

Divorce

Malachi 2:10-15; Matthew 19:1-12 / Genesis 2:1-25

I. Some Questions Are Actually Temptations

A. The Pharisees tried to tempt Jesus, straddling the border of SCRIPTURE and TRADITION. 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?* (MATTHEW 19:3)

B. Opposition to Christ forges strange alliances. And *they send* unto him certain of the *Pharisees* and of the *Herodians*, *to catch him in his words.* (MARK 12:13)

C. Jesus rejected the grounds for the question by returning to the Biblical foundation which tradition ignored. 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?* (MATTHEW 19:4-5)

D. God designed marriage to be helpful to people. And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* (GENESIS 2:18)

E. Adam chose his wife over his God. And when the woman saw that the 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, *and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.* (GENESIS 3:6)

II. Jesus Forced His Tormentors Back to Scripture

A. Not understanding marriage, the Pharisees could not understand divorce. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* (MATTHEW 19:6)

B. Heaven, not earth sets the standards for personal relationships; just because a culture uses the word marriage or divorce is no guarantee that either relationship is being practiced. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* (MATTHEW 19:6)

C. The Pharisees assumed Jesus was introducing a new law in contradiction of Scripture. They say unto him, *Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?* (MATTHEW 19:7)

D. Moses was ameliorating sin; Deuteronomy 24 gives a larger picture. 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. (MATTHEW 19:8)

E. When people manipulate Scripture the root may well be hardness of heart. Yea, *they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law*, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: *therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.* (ZECHARIAH 7:12)

F. Even the disciples could see no way to deal with what Jesus was saying. 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. His

disciples say unto him, ***If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.***
(MATTHEW 19:9-10)

III. Turn to Scripture, Not Customs, Courts, or Legislatures

A. Not everyone should be married. But he said unto them, ***All men cannot receive this saying***, save *they* to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. ***He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.*** (MATTHEW 19:11-12)

B. However, God uses marriage terminology to describe His relationship with the church. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and ***as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*** (ISAIAH 62:5)

C. The vision of the perfection of the church at the end of time is a heavenly marriage. And I John saw ***the holy*** city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared ***as a bride adorned for her husband.*** (REVELATION 21:2)

D. That ultimate pattern for marriage is evangelistic; believers should focus on the wedding, not the divorce. And ***the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*** And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And ***whosoever will, let him take the water of life*** freely. (REVELATION 22:17)

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 24 (OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE)