

CHAPTER D12

MARRIAGE

Marriage is an exchange or acquisition of *property*. As Christ's brides we are possessions He bought (**1 Co 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pe 2:1**), which is also a method of acquiring slaves (**Le 25:44-46**). Christ made us His wives expecting – nay, *demanding* – that we prove ourselves to be helpers meet for Him. When we were purchased by Christ, we and all we have became His property, part of His household (**Ac 4:32**). A wife owns nothing (which was one of covetous Lucifer's main objections to life under God's rule). She subsists on the providence of her man. Her responsibilities can be extensive, including the use and management of all His resources for the good of his household (ruling and reigning under his lordship in accordance with his will). (I have deliberately blurred the distinction between Christ/bride and man/wife because there is no difference.) And even though it is extremely offensive to everything the “free world” holds sacred, we learn in **Dt 5:21** and **Le 25:39-46** that God considers women and slaves to be chattel.

When two men get together to discuss the acquisition of a helper, a wife, the terms of the agreement depend on the value they assign to the woman involved. Sometimes the potential husband will need to pay for the woman. Sometimes the father or other guardian will need to sweeten the deal by including additional assets (a dowry). A man may give his daughters to another man as a wage (**Ge 29:15**). In fact, in that example Jacob felt cheated when he got Leah, but he agreed to work longer so he could have her sister, too. And Laban, perhaps not wanting his daughters to have too much of a change in lifestyle, took a couple of his handmaids and threw them into the deal as well (**Ge 29:24,29**). Once the men agree to the terms of the deal a future date may be set for the actual property exchange. Often a public event (usually a meal) is arranged in order to formally publicize the exchange (**Ge 29:22; Re 19:9**).

Marriage is a general word so you have to be careful about its meaning. It can refer to the initial agreement between the two men because, unless a later date is set, that is when the exchange of property takes place. It can also mean the “ceremony”, such as a marriage supper, at which the exchange is made public and official. And it can mean the act of consummation because that is when the two become united. For example, the legal exchange of property part of marriage in **Ge 24:51** took place between Bethuel (Rebekah's father) and Abraham's servant who was acting on the behalf of Isaac in accordance with Abraham's instructions. And then the consummation part of marriage took place in **Ge 24:67**. This important distinction among the legal contract/agreement part of marriage, and the finalizing/consummation part of marriage, and the evaluation/judgment part of marriage (this judgment part of marriage takes place between the other two parts and will be covered shortly) is missed or ignored by “eternal security” advocates who fail to realize spiritual realities must agree with the physical patterns established in the Bible.

Some Christians think a man who has sex with an unmarried woman is automatically making her his wife because he has “consummated”...well, I don't know *what* they think he might have consummated. Maybe their problem is they don't know what *consummate* means. It is not a *union*; it's the completion, perfection, or finalizing of something that happened before. Therefore it is not true that casual sex makes two people husband and wife. Why? Because the woman still *belongs* to another if her owner hasn't agreed to *give her away* and if there is no intent to *acquire a wife*. In other words, if there is no legal transaction there is *no deal to consummate*. If the man and woman are Christians, however, the man has defamed her and disgraced her father. Therefore he is not only required to pay a fine to the father, he also has an obligation to marry the daughter because most men wouldn't be interested in a woman humbled (**Dt 22:28,29**).

Even before the consummation occurs, however, a woman *legally* becomes a man's wife at the property exchange agreement. Joseph's wife Mary is a perfect example. We know Mary was a virgin until after Christ was born because Joseph “knew her not” until then (**Mt 1:25**). Now note that even though the marriage was not consummated, Mary is called Joseph's “wife” (**Mt 1:20,24**). Should we think the use of the word “wife” always means “finalized wife” and therefore the consummation is not required for two to become inseparably one? No, because **Lk 2:5** tells us even though Mary was already legally Joseph's wife, which meant he could take her with him to other towns like Bethlehem and get a room at an inn with her, she was technically and specifically only his “espoused wife.” Another good example is **Dt 22:23,24**. Here we find that a woman who is only “betrothed” and is still a “virgin” is legally the man's “wife” even though the union has not been consummated. (Legally enough to authorize the death penalty for disregarding that fact!) That means the word “wife” in the context of Mt 1:20,24 and Dt 22:24 only refers to the initial, legal process part and meaning of marriage. Mary was Joseph's wife *legally*, and Joseph was her *legal* husband. It is imperative that we understand this topic because, while we *are* legally Christ's brides, His wives, we are, like Mary, merely unconsummated espoused wives (**2 Co 11:2**). Why is that an important point? Because of what the “that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” part of 2 Co 11:2 refers to. The outcome of an espousal is dependent upon the groom's being satisfied when he inspects his bride. This is a type of Judgment.

The judgment part of marriage has been forgotten. It takes place after the “legal” or “espousal” part of marriage (salvation), and before the “finalization” or “consummation” part of marriage. When Joseph found out, before the consummation, that Mary was (as he supposed) a fornicator rather than a chaste virgin he decided to put her away (**Mt 1:19**). This pre-consummation judgment is supposed to prevent a man from being fooled into ending up with a wife he doesn't really want. Because Jacob foolishly got drunk at his wedding feast he not only skipped the judgment process and went straight to the consummation part, he didn't even know whom he was consummating (**Ge 29:22,23,25**)! But after the consummation has occurred, putting away/divorce is not possible because consummation is when the *legal* part of marriage (when two are merely “*reckoned*” to be one flesh) is superseded by reality. (The legal prerequisite to consummation, which is the legal exchange of property, is absent in cases of rape and consensual premarital and extramarital sex.) So it would be fair to say the *legal* part of marriage is a human transaction represented in **Mt 19:5**, and the post-judgment *consummation* represents the divine procedure mentioned in **Mt 19:6b**.

An excellent description of this judgment (that is such an important part of marriage) as well as the potential outcome of this judgment is **Dt 22:13-21**. In it we learn that after the legal part of marriage, the giving and the taking part in verses 13 and 16, a man takes his new, legal bride to the bedroom in order to examine her so he can make a judgment as to whether or not he will consummate the union. If he finds she is not pure he may decide to return the property to the man who gave her to him, as is his legal right. That is what putting away is: It is *legally* severing the *legal* bonds of marriage for cause. (God has

provided no means or cause to put asunder the *consummated* marriage *because it can't be done.*) The reason Joseph was going to put away his bride, Mary (Mt 1:19), was he'd discovered, in the period between the legal giving and taking part of marriage and the consummating part, that she was (as he supposed) impure.

When the husband goes to the father with his finding that the damsel is not a virgin, the parents have an opportunity to bring forth, for example, the bloody tokens of her virginity (that they've carefully preserved just in case this would become an issue) in order to prove her virtue (Dt 22:17). Notice that when Mary's parents had absolutely no evidence that could establish – to Joseph's or to anybody else's satisfaction – the virtue of their obviously *pregnant* daughter (which made old bloody tokens irrelevant), God the Father in effect saved her honor and her marriage by presenting to Joseph the tokens of her virginity in accordance with His rules (cp. Dt 22:17 and Mt 1:20).

But if, during the pre-consummation examination/judgment, the bride is found to be impure, she will be put away *and executed* (Dt 22:20,21)! Thus the Scriptures make it clear that the part of the marriage process that has been ignored and forgotten today is *the most important part – Judgment!* How did that happen? Western civilization is built upon philosophy and its doctrinal offspring, the Enlightenment, the independence and sovereignty of the individual, the liberation of women from their God-ordained role as servants, the proscription of human chattel, and the love affair with equality. Because those ideas are so instinctive and appealing to the Reason of the Natural carnal mind (because their veracity is universally *self-evident*) they were allowed to overrule the words in (any version of) the Bible because *Reason* has replaced *revelation*. With our lips we claim to believe the Bible, but in practice we reveal ourselves to be unbelieving fornicators who have squandered our Christian virginal purity. We then either shamelessly ignore the judgment part of marriage that comes *before* the consummation part, or convince ourselves Judgment is really a joyful occasion at which Christ's espoused brides receive varying numbers of rewards based on their service. But the purpose of the judgment part of marriage is to determine *if* the consummation will even take place. Handing out rewards, duties, and responsibilities to wives in God's household has nothing to do with marriage; that happens later.

The Judgment part of marriage emphasizes the headship/rulership of the husband, and the membership/servanthood of the wife. Let's apply that to our relationship with God: At Judgment He'll be deciding which of His espoused wives that took His name upon themselves are meet to serve Him, and which of His espoused wives took His name in vain by not pleasing Him. In other words, God is the Judge – the only Judge. Therefore, our mission as His espoused wives is simply to *please Him*. Because God's decision at Judgment is *completely arbitrary*, we must convince Him with our loving, eager, happy, wholehearted, selfless, dedicated service that we're the kind of servant He *wants* in His kingdom. **Ps 2:11,12** is a good example because it emphasizes the *fear* of servanthood, and the "*arrogance*" of authority – especially this part: "Kiss the Son, **lest he be angry**, and ye perish...**when his wrath is kindled but a little.**" That means He'll cast us out if we serve Him halfheartedly, undermine His glory and authority by twisting His Written Instructions into what *we think* He actually *meant* to say...but didn't, or in any way fail to impress, please, and satisfy Him. We are *His servants*, and He can and will do with us *whatever He wants*. Because He really is God Almighty He doesn't need to settle for half-assed servants that don't make Him happy. Therefore we need to fearfully and humbly remember our sole purpose in life is *His happiness*.

Many Christians are unaware that the New Testament not only drops the *Old Commission's* exhortation to marry and have physical sex in order to be fruitful and multiply, but that along with the new *Great Commission's* exhortation to spiritually feed Christ's sheep, the New Testament actually exhorts us to never marry anyone (unless uncontrollable sexual lust might cause us to commit fornication – as defined in chapter D15). Tradition has effectively removed **1 Co 7:1,2,7-9,32-35** from the Bible. The sad truth is today's preachers never advise their congregations *not to marry*. Why did God decide to advise us New Testament saints to – unlike His Old Testament saints – remain unmarried? I believe there is more to it than just **1 Co 7:23-35**. Let's compare God's advising His Old Testament era saints (who were under the physical Old Commission's mandate to be fruitful and multiply) to not marry pagans and to only marry daughters of Israel...with His advising us New Testament era saints (who are under the spiritual Great Commission's mandate to preach the gospel to every creature) not to marry *anyone*.

We know God created laws in response to our transgressions (**Ga 3:19**) because He wanted to help us avoid some of the problems we've had in the past – as well as some of the problems He foresaw in our future. God advised His Hebrews to only marry Hebrews – for the good of the church. We saw in chapter H3, *The Whoredom of Peor*, that Balaam told King Balak God's people could be defeated from within if they would just marry enough pagan women. Even a brilliant Christian like King Solomon was leavened by his pagan wives (ignoring the modern temptation to blame his leaven on God's policy of polygamy) because through marriage he brought the subtle dangers of pagan traditions and humanistic ways of thinking directly into the church. Men are supposed to be heads and leaders; wives are supposed to be servants who follow the lead of their husband. But in the Old Testament it wasn't just pagan wives that were problematic: The *very first wife* in the Bible hurt the church by getting Adam to participate in sin. And Job's Christian wife advised him to curse God and die. Therefore, could it be that God saw how much trouble marriage caused His church back in the Old Testament days when women weren't "liberated", looked ahead into our New Testament times and saw how much *worse* marriage was going to be for Christian men in the era of women's liberation and equality, and therefore lovingly and wisely advised us to remain unmarried? I don't know. But I have seen a number of Christian husbands who recognized the Scriptural truth of *The Age of Reason's* message, later be forced by their Enlightened wives to abandon the way of the Sword and re-embrace modern tradition's way of peace (**Mt 10:34-39**; 1 Co 7:33). It was agonizing (and in some cases *frightening*) to witness. If those men had *never married*, would they have continued to serve the Lord without distraction?

On page H4-1 under "Return To Jerusalem" we talked about Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi rebuking God's people for ignoring His word by getting married to pagans. They said God's people wearied Him by claiming the evil of their disobedient marriages was good in His eyes. Today God would have them rebuke His New Testament Christians for ignoring His word by getting married, and He'd have them point out that today's Christians weary Him by claiming the evil of their disobedient marriages is actually good. It is never good to sin against God; therefore, marriage is doing more harm to the church than good. To think otherwise is to believe God Almighty screwed up when He advised us *for our own good* not to marry. It is good not to marry.

God's advice to not marry is good advice, and it applies to most Christians. Be advised by the word of God, brother: Gird your loins with the truth, pick up the cross and the Sword, and fight for the doctrinal purity of the church.

Let's now take a closer look at divorce.