

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

JANUARY 1980

THIS IS A SUBJECT THAT ALWAYS MAKES ME A LITTLE NERVOUS AS I TRY TO GET STARTED ON IT, FOR I REALIZE THAT MANY IDEAS AND PERSONAL FEELINGS ARE HANGING IN THE BALANCE. TRADITION HAS BLINDED THE EYES OF A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO STAND DESPERATELY IN NEED OF AN ANSWER FROM THE WORD OF GOD ON THIS SUBJECT: THEREFORE I PRAY THAT I CAN SAY EXACTLY WHAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAS LED ME TO SEE IN THE SCRIPTURES. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN PREACHED HERE IN FAITH ASSEMBLY BEFORE, AND WE HAVE PUBLISHED IT, BUT GOD HAS OPENED UP A FEW THINGS TO ME SINCE THEN THAT REALLY CLINCH THE THING. THERE IS NOT ANOTHER SUBJECT IN THE WHOLE GOSPEL THAT SATAN HAS USED FOR A CLUB TO BEAT PEOPLE, AS MUCH AS THE SUBJECT OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. HE KNOWS WHAT CAUSED THE TROUBLE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, FOR HE WAS BEHIND IT ALL, AND HE KNOWS THAT THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE IS STILL SUFFERING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT ACT IN THE GARDEN, BUT AS LONG AS HE CAN KEEP CHRISTIANS FROM UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE MIND OF GOD IS, ON THE SUBJECT OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE, FORNICATION AND ADULTERY, HE CAN KEEP THEM UNDER A CLOUD OF GLOOM, DOUBT AND CONFUSION. I FOUND THE SAME CONDITION IN NORWAY WHEN WE WERE THERE. I DID NOT PLAN IT, BUT THE SUBJECT WAS LAID UPON MY HEART TO DEAL WITH ON THE VERY LAST DAY WE WERE THERE. I HAD A LITTLE FEELING I WOULD BE CONFRONTED ON THIS, WHILE THERE, BUT IT WAS NEVER MENTIONED. THEN ON SATURDAY NIGHT, BEFORE WE WOULD HAVE THE LAST SERVICES ON SUNDAY, IT JUST SEEMED LIKE EVERY OTHER SUBJECT WAS CLOSED TO ME EXCEPT THIS ONE. I FOUND OUT WHY, LATER. WHEN THE MESSAGE WAS FINISHED, THEY SAID, BRO. JACKSON: THAT HAD TO BE THE LEADING OF THE LORD. THEY HAD SITUATIONS THERE THAT WOULD HAVE LED TO BROKEN FELLOWSHIP IF THEY HAD NOT BEEN CLEARED UP SCRIPTURALLY. THAT JUST SHOWS HOW GOD IS ABLE TO MEET THE NEED OF HIS PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF WHERE THEY MAY BE. ONE THING I DID DISCOVER THOUGH, IN DEALING WITH THIS MESSAGE THERE: THE NORWEGIAN LANGUAGE ONLY HAS ONE WORD FOR TWO DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIPS. IN THE ENGLISH, WE USE THE WORD, FORNICATION, TO DESCRIBE ONE RELATIONSHIP OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE, AND ADULTERY FOR ANOTHER: THEREFORE MANY STATEMENTS WE MAKE ARE A LITTLE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO GET THE FULL MEANING OF THE THOUGHT BEHIND THEM. I FOUND OTHER SCRIPTURES SUCH AS **EZEKIEL 38, REV. 17 & 18**, ETC., WHERE THERE WAS A SIMILAR HANDICAP, BUT GOD ALWAYS MAKES A WAY FOR MEN TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSE. PRAISE HIS NAME!

AS WE GO INTO THIS SUBJECT WE APPROACH IT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF, IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS NOT SO, AND I REALIZE THERE WILL BE SOME THINGS SAID THAT WILL NOT BE EASILY ACCEPTED BY EVERYONE, BUT PLEASE! LET US TAKE OUR BIBLES AND APPROACH THIS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WITH HUMBLE HEARTS AND OPEN MINDS. WE MUST GET A TRUE REVELATION OF WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES IF WE ARE TO BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH SITUATIONS THAT WILL ARISE, FOR GOD DOES NOT HAVE SIX DOZEN WAYS TO ANSWER THE SAME QUESTION. I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN.

TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 22:13-21, 24:1-4**A LOOK AT THE LAW**

Open your Bible to the **22nd chapter of Deuteronomy** and we will begin with the **13th verse**. **“If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, and give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: (virgin) Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel’s virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: And the damsel’s father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter’s virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.”** Before I go on let me remind you that God gave this law to the Israelites when their moral structure was probably at its lowest ebb, having just been delivered from Egyptian bondage. In Egypt they were looked upon as a minority people, slaves, just as outcasts. Conditions like that can sometimes tend to cause a let down of moral standards, especially when they prevail for such a long time, but these people were chosen of God to receive a revelation of Himself, and to eventually reflect that revelation to the Gentiles, who were pagans, that they also might come to see the reality of spirituality, morality, and a true social society that functions with upright principles. God gave them the law through His servant, Moses, in order that they might have something to reveal the plan and purpose for mankind that He held in His great mind. Before the law was given, how was man to know what pleased or displeased God? It is true, there were certain men who walked with God down through time, but we are looking at this from a standpoint of what Paul said to the Christians at Rome. **“For by the law is the knowledge of sin, (also) Where there is no law, there is no transgression.”** In **Romans 5:13**, he said, **“For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”** Of course he is talking about the sins of the flesh, for Adam’s sin already had death reigning over all mankind. He clarifies that in **verse 7, chapter 7**