

Alien Sinners And The Law of Christ

*A Study Addressing The Condi-
tion of Non-Christians Before God.
Are They Amenable To Any Laws of
Christ, Particularly Those Relative
To Divorce And Remarriage?*

by Maurice Barnett

1 - In The Beginning

When God created man, he didn't intend for humankind to remain in the garden of Eden. **Genesis 1:28** says (See, also, **Genesis 9:1-2, Psalm 8**):

"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

"Replenish" meant to "fill up" the earth. Man was to spread out over all the earth and fill it up. He was to bend all of God's works to his will, thus reflecting the image of God in humanity. In making him in his own image, God endowed man with intelligence, imagination, reasoning, will, and an ability to communicate ideas precisely. God also made man with a physical dexterity to accomplish his tasks.

God made man male and female, establishing sexuality at the very beginning. By this means, the species would be propagated. To facilitate this, a sexual drive was included in man's physical nature, thus insuring rapid reproduction of mankind. **All of this had to be regulated, however.**

Psalm 8:5 says that man was created a little lower than the angels. Yet, man was also created above animals, and was to be more responsible than such creatures; man was not to act like a dog, or beast of the field. Man, and his society, had to be regulated. God established laws to that end. Violation of those laws was sin, and punishment would come from such transgression, **Romans 5:12-14**. It says:

"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned: for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come."

First, death came as a result of sin. Death came upon all men "for that all sinned." We all die physically, but not because we are sinners. Infants die, but are not sinners. (There were times in the

Old Testament when God destroyed people physically because of their sins, such as the flood. Even in the new Testament, we find the case of Ananias and Sapphira, **Acts 5**, who died as an example to others. They were not the norm. What we are looking at in **Romans 5** is death that came on **all** because of sins). In **Romans 7:9**, Paul said:

7 was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

When he was an infant, he was not accountable, but when he reached an age of accountability, he sinned; he died as a result. In both places, Paul is talking about a death that comes as a result of one's sins. Adam was told that "in the day that you eat" you will die. Adam died the very day he sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. He did not physically die that day, but he did spiritually. Certainly, as a final consequence, physical death came from what Adam did. God said, as a result of his eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that access to the tree of life would be denied him. The first "death" occurred the day he ate of the first tree. The second "death" occurred because he was denied access to the second tree. The two events were not synonymous. The emphasis of **Romans 5:12-14** is on the events of the first tree, not the second one!

Second, notice that death passed unto all men because "all sinned." It does not say death passed unto all men because Adam sinned. We die as a result of our sin, spiritually. (See, also, **James 1:13-15, Romans 6:23**).

Third, Paul argues the existence of law between creation and the Law of Moses. This is the entire patriarchal period. He says:

"For until the law (of Moses, mb) sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law."

His argument is that there was law over all mankind during that time, laws that were different from the one Adam violated in eating the fruit in the garden. "Sin is not imputed when there is no law," argues that sin existed, therefore, law existed. The evidence through the book of Genesis is clear.

The first prophet in the world was Abel, the son of Adam, **Luke 11:50-51**. By Abel, God taught concerning right conduct, including right worship. **Hebrews 11:4** says that by faith Abel offered a

more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and **it witnessed that he was "righteous."** Since faith only comes by hearing the word of God, the offerings were made by God's direction. **Genesis 4:6-7** says:

"And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door. . ."

Anything other than "doing well" would mean that sin was present. Yet, no law, no sin! **I John 3:11-12** says:

"For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

Cain was a rebel against God, a liar, full of envy, jealousy, and wrath, as well as being a murderer. His worship was contrary to "the faith" revealed at that time, and no telling what else. All were violations of God's laws, for there can be no evil, sinful, works without law. Notice as well, love of others was revealed at the beginning; the attitude of Cain was contrary to that.

Though it's after the flood, **Genesis 9:6** declares "capital punishment." Whoever sheds man's blood will have his blood shed by others. Cain already knew that. When God cast him out, Cain knew that others would seek his life because of what he had done, **Genesis 4:14-15**. Where did such knowledge come from?

Genesis 5:21-24 tells us of Enoch, who walked with God. "By faith" he was translated because he was "well pleasing" to God, **Hebrews 11:5**. It is left to **Jude**, however, to give us the fullest picture of Enoch. Verses **14-15** state:

"And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Enoch was a prophet who spoke words of warning to the people of his day, long before the flood. Jude adds Enoch's testimony to

those others he mentions who tell us of the final condemnation of the wicked. Jude wants us to know that the final judgment of mankind is not limited in teaching to either the Law of Moses or the New Testament. Enoch spoke warning to "ungodly sinners," threatening them with eternal condemnation. Whatever specific sins they practiced, **there had to be law there to violate.**

Genesis 6 opens with details about the wickedness of the people before the flood. Every imagination of their heart was only evil, continually. From the first few verses, the wickedness had to involve something about marriage, verse 2, that brought the statement of verse 3 about God's not putting up with things any longer. Verses **11-12** say:

"The earth was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth."

This wickedness involved all mankind, with the exception of Noah and his family. Moah was a "preacher of righteousness." **II Peter 2:5**, when God brought destruction on the "world of the ungodly." Moah had to have something to preach, and people to whom he preached. God had a standard, a law, that had to be upheld. Violating that law brought condemnation. **I Peter 3:20** says that those people who lived during the building of the ark were "disobedient."

After the flood, we come to Abraham. He was a firm believer in God before he was called by God to leave his homeland. Where did the faith of Abraham come from? **Hebrews 11:8** says:

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

It took a lot of already established faith in God to do that. God said of Abraham that he "obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws," **Genesis 26:5.**

Even Abimelech, **Genesis 20:3-7**, knew he would have sinned against God if he had taken another man's wife. He knew that **before** God appeared to him about Sarah. In verses 6-7, God said:

7 also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore re-

store the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine."

Abimelech reproves Abraham in verse 9, saying: "What have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?" Abimelech had knowledge of right and wrong, and of God. Notice, again, what God told him: "I also withheld thee from sinning **against me. . .**" **Abimelech would have sinned against God if he took another man's wife.** Sarah was the wife of Abraham. This shows laws from God regulating marriage.

Melchizedek was not just the king of Salem, but also priest of God, **Genesis 14:18-20.** According to **Hebrews 7:1-10**, Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, and Abraham acknowledged it. Though we are told very little about Melchizedek, he must have had a wide influence on God's behalf.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their wickedness, primarily homosexuality. **II Peter 2:6-8** says:

". . .and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds)."

Lot was a righteous man, a servant of God. The people of the cities were wicked. Their deeds were lawless; they were in violation of law in what they did. (It's not surprising to see the number of references in the Patriarchal age to laws of God about man's sexual practices and marriage regulations. We will see this fact clearly stated when we look at **Matthew 19** in Chapter 3). **Jude 7** puts it this way:

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire."

Besides the direct revelation from God to prophets and preachers, by which men could know the will of God, revelation

was also handed down through the generations of people. Some of this became twisted and garbled, but was still there. There were some things incorporated into the Law of Moses that were not new; they had already existed by revelation. Of course, there were many things that were new in the Law. Lest some Sabbatarian get excited at this point, we will note that the Sabbath was new in its instruction and observance with the coming of the Israelites. The Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel only, **Exodus 31:13-17**. Because of their bondage, and delivering them from it, God commanded them to keep the Sabbath, **Deuteronomy 5:15**. The covenant, the "ten commandments," including the Sabbath, was not made "with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day," **Deuteronomy 5:3**. That's not said about marriage, adultery, nor any related sin.

The Laws of Hammurabi, the Gilgamesh Epic, and within the past two decades, the library at Ebla, all reflect stories of creation and the flood. Some suppose that the Old Testament writers, primarily Moses, copied from such existing documents and so were not of divine origin. However, whatever is found in such documents that resemble what Moses said, shows the information came from the same source, just different ways. Moses got his information directly from God.

We find knowledge about God, and even truths found in the Bible, spread through many nations throughout history. The evidence shows that Hammurabi borrowed extensively from laws of nations around him that existed before him. He chose what he considered the best system. Hammurabi even had a regulation that sounds like the eye for eye statute of the Law of Moses. Though we have no record of that exact ruling prior to Hammurabi, we have the same principle recorded in Cain's fear for his life, and in **Genesis 9:6**. Most of what Hammurabi, and others, said reflects human determination and culture only. Yet, we note that some statements of Moses are divine regulations of existing custom. We have that same fact in the New Testament, such as regulations of slavery, and even customary greetings between two people, a "kiss of love." Whatever picture we find in comparison of Moses with others, Moses has the most correct one.

Joseph gave instructions concerning his body, **Genesis 50:22-26**. This account closes the book of Genesis. How did Joseph know about God's visiting the Israelites in the future, leading them out of Egypt into Canaan? Knowing that, he gave instructions about the people's taking his body with them. He said it

by faith, **Hebrews 11:22**. The promise made to Abraham, that they would inherit that land, is recounted by Joseph. Joseph knew that God would fulfill his promise. That knowledge was either correctly handed down to him from others, or God directly revealed it to him, or some of both.

