

News and Current Events :: TIME Magazine: "An Evangelical Rethink of Divorce?"**TIME Magazine: "An Evangelical Rethink of Divorce?" - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2007/11/6 11:55****An Evangelical Rethink on Divorce?**

By DAVID VAN BIEMA

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

On questions relating to the Bible's treatment of family and morals, one might expect assurance, if not rigidity, from Evangelical Christianity. So, it may surprise many to learn how "live" the topic of divorce remains in Evangelical circles. Last month, the cover story of the monthly *Christianity Today* was titled "When to Separate What God has Joined: A Closer Reading on the Bible on Divorce." The heated controversy provoked by the story showed how Biblically flexible some Evangelicals can be—especially when God's word seems at odds not just with modern American behavior, but also with simple human kindness.

As the article's author, the British Evangelical scholar David Instone-Brewer, points out, for most of 2,000 years Christians have viewed divorce through two scriptural citations. In Matthew, the pharisees ask Christ, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?" Jesus refers to the Old Testament and then replies, "Whoever divorces a wife, except for sexual indecency, commits adultery." The apostle Paul adds in the book First Corinthians that a Christian is "not bound" to a non-Christian spouse who abandons him. Simple, right?

Instone-Brewer radically reinterprets the first passage using, of all things, quotation marks. The Greek of the New Testament didn't always contain them, and scholars agree that sometimes they must be added in to make sense of it. Instone-Brewer, an expert in Jewish thought during Jesus's era, writes that Christ's interlocutors were not asking him whether there was any cause at all for divorce, but whether he supported something called "any-cause" divorce, a term a little bit like "no-fault" that allowed husbands to divorce wives for any reason at all. Instone-Brewer claims Jesus's "no" was a response to this idea, and that his "except for sexual indecency" condition was not a statement of the sole exemption from God's blanket prohibition, but merely Christ's reiteration of one of several divorce permissions in the Old Testament—one he felt the "any-time" advocates had exaggerated. Finally, Instone-Brewer tallies four grounds for divorce he finds affirmed in both Old and New Testaments: adultery, emotional and sexual neglect, abandonment (by anyone) and abuse.

Christianity Today has written previously on divorce, often bemoaning how easy it is in today's America. However, the Instone-Brewer essay appeared to be its editors' attempt to offer Evangelicals an escape from a classic dilemma. The "plain sense" of Jesus's words without quotes seems clear enough, but also inhumane: how could a loving God forbid divorce, even by omission, in cases of wife-beating, or of abandonment by a Christian spouse?

Each branch of Christianity deals with divorce in its own way: Catholicism bans it entirely, but many divorced and remarried couples nonetheless find that their conscience permits them to take Communion. Liberal Protestantism accepted divorce some decades ago without much engagement of the scriptural issue. Evangelicals define themselves as being tightly bound by scripture. But besides the humanitarian problem, there are some uncomfortable facts on the ground: The divorce rate among Evangelicals, which first became news after polls released by the Barna Research Group in 2001, has been as high or higher than the national average.

The Evangelical movement has actually made tremendous accommodations given the strictures it lives under. Ministries for the newly divorced are common at megachurches; and on the historically less-rigid Pentecostal side of the spectrum, celebrity preachers Juanita Bynum and Paula White both recently (<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1666552,00.html>) announced their intention to divorce. Most experts interviewed for this story attested that whereas 30 years ago, a pastor might well order a battered woman home to return her husband, that is rare today.

More conservative Evangelicals remain uneasy about divorce. If a split itself is inescapable, notes *Christianity Today* editor Andy Crouch, "remarriage is where the rubber meets the road," and many remarried couples find themselves denied church membership. Says Russel Moore, dean of the 16.3 million-member Southern Baptist Convention's influential Southern Seminary, "We teach our future pastors that marriage is a lifelong, one-flesh union." Any woman in an abusive marriage should "leave that situation," he acknowledges, and a "majority" probably accept remarriage. Asked if *he* does, Moore demurred: "Let me think about that for a little bit. I could answer in a way that would be very easily misunderstood."

Evangelical conflict on the topic was obvious in reader response to the Instone Brewer essay. Initially the mail was heavily negative. The most stinging broadside was a column by John Piper, a respected theological conservative, that called the essay not just weak but "tragic." The magazine's editor in chief, David Neff, felt the need to explain online that "Instone-Brewer's article did not... give people carte blanche on divorce." The mail eventually leveled off at 60% negative to 40% positive.

Still, the controversy suggests that even the country's most rule-bound Christians will search for a fresh understanding of scripture when it seems unjust to them. The implications? Flexibility on divorce may mean that evangelicals could also rethink their position on such things as gay marriage, as a generation of Christians far more accepting of homosexuality begins to move into power. (The ever-active Barna folks have found that 57% of "born-again" Christians age 16-29 criticize their own church for being "anti-homosexual.") It could also give heart to a certain twice-divorced former New York mayor who is running for President and seeking the conservative vote. But that may be pushing things a bit.

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(<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1680709,00.html?xidfeed-yahoo-full-nation>) CLICK HERE for full article.

Re: TIME Magazine: "An Evangelical Rethink of Divorce?" - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/11/6 12:29

This is a case when the scripture says something clearly, in several places, and we ignore it in order to continue living our practically aethiestic lifestyles. Does God's word speak any more?

Re: What is the correct definition of fornication?, on: 2007/11/6 13:28

Matthew 19:9

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.

Throughout scripture God says His people fornicated but how could they fornicate if He was married to them? Than I was thinking that it's possible that He used that word because they forsook Him completely. Notice that He gave them the bill of divorcement but did not send them away, they went away from Him.

I'm wondering if adultery means that you commit a one time act (or even more than once) but fornication means you have forsaken your covenant entirely. The word whoredom is also used.

<http://cf.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=02181>

<http://www.zhubert.com/> -(#4202 under find)

<http://www.elijah.com/cgi-bin/strongs.cgi?file=greeklexicon&isindex=4202>

Im wondering if fornication is a word to describe those who just want to commit whoredom and not have a covenant???

Fornication is the only allowance Jesus gave to divorce.

