

WHAT CONSTITUTES A SCRIPTURAL MARRIAGE?

Gen.2:23,24; Mt.19:3-9

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. We are not asking, What constitutes or makes up a marriage?
2. We are asking, What constitutes (makes up) a scriptural marriage? That is, a marriage made in harmony with the Scriptures? Or, a marriage made that is acceptable to and/or sanctioned by God, because it is made in harmony with what God has ordained in the Scriptures.
3. To answer this question, we must go all the way back to the beginning to the book of Genesis to start our study.

II. DISCUSSION

A. 1ST NOTE WHAT GENESIS REVEALS ABOUT MARRIAGE AS GOD ORDAINED IT.

1. On the 6th day of creation God made man and woman.
 - a. He made them not like the beasts of the field and other creatures.
 - b. He made them spirit being in his own image and likeness (Gen.1:26,27), for God is Spirit (Jno.4:24; Cf. Lk.24:39).
2. These new spirit creatures he clothed with flesh, Gen.2:7.
3. God ordained marriage between man and woman – male and female – the first man and woman – Adam and Eve – were brought together as husband and wife, to be one flesh, in marriage, Gen.2:23,24,25; 3:6,20,21; 4:1.
4. Centuries later on an occasion when the unbelieving Pharisees were tempting Jesus and demanding that he answer their question, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”
 - a. Jesus first asked them a question (Mt.19:4) thus reminding them of what they already knew was taught in Gen.2:23,24.
 - b. He then boldly and emphatically affirmed the truth about God’s law of marriage from the beginning (Mt.19:5,6) – that:
 - (1) Marriage as ordained by God is between male and female.
 - (2) The parties to the marriage are to leave father and mother, cleave to each other, and be one flesh.
 - (3) they are thus joined together by God as one.
 - (4) What God has joined together man is not to put asunder.

- c. Then Jesus, in Mt.19:9, taught that divorce is permitted by God for one cause or one reason only – for fornication on the part of the guilty party – on that grounds the innocent spouse may divorce the guilty spouse.
- 5. Thus Genesis reveals that God was both the creator of man and woman, and “the creator” of marriage between man and woman, as well as “the regulator” of marriage.
- 6. Other related passages reflecting this truth, Heb.13:4; Mt.5:31,32; Mk.10:11,12; Lk.16:18; Rom.7:1-3; 1Cor.7:2-5,10-13,39.

B. THEN FROM MAL.2:14-16 WE LEARN OF THE THREE SIMPLE, HOLY REQUIREMENTS CONSTITUTING MARRIAGE ACCEPTABLE TO AND SANCTIONED BY GOD.

- 1. The occasion of this record in Mal. was God’s refusal to accept the idolatry, the strange marriages, the treachery, and the impiety of certain Jews under the Law of Moses as indicated in 2:11-13.
- 2. Thus they asked Malachi, the prophet, “Yet ye say, Wherefore?” , Or, you ask, “For what reason (does God not accept our worship)?”
- 3. The three requirements constituting marriage sanctioned by God are found in the prophet’s answer in Vv.14,15a, as follows: “Because (1) the Lord hath been witness (and sanctifier) between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: (2) yet is she thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. And (3) did not he make one (or make them one)?”
- 4. From this text we learn concerning acceptable marriage:
 - a. That **God is witness** to the joining of man and woman in acceptable marriage – that God is a party to and sanctifier of such a marriage.
 - (1) He witnesses the fact that the two are coming together for holy matrimony – to be one flesh in holy matrimony, not for fornication or adultery.
 - (2) He is the witness to and the sanctifier of the marriage.
 - b. That a **covenant** be made in this marriage – a vow is made. One must recognize and keep one’s vow. See Num.30:2,3; Deut.23:21; Eccl.5:4.
 - (1) In the U.S.A. a marriage license is required and then have a preacher or other “official” perform the marriage ceremony.

- (2) In an African village a man may give three cows to the father-in-law and the couple jumps over a broom, but in both cases they **covenant** to marry.
- (3) In India marriages are most often arranged by parents, an **agreement** is drawn up, a feast is held and the bride and groom sign the **covenant**.
- c. That God makes the two **one**.
 - (1) Witnessing that the two had the right to marry as a man has the right to take (rejoice with) the wife of his youth (see Prov.5:18; Eccl.9:9), God makes them **one**. (See Gen.2:24; Eph.5:31,32; Rom.7:1-3; 1Cor.7:39).
- d. When God, on this basis (on the basis of these three principles) has made them one flesh in marriage, they **then**, and only then, have the privilege of the marriage bed, Heb.13:4; 1Cor.7:2.
- e. God hates “putting away” (Mal.2:16); “What God has joined together let not man put asunder” (Mt.19:6); and divorce for any cause except for fornication is sinful (Mt.19:9).

C. NEITHER PERMANENT SEPARATION, NOR DIVORCE FOR ANY CAUSE EXCEPT FORNICATION IS ALLOWED BY GOD, 1Cor.7:2-5; 1Cor.7:10-23.

III. CONCLUSION

1. All man-created and man-taught theories on acceptable marriage, and there are many (at least 8 different ones among brethren in Christ), are just that – “man-created” – they are not of God. And what is not of God is sinful. Cf. Mt.21:23-25.
2. Any coming together of the sexes for sexual cohabitation, for any other reason, under any other circumstances, or any other arrangement, is sinful, and/or does not constitute or make up a marriage acceptable to or sanctioned by God, the creator of man and women, “the creator” of marriage between man and woman, as well as “the regulator” of marriage!
3. The application of these established scriptural principles of God-ordained marriage to the following marriage relationships often entered into and defended by men prove their sinfulness.
 - a. Same-sex marriages are sinful because:
 - (1) God ordained marriage between male and female – a man and a woman, not male and male, or female and female –

they are to be husband (male) and wife (female) in marriage.

- (2) Though God witnesses (knows about) such a marriage, and though they make a **covenant**, God does not make them **one** or sanctify them in their relationship; he does not join those of the same sex in marriage in one flesh.
- (3) It is only a two party covenant, not a necessary three party one (with the man, the woman, and God); for God does not enter into it.
- (4) God is not a party to any marriage covenant that is not based on all the conditions he has required in order to make up a scriptural marriage.
- (5) And if God is not a party to the marriage, it is not a marriage acceptable to or sanctioned by him. He doesn't make them one!

b. Polygamous marriages are sinful because:

- (1) God ordained marriage is monogamous, not polygamous – one man and one women joined together; not one man and several females joined together.
- (2) See above: a. (2); (3); (4); (5).

c. Or marriages where either one or both parties to the marriage have either divorced a previous spouse for a cause other than fornication or either one or both parties to the marriage have been divorced by a previous spouse are sinful because:

- (1) God ordained marriage is monogamous and permanent till death do us part.
- (2) The only scriptural grounds for divorce is fornication. And anyone who divorces for any other cause commits sin.
- (3) Whosoever divorces a spouse for a cause other than fornication and marries another commits adultery.
- (4) Whosoever marries another who has been divorced commits adultery.
- (5) See above: a. (2); (3); (4); (5).

4. Therefore we have established from the Scriptures what constitutes or makes up a Scriptural marriage, or a marriage that is acceptable to and or sanctioned by God; a marriage that is holy in the sight of God. See Heb.13:4.

With credit from Jim E. Waldron