How the knowledge of God was spread among other nations is also clearly seen at the time of the Exodus. Pharaoh was told, as a reason for the plagues that came on them, **Exodus 9:16**:

". . .but in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, to show thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth."

What God intended came to pass. When Israel was about to enter Jericho, Rahab said, **Joshua 2:10-11**:

"For we have heard how Jehovah dried up the water of the Red Sea before you, when ye came out of Egypt, and what ye did unto the kings of the Amorites, that were beyond the Jordan, unto Sihon and to Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more spirit in any man, because of you: for Jehovah your God, he is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath."

Here was a Gentile, a non-Israelite, who was so impressed with what was heard about the power of God that she believed. Rahab is singled out in both **Hebrews 11:31** and **James 2:25** for her faith and works. In such ways was the knowledge of God and his will spread throughout the world.

GENTILES, LAW, AND THE LAW OF MOSES

Law and sin existed before the Law of Moses. We have seen this in detail. Though the Law of Moses was given to a particular nation, Israel, it did not change the condition of the rest of humanity. What is clearly seen through the Old Testament is that God still held non-Jews accountable to his regulation.

Take Nineveh, at the time of Jonah, for an example. The date is somewhere in the early eighth century B.C. Jonah was a prophet of God in the time of Jeroboam II. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, non-Israelite. Jonah was sent to preach to them because of their wickedness. God was going to destroy them. The reaction of the Ninevites is given in **3:6-10**. Verse **10** says:

"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not."

Jesus testifies to the accuracy of the book of Jonah in **Luke 11:29-32**. He said that Nineveh "repented at the preaching of Jonah." Notice that **the preaching of Jonah was not what made Nineveh wicked in the first place**. Nineveh was already wicked, and the preaching was to warn them of the consequences.

Nebuchadnezzar was ruler of Babylon, and carried Judah into captivity. God smote him for his arrogance. **Daniel 4:25** says:

". . . thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and thou shalt be made to eat grass as an oxen, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee; till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will"

There are three places in the New Testament that give us some indications of the condition of the Gentiles in the time before the New Testament. They are parallel in their statements, and testify to Gentile wickedness. **Acts 14:11-17** is the first:

"... ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness."

Three things are important to understand here. **First**, the living God created all things. **Second**, what he created continued to bear witness to his existence, power, and divinity. **Third**, in generations past, he "suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways." The term "suffer" means "to allow, permit, let," **Thayer**, page 163. As we shall see, that does not mean the "nations" were allowed to live any way they wanted to with impunity; they were still accountable for their sins.

Acts 17:22-31 is the next reference. **First**, Paul says that God created all things seen and all people. **Second**, God is seen in what he has created, so they should not conclude idolatry represented deity. **Third**, "the times of this ignorance therefore God

overlooked: but now commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent," verse 30. The term "overlooked" (winked at) means to "take no notice of, not attend to," **Thayer**, page 640. In spite of such exceptions as Nineveh, God did not send prophets to all the nations to try to stem the tide of their sinful practices, as he does now. Now, he sends preachers out to "every creature" and "commands men everywhere" to repent. Though God "suffered" the Gentiles to "walk in their own ways" (as versus God's), and "overlooked" the "times of ignorance," the Gentile was still amenable to law. To fully understand this, we must look at, **Romans 1:18-32**.

The section starts with the precise statement that the "wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness." He continues by showing the Gentiles were without excuse for their unbelief and ungodliness. God had manifested himself to them, but they rejected him. The creation of God testified to his power and divinity. The Gentiles did not glorify him but became vain in their reasonings. Their senseless hearts were darkened; they professed wisdom but were fools, and so they practiced idolatry. In three places that follow, it says that "God gave them up" to the practice of ungodliness. "Gave them up" means just that, **Thayer**, page 481. In verse **24**, because they had rejected God and had become senseless fools, it says God "gave them up" to idolatry. They "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." Notice, it was their choice!

Verse **28** says: "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting." Some have argued that the statement, "even as they refused to have God in their knowledge," means they were just ignorant of God's existence, and not accountable because of ignorance. **First**, that puts a premium on ignorance. The best thing to do, in that event, is keep people as ignorant as possible so they will be safe! Not so! **Second**, the word "refuse" in the passage means "to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy . . . they did not think God worthy to be kept in knowledge, Ro. i.28," **Thayer**, page 154. The word means they rejected God **after examination**. They consciously refused to follow God. The consequences of that are clearly stated in context.

Verse 26 begins: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions. . ." He then discusses their homosexual practices. He concludes that they receive "that recompense of their error which

was due." Verse 28 says: "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting." Then is presented a list of specific and wide ranging sins, concluding in verse **32**, "who knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them."

The phrase "gave them up to" in these passages, "suffered" in **Acts 14**, and "overlooked" in **Acts 17**, all state the same fact. The Gentiles chose to follow ungodly ways, even though they had known better, and could have known better at any time. Seeing they had chosen that course, God "suffered" them to walk in their own ways, he "gave them up" to uncleanness and ungodliness. This does not mean they were without accountability to law. They had rejected God's way.

Look at the list of things they committed: unrighteousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful. Then, in verse **32**, speaking of those who practiced these things, he says: "who knowing the ordinance of God." In **Romans 2:2**, continuing the subject, he says: "And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practice such things." **There are your Gentiles!** The "times of ignorance" did not excuse them.

Romans 2:14-15 presents a statement of the Gentile's condition compared with the Law of Moses:

"(for when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the word of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them)."

We have already seen that Gentiles are amenable to laws of God. They will be judged by such laws. In this passage several things are evident. **First**, the "law," in the statement "have not the law," and appearances following, refers to the Law of Moses. **Second**, it speaks of "things of the law," and "work of the law." These are things that are also found in the Law of Moses that Gentiles did. The passage is not saying that all Gentiles did such

"things," nor that some did such things all the time. It just says "when Gentiles. . .do."

"Nature" refers to the natural order of Gentiles as far as receiving and following laws is concerned. There is no such thing as a "Law on the Heart," or "Law in the Heart," or "Law of the Heart," as though it were some predetermined system of law, a Law of the Gentiles. The passage speaks of "things" and "work" of the Law of Moses "written in their hearts." These things were written in their hearts instead of on paper or stone, and their conscience testified to that fact. Several passages speak of this: **Proverbs 3:3, 7:1-3, Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 8:10, II Corinthians 3:3.**

We know, from such passages as these, that God's laws can be revealed to man and made a part of man's inner self, placed upon the mind, the conscience showing that this is so. A "conscience" is the faculty of mind that can accept and retain a standard of conduct. Our "conscience hurts" when we go counter to such rules. We are not born with the knowledge of the rules, but with the capacity to accept or reject such rules when presented. For the most part, Gentiles could have known, but **"refused to have God in their knowledge."** God "gave them up" to all sorts of ungodliness. The evidence for God and his standard was there; they rejected it. Their conscience testified to their capacity for knowing. Without a system of law written on paper, or stone, this was the natural order for Gentiles; "by nature."

It has been said that the "**Law on the Heart**" contains only those unwritten laws that Gentiles (unbelievers) **could have known**. This is said to specifically exclude marriage regulations, and such passages as **Matthew 19:3-12**. It is said that the Gentiles could **not** have known such a regulation and so were not accountable to it. Let's see if this is true.

First, how does the theorist know that the Gentiles could not have known of such marriage regulations? We do find such knowledge in numerous societies throughout history. Abimelech certainly knew about it.

Second, **Romans 2:14-15** speaks of those "things" and "work" of the Law of Moses that Gentiles did observe, not what all they were amenable to.

Third, it's true that they were accountable for those things they could have known and rejected, hence, ignorance was no excuse. We have already seen that the "times of ignorance," **Acts 17**, didn't mean they were not held accountable for idolatry, etc. In **Romans 1**, the Gentiles **could have known** God at any time so that "they

may be without excuse." They "refused to have God in their knowledge," and God "gave them up" to vile ungodliness. They were left with a reprobate mind to do things that were not "fitting." Chapter two warns that they who practice such things cannot escape the judgment of God. Ignorance was not an excuse!

In the list of sins with which they were charged, **Romans 1:31** says they were "covenant breakers." There is no closer relationship, nor more binding covenant, than in marriage. This is why **Malachi 2:14** says:

"Yet ye say. Wherefore? Because Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant"

No limitations are placed on "covenants" that are "broken" in **Romans 1:31**. We must conclude that the marriage covenant is included.

Further, just what was the "natural" use of the woman in **Romans 1:26-27**? They went counter to "nature," leaving the "natural use of the woman" and practiced homosexuality, a sin. God made man male and female, establishing sexuality and sex drive. "For this cause" (**Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5**) a man was to leave father and mother and "cleave unto his wife," and the two would become one flesh. The only place that God ordained and allowed sexual relations was in marriage. That fact was settled for mankind at the beginning. The reason homosexuality was condemned was because it violated God's original regulations for man, the original laws concerning the proper realm for sexual relations. **That means violations of God's marriage law by the Gentiles!** Whether they were ignorant of that law or not, every time they practiced homosexuality, they violated God's law concerning marriage, and "received in themselves that recompense of their error which was due," **Romans 1:27**. This is why **Hebrews 13:4** says that "marriage is to be held in honor among all," because "fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Fornication included homosexuality, **Jude 7**. Homosexuality (fornication) was a violation of God's marriage regulations, just as adultery was. Paul says the Gentiles were guilty of that.

