree was good for food". The Bible does not say Adam was with her when she was being deceived. Does that justify sin ? God forbid ! Adam did not become disobedient in order to be obedient. Before Eve ate of the fruit, and gave also to Adam, "and he did eat", Adam was obedient to both, the Law of sin and death and to the Law of Marriage. After Adam did eat, he continued to be obedient to **GOD'S VOW OF MARRIAGE.** After he did eat, he **BECAME DISOBEDIENT** only to **THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.** Adam's sin plunged the entire human race into sin: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that (or, in whom) all have sinned --" (Rom. 5:12).

The Anti-type is seen in the "first Adam", and compared to Christ, "the second Adam". "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. - And we who have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:45-49). The first Adam became sin and sinful (disobedient) that he might cleave to Eve, his bride, the second Adam, Christ was made "to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II

Cor.5:21). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (I Cor. 15:22). "For by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous". Since sin "hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:17-21).

The Anti-type pictures the first Adam willingly committing sin in order to cleave to his bride, compared to CHRIST the second Adam, who willingly gave himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin, to redeem HIS BRIDE that He might "PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish". JESUS CHRIST HAS NEVER HAD BUT ONE BRIDE, MADE UP OF ALL WHOM THE FATHER HAS GIVEN HIM . CHRIST HAS CLEAVED THROUGHOUT ETERNITY TO HIS BRIDE - FROM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD - EVEN UNTO ETERNAL GLORY - REGARDLESS OF HER SINS. He has never in the past, and never will in the future "put his bride away". Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it !!

The term CHURCH (Gr. Ekklesia; meaning a called out assembly) includes two references here. It primarily refers to the true visible local church or assembly of sinners who are: (1) BORN AGAIN (2) BELIEVERS, who have been (3) Scripturally BAPTIZED. The word CHURCH here, also has reference to that invisible assembly to be gathered in heaven; that is all of God's elect FAMILY for whom Christ gave himself. That family is made up of both Jews and Gentiles in time, but SPIRITUALLY IN CHRIST there is "neither Jew nor Greek (Gentile), bond nor free, male nor female - for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). This is a mystery "which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord — Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named --" (Eph. 3:2-15). "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. AMEN" (Eph. 3:21). "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:31).