
Words of Truth

Is Deuteronomy 24:1-4 God's Marriage Law For Today?

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Today, when a man and a woman commit to marriage for life, there is often that cross your fingers behind your back attitude about it. "I do" has become "maybe I do". People want marriage to come with an eject button. Thus, we should not be surprised that many will look to find a Scripture that allows them to get out of their marriages.

In the Old Testament, there are these verses: *"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance"* (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

When you read the Scriptures that were just quoted you cannot deny that, in those Scriptures, God allowed for a man to divorce his wife. In fact, those Scriptures allow that man to divorce his wife even if she has not committed fornication. The question is, do those Scriptures apply today? Does God allow for us to use Deuteronomy 24:1-4 to divorce for any reason now?

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 Does Not Apply To Anyone Today

We are not under the Law of Moses today. The Law of Moses was always intended to be temporary (Jeremiah 31:31-34). In fact, notice the following Scriptures that PROVE we are dead to the law: *"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 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. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter"* (Romans 7:1-6).

When you read through the Old Testament, you learn that the Law of Moses was never intended to govern all of mankind. The Law of Moses was only intended to govern Israel (Nehemiah 8:1). Thus, we who are Gentiles never would have been under the Law of Moses. Notice: *“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh”* (Ephesians 2:11-17).

The death of our Savior put the Law of Moses away (Hebrews 9:15-17). The Law was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). Now, it is the Gospel of Christ that one must obey (John 12:48). Unlike the Law of Moses, the Gospel of Christ applies to all men, everywhere (Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16). This brings us to an important point and question. What does Jesus teach regarding the issue of divorce? The answer to that question adds much light to how we should approach Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

What Did Jesus Say In Regard To Deuteronomy 24:1-4?

The question to this part of our article was, in so many words, posed to Jesus. Notice the question and His answer, which will close any discussion on the matter for an honest person: *“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, 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, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery”* (Matthew 19:3-9). Enough said!

Conclusion

When God designed marriage He did not build in an escape clause (Genesis 2:18-25). Moses allowed for divorce under an imperfect law. Our Savior overturned that law and went back to what God designed in the beginning. Now, under the New Testament, a man or woman is not permitted to divorce one another (I Corinthians 7:10; 39), with the exception being in the case of fornication (Matthew 5:31-32). When mankind obeys this law, you will find that a man will love his wife as himself and the wife will reverence her husband (Ephesians 5:31-33). Let's leave this subject where Jesus did: *“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (Mark 10:9).