It's possible that adultery and fornication are used hand in hand because you are first an adulterer before you are a fornicator. First you commit adultery and than you decide to not return making you a fornicator(without a covenant). Even if that person remarries they are still without a covenant but you are free. If you remarry than the covenant would be terminated.

God could not have ever broken His marriage covenant to His people.

God also made a covenant to never again flood the earth. Who would doubt whether or not God would flood the earth again???

Is His covenant to not flood the earth greater than His covenant to His people???

Genesis 9:13 (King James Version)

I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

BUT...

...yet He said they fornicated, well how could they fornicate if they were married to Him? Is it because the covenant on their part was broken but His was not? Isn't it only when the husband/wife refuses to return and they have broken their part of the covenant making them fornicators?

Isaiah 50:1 reads,

"Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away."

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/11/6 13:44

Hi Ian,

Quote:

-----Does God's word speak any more?

This is indeed sad.

I am reminded of the old puritan wisdom; a land is not made wicked when the wicked living in it do wicked things, but when the righteous living in it do wicked things without reproof.

From this perspective, we can honestly say our land is being made wicked by the very church who should be preserving righteousness. May God truly and powerfully help us.

Blessings brother,

MC

Re:, on: 2007/11/6 14:10

Quote:

MY QUOTE:

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Im going to do some more studying on this subject.

If Isreal was in fornication than who divorced who first? Would God divorce His people for no reason? Of course not. So we can only conclude than that Isreal forsook God first making them fornicators right? Weren't they married before the fo llowing verses?:

Wasn't God married to Isreal before
2 Chronicles?

2 Chronicles 21:11

Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication , and compelled Judah thereto.

2 Chronicles 21:10-12 (in Context) 2 Chronicles 21 (Whole Chapter)

Isaiah 23:17

And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

Isaiah 23:16-18 (in Context) Isaiah 23 (Whole Chapter)

Ezekiel 16:15

But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornication s on every one that passed by; his it was.

Ezekiel 16:14-16 (in Context) Ezekiel 16 (Whole Chapter)

Ezekiel 16:26

Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy sleeperdoms, to provoke me to anger.

Ezekiel 16:25-27 (in Context) Ezekiel 16 (Whole Chapter)

Ezekiel 16:29

Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied therewith.

Ezekiel 16:28-30 (in Context) Ezekiel 16 (Whole Chapter)

Im not divorced and remarried just so you'll know, Ive only been married once so this is not about me if you were wondering ;-).

Re:, on: 2007/11/8 11:20

Hi glorytoglory,

This subject has been incompletely covered in many threads here in the past, mainly in the Scriptures and Doctrine forum.

you asked

Quote:

.....yet He said they fornicated, well how could they fornicate if they were married to Him?

The word 'fornicate' is a general term for sexual sin. This means it can be committed between married partners as well as with someone outside a marriage or who is single.

In Matthew, Jesus is quoted as having used the word for a woman whose marriage had been consummated. In the light of Jewish betrothal practices, this is an important difference which ministers His thought into the New Covenant era.

Some of the links in the older threads on this topic, are very good.

Re: TIME Magazine: "An Evangelical Rethink of Divorce?" - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/11/8 12:29

Quote:
-----Instone-Brewer radically reinterprets the first passage using, of all things, quotation marks. The Greek of the New Testament didn't always contain them, and scholars agree that sometimes they must be added in to make sense of it.

I have just finished reading Instone-Brewer's book. It is a challenging viewpoint. I would recommend that folks read it before they reject it. It is 350 pages of careful reasoning; it will be hard work for some but I would recommend reading it.

(http://www.amazon.com/Divorce-Remarriage-Bible-Literary-Context/dp/0802849431/refsr_11_1/105-0342729-3886825?ie=UTF8&qid=1194542812&sr=1-1) Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible; the Social and Literary Context.

One of the difficulties, sometimes, in understanding the scriptures is trying to work out the question that was being answered. This is particularly so in 1st Corinthians. This book tries to understand the social context of the key scriptural passages. His thesis is that we cannot understand the scriptural comments without the cultural context. He certainly explains the cultural context well. I think this is an honest book written by a man of integrity. He has been a 'research fellow at Tyndale House in Cambridge, England'.

Re: - posted by JelloTaster (), on: 2007/11/8 15:53

I don't believe that everyone who is divorced is going to end up in eternal hellfire. That being said, I do think it's an indicator of spiritual lack, especially when we start dealing with remarriage.

This man may present some good arguments, but if I have to be a scholar and know my greek and my jewish history and so on and so on, then my Bible is worth nothing. If I need to present a 350 page, difficult to read argument of why any doctrine is Biblical, it probably isn't. Chris

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/11/8 16:07

Quote:

JelloTaster wrote:

This man may present some good arguments, but if I have to be a scholar and know my greek and my jewish history and so on and so on, then my Bible is worth nothing. If I need to present a 350 page, difficult to read argument of why any doctrine is Biblical, it probably isn't. Chris

Well, then maybe the book just isn't for you? What's the purpose of making comments like this?

Re: - posted by lastblast (), on: 2007/11/8 18:16

It is interesting that in 1900 the episcopal church in NY was split over this issue of remarriage after divorce: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9405E5DF1339E733A25756C1A9649C946197D6CF>

Some of the churches at that time broke away with the main church over this issue. It is ironic that today we see the same thing going on in the Episcopal church.....same actions of separation, different sin. Then it was adultery (remarriage), now it is homosexuality.

I read an excerpt someone sent me by R.A.Torrey in his book, How to Pray. In it, he calls divorce, 'legalized adultery' and says that those who remarry are actually living with other people's spouses. What some of us believe today to be true was even believed by some of the great men of the faith of yesteryear.

Re: self-righteous supposing - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/11/8 20:26

You know, sometimes things need to be restated...

Quote:
-----From this perspective, we can honestly say our land is being made wicked by the very church who should be preserving righteousness

Some more little winged birds that can never be completely reeled back in...

I thought about quietly editing my statement below, but then I thought maybe there is some benefit in being more open. It seems Carter Conlon's concern over "Angry Watchmen" hits closer to me than I suspected.