Romans 2:17 picks up with the Jew that condemns the Gentile for committing sins while he, himself, is guilty of the same things. Verse 22 points out that adultery was one of the specific

sins. What the Jew was guilty of "under" the Law of Moses, the Gentile was guilty of "without" the Law of Moses, but they were both guilty of the same thing. How could the Gentile be guilty of such sins as stealing and adultery if there was no law concerning them to which they were accountable? In **Romans 3:9**, Paul asks:

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we before laid to the charge of both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin."

How was the Jew no better than the Gentile? It was because both were guilty of sin. Remember, where there is no law, there is no transgression. Yet, **where there is transgression, there has to be law!**

2 - The Gospel Age

We have already seen that there were laws in regard to all mankind from creation through the Mosaic period. Though the Law of Moses was given to a specific nationality of people, it did not change the existence of law and sin for the non-Jew. There were many things in the Law of Moses that applied only to the Jews, but there were "things" and "work" of the Law that applied to non-Jews as well.

It has been said, many times, that "all men are amenable to the Law of Christ." That needs some explanation, however, to understand what it means. Many things in the new Testament have meaning for, and apply to, Christians only. Actually, Christians are not amenable to **all** of the "Law of Christ." Too, **some** Christians are amenable to **some** of the "Law of Christ" that others are not.

There are laws that apply to parents, children, servants, masters, husbands, wives, elders, preachers, deacons, churches, and individuals. The laws that apply only to one category cannot be obeyed or disobeyed by others. If you aren't in one of those categories, the rules of that category don't apply to you. Yet, some laws, common to all these categories, apply to all.

The laws regulating spiritual gifts applied only to Christians when and where spiritual gifts existed. We can neither obey nor disobey such regulations today, seeing such gifts no longer exist. Yet, all such "laws" governing these categories are contained in the "Law of Christ."

Though a person may not be amenable to **every** law in the Law of Christ, does it mean the he is in no way amenable to the Law of Christ? Of course not! Not all Christians are amenable to every law, and yet all will accept that Christians are amenable to the Law of Christ. The same is true of unbelievers. The new Testament is very clear on the condition of non-Christians, telling us clearly what their sins are, and consequently, what laws they are amenable to in the Law of Christ. The very fact that unbelievers sin argues the existence of laws that are violated, for "where there is no law, there is no transgression."

The only reason this "issue" exists is the desire of some to justify multiple divorces and remarriages by unbelievers, and secondarily, remarriage of a believer after simple desertion by an unbeliever. If not for that, the subject would never have come up.

IMPORTANCE TO UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL

Jesus did not come into this world to die in order to condemn mankind, but to save it. **John 3:17** says:

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

The gospel is not one of damnation, but salvation. Man was already in sin. Paul said that "we before laid to the charge of both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin," **Romans 3:9**. **Ephesians 2:1** says: "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins." He continues, showing that they were dead in trespasses and sins **before** they became Christians. When we look at the New Testament and identify a specific sin of an unbeliever, we will then identify what "law" they are amenable to, at least in that instance.

THE UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

The authority of Jesus is not only over the church, but also all mankind. **John 17:2** says:

"even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life."

Jesus said that "all authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth," **Matthew 28:18**. It has been argued that Jesus has authority only over the church, and Satan has authority over the world, because Satan is called the "god of this world," **II Corinthians 4:4**. Not so! Men have made Satan the god of this world by their voluntarily serving him. That's the only power Satan has.

Both the Old and New Testaments declare the universal authority of Christ. **Psalms 2** is one such instance. **Ephesians 1:19-23** says:

\ . . . and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under

his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all"

Jesus was given all authority, dominion, above all and everything, "and" he was made to be head of the church. That makes universal authority. Whatever laws exist, and amenability to those laws, have been placed under the authority of Jesus. Everything involving mankind is his business!

To emphasize this fact, we can see his authority in judging all humanity. **Acts 17:31** says that God has appointed a day to judge the world by Jesus Christ according to a standard of righteousness. In **1 Peter 4:1-5**, because of their attitude and conduct, unbelievers "shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead." This fact will be more fully seen in the next section.

GUILTY OF SPECIFIC SINS

That which will condemn anyone, Christian or non-Christian, will be sin. Under Christ, we need not think it strange that some of the same laws that apply to Christians also apply to non-Christians. What one may be guilty of, so the other. This is clearly seen in **1 Corinthians 5:9-13**:

7 wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, nor with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world: but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves."

The people of the world were guilty of the same thing that the Christian might be. The "judging" that was done was disciplinary judging. We have some control over doing something about a Christian who sins by using certain disciplinary measures. What is done in regard to the world is handled by God.

We have already made reference to **Romans 1:24-32** and the specific sins of the Gentiles. We could repeat the same for the unbelievers in **Galatians 5:19-21**. Then in **Ephesians 5:3-12**,

there is a list of specific sins: fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting. He follows that with:

"Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience."

They are then described as being in darkness. The "sons of disobedience" are unbelievers. We see this in the context, and from a similar statement in **2:1-2**:

"And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience."

Before being made alive, they were "dead through trespasses and sins." There are no trespasses and sins without law. In **Colossians 3:5-7**, we find:

"Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience; wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things ..."

The term "disobedience" refers to violating, transgressing, law. The people of the world, unbelievers, are guilty of transgressing laws; "for this cause" God's wrath will come upon them. It's because of the specific sins mentioned that they will be lost! **Colossians 3** goes on to say, verses **8-10**:

". . . but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him."

When one becomes a Christian, his life has to change. That is what repentance is all about. The sinful practices of the past must stop, and he must begin doing what God requires. This is the meaning of Paul's statement in **Acts 17:30-31** to idolaters:

"The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained ..."

Notice that idolaters had to repent and were threatened with the judgment if they didn't. **Revelation 9:20-21** says:

"And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts."

Repentance in regard to murder, stealing, and fornication meant the same as with idolatry. It meant **"that they should not."** Repentance has the same meaning for the unbeliever and Christian alike.

NON-CHRISTIANS AND MARRIAGE

Not only was murder and stealing regulated by God, but also the sexuality God created. Jesus said, referring back to **Genesis 2:24** in **Matthew 19:4-5**:

"He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

All of this was based on God's original statement about marriage for his creation. Violation of this comes under the general heading of fornication, which includes adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality, as well as sexual relations before marriage. In some passages, the terms are separated for more specific identification. Such a passage is **Hebrews 13:4**:

"Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

Although adultery is the most widely practiced violation of marriage, homosexuality and bestiality are also violations. Such sins will be the basis for condemnation by the judge of all.

Some insist that unbelievers are not amenable to God's marriage laws at all; such rules, they say, apply only to Christians. However, the word adultery indicates a violation of God's marriage laws, and where there is transgression, there is law. When we find that unbelievers can be guilty of adultery, then we know they violate God's laws about proper marriage. **I Corinthians 6:9-11** says:

"Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."

As unbelievers, they were guilty of such things listed here. **Adultery is on the list.** How could an unbeliever be charged with this if there was no law of marriage to which he was amenable? Paul was not talking about "civil law." There are items on the list that were not violations of any nation's civil law.

SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

Most of the objections, to the position I have presented thus far, have been answered in the preceding material. Following are, perhaps, some objections that call for more pointed comment.

OBJECTION: Romans 8:7 says that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be." This shows that unbelievers, those having the mind of the flesh, are not under any law of God, and can't be.

REPLY: The term "subject" in this passage is middle voice of a present tense verb. In the middle voice, **Thayer's Lexicon**, page 645, says it means, "to subject one's self; to submit to one's control; yield to one's admonition or advice." The meaning is that a person who has the mind of the flesh is not obeying, submitting to the control of, the law of God. It has nothing to do with the accountability of that person to the law. As the present tense indi-

cates a continuance in something, the person with the "mind of the flesh" continues in rebellion, disobedience, to the law of God. Rather than denying accountability to the law of God, this passage establishes it.

In **Galatians 5:19-21**, is a list of the works "of the flesh," and "they that practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It is "because of these things" that the wrath of God comes on the sons of disobedience, **Ephesians 5:3-6**.

OBJECTION: Romans 11:32 says: "For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all." This shows that unbelievers cannot obey any of the laws of God for they are isolated from such laws, shut away from disobedience.

REPLY: Rather than establishing an isolation from God's law, the passage says the opposite. Please read the two preceding verses. They say the same thing as **Romans 3:9**, "for we before laid to the charge of both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin. . ." "Shut up unto disobedience" doesn't mean isolated from law. It means all are declared disobedient, so he can have mercy on all.

OBJECTION: I Corinthians 9:20-21 says: "And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the *law*, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law." There are three conditions for three sets of people here; the Jews, who were under the law of Moses, Christians (Paul), who are under law to Christ, and unbelieving Gentiles, who are without law.

REPLY: Let's keep the facts straight. **First**, the Jew was not actually "under" the Law of Moses at this time, seeing the law was abolished; there was no accountability to it. Yet, the Jew lived as though it was still God's will. The Gentile, being "without law," lived accordingly. This does not mean there were no laws that either Jew or Gentile were accountable to, but rather they lived according to their view of things. Paul accommodated himself to both. Paul is talking about his accommodating himself to the different cultures so as not to alienate them before he had a chance to tell them of Christ.

Second, the "law" that the Gentile was "without" was the Law of Moses. Compare this with **Romans 2:12**: "For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law: and as

many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law." Though the Gentile was "without the law," he was still charged with sin. Remember, sin is not imputed where there is no law, **Romans 4:15, 5:13**. In Paul's statement that he was "under" law to Christ, the term "under" is a different word than the one translated "under" about Jews being "under" the Law. For Paul, it means to be subject to in the sense of being **obedient** to it, *Thayer's Lexicon*, page 217.

Third, in **I Corinthians 9:22**, he says he did all this in order to "save" them, meaning save them from sins. Remember: no law, no sins. **I Corinthians 15:17** says that if Christ has not be raised, "ye are yet in your sins." **I Corinthians 5:9-13** and **6:9-11** detail specific sins of those "without law." So, in the same letter we learn that the Gentiles, though without the Law of Moses, were still sinners, violators of specific laws, for which cause they would be condemned. Paul was trying in every way to "save" them.

OBJECTION: I Corinthians 7:17-24 says that unbelievers are to abide in the calling wherein they are called. So, if a person is in a second, third, or twentieth marriage, regardless of how he got there, he is to abide in that. This shows that God's laws on marriage do not apply to unbelievers.

REPLY: That argument not only misses the mark, but proves too much. What about a polygamist? Is a polygamist to abide in polygamy? Or, is an idolater to abide in his idolatry? Or, the drunkard in his drinking? Mo! Paul is talking about things that are lawful to begin with, not ungodly practices. Such evil practices must be stopped, **adultery included**.

OBJECTION: Unbelievers are not part of the new Covenant. A covenant is an agreement made between two parties, and only Christians have agreed to follow the laws of that Covenant. So, unbelievers are not "in" the new covenant, nor are they "under" its regulation.

REPLY: This objection is a misunderstanding of a "covenant." We have already seen that unbelievers are sinners because of violation of specific laws of God, including marriage laws. As for the word "covenant," the following are representative of definitions of the word. They are taken from, first, the **Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words**, by W.E. Vine, page 53, and, second, from his **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**, page 242:

"The word 'covenant' in its sense of an agreement on the part of each of two contracting parties cannot apply to a covenant between God and man... In contrast to the covenants made by God are those between men as between Abimilech and Isaac (Genesis 26:28), where an oath was taken by both parties."

"Diatheke primarily signifies a disposition of property by will or otherwise. In its use in the Sept., it is the rendering of a Hebrew word meaning a covenant or agreement. . . in contradistinction to the English word 'covenant' (lit. a coming together), which signifies a mutual undertaking between two parties or more, each binding himself to fulfill obligations, it does not in itself contain the idea of joint obligation, it mostly signifies an obligation undertaken by a single person. For instance, in Gal. 3:17 it is used as an alternative to a 'promise' (vv. 16, 17, and 18). God enjoined upon Abraham the rite of circumcision, but His promise to Abraham, here called a covenant, was not conditional upon the observance of circumcision, though a penalty attached to its non-observance."

God sets the terms, and man has only the choice of accepting or rejecting them. If man goes contrary to the rules that have been set, he will suffer punishment; he has sinned. There have been many "covenants" made by God in the past, and they followed the same pattern. Things that God set in the beginning for all men, even those who were yet unborn, answer to the term "covenant."

OBJECTION: On the day of Pentecost when Peter preached, he did not tell the Jews that had such, that they had to put away their second, third, or twentieth wife. Nor is there anywhere that any Gentile was ever told to separate from his wife in like circumstances. We must conclude that such a regulation concerning marriage and divorce did not apply to unbelievers. Or, even if it was adulterous, baptism washed away the sin, and they could keep the marriage intact.

REPLY: We do not have recorded what sins the Jews on Pentecost had, outside of that of crucifying Christ, not all of the Jews there could be charged with that. Where did Peter tell the Jews on Pentecost that they had to stop drunkenness, stealing, murder, covetousness, or any number of other sins that could be listed? Surely such things were sinful, but could they continue in drunkenness, stealing, etc.? Also, are we to conclude that what was once

sinful is no longer so because baptism sanctifies the practice? Drunkenness and stealing are alright after baptism? Of course not.

Only part of what Peter said on Pentecost is recorded. Note: "And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation," verse 40. Peter did tell them to repent, as well as be baptized, "for the remission of sins." Whatever else Peter said, that isn't recorded, related to what was essential to saving themselves.

Further, **I Corinthians 6:9-11** states that those who practice the sins listed could "not inherit the kingdom of God." They had been washed, sanctified, and justified, verse **11**. They could not continue such sins and be justified; the practices had to stop. Among the list is adultery, as well as homosexuality, stealing, drunkenness, and idolatry. In **Acts 17**, Paul tells the Athenians that God commanded all men everywhere to repent; here the specific was idolatry, because that was his subject at the moment. Why would unbelievers be commanded to repent of idolatry and not adultery?

Remember: one sin is as much a violation of God's law as another, **James 2:11**. If the other things in **I Corinthians 6:9-11** had to be stopped, then adultery did too. Repentance involves the stopping of sinful practices, as we have seen in **Revelation 9:20-21**. Our sins are washed away in obeying the command of God, **Acts 22:16**, but it first requires repentance. Just the act of baptism does not make an **adulterous** marriage now acceptable. The point at issue is not "telling unbelievers to separate from their wives," but rather that they **must stop the practice of adultery!**

If a separation must occur in order to stop adultery, then that is what must be done. The preachers of the first century preached repentance, a turning from wicked and ungodly ways. **Ephesians 5:3-12** lists specific sins, fornication included. Because of those sins, the wrath of God will come on the "sons of disobedience." **Verse 11** instructs us:

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them."

The task of preachers is to tell people what sin is, what sins are applicable, and what they must do to please God.

There is more evidence, of the universal application of God's marriage laws, to come. **Hebrews 13:4** applies to all men, and that is what we must preach.

3 - Genesis 2:24, Deuteronomy 24, Matthew 19

The foundation statement of the Bible concerning marriage is **Genesis 2:24**. God caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam. Taking a rib from his side, he made Eve. Verses **23-24** then say:

"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Notice the "therefore," introducing the second statement. Based on the woman's being made from man, comes the basic feature of all future unions in marriage. The closeness of the union in marriage is that she is **"bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."** They become one. Though they were male and female as a result of the woman's being made from man, when they joined as husband and wife, the union turned back in the other direction to emphasize the one flesh. In effect, with every lawful marriage, the woman becomes her husband's "Eve." On this fact is based all the rules God made that regulate marriage.

From this, we can understand the destructive nature of adultery, with the attendant rules of divorce and remarriage, **Matthew 19:1-12**. We can also see it in a man's loving his wife as he loves his own body, and a wife's being in subjection to her husband, **Ephesians 5:22-32**. It is all based on the act of the creation of male and female, their being "one flesh."

In **Matthew 19:3**, the Pharisees try to entrap Jesus. They ask: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Jesus refers them to the beginning, not **Deuteronomy 24**. He says:

"Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not

been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery."

Without becoming embroiled in the theological opinions of the Rabbis, Jesus answers the question. Mo! He goes back before the Law of Moses. He shows that God's original legislation was in effect as God's will even during the Law of Moses; it was never repealed nor replaced by something else, and will continue till the end. Let's look at the reasons.

First, the question they asked Jesus was based on controversy over **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**. The answer of Jesus, going back to the beginning, **was applied to the period involved in the question**, namely, the period of the Law of Moses.

Second, God made them male and female **from the beginning**. As long as humanity continues with such division of the sexes, the same rule applies that started with such sex distinction.

Third, the Jews well understood that the answer of Jesus was "Mo, a man cannot put away his wife for every cause." They took his answer to be a contradiction of Moses. So, **they got the point!**

Fourth, Jesus tells them exactly why **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** was given: "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it hath not been so." The verb in "it hath not been so," is **present perfect**. It has a primary meaning of something in the past continuing through to the present time of speaking. That is, **"it was not so in the beginning and has continued unchanged till the present time."** God's original statements are still in force, even during the Law of Moses.

It has been said that **Matthew 19:9** is new legislation, different from both **Genesis 2:24** and **Deuteronomy 24**. Let's see.

