

Unscriptural Theories About Divorce and Remarriage

Text: Colossians 2:8-10

Introduction:

- A. Ships belong in the water, but the water does not belong in the ships.
 - B. Christians are to be in the world, but the world must not be in us. - John 17:11,14,16
 - C. The world has entered the church by means of false human theories designed to justify unscriptural second marriages. - text
 - D. What are some theories currently popular which circumvent the law of Christ concerning divorce and remarriage and why are they wrong?
- I. False Position One: There is no scriptural divorce and remarriage.
- A. If Matthew 19:9 does not apply today, it never did apply, for the adulterer under the law of Moses was to be put to death, not put away. - Deuteronomy 22:22
 - B. Jesus' teaching on earth was preparatory to the kingdom. - Matthew 4:23; e.g. 5:28; 18:15-17
- II. False Position Two: The Guilty Party (one who has been put away by his innocent mate because he is guilty of fornication) may scripturally marry another mate with divine approval.
- A. Supporting Argument One; If one is free, both are free.
 - 1. This is mere human reasoning. God has given only the innocent party the right to remarry. - Matthew 19:9
 - 2. One mate may be free from a covenant relationship, while the other is still bound by the law of the relationship. - Mark 6:17-18; cf. contract with professional athlete
 - 3. This places harsher penalties on an innocent mate put away for an unscriptural cause than on the guilty fornicator.
 - B. Supporting Argument Two: Fornication dissolves the marriage relationship and frees both to remarry.
 - 1. Answers "1" and "3" above apply here.
 - 2. What if the innocent party, ignorant of the guilty party's fornication, has sex relations with him? Is the innocent party then committing adultery?
- III. False Position Three: The Law of Christ on Divorce and Remarriage does not apply to the alien.
- A. Supporting Argument One: The alien is not under law.
 - 1. If aliens are sinners, they are under law. - Romans 5:13
 - 2. Aliens are sinners. - Romans 3:23
 - 3. Therefore, aliens are under law.
 - B. Supporting Argument Two: Aliens are under a "law written on the heart" (i.e., conscience) rather than the law of Christ. - cf. Romans 2:14-15
 - 1. If this be so, the conscience of the alien is a safe guide, and, as long as the alien follows his conscience, he will not sin. - cf. Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:15
 - 2. "Nature" in Romans 2:14 refers to "long, customary practice," not to an inborn sense of right and wrong. - cf. 1 Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 2:3
 - 3. Christ rules over all people, including aliens. - Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:19-23
 - 4. The Standard of Judgment

- a. All people will be judged by the law to which they are accountable. - Romans 2:12
 - b. All people who live during the gospel age will be judged by the law of Christ. - John 12:48; Romans 2:16
 - c. Therefore, all people who live during the gospel age are accountable to the law of Christ.
5. All people, including aliens, are subject to the law of Christ. - Acts 17:30-31
- IV. False Position Four: When two people in an adulterous marriage are baptized (or, in the case of two Christians, confess the sin of adultery), they are forgiven and may continue living together.
- A. John the Baptist
- 1. John baptized for the remission of sins. - Mark 1:4
 - 2. Why did he not tell Herod to be baptized and to continue living with Herodias? - Mark 6:17-18
- B. To be forgiven of adultery, one must repent of adultery.
- 1. Neither baptism nor confession of sins are valid unless preceded by repentance. - Acts 2:38; 8:22
 - 2. If one repents of a sin, he gives up that sin. - Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10
 - a. may one repent of stealing and keep on stealing?
 - b. May one repent of drunkenness and keep on drinking?
 - c. May one repent of adultery and keep on committing adultery?
 - 3. Thus, if baptism or confession of sins is to benefit the adulterer, he must give up his adultery.
- C. That which is adultery before baptism is adultery afterwards. - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 4:17-24
- V. False Position Five: If a Christians is divorced by a nonChristian, the Christian is free to remarry. - cf. 1 Corinthians 7:12-15
- A. The word “bondage” (v. 15. is never used in the Scriptures to refer to the marriage bond.
- 1. “... make a slave of; reduce to bondage; subject to...”(Thayer. 158).
 - 2. “... to reduce to servitude, enslave, oppress by retaining in servitude...” (Bagster. 107.. - cf. 2 Peter 2:19
- B. The word “bound,” which does refer to the marriage bond and its permanence, is used in verses twenty-seven and thirty-nine and is a different Greek word with a different meaning. - cf. Romans 7:2

C. What does the passage teach?

1. "Bondage" here is a strong word indicating that the law of the Lord has not made marriage a state of slavery for the believer.
2. Even the most loving husband may not be able to sustain the home if the unbeliever, who refuses to submit to the law of Christ, decides to leave.
3. In such cases the believer is not obligated by the marriage bond to make provisions for the one that departed; i.e., he is not in bondage to the unbeliever, so he is not obligated to forsake the Lord in order to preserve the marriage union.
4. The believer is not to initiate the separation but need not resist it and try to enforce union upon the unbelieving companion or have an unequal yoke forced upon himself.
5. If the unbeliever insists and deserts in spite all peaceful efforts to preserve the marriage, peaceful acquiescence to the inevitable is the only righteous solution open to the Christian.

(The material on 1 Corinthians 7:15-16 was taken from a sermon outline by Edgar J. Dye, entitled "A Study of I Cor. 7:15.")

VI. False Position Six: If my mate divorces me and later remarries, I am free to "mentally divorce" that mate and to remarry. - cf. Matthew 5:32

Conclusion:

A. We must not:

1. be taken captive by false, human theories or
2. allow the world to enter our lives through unscriptural divorce and remarriage.

B. As Christians, we must be separate from all such false doctrine and sin.

C. Let us purify ourselves!