Whether I spoke from poor logic, or by ungodly frustration, I should not have made that comment. The Church isn't making anything wicked...

Too often I find my frustrations are expressions of personal offenses more than Godly burdens. This fitful indulgence is unhelpful to those who might indeed be rediscovering the grace and rest of God.

I've been spoiled by a cheerful and long-suffering wife. Because of this, when it comes to clucking my tongue over divorce, I supposed I considered myself exempt from Paul's warning: But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

'Such things' includes more than the one thing I happen to be pleased with myself over...whatever my sin and corrupt fruit has been it is surely equal to be counted among 'such things'.

If there is any encouragement in Christ in me, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, then let me heartily offer my prayers, my fellowship, my deep sympathies, and my humility, to those who may be hurting right now in some aspect from divorce. I gladly receive this same grace. O, there is more forgiveness and more hope in Christ than I was representing. May the love of Jesus overflow into your heart this night.

Blessings,

MC

Re: - posted by JelloTaster (), on: 2007/11/8 23:56

First of all, looking back, I realize my purpose for posting what I did was not Christ-like. I feel quite strongly about this issue and apparently let that get in the way. It was not directed at anyone posting here but rather at the fellow who wrote that paper. I apologize if I've offended anyone.

I do though think that if we look at all passages pertaining to divorce and especially remarriage, it becomes quite clear that we should at the very least be erring on the side of rejecting it. I guess because it seems so cut and dry to me, I wonder if this fellow has a hidden agenda, needing to use a large paper to argue in favor of divorce. I hope that clears things up. Chris

Re:, on: 2007/11/9 0:23

Quote:

philologos wrote:

Quote:
-----Instone-Brewer radically reinterprets the first passage using, of all things, quotation marks. The Greek of the New Testament didn't always contain them, and scholars agree that sometimes they must be added in to make sense of it.

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One of the difficulties, sometimes, in understanding the scriptures is trying to work out the question that was being answered. This is particularly so in 1st Corinthians. This book tries to understand the social context of the key scriptural passages. His thesis is that we cannot understand the scriptural comments without the cultural context. He certainly explains the cultural context well. I think this is an honest book written by a man of integrity. He has been a 'research fellow at Tyndale House in Cambridge, England'.

Does he discuss the definition of fornication in this book with any scripture references? It seems to me if this is the only cause for divorce than it deserves looking into.

My question is this, was Israel betrothed or married to God in this verse:

2 Chronicles 21:11

Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto.

It looks like an interesting book.

Re: - posted by TonyS (), on: 2007/11/9 4:35

Quote:
-----It is ironic that today we see the same thing going on in the Episcopal church.....same actions of separation, different sin. Then it was as adultery (remarriage), now it is homosexuality.

And I think it to be an honest observation. And in my opinion the homosexual agenda is God's judgment against a Church that has approved of heterosexual sin. The issues facing the Episcopal Church rest assured will be coming to a Church near you if it has not already.

I look forward to buying the book.

Re: TIME Magazine: "An Evangelical Rethink of Divorce?", on: 2007/11/9 11:27

TonyS said

Quote:
-----in my opinion the homosexual agenda is God's judgment against a Church that has approved of heterosexual sin.

I believe the more radical issue is idolatry, which the basis of sexual sins in *all* their forms.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/11/9 15:25

Quote:

-----I believe the more radical issue is idolatry, which the basis of sexual sins in all their forms.

And not only sexual sins! Isn't idolatry, worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, pretty much the whole ball of wax? The old man is homo idolatrous.

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful...

MC

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/11/9 15:31

You know, I was walking to my car this morning and thought of this thread again... and I was thinking about the excuse that these people make using 'context.' That the verses in the bible were made in a 1st century context... but then they never go on to explain what that context is.

But then I remembered reading in a sociology book what one of the major problems was in the decline of the Roman empire: Divorce.

Even in 1st century Rome there was divorce, it was rampant, and it was a sin that the early church recognized. If there was any context besides infidelity that was permissible for divorce, they surely would have mentioned it in scripture.

What we've done is excuse ourselves to ignore the Word of God. We all know it is wrong, but for the sake of filling up people's feelings we do not preach against sin!

We've let Satan build a stronghold within many of our churches, and he continues to take ground. There must be a counter-offensive, we must pray!

Re: TIME Magazine: "An Evangelical Rethink of Divorce?" - posted by SONmind (), on: 2007/11/10 13:34

These are sad times in America, indeed. Our "section" of Christ's Body is becoming a weak, sickly, unfruitful branch that is in real danger of being cut off instead being pruned (purged) by our Father, the master gardener. May God have mercy on our present blindness and apathy! Why is it if we read a hundred theological discourses, hear a hundred sermons, or read a thousand secular opinions when it comes to marriage, divorce, and family issues what is heard is more agreement than the different views the above mentioned sources should have.

Why do those who profess to know God through Christ, claiming to have God the Spirit dwelling in them now are more concerned about searching the scriptures to find excuses for our disobedience and lack of faith...as opposed to diligently searching the Word to learn of Him, to be transformed in our being to reflect His glory in this dark world?

We are to be a people that want to rightly divide (skillfully handle) the Word of Truth. The heart of Jesus teaching was not about what sin or sins give us a right to divorce, but why God had to give His people the provision of divorce in the first place. It was not about what was done to the hurt, offended, or wronged party, but about the hardness of heart and root of bitterness springing up in the inner man toward this person that the Master has declared that I am one with.

Please don't think I am judging any particular individual...I have been previously accused of that in another forum here...that was not the case then, and it isn't now. "Who am I to judge another man's servant, to his master he either stands or falls." No this is my heart cry to the Lord, and to my genuine brothers and sisters in Christ: let's stop looking for and making excuses that only smack of false religion, and not reality in Him.

I would never be an advocate for an unrepentant husband or wife abusing the Christ-likeness of their husband or wife. However, the one who offends is no less sinful than the unforgiving party. God has accountability for husband and wife, regardless of the performance or non-performance of their mate. No I'm not advocating bondage...the scriptures in Corinth

ians address that.