First, Jesus appeals to **Genesis 2:24** as the basis for all rules on the subject from the beginning to the time of his speaking. **Second**, this is also emphasized in verse 8, when Jesus notes what Moses said, then states: "but from the beginning it hath not been so." He follows in verse 9, saying, "And I say unto you." The conjunction "and" shows a continuation of his statement of what was in force from the beginning, namely, **Genesis 2:24**.

Yet, you may say, we cannot find such a statement as **Matthew 19:9** in Genesis, or anywhere else. So, **Matthew 19:9** just **must** be newer revelation, limited to Christians. Mo, not so!

First, notice the context and its connection with the beginning.

Second, just because we cannot find it *recorded* in Genesis does not mean it is entirely new revelation. We would not have known that Abel was a prophet if Jesus hadn't told us in **Luke 11:50-51**, nor that Enoch was one also, if not for **Jude 14**. Jesus, in **Mark 2:26**, says that it was "not lawful" for anyone but priests to eat the showbread, yet **Leviticus 24:5-9** does not say that in those words. Many items are not fully explained in writing until the New Testament. Jesus explains why **Deuteronomy 24** was given, and some of its significance. He amplifies **Genesis 2:24** in **Matthew 19:4-6**, giving us more complete understanding. So, why think it strange when we come to verse 9?

Third, there is perfect accord between **Matthew 19:9** and **Genesis 2:24**. God made male and female, establishing sexuality, a close sexual union between husband and wife. Fornication of all kinds would violate God's order from the beginning, and would be the only natural exception allowing a putting away. No other reason would be acceptable but that one.

Matthew 19:9 applies universally. Its connection with **Genesis 2:24** shows a rule established for all humanity. Look at the "whosoever" of the passage. Then, **Matthew 19:10-12** say:

"The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, that were so from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs, that were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, that made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it."

The disciples well understood the strictness of his statement in verse 9. They thought that if there was no other cause than fornication for putting away one's wife, then it was better not to marry at all. If they were wrong in their understanding, this would have been the perfect place for Jesus to correct them. The strictness of the rule, as understood by the disciples, was just what Jesus meant. Some today want to rearrange, or redefine, verse 9, just like the Jews did with **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**, to make it relatively easy to divorce and remarry without penalty. The disciples didn't understand it that way, and by his answer, Jesus agreed with their conclusion.

We can better understand the rules because Jesus tells us to whom the saying was *not* given. Eunuchs are incapable of sexual relations, hence, unable to "cleave to," and become "one flesh" with another. The sexual difference between male and female is the basis of the union; eunuchs are incapable of such a union. Some might refrain from marriage "for the kingdom of heaven," in effect becoming a eunuch. Paul remained single, giving all his attention to the work. (See **I Corinthians 7:32-35**).

Verses **10-12** would have been the perfect place for Jesus to tell the disciples, and us, that those to whom it was given were Christians only. He didn't! Quite to the contrary.

Some object to this by pointing to the eunuchs who became eunuchs "for the kingdom of heaven." That's supposed to prove that the regulations apply only to those in "the kingdom." However, notice there are several classes of eunuchs. (Do these objectors suppose that a **non-Christian** would become a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven? There is no other way Jesus could have worded what he said). Those born eunuchs and those made eunuchs by men include Christian and non-Christian alike. Jesus could not talk about a person's being *born* a eunuch "for the kingdom of heaven." Nor is a person *made* a eunuch by men "for the kingdom of heaven." Jesus is saying that *the only ones the rule is not directed to are those incapable of marrying in the first place*, either by a physical incapability or by choice.

The context of **Matthew 19:9** shows its universal application, based on God's creation and ruling at the time he made Adam and Eve. This is why **Hebrews 13:4** applies to all men. God's marriage laws, now under the authority of Jesus, are universal, and have been universal from the beginning.

DEUTERONOMY 24:1-4

Some insist that **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** annulled, at least for the Jews, the regulations of **Genesis 2:24**. Or, it at least temporarily revoked God's order, with implications for our own time. To understand the passage, we must understand the *kind* of legislation in it. **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** is what is called *contingency* legislation, quite common in the Law of Moses.

Contingency legislation is dependent on a circumstance that may possibly occur, but is not certain. It is an "if condition." If that condition occurs, "then" some penalty is exacted, or something else must be done. An example of contingency legislation is **Exodus 21:18-19**:

"And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: If he rise again and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed."

God did not command nor encourage men to strive together and injure one another like this. Yet, he knew that men would act that way. So, contingent on such a thing's happening, he legislated what was to be done. Verse 20 of that chapter speaks of the possible occurrence of a man's hitting his servant with a rod so that the servant die. Verses **22-25** involves men fighting, and by so doing hurting a woman with child, with the consequences stated. God did not want such things to happen, but he knew such would happen and so provided consequences if it did. It's even in **Deuteronomy 24**. Mote verse 7:

"If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you."

God did not command nor encourage slavery here, but makes provision for such when and if it occurs, and sets the penalty. Notice the "if" and "then."

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 shows the same type of legislation. The King James translation of the passage leaves some ambiguity that has encouraged a misconception about the passage. The MIV states it correctly and clearly. Notice that all four verses are to be read as a single sentence:

"If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord. Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance."

Notice the "if" and "then" sequence. A short reference to this account, showing the same idea, is **Jeremiah 3:1**:

"They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted?"

Israel was a physical nation of people, unlike the spiritual nation of God today. One became a Jew, a citizen in the nation, by birth, not by conversion out of conviction, **Hebrews 8:10-11**. Whether one really wanted to be an Israelite or not was beside the point; he was born one and was to be governed by its laws. Many laws of the Old Testament are civil and social, governing a physical nation. There would be many citizens who cared nothing about doing what was right and good. Jesus calls them "hard hearted," meaning rough and calloused, unwilling to accept God's will, with a stubborn intent to go their own way. God knew that certain conduct would occur in that nation, and some would act in a hard hearted manner. He did not approve of what they did, such as fighting, hurting, killing, making slaves of one another, or divorcing. He made provision for when such a thing happened, and set a penalty for that action. He actually disapproved of such conduct. This is why **Malachi 2:16** records: "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away."

God had never changed his mind about putting asunder what he had joined together. He disapproved of it, but knew that such things would happen, and provided contingency legislation as a deterrent. Notice that nothing is said in **Deuteronomy 24** about the **right** to divorce or remarry on the part of **anyone**. The Jews twisted the statement to mean God approved, or even commanded, their putting away for any reason, and then remarrying. God "suffered" the circumstances to exist, only in that he did not at the time try to stop the practice entirely rather than regulate it. We'll note just how strict the passage really is.

Seeing that this is contingency legislation, showing that the hard hearted Jew would divorce and remarry for flimsy reasons, the "something indecent," or "some unseemly thing," would cover anything the **husband** would consider such. It would be reason enough for him to put her away if he "disliked" her. Remember, this passage is not stating what "causes" God would approve for putting away, but the basis on which the Jew would take his action. "Some unseemly thing" is not God's "rule" for acceptable

divorce. It covers the flimsy reasons the Jews would give for taking the action. However, there were some consequences the Jews did not take into account. They did with **Deuteronomy 24** what modern theorists do with **Matthew 19:9**, redefining and rearranging terms and ignoring pertinent facts. They do this to come up with the "right" to divorce and remarry as they please with no penalty, or at least with a very light one.

After the "if events have occurred, the woman in **Deuteronomy 24** is then *defiled*. It was not the *second divorce* that defiled her, but the *second marriage*. We know this from the fact that even though she might be freed from the second man by his death, she is still defiled. The defilement involves a pollution, like adultery, bestiality, and homosexuality defiled, **Leviticus 18:20-25**. In this instance, it was adultery. There are two New Testament passages, that apply.

In **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**, there are two different Hebrew words translated "husband." In regard to the "second" husband, the word *ish* is used. It refers to a man, as opposed to a woman, a husband, as opposed to a wife., **Gesenius**, page 40. However, the "first" husband is described differently. The word there is *baal*, meaning a husband as lord, master, or owner, **Gesenius**, page 130. A distinction is made between the two men as a first and second husband. The second man is not the same as the first; the first man is the one of ownership. **Romans 7:1-3** says:

"Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men who know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man."

There's a difference between "bound," *deo*, and "joined," *become to*. "Joined" means to be "married" to someone. Being "joined" to the second man would have been alright if the first had been dead, so it was a legal relationship but not a moral one; they were not just "living together." Also, see verse 4 - same word. The man the woman is married to is not the one she is bound to; the one she is bound to, she is no longer married to.

This "bond" is further seen in the word translated "hath a husband" in verse 2, referring to the first man. It is from *hupandros*, and is found only in this passage. It means to be "under, i.e. subject to a man," **Thayer**, page 638. As long as she was married to a second man, and the first was still living, she was an adulteress. The likeness of the "first" husband in **Romans 7** to the "first" husband in **Deuteronomy 24** is clear. The "adultery" in **Romans 7** and the "defilement" in **Deuteronomy 24** are also related. There is a responsibility (bond) that is established by the first marriage that is not necessarily erased by a second marriage.

Romans 7 applies for our own day. We can see this in several ways. **First**, it's seen from arguments already presented in the preceding material. **Second**, it's seen from **Romans 7** itself. Some argue that it is limited only to the Law of Moses, which no longer applies. However, notice the present tense used by Paul. He describes present conditions. There is no definite article before "law" in the original language in verse 1. It's just "I speak to men who know law." This is true in regard to the Law of Moses or any other law; it has dominion over a man for a lifetime. He illustrates the point by referring to marriage and its violations. In verses 2-3, "the law" is "the law of the husband." It emphasizes God's law about proper marriage: the woman is bound "by law" to the husband. **Third**, it's also seen from **I Corinthians 7:39** that says essentially what **Romans 7** does, using the same terms:

"A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord."

Another passage that applies is **Matthew 5:31-32**. Usually Jesus introduces a quotation from the Old Law by some phrase like "it is written," or "have ye not read." A different formula is used here. It begins with verse 27: "Ye have heard that it was said." It continues in verse **31**: "It was said also." That formula introduces popular opinion, or rabbinic interpretation, rather than strictly what the Law said or intended. A partial quotation from the Law may be given, but that is not all that's to be considered, or there is some general misconception about it. So, verses **31-32**, "It was said also:"

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of

fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery"

Verse 31 reflects a perversion of **Deuteronomy 24**. The Pharisees twisted the passage to say that putting away your wife required nothing more than giving a writing of divorcement, and that's all there was to it. That's not what **Deuteronomy 24** said! The reply of Jesus sets things straight. The man who puts away his wife, without the cause of fornication on her part, must also be held accountable for her adultery, and the one who marries her when she is put away also commits adultery. If she is put away for fornication, then she alone is responsible. This fits well with **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**, showing again the adultery committed by the second marriage. It is a marriage to which the woman and second man had no right, but they married anyway. We must keep in mind two facts in this that affect our own time.

First, the statement of Jesus in **Matthew 5** is equally applicable today. Jesus corrects the error the Jews had, but we know from other passages, also, that it still applies. Jesus says, "but I say unto you." He thus places his authority behind it.

Second, though there is a connection between **Deuteronomy 24** and New Testament passages, we do not conclude that the prohibition of the woman returning to the first man is applicable today, even though the "defilement" (adultery) still applies. The reason is given for the prohibition in **Deuteronomy 24:4**. It would bring sin upon the land that God had given the Jews for an inheritance. That limits application of that point to the physical nation of Jews, and the land of Palestine; a specific prohibition for Israel.

POLYGAMY

Though it wasn't widespread, polygamy was practiced by some of God's followers in the Old Testament period. That is, admittedly, difficult to understand. It was not God's intention for mankind at the beginning, nor even during the Law of Moses. We know this from several facts. **First**, God made but one woman for Adam; there is no mention of his having any other wife but Eve. **Second**, only one man and one woman unite in one flesh. **Third**, speaking of possible future kings of Israel, **Deuteronomy 17:17** says: "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away. . ." **Fourth**, only one wife is found in **Proverbs 5:18**: "Let

thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth." **Fifth**, **Malachi 2:14-15** also speaks of the "wife of thy youth," and "she is thy companion," the "wife of thy covenant." **Sixth**, the dangers and disasters of polygamy are revealed in the Old Testament. God gives warnings and discouragement of it in the instances of its practice that we do see.

The first polygamist on record is Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the lineage of Cain, **Genesis 4:19**. Apparently, he wasn't a very good man to start with, anyway. The sexual sins in **Genesis 6:1-2** imply polygamy. They took "wives of all that they chose." Moan, however, "was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God," **Genesis 6:9**. Neither Noah, nor his sons, were polygamists, **Genesis 7:7**, **1 Peter 3:20**.

After the flood, many started another downward slide. Evil practices of the past asserted themselves, and man began to do things that would become so engrained as to be considered normal, "natural," customary. When Sarah insisted that Abraham take Hagar in order to have children, she was following accepted custom of the day. Even the code of Hammurabi showed such a custom. If a woman was childless, another might be taken to act as proxy for the childless wife. This suggestion was Sarah's, not God's. It would be made clear that Sarah would bear the child of promise. Ishmael was born "after the flesh," **Galatians 4:23**; the arrangement that brought forth Ishmael was a human arrangement.

Isaac, the child of promise, had only one wife, Rebekah, and was faithful to her all his life. To the contrary, Esau, a son, married two Hittite women, "which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah," **Genesis 26:35**. After Esau learned that his father charged Jacob not to take a wife of the Canaanites, Esau took the daughter of his uncle Ishmael as his wife, also, **Genesis 28:6-9**. It was, apparently, just a political move to gain favor with his father.

Jacob stumbled into polygamy. His only desire was for one woman, Rachel, a daughter of Laban. However, Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his eldest daughter, Leah. Jacob had served seven years of labor in order to have Rachel, and wound up with Leah instead. He then had to serve another seven years for Rachel. Jealousy arose when Rachel remained barren while Leah bore children to Jacob. Rachel insisted that Jacob take her handmaid, Bilhah, as a proxy to bear children for her, like Sarah had done with Abraham. When Leah became barren for a time, she insisted that Jacob take her handmaid, Zilpah, as a proxy to bear children for

her. So, Jacob's polygamy grew first out of deception by Laban, and then out of competition between Leah and Rachel for children by Jacob. One thing led to another, yet Jacob wanted only Rachel.

Several rulers and leaders of Israel were polygamists, such as Moses, Gideon, Saul, David, and Solomon. A statement from **II Samuel 12:8** is sometimes quoted in regard to David as evidence that God authorized and encouraged polygamy. It says:

"And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah ..."

However, it was the practice of the day that when one king supplanted another, and not being the son of the previous king, he took the wives of the other as a declaration and assurance of sole ownership of the throne. If they became wives of someone else, some legal claim to the throne might be established. If the succeeding king was a son, the wives of his father only came under his protection and care, and were not allowed to remarry.

This is why Solomon was so distressed when Adonijah wanted Abishag, David's youngest wife, for himself, **I Kings 2:22**. Solomon objected to his mother, "ask for him the kingdom also?" Solomon viewed the request as a threat to his throne. The statement of Nathan to David, about Saul's wives, was only a declaration of God, telling him that he had assured David's right to the throne against all others.

There were several discouragements to polygamy. **First**, the problems arising from polygamy are clearly set forth. Not only was Abraham's taking Hagar a purely human arrangement, it produced sore problems. Hagar flaunted her fertility before Sarah, and Sarah dealt harshly with her, finally casting out Hagar and Ishmael. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, and bitter rivalry between the women existed continually, **Genesis 29ff**. In regard to one of Elkanah's wives, the other "used to provoke her sorely, to irritate her. . .," **I Samuel 1:6**. Others had like problems that were a natural part of polygamy.

Second, the kings of Israel were told not to practice polygamy: "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away. . .," **Deuteronomy 17:17**. This is graphically presented in Solomon's life, **I Kings 11:1-40**. One statement says: "But king Solomon loved many strange women. .. and his wives turned away his head." **Nehemiah 13:26** said of this:

"Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin."

Keep in mind that *when* Solomon was beloved and blessed was *when* God made him ruler of Israel. **He later sinned.**

Third, Exodus 21:10 says, "If he take him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish." This is not a command to take another wife, but is more contingency legislation. *If* he does take another wife, she is to receive **equal** treatment with any other. The burden of having more than one wife, financially, would limit the practice to the wealthy. That would put the practice beyond the ability of the majority. See **Deuteronomy 21:15-16**.

Fourth, the Law declared that sexual relations made a person unclean until the evening, **Leviticus 15:18**. That would deter polygamy.

Fifth, Several passages, such as **Proverbs 5:18-19, Malachi 2:14-15**, emphasized monogamy as the will of God.

In the new Testament, monogamy is the rule. Look at **Matthew 19:4-6. I Corinthians 7:2** says:

"But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband."

There is to be only one man and one woman. Then, in **Ephesians 5:22-32**, Paul says the church is married to Christ. Christ has only one "wife," so are we to have only one.

Some have tried to find allowance for polygamy for most Christians in that elders have to be the "husband of one wife." They say that this means an elder cannot be a polygamist, but others can be. However, the phrase, literally "one woman man," does not demand such a meaning. The same phrase is found, only reversed, concerning "widows indeed" as "having been the wife of one man." There is no inference in the phrase that would make it refer to polygamy, especially in view of the other New Testament passages we have seen.

It seems that for a time God tolerated polygamy; for what reason, he does not tell us. Polygamy was not his uniform will in the matter. We cannot conclude that God will allow such practice today, but to the contrary.

4-1 Corinthians 7:15

In our preceding material, we have seen that God's marriage laws, found in **Genesis 2:24**, **Matthew 19:3-12**, **Romans 7:1-3**, and related passages, are for all men of all ages. There is only one reason given that allows divorce and remarriage. That is divorce for fornication. It is the only reason that will allow the person innocent of fornication to remarry without penalty. The guilty party is not allowed that. For several generations, **I Corinthians 7:15** has been used to establish that Christians who are deserted by an unbelieving spouse may remarry without sin. They are "**not under bondage in such cases.**" This is expanded to imply that no unbeliever is amenable to God's laws of divorce and remarriage. That position is assumed and asserted contrary to the evidence.

BACKGROUND

The background of **I Corinthians 7** involves some questions the Corinthians had written Paul about marriage, verse 1. He answers these questions in order. We may infer the questions from the answers given. The answers are tempered by "the distress that is upon us," verse 26. Some of his statements make sense only in the light of this "distress."

"Say I, not the Lord." A major argument is based on this phrase by those who want to allow remarriage of the believer who is deserted by an unbeliever. They contrast the phrase with verse **10**: "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord." Verse 10 is supposed to refer back to **Matthew 19:9**. So, we are told, the Lord had already given instruction that applied to the circumstances of verses **10-11**, the marriage between two believers. However, the argument adds, new and different legislation was given for a believer married to an unbeliever, "Say I, not the Lord." This shows that the Lord gave no instruction about desertion by an unbelieving companion. Therefore, they conclude, **Matthew 19:9** does not apply in the case of desertion by an unbelieving spouse. This leaves the believer free to remarry without the cause of fornication committed by his companion. **Matthew 19:9**, then, applies only to Christians married to one another.

Well, that argument is all very fanciful and enticing, but hasn't been proven. We have already seen the universal application of God's laws, and unbelievers can violate the "marriage bed" just as Christians can.

I will grant that there are things in Paul's statements not covered by **specific statement** of the Lord while he was on earth. Nowhere does Jesus explain and solve some of the problems that would later arise from a "mixed" marriage, although there are some **principles** he gave that do apply in **I Corinthians 7:15**. The question is not whether Jesus ever specifically said anything about the circumstances of these passages, but rather, **what does I Corinthians 7:12-16 say!** All the argument over who said what has no bearing on it. If we grant that verse **10**, "not I, but the Lord," refers back to **Matthew 19:9**, it does not establish that verse **12**, "say I, not the Lord," refers to divorce and the right of remarriage in "mixed" marriages!

As the gospel was preached, there were many instances where only one partner in a marriage was converted. This generated many problems for the believer. It involved the status of the marriage. Perhaps some thought that the Christian must now break off all contact with unbelievers, (see chapter **5:9-13**). It would involve what responsibilities were owed the unbeliever, or other members of the family, and perhaps other questions implied by the circumstances.

"Content to dwell," verses **12-13**. These terms correctly translate the original statement. Both terms are present tense verbs that show a continuing agreement to continue to dwell. It shows a full knowledge by the unbeliever of having a Christian for a mate, and what that meant. The unbeliever "accepts" the faith of the partner, is agreeable with the circumstances, and wants to continue the relationship. This knowledge would involve the new circle of acquaintances the believer has, the kind of life the believer must lead, and the attempts at conversion by the believer toward the wife or husband. The unbeliever is content to dwell with all that.

"Let him (her) not leave." Notice the present tense verb here. It means the believer is not even to consider changing the circumstances of the marriage, neither in thought or deed, provided the unbeliever is "content to dwell." The two are married in the sight of God and man, and they have all the attendant responsibilities, **I Peter 3:1-4**.

"Unbeliever is sanctified in the believer," verse **14**. This verse, while on the same subject, presents a shift in emphasis, injecting another idea into the relationship. Not only is the marriage lawful, and to be continued, but the unbeliever is "sanctified" in the believer. The usual sense of **sanctified** is to be set apart for a holy

purpose. It couldn't mean here that the unbeliever now becomes a believer because of marriage to a believer. Nor is there any holiness now transferred to the unbeliever so that he is a holy unbeliever. Nor, could it just be the "sanctity of marriage," seeing that this would also be the case if two unbelievers were married to each other. That is, an unbeliever would be sanctified in his unbelieving companion just as well as an unbeliever being sanctified in his believing companion, if it is just "marriage" that is under discussion. Two unbelievers are just as much married to each other as they would be to a believer. The unbeliever's being sanctified in the believer indicates the atmosphere and conditions established by one of the partner's being a believer. **Thayer** says, page 6:

"In I Co. vii, 14 hagiadesthai is used in a peculiar sense of those who, although not Christians themselves, are yet, by marriage with a Christian, withdrawn from the contamination of the heathen impiety and brought under the saving influence of the Holy Spirit displaying itself among Christians."

The constant day by day living with a marriage partner who is a Christian exposes the unbeliever to the word of God, to the influence of the Christian in living, and to the circle of brethren in the church with their influence. That places the unbeliever in a better atmosphere, a better position to be converted, than would exist with most unbelievers. So, the unbeliever is "set apart" in the believer in that sense.

Paul sums up verses **12-14** with the added consequence that "else were their children unclean; but now are they holy." One theorist has insisted that the reason they were unclean is because the parents had been living in adultery. They were told not to separate, seeing that one had been baptized and by that forgiven of their adultery! (That, of course, would make the believer/unbeliever marriage of this passage refer **only** to those who had been divorced and remarried). They claim that this is the only way the children could have been "unclean." My, how some people can read something into a verse to support a conclusion they want! Paul is talking about **lawful** relationships to begin with, not adulterous ones. Nor is there any indication whatever that either parent involved had been married before. The "sanctification" does not, mean "sanctification" of adultery by baptism.

From verses **12-14**, we can see one of the questions they had asked Paul. They wanted to know if a new Christian needed to

leave his or her unbelieving companion because the unbeliever somehow contaminated the believer, or their children. However, to renounce the relationship would imply, of itself, that the children were somehow illegitimate because there was something wrong with their being married. The believer's leaving would also destroy the family atmosphere, perhaps destroying the Christian's influence on those children. The unbeliever is "sanctified" in the believer, as are the children; the spouse is "sanctified," the children are "holy."

Verses 15-16

"Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart' the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace. For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"

The verbs translated "depart" are in the present tense. The first instance is **present indicative** and the second, "let him depart," is **present imperative**. For the moment, let's note that the present tense shows that the unbeliever was still living with the believer. "Depart" is opposed to the "content to dwell" of verses **12-13**. The unbeliever is not "content to dwell" with the believer and is in process of breaking off the relationship, intending to do so; it just hasn't happened, yet. Obviously, the reason for the unbeliever's reacting this way is because of the faith of the believer, and the practice of that faith. It is not that the unbeliever just doesn't want to be married any longer, which could as well have been the case if two unbelievers were married. The faith of the believer has brought on the problem. **All of this can be seen in verses 12-14, where the questions and replies hinge on religious differences in the relationship.**

Paul tells the Christian to let the unbeliever carry out his intention. Whatever the Christian might do would only cause turmoil, would accomplish nothing, and would be worse than just letting him do what he intended. God has called us unto peace.

The heart of the controversy over this passage, and its consequences, is found in the meaning and application of the word "bondage." When it says that the believer is "not under bondage in such cases," does it mean that the Christian is now free to remarry? If it were not for that question, and the fact that some **want** to believe in the freedom to remarry, there would be very little con-

troversony over **I Corinthians 7:15**. So, we need to understand how it applies.

The term "bondage" is taken, by some, to mean a "marriage bond" that ties two people together. Though the original word here is **douloo**, they make it to be equal with **deo**, translated "bound" in other passages. So, the interpretation is that the believer is no longer "bound" to the unbeliever if the unbeliever wants to leave. Not being "bound" to the other, the believer is "free" to remarry with God's approval. This position has other consequences implied in that conclusion. Let's see if that is all true.

The word "bound" (**deo**) has a primary physical meaning of being bound with something like chains, rope, etc., to be tied together. There is a figurative meaning, based on this, that means "to bind i.e. put under obligation, sc. of law, duty, etc...", **Thayer's Lexicon**, page 131. **Arndt & Gingrich Lexicon**, page 177, says: "of binding by law and duty, with dat-ive of the person, to someone: of a wife to her husband Rom. 7:2. . vs. 39."

The word **deo**, "bound," is found twice in **I Corinthians 7**; verses **27** and **39**. That being so, it would have been very easy and logical for Paul to have used it in verse **15**, if he had wanted to convey the same meaning in that passage. Yet, he didn't use it there. In verse **39** he says: "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will. . ." how look at **deo** in **Romans 7:2-3**:

"For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man"

First, the woman is **bound** by law to the husband **as long as he lives**. The phrase "hath a husband" is from the single word **hupandros**, found only in this passage. It means to be "under, i.e. subject to a man," **Thayer**, page 638. This emphasizes the idea of the "bond" to the first man.

Second, she is **bound** even though the relationship has ended, and she is now married to another.

Third, she is an adulteress for the same length of time she is married to another man, and her husband is still alive. That might be decades in length.

Fourth, there is a difference between **bond** and **marriage**. The woman here was "bound" to a man she was "no longer married to," and "married" to a man she was not "bound" to. **Webster's Dictionary** says on the word "marriage:"

"The institution whereby men and women are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family."

Marriage refers to a particular kind of **relationship** between a man and woman, which may or may not be acceptable to God. It might be an adulterous marriage, but it is still "marriage." **Bond** refers to a particular responsibility God holds a man to in regard to a certain woman, and a woman to a certain man. The **relationship** (marriage) may end but God still holds them accountable in regard to the other person. **Mark 6:17-18** shows that Herod had "married" Herodias, but she was still called the "wife" of Philip, Herod's brother. The woman in **Romans 7** might have been married "to another man" for thirty years "while" the man she was first married to was still alive. Through no conscious effort on her part, and maybe no contact for decades, she was still "bound" to him.

Fifth, she is bound **by law** for as long as the first man lives. Remember the statement of the lexicons: "**of binding by law and duty...**" The emphasis is on law here. It is also seen in the statement that if the husband dies "**she is free from the law.**" We would think the better expression would be that she is free from the husband. That's not the way it is said. The emphasis is on the legal bond that still exists, even though the relationship is ended. **Deo**, bond, is a covenant word regulated by God's laws, **Genesis 2:24, Proverbs 2:17, Malachi 2:14, Matthew 19:3-12**.

So, this "bond" is not the same thing as "marriage" and may exist distinct from the relationship. It continues even though the one marriage has ended, and marriage to another begun.

When we look at the word "bondage" (**douloo**), we find a different emphasis. The term means, basically, "to make a slave of, reduce to bondage . . . to be under bondage, held by constraint of law or necessity, in some matter, I Co vii. 15," **Thayer's Lexicon**, page 158. **Arndt & Gingrich**, page 205, puts it simply, "to make someone a slave (doulos) enslave, subject." **Doulos** means a slave, while **douloo** means the servitude rendered. That is, the **bondage** could not exist without the actual serving. A covenant is not required in order for a person to be in bondage. One may

be forced into bondage against his will, or may voluntarily place himself there. However, *there is no bondage without the active service to the person or thing to whom, or to which, one is in bondage.*

There are only eight places that **douloo** is found in the Mew Testament, and four in the Septuagint. All show the same thing. In **Acts 7:6**, the fact that Israel was brought into "bondage" and ill treated for four hundred years is stated. We are all familiar with the forced servitude they experienced. **Romans 6:18** tells us we are to become "servants" of righteousness, and in verse **22** to become "servants" to God. Neither can be true without the activity that **is** service. We are now discussing **I Corinthians 7:15**, and we will look at 9:19 in a moment. **Galatians 4:3** presents them as having been in "bondage" under the rudiments of the world, and presents it all in the context of a slave **serv**ing a master.

Titus 2:3 has "not enslaved to much wine," which speaks of one's continued indulgence, just as a slave serves his master. Finally, **II Peter 2:19** presents going back into the world and serving sinful things as being brought into "bondage." Voluntarily or involuntarily, there can be no "bondage" without "serving." **That requires some sort of contact with the person to whom one is in bondage.**

When we compare **douloo** and **deo**, we see the distinction. While **douloo** may involve obligation, and the serving that comes only with contact with the person to whom they are in bondage, **deo** refers to an obligation by law that exists even if all contact is broken for decades or a lifetime! The two terms are not synonyms. In fact, **douloo** is never used in reference to marriage in the scriptures, not even in **I Corinthians 7:15**. In verse **15**, Paul is talking about an obligation of servitude in regard to someone alright, but it is not the bond as found in verses **27** and **39**.

We further notice that **douloo** (bondage) in **I Corinthians 7:15** is a perfect tense verb. This indicates that the Christian has not been in the past, and is not now, under bondage "in such cases." That implies that under **other** circumstances, or "cases," they would be under bondage. What we must determine is the "case" under discussion here.

UNDER BONDAGE - NOT UNDER BONDAGE

In **I Corinthians 9:19-22**, Paul says: "For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more." He says that to the Jews he became a Jew, to the

Greeks he became a Greek. He closes with: "... I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." All will acknowledge that Paul had an obligation from God, and to God, to do all he could to save as many as possible.

In verse **16** he said: "... for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." In verse **17**, he says: "For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of my own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me." In verse **18**, he tells us what part of this whole thing was of his own will by telling us what his reward is: "... that I may make the gospel without charge . . ." Otherwise, he was under obligation, stewardship, to preach the gospel and save as many as he could. So, when he says in verse **19** that he brought himself under bondage to all, it must be understood that his servitude was toward, and for the benefit of, others. The term bondage certainly could not mean that Paul was "married" to everybody; he was not "tied" or "chained" to all mankind, as might be indicated by the term **deo** (bond). The service in these passages is that Paul accomodated himself to the social and personal circumstances of the people he was trying to reach. To the Jew he became as a Jew, to the Greek as a Greek. **This was all done that he might influence them with the gospel.** A similar passage is **Romans 1:14-15**:

I am a debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are at Rome.¹

An appropriate comment on these verses is from the commentary on **Romans** by R.L. Whiteside:

"I was not anything these Greeks and Barbarians had done for Paul that put him in debt to them. Jesus had redeemed him, saved him, and made him an heir of heaven, and thus had brought him under obligation to do all he could to carry the same blessings to others. He had thus been brought under obligation to all men. He was ready to do what he could to discharge that obligation to the Romans. . . A practical question arises here. Was Paul under any obligation that the rest of us are not under? Are we not in debt the same as he? Are not all Christians under the same obligations? Every one is responsible up to the limit of his possibilities:¹

The word "debtor" in **Romans 1:14** is from *opheiletes*, meaning one who owes someone else something, such as money. The word *douloos* in **I Corinthians 9:19** emphasizes the servitude rendered toward unbelievers.

However, there were circumstances where Paul's "bondage" toward others ceased. **Acts 13:44-46** describes an encounter by Paul with the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia. He had spoken to them before, but they turned against him. Verse **36** says:

"And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

This is in keeping with the teaching of Jesus concerning reaction to the rejection of truth. **Matthew 10:1-15** records the "limited commission." As the disciples were accepted by some family where they went to preach, they were to "let your peace come upon it." The parallel account in Luke records they were to eat whatever was set before them, "such things as they give." They accommodated themselves to the circumstances. If they were rejected, they were to "shake off the dust of their feet." So, in addition to the words spoken by Paul in **Acts 13:46**, verse **51** says that they "shook off the dust of their feet against them." This is what Jesus said to do. A like circumstance is in **Acts 18:6**. It says:

"... when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. . ."

The word "clean" in the passage meant that Paul was **guiltless**, no longer responsible. He had done all he could do, and they rejected the truth. He emphasized this reaction by shaking out his raiment. Shaking out one's clothing was done inside a dwelling. Shaking the dust from the shoes was done outdoors. Both actions meant the same thing. The action indicated that all further attempts to reach them would cease, his obligation had ended. Jesus also had said:

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you."

In the instances above, in **Acts**, if Paul had continued to try to reach the Jew, after their positive rejection of the truth, it would only have caused more trouble. God did not want that to happen. In this case, we have a parallel with **I Corinthians 7:15-16**.

Before getting directly to that, let's note in **I Peter 3:1-4** that women who are Christians and have unbelieving husbands are still to be in subjection to their husbands. The marriage is valid. In addition to this, the Christian is to try in every way possible to save her husband. If the husband will not hear the word, then he can be gained by the wife's proper behaviour before him. This obligation is from God. Though the word is not used, it is still stated that she is hereby "under bondage." She was to accommodate herself to the circumstances in every way to save her husband. The like instruction would apply to a male Christian.

In **I Corinthians 7:15**, we find the unbeliever is not "content to dwell" with the believer because of the practice of the spouse's faith. The unbeliever has rejected the message of truth and every effort the believer has put forth. To continue to try to reach him, under the circumstances, would only cause turmoil, and "God has called us unto peace." **The present imperative** of "let him depart" is a command to the believer, seeing that an imperative indicates a command of one strength or another, here permissive.

This reminds us of the instructions of Jesus concerning reaction of his disciples toward those who reject the truth: don't cast your pearls before swine, or they will turn and rend you. Or, shake the dust off your feet. Then in verse **16**, Paul says: "For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"

The subject is the effort put forth to save the unbeliever. When they reject the truth in the way the unbeliever has in verse **15**, the believer is no longer "under bondage." It can be charted this way:

UNDER BONDAGE

Paul -1 Corinthians 9:9-22
Believers -1 Peter 3:1-3

NOT UNDER BONDAGE

Acts 13:44-51, 18:6
I Corinthians 7:15-16

The "case" under discussion, in **I Corinthians 7:15**, is that of the rejection of truth by an unbeliever. He has so rebelled against truth that he wants nothing more to do with the Christian, even though they are married. That is an extreme reaction. *In such cases*, the Christian *never has been under bondage*. Paul in **Acts 13** and **18** would be two other such "cases." Any attempts to reach the unbeliever would only cause more trouble, and *"God has called us to peace."*

Having no assurance that the Christian would ever reach the other, the believer is told to *"let them depart."* The passage has nothing at all to do with a "marriage bond," nor any right of remarriage. Such believer/unbeliever manages are subject to the same marriage laws as all others are, **Genesis 2:24**, **Matthew 19:3-12**, **Romans 7:2-3**.