

J B Tamm  
1958  
Denver5/6/6  
1 - 39DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

For a statement of distinct Biblical doctrine it is necessary that first all passages of Scripture related to the particular subject concerned, be considered. There is no contradiction in the inspired word. A principle of doctrine therefore cannot be out of harmony with any part of the divine revelation. The stated principle must be applied to all teaching, also to that concerning divorce: In the following of the Scripture on this question we find the following:

1. In the Old Testament Moses had made provisions for divorce (Deut. 24:1-4) but Christ declares, that such provision was not from the beginning. The Israelites had been slaves for many years, their moral and ethical concepts were too low to measure up to the requirements of the creative laws of God. The original law was not changed nor its high ideal standard withdrawn, but a provision made to guide and regulate an evil so it may cause the least destruction until through the new establishment of spiritual laws the people could be elevated to a moral level where the standard of God "from the beginning" could be applied. (Matthew 19:8).

2. Those united in marriage are "no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has put together, let no man put assunder." (Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:16; Mark 10:6-9). This is the heart of the marriage relationship.

3. What are the Scriptural provisions for Divorce?

a) Matthew 5:31-32. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to committ adultery." Note, fornication only is given as sufficient cause of divorce.

b) Matthew 19:9. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication and shall marry another, committeth adultery." The only cause for separation here again is given as fornication.

c) 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife."

In the passage Paul refers to the instructions of the Lord, and states only, that neither husband nor wife shall separate - but where a separation takes place, they shall remain unmarried.

4. What are the Scriptural Provisions for Remarriage?

a) In the passage of the preceding paragraph, Paul states "as the word of the Lord to the married "But if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband, and let not the husband put away his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Please note, Paul makes no provisions for remarriage.

b) Luke 16:8. "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery, and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." Here according to Luke's record concerning the teachings of Jesus, there was no provision for remarriage.

c) Mark 10:11-12. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Note again, Mark mentions no condition which would justify remarriage, but classifies all remarriages as adultery.

d) Matthew 5:32. "Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." No explanation is necessary. One that is divorced, for the cause of fornication cannot be married without the offence of fornication. No statement made concerning the party who has put away the other because of fornication.

e) Matthew 19:9. "Whosoever shall put away his wife except for fornication and shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Does the interpolation - except for fornication - refer to the putting away of the wife, or to the remarriage question which follows? We are conscious, that we are living in a day, where many are applying it as a modifier to and shall marry another, and thereby believe that remarriage is permitted in such cases where fornication has been the cause for separation.

With no unkindness towards those who have voiced this interpretation and thereby opened the way for remarriage, we state here freely, that in our honest conviction we believe this to be unscriptural and for the following reasons:

f) In all the passages dealing with remarriage (1 Corinthians 7:10-11; Luke 16:18; Mark 10:11-12; Matthew 5:32, and Matthew 5:31-32) no mention is made that in such cases, where divorce was effected on the grounds of fornication, a remarriage is permissible. Not even in Matthew 5:31-32, where fornication is given as a legitimate cause for divorce is it stated as a justification for remarriage.

If now five passages of Scripture make no provision for a possibility of remarriage, (except the one party of the marriage covenant dies, Matthew 19:5-7; 1 Corinthians 6:15-18, Romans 7:2-3, 1 Corinthians 7:39) and one passage contains a setting which possibly could mean that it does permit remarriage where fornication was the cause for separation - shall we in such a case accept the latter as the point of doctrine?

We must recognize that fornication is also mentioned as a cause for justified divorce in a connection where it cannot apply to remarriage. Because of the above Scriptural setting, we believe, that Matthew 19:9 makes no provision for remarriage and that "except for fornication" applies to the point of divorce and not remarriage.

g) g) In a case where the margin for the application for justification of remarriage is so small - where it is a matter of interpretation by applying one phrase to its following instead of to its preceeding clause, we consider it the only safe position to hold to the interpretation which makes no provision for remarriage.