I'm simply saying that there must be reasons why God expects us to treat marriage as a holy covenant, not one to be casually entered into, and even more seriously considered before the last resort of divorce is done.

May GOD grant that we return to honest seeking of GOD's face to determine what the will of the Lord is in our unique situation. Then have the grace and heart to be obedient and walk in the will of the LORD, and not walk in our hurt, our emotions, or our own thoughts.

The LORD Bless You & Keep You All,
Harold

Re: God forgives ALL sin, even divorce. Too bad Christians don't., on: 2007/11/10 20:46

I wasn't going to comment on this but all these sanctimonious comments have really grieved my heart. Who are we as mere humans to judge another's heart or better yet their calling? I will not condemn anyone who is divorced. God can only judge someone's heart and understand what happened. The world is full of condemnation, why oh why is there so much of it in the church under the guise of quoting Scripture?

All I know and believe is that "gifts and the calling of God are WITHOUT repentance." (Rom 11.29)

I'd like for you all who so easily stand behind Scripture to condemn others to consider that if Christ is truly the Alpha and the Omega, please consider when He gave me (and others) the Holy Spirit and called us in our callings... that He knew our beginning, our erroneous middle, and that He knows our end. So if He truly is Alpha and Omega, then maybe truly He has more hope for us than you?

If He is anything like what I've read in your comments, all is lost with me (and others) but I thank God that I nor my calling is not lost or nor is my testimony. And yes, you're right, I'm divorced but I thank God that I only look to HIM for condemnation and since there is NONE in HIM, I can stand around folks like you.

Sadly, the majority will not even understand what I've written.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/11/10 21:34

Quote:
-----...I thank God that I only look to HIM for condemnation and since there is NONE in HIM, I can stand around folks like you.

Sister, there is merit in what you are expressing here.

I am sorry that some of our posts added to your grief. Let me ask for a little patience...many of the people here might not be expressing condemnation but their own grief over the dramatic increase of divorce within the Church. Certainly, whether we have personal experience with divorce or not, we have strong feelings in reaction to this trend,... but I do so desire to be careful, humble, and most of all Christlike, in how we treat those brethren who have been affected by it.

Quote:
-----...the calling of God are WITHOUT repentance."

Sincerely, I appreciate you venturing to be heard on this. Some people, in a desire to stand strong, may dismiss and even resent those who have been wounded. In return, the wounded may understandably grow resentful towards them. Let's forgive one another just as easily as we once resented each other for the sake of that very same calling we share in Christ. Folks like us is all we have.

Blessings sister,

MC

Re: - posted by HIServant (), on: 2007/11/11 0:23

I echo your comments, MC, and express regret for words perhaps too quickly shared out of context. I have enough failures and sins internally that I could let a dozen or so other people take the rest of their life off from sinning. CHRIST said to the pharisee's, "Whoever is without sin, let them cast the first stone". Where then do we (Self included) gloss over HIS comments where are meant to arrest our thoughts and "think about it" and go right to our perception of what JESUS wants someone else to know or what they should know. As such, we just start chucking stones. I just posted on being burnt out on the health wealth and prosperity message having been offended by the quotes of others (Not on SermonIndex) telling me REALLY what GOD means. Unless one has walked in it, quoting Scripture to the wounded isn't the saave needed. I cannot pretend to understand your specific challenge but I know that the ratio of two ears and one mouth means I should listen first to both the other person and to GOD before responding. I speak only to myself. May the LORD bless you this day.

As HIS servant in your service,
HIServant

Re: Rethink - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/11/11 1:01

Wasn't sure if this was the same author but had come across this elsewhere and mentioned it here;

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order1&topic_id18583&forum35&post_id&refreshGo) Your Thoughts

The accompanying link has something of a summary from the author of the book that Philologos mentioned. Found it very interesting as this matter is not one that I have found precisely cut and dried for all the variety of view point. I would also concur that just the idea of pressing further into this does nothing to degrade or demise the seriousness or sobriety that we ought to have over what has been established;

Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Mat 19:6

And MC, God bless you brother ...

Re: - posted by SONmind (), on: 2007/11/13 13:18

I pray that you didn't view my comments as judgmental or 'holier -than-thou', because they're not. I have been married and divorced twice (after 8 years, and 13 respectively), so I am the last to throw stones as it were. However, my experience and pain, along with how the Spirit has ministered and taught me through the Word, is how I've reached my convictions.

When a marriage ends it is excruciating (or should be) for the man/woman, however most of the time, the most devastated parties are the ones who have no say in the matter: namely our children. Both scripture and secular research support the devastating long-term consequences of the family breakup.

Fatherlessness is a major contributor to promiscuity, out of wedlock births, criminal acts, underperformance academically, emotional issues, greater divorce rate among the children, etc. No wonder scripture states, 'Fathers, don't provoke your children to wrath'. I know all too well there are no easy answers, but if both of us profess to know Christ and possess His Spirit, there should be a whole lot less divorce than what the Church is seeing.

All I'm saying is we need to more carefully consider our ways...either 'we have been bought by a price...or 'my life is not my own', or maybe we are just blinded by false religion, perhaps...'lovers of our selves, and not lovers of God'...'covenant-breakers', etc.

Intens4Him, I don't know your situation... frankly, it is none of my business. I pray that you are finding comfort, healing, a

nd peace in addition to the forgiveness and cleansing you already have in Him. There is no harsh judgment from me, only compassion...but there must be a return to real conviction about pleasing God in the Church. Please no more false religious legalism, but faith proven by obedience...besides our children and a lost world are watching...us.

The Lord Bless You & Keep You,
Harold

Re:, on: 2007/11/13 19:36

I am finding comfort and healing but it's slow coming sometimes. I am definitely not the same person I was when I was divorced. The Lord really has brought me through some rough patches and I've grown so much in Him.

No one knows better than a divorced Christian what the Scripture says about divorce (we live it, we breath it, it echo's continously in our mind like a video on constant replay). Well meaning Christians need to realize that the Scripture says "the letter killeth" (2 Cor 3.6). Scriptures about divorce have been hammered home so many times and I'm not just speaking of SI but in churches throughout America. I visited a church a couple of months ago and the pastor spoke of going from house to house that weekend and ran into an older man (60ish) that broke his heart. The man told him that his church sounded like a good one but he could never go because he was divorced. Tim tried to talk to him but he had heard for years and he had been beaten to death by the letter of the word.

Harold, I too, want people to consider their ways and their words. Someone reminded me of a Don Francisco quote,

Quote:
-----we are in danger of making divorce the second unforgivable sin.
~ Don Francisco

It's my firm belief that the church is killing it's wounded or at the very least, kicking them to the ditch to lick their wounds and heal themselves. This is NOT Bible...

Quote:
-----Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.
~Galatians 6.1 NAS95

To me this means, that if you even THINK you're spiritual - it's your job (not someone elses) to restore that person in a spirit of gentleness and meekness. Not kick them out of church or make them feel more ashamed than they already do. But most people (& you know who you are), right now you're thinking of worst case scenario to spout back to me!!! Without realizing that most divorces AREN'T the worst case scenario.

I still want to know that if God called us (divorced people) before we ever sinned so miserably, then He had hope in us, so why can't the rest of the church?

Quote:
-----I know all to well there are no easy answers, but if both of us profess to know Christ and and possess His Spirit, there should be a whole lot less divorce than what the Chorch is seeing.

Well, Harold, it's sad to say but I professed Christ AND possessed His Holy Spirit before I was divorced... oh for about 20 years. I realize now that I was more of a carnal Christian than I ever realized then. But my guilt and shame almost drove me to suicide but Christ didn't allow that BECAUSE He has a plan (a calling) for me and what most Christians would call a failure of a life. I'm learning it more and more everyday that there is NO condemnation in Christ, no matter who tries to put it on me.

In my perfect world (if there was one!! HA!), each and every Christian would know that LOVE does indeed cover a multitude of sin (1 Peter 4.8).

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2007/11/14 0:01

Interesting topic. I would like to ad, or ask questions. So please be patient and try to understand that I ask and comment out of a true quest for understanding on this subject.

I came from a household where my mother was married and divorced 3 times, and my father was married and divorced 4 times, never to each other again after the first divorce. They are now both getting married again in the near future (not to each other). The first divorce, between my biological parents, was when I was 6 years old and the last was when I was 22. Neither parent is saved.

Yes, this was as confusing as it sounds. :-)

I understand divorces between unsaved people, even if I do not agree with it, but some questions are: what would possess a born again Christian to get divorced? Why would some Christians justify divorce between two Christians? Why do some Christians believe that it is ok to divorce?

Obviously I do not know the situation between Paula White and her husband, or others on this site for that matter, but come on. Her divorce, if repented and asked forgiveness, is forgiven, but why go down this path? I mean, what is she/he thinking the gain will be?

What is the GAIN of divorce? It does not gain anything. As stated earlier in this post, the only reason to divorce is adultery/fornication. There is no other justification for it. Why do some as Christians justify it?

As someone that has lived through multiple divorces (through my parents) and has now been married for 7 years to my wife, I understand that struggles come up in marriages. We have had our share of arguments and fights, but we both understand that no matter how bad it may get, divorce is not an option. This doesn't mean that we are better than others, for we are not, but we won't go the divorce route because it strictly IS NOT an option.

If the Lord set people up in a marriage, who are we to disband it?

I am truly interested in people's responses to this. I have not read any old postings on this subject, so any comments for these questions would be appreciated. My questions and comments are not the most edifying, I don't know how asking these questions can be, but they are honest questions.

In Christ

Christiaan

Re: - posted by lastblast (), on: 2007/11/19 7:57

Quote:
-----No one knows better than a divorced Christian what the Scripture says about divorce (we live it, we breathe it, it echoes continuously in our mind like a video on constant replay)

Lisa,

I must disagree with you on this point. I personally know many people who are divorced, and they do know what the scriptures say on divorce, but for most divorced professors of Christ, they do NOT know what the scriptures teach, that's why the majority of divorced get remarried in spite of what the scriptures teach to the contrary. What the scriptures teach is what R.A. Torrey believed and wrote about: divorce for many is just legalized adultery.

If people "remained unmarried or were reconciled to their spouses" as the scriptures teach, there would not be this huge issue. The main issue in the church today is "legalized adultery". Yes, divorce is the initial evil in this because if one/both of the marital parties believed in God's eyes they were not free to "move on", that they were indeed "joined" together BY GOD for life, many marriages would not end in divorce.

In years past, the same sins existed, yet families stayed together.....some admittedly were miserable, but that is where the ministry needs to come----to help bring healing BEFORE a divorce occurs. If a divorce happens, then Truth needs to be applied to the situation and we need to stand with each other through that pain and help the one divorced be able to persevere without falling into sin (adultery/remarriage).

As I said, I know many who are divorced. I don't think they would agree with you that divorced people are ostracized in church much today----that is why it is such a problem in the church----because divorce is being accepted. Where I see the biggest persecution is with those divorced brothers/sisters who believe that their spouse belongs to THEM until "death do us part"----they believe the divorce did NOT dissolve their marriage in the sight of God. Many churches today DO teach that, so such saints who are standing firm in the truth and persevering are being ousted from their churches because their stance/belief makes the remarried uncomfortable. That is a sad, sad, thing.

I recently heard of a couple who tried repeatedly to have a meeting with their pastor on the issue of divorce/remarriage to find out what the church's stance. The pastor would not return their phone calls/emails. They finally understood that he was unwilling to discuss it with them, so they felt no option other than to leave that church. They then received a letter from the pastor "blessing" them on their way.

The enemy sure is having a field day in the church.....and sadly, we are letting him..... :-(

Re:, on: 2007/11/19 8:18

Quote:

glorytoglory wrote:

Quote:

MY QUOTE:

Matthew 19:9

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.

Throughout scripture God says His people fornicated but how could they fornicate if He was married to them? Than I was thinking that it's possible that He used that word because they forsook Him completely. Notice that He gave them the bill of divorcement but did not send them away, they went away from Him.

I'm wondering if adultery means that you commit a one time act (or even more than once) but fornication means you have forsaken your covenant entirely. The word whoredom is also used.

<http://cf.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=02181>

<http://www.zhubert.com/-/#4202> under find)

<http://www.eliyah.com/cgi-bin/strongs.cgi?file=greeklexicon&isindex=4202>

Im wondering if fornication is a word to describe those who just want to commit whoredom and not have a covenant???

Fornication is the only allowance Jesus gave to divorce.

It's possible that adultery and fornication are used hand in hand because you are first an adulterer before you are a fornicator. First you commit adultery and then you decide to not return making you a fornicator(without a covenant). Even if that person remarries they are still without a covenant but you are free. If you remarry than the covenant would be terminated.

God could not have ever broken His marriage covenant to His people.

God also made a covenant to never again flood the earth. Who would doubt whether or not God would flood the earth again???

Is His covenant to not flood the earth greater than His covenant to His people???

Genesis 9:13 (King James Version)

13I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

BUT...

....yet He said they fornicated, well how could they fornicate if they were married to Him? Is it because the covenant on their part was broken but His was not? Isn't it only when the husband/wife refuses to return and they have broken their part of the covenant making them fornicators?

Isaiah 50:1 reads,

"Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away."

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

Im going to do some more studying on this subject.

If Isreal was in fornication than who divorced who first? Would God divorce His people for no reason? Of course not. So we can only conclude than that Isreal forsook God first making them fornicators right? Weren't they married before the following verses?:

Wasn't God married to Isreal before
2 Chronicles?

2 Chronicles 21:11

Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto.

2 Chronicles 21:10-12 (in Context) 2 Chronicles 21 (Whole Chapter)

Isaiah 23:17

And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

Isaiah 23:16-18 (in Context) Isaiah 23 (Whole Chapter)

Ezekiel 16:15

But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.

Ezekiel 16:14-16 (in Context) Ezekiel 16 (Whole Chapter)

Ezekiel 16:26

Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy sleepdoms, to provoke me to anger.

Ezekiel 16:25-27 (in Context) Ezekiel 16 (Whole Chapter)

Ezekiel 16:29

Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied therewith.

Ezekiel 16:28-30 (in Context) Ezekiel 16 (Whole Chapter)

Im not divorced and remarried just so you'll know, Ive only been married once so this is not about me if you were wondering ;-).

I posted this earlier. My question has been and still is what did Jesus mean by fornication? What is the true definition

of fornication? Does it include all sexual immorality?

Here's another article:

Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce and remarriage is an area of intense controversy among Christians. It is admittedly a difficult and complex issue. Doctrinal positions on this issue range from "no divorce, no remarriage under any circumstances" to "divorce for any cause." We, at Consuming Fire Fellowship, offer this concise doctrinal statement which we feel reflects the spirit and letter of Scripture regarding this issue.

Marriage Is A Lifetime Contract In The Purpose of God.

Genesis 2:24 speaks of the man and woman "cleaving" to each other and "becoming one flesh." Thus, breaking a marriage is like rending the body apart.

The marriage contract is intended to be binding until death (I Corinthians 7:39).

Marriage is symbolic of Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:31,32) who are bound together in an indissoluble union.

Divorce Is Sin And Should Never Be Practiced By Christians.

Malachi 2:16 says that the Lord hates divorce; the Lord Jesus reaffirms this in Matthew 19:3-9 (what "God hath joined together, let not man put asunder").

Nevertheless, should Christians be innocently abandoned and divorced by their spouses there is little they can do in our licentious and Christ-rejecting culture.

The Exception Clause: For Fornication.

The Lord Jesus names "fornication" as grounds for remarriage after one has been divorced (Matthew 19:3-9). However, what does our Lord mean when using the term "fornication?" The Greek word "pornea" translated "fornication" in Matthew 19 and Luke is used elsewhere in Scripture to denote "harlotry" (Luke 15:30); "incestuous relationships" (I Corinthians 5:1); "sodomite relationships" (Jude 1:7); "betrothal unfaithfulness" (Deuteronomy 22:13-21); and "marital unfaithfulness" (Proverbs 7:10-20; Hosea 2:2; Jeremiah 3:6-9; Ezekiel 16:28-34; 23:43-45), where adultery and fornication are used synonymously.

As shown above, the restricting of "fornication" to mean only "betrothal unfaithfulness" is to ignore its usage in other parts of the Bible.

Certainly, when Jesus cites "fornication" as an exception to His divine principles regarding divorce and remarriage He cannot be referring to single acts of sin. Why? Because elsewhere the Bible instructs Christians to forgive and to seek reconciliation, to love our enemies, and to even pray for those who spitefully use us. Therefore, we are of the opinion that what is meant in these passages refers to "perpetual adultery," or, being deserted by a spouse who then remarries another, thus committing continual adultery. There is no command in the Bible that marriage must be broken off for fornication or any other sin. There is a better course -- to forgive, and be reconciled (as in Hosea 1-3).

Desertion By An Unbeliever.

Desertion of a believing mate is addressed by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 7:15). The Apostle states that the believing mate "is not under bondage" in such cases. Again, we are of the opinion, based on the totality of Scripture, that "desertion" here refers to being abandoned, divorced, and the offending party remarrying an

other. Under these conditions the deserted Christian is not bound to the marriage contract.. This situation is in direct contrast to that of I Corinthians 7:11, where the "separated" believer is bound to the spouse. The same root word ("bound" or "bondage") is used in I Corinthians 7:27,39 where it refers to the marriage contract. Moreover, the incentive to remain with the unbelieving partner (i.e., that the unbelieving partner is sanctified by the unbelieving spouse) is nullified when the unbelieving partner deserts.

Two Christians joined in wedlock do not have grounds for divorce outside of fornication. Allowance is made for "separation," but there is no allowance for divorce ("putting away") or remarriage ("let her remain unmarried"). The reason stated is that the door must always be open for "reconciliation."

Scriptural Divorce Gives a Right To Remarry.

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 24:1,2 which clearly states that a right to divorce means a right to remarry (Matthew 19:8).

Since a Scriptural divorce is a dissolution of marriage, the Scripturally divorced person is an unmarried person. When a former partner marries, the other party is automatically freed from the bonds of that marriage, regardless of where the guilt lies, and thus is free to remarry.

Remarriage is not permitted for desertion of a believer by a believer, unless the deserting party remarries (thus committing adultery and breaking the marriage bond).

Remarriage is not permitted in the absence of fornication or desertion of a believer by a believer where the divorced partner is still living.

Remarriage is permitted when a former divorced partner is deceased.

Moral Failure, When Duly Repented Of, Cannot Bar The Offended From Fellowship.

When a person comes to Christ, he is forgiven of all failures in life, moral or otherwise (II Corinthians 5:17). Human obligations may continue, however. If he is divorced and remarried before salvation, he should remain in that new marriage, since to remarry the former spouse (even if possible) would be an abomination (Deuteronomy 24:3,4). If he is divorced without Scriptural cause and has not remarried and his spouse is not remarried, he may be reconciled to the former spouse or remain unmarried.

Unscripturally divorced persons or unscripturally remarried persons should not be barred from church fellowship if there is clear evidence of repentance.

The right hand of fellowship may be denied for those who deliberately obtain an unscriptural divorce or remarriage against counsel. When considering a divorced person for an official church position, the Elders must weight the facts of each case in order to determine eligibility.

Sanctity of Marriage.

We are as fully committed to the sacred character of marital commitments as other believers. We join with them in deploring the high divorce rate and the disintegration of family life. Our view of the Scriptures is not a careless yielding to the spirit of modern life, but a conscientious examination of the entire teaching of God's Word on this subject. Let us hope our Scriptural conscience is respected by those of differing views.

<http://www.consumingfirefellowship.org/Divorce%20And%20Remarriage.htm>

Re: TIME Magazine: "An Evangelical Rethink of Divorce?", on: 2007/11/20 22:21

glorytoglory said

Quote:
-----My question has been and still is what did Jesus mean by fornication? What is the true definition of fornication? Does it include all sexual immorality?

In general terms it does include *everything*. No sexual perversion is excluded by the term.

In Matthew, Jesus chooses to describe the woman as one whose marriage has already been consummated, when He says to the Pharisees, that a man may not put his wife away *except* she has committed sexual immorality. The word He uses for 'woman' automatically rules out the possibility of His meaning only a sexual liaison between betrothal and consummation.

Re:, on: 2007/11/20 23:02

Quote:

dorcas wrote:

glorytoglory said

Quote:
-----My question has been and still is what did Jesus mean by fornication? What is the true definition of fornication? Does it include all sexual immorality?

In general terms it does include *everything*. No sexual perversion is excluded by the term.

In Matthew, Jesus chooses to describe the woman as one whose marriage has already been consummated, when He says to the Pharisees, that a man may not put his wife away *except* she has committed sexual immorality. The word He uses for 'woman' automatically rules out the possibility of His meaning only a sexual liaison between betrothal and consummation.

Wow, I was just thinking, Jesus said the Pharisees put them away in the OT FOR EVERY CAUSE BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS OF THEIR HEARTS. GOD ON THE OTHER HAND PUT THEM AWAY FOR FORNICATION, ADULTERY AND WHOREDOM AND WE KNOW THAT GOD DOES NOT HAVE A HARD HEART. IF WE KNOW THAT GOD DOES NOT HAVE A HARD HEART AND HE PUT HIS PEOPLE AWAY FOR THESE SAME REASONS THAN THAT ONLY BRINGS CONFIRMATION TO ME THAT FORNICATION DOES MEAN ALL SEXUAL IMMORALITY:

Matthew 19:7-8

7They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8He 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.

GOD PUT AWAY ISRAEL FOR FORNICATION, ADULTERY, WHOREDOM AND WE KNOW THAT GOD DOES NOT HAVE A HARD HEART. God would not do something that was not acceptable.

Jeremiah 3:8

And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

Jeremiah 3:7-9

7And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Ju

dah saw it.

8And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

9And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.

Doesn't that make sense?

Re:, on: 2007/11/21 0:15

Ok. correction I found fornication mentioned in the law but adultery is also mentioned:

13If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,

14And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid:

15Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate:

16And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her;

17And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

18And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him;

19And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.

20But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel:

21Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.

22If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.

23If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

24Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

25But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay wi

th her shall die.

26But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:

27For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.

28If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found;

29Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.

30A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.

Re:, on: 2007/11/21 0:30

I found that God feels the same way about adultery as He does fornication. The word fornication though is not in the law. Neither does it anywhere in the law describe it as something that happens only before you get married.

Re:, on: 2007/11/21 5:27

I found the two definitions in the bible for fornication. How would you interpret this? Esau is described as a fornicator:

DEFINITION #1:

Hebrews 12:16

Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

Genesis 25:30-34

30And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

HERE IS DEFINITION #2:

1 Corinthians 10:6-8

6Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to

play.

8Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

Exodus 32:1-10

Exodus 32

1And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

3And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

4And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

5And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.

6And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

7And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

8They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

9And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

10Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

This is fornication:

34Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way:

What happened in Genesis with Esau was not even about marriage it was about a birthright. In the new testament the bible is using this passage of scripture to describe what fornication is. It says nothing here about before marriage only. This is sexual immorality.

Numbers 25:1-9

The bible describes this type of fornication as whoredom. It doesn't say anything about these people not being married who committed this whoredom:

Numbers 25

1And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

2And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

3And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

4And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun

, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

5And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor.

6And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

8And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

9And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

THEY ALSO KILLED THE PRINCES AND JUDGES.

Fornication with God's people continued throughout the old testament:

2 Chronicles 21:11, Isaiah 23:17,
Ezekiel 16:15, Ezekiel 16:26, Ezekiel 16:29,

I agree with you Linn, I just want to back this up with scripture.

Re:, on: 2007/11/21 8:21

I'm still not 100% on this. Thoughts anyone?...

Re:, on: 2007/11/21 9:01

One more thing... :-) Maybe someone could answer this for me. Someone told me that the Jewish people considered those they were betrothed to as their wives. Can you tell me where they got that information from?

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/11/21 11:00

Definition of Fornication from Dictionary.com:

1. voluntary sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons or two persons not married to each other.

Glory to glory, fornication even in the two contexts listed was sexual, it had nothing to do with the food.

Why was Esau a fornicator?

Could it be that he took Canaanite women to be his wives, then married one of his cousins?

Quote:
----- Gen 26:34,35 And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

Quote:
----- Gen 28:8,9 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

There is a good possibility that Esau had sexual relations either with these women before he married them, or with others... I think that is what his label as fornicator indicates.

In the case of the 1 Cor 10:8 example of fornication, that is referring directly to a plague in the OT in Numbers 25 that had nothing to do with eating and drinking and everything to do with sex outside of marriage.

Quote:
-----Numbers 25
1And Israel abode in Shittim, **and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.**

2And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

3**And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor:** and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

4And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

5And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were **joined unto Baalpeor.**

6And, **behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses,** and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

8**And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly.** So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

9And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

I think the case is very clear as to what fornication is.

Re:, on: 2007/11/21 13:45

Quote:

iansmith wrote:

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In the case of the 1 Cor 10:8 example of fornication, that is referring directly to a plague in the OT in Numbers 25 that had nothing to do with eating and drinking and everything to do with sex outside of marriage.

Quote:

Don't you think that would be reading into it a bit? What do you think of how God refers to his people as fornicators here:

2 Chronicles 21:11, Isaiah 23:17,
Ezekiel 16:15,Ezekiel 16:26,Ezekiel 16:29

Re: TIME Magazine: "An Evangelical Rethink of Divorce?", on: 2007/11/21 15:44

Quote:

-----Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau

If you look at this bit of the sentence, this is about a fornicator or a profane person.

It is not applying fornication to Esau. The condemnation against Esau was his profanity ... which is then described... his totally missing the value of being blessed by God because he was firstborn.

The best definition of fornication is the idolatries described in Lev 18. Notice how at the end of the chapter, God repeats five times what will happen if they worship idols.

By the time we get to the New Testament, there is an assumption in scripture that everyone in Israel knows what is meant by fornication or adultery. This is clear also from the precision with which the gospel writers note the changes Jesus made to their previous practices.

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/11/21 15:51

Quote:

-----Don't you think that would be reading into it a bit? What do you think of how God refers to his people as fornicators here:

2 Chronicles 21:11, Isaiah 23:17,
Ezekiel 16:15,Ezekiel 16:26,Ezekiel 16:29

2 Chronicles 21:11 *Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto.*

Other translations:

ASV 'made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot'

ESV 'led the inhabitants of Jerusalem into whoredom'

NASB 'caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot'

NIV 'caused the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves'

This instance of 'fornication' in the KJV is understood by almost every modern bible translator to be in reference to sexual sin committed by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

One thing to mention about 'high places' is often these high places were temples to other gods, or shrines where pagan rituals were performed. Often 'shrine prostitutes' both male and female were found at these places. So the transition from saying 'he made high places' to 'they prostituted themselves' is not a hard connection.

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Isaiah 23:17 *And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.*

This is a prophecy concerning the future of the city of Tyre. Tyre was at this time a great trading city, and was very wealthy. As a trade city she needed to have partnerships with other world powers, nations and kingdoms in order to continue to thrive. Isaiah is saying that the city will become a 'virtual' prostitute to these other nations... that it will do anything for their trade, for their money.

Prophecy translation by Ian: Tyre, a once great and mighty city will be nothing more than a whore to other kingdoms. It will have the appearance of wealth and success, but be rotting from within.

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Ezekiel 16:15 *But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.*

This chapter of Ezekiel starts this way: *Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations*

What is the purpose of this prophesy by Ezekiel? It is to point out how Israel has gone astray. In verse 15 Ezekiel likens Israel to a harlot (a whore). What do harlots do? Harlots commit adultery (also known as fornication). And more scathingly, Ezekiel accuses Israel with fornicating with everyone that passes by.

I am reminded of how God told Hosea to take a harlot (whore, prostitute) as a wife so that he could understand how He felt about Israel's indiscretion.

26 *Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.*

In this instance Ezekiel could either be talking about physical relations with the people of Egypt, which would explain 'great of flesh.' Or it could also be a spiritual alegory to fornication, that we have committed spiritual adultery with the religions, false gods and pagan practices of Egypt.

29 *Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied the rewith.*

Israel, God's chosen people, who were supposed to bless those nations around them; a chosen priesthood and a holy nation... they were not only as bad as their neighbors, but actually caused increased corruption. This is a pretty harsh rebuke.

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/11/21 15:53

Quote:

-----If you look at this bit of the sentence, this is about a fornicator or a profane person.

Yeah, I was thinking the same thing as well, but I wanted to stick with one horse and run with it.

Re: - posted by lastblast (), on: 2007/11/21 16:05

Quote:

-----Someone told me that the Jewish people considered those they were betrothed to as thier wives. Can you tell me where they got that information from?

Well, the NT example of that would be: Mt. 1:18-24. Joseph thought to "put away" Mary during their betrothal because she was found with child (while she was still in her father's house), before he took her as his wife.

Here's a couple of websites that touch on the betrothal custom in regards to Jesus' teachings in Mt. 19:9

www.marriagedivorce.com
<http://www.cadz.net/mdr.html>

Re:, on: 2007/11/21 22:16

I have a problem with reading into things. I don't like to look at Jewish traditions either unless there is scripture to confirm that these things are so. I'm going to do some more studying up on this. Once I get going it gets in my spirit and I have to get an answer.:-)

Re: - posted by lastblast (), on: 2007/11/21 22:34

Yeah, I don't care much for placing custom on par with scripture as some want to. However, in this instance, there is scripture to show precedence that divorce could occur PRIOR to a woman being joined to her betrothed husband.

As I have stated before though, I do not 100% believe the porneia of Mt. 19:9 is regarding pre-marital sex in the betrothed. It very well could be though, so for those who say it absolutely cannot mean that, are disregarding the scriptures at hand and that show it is possible.

Blessings in your study! I KNOW how it feels to have something in your "craw" and HAVE to have the answers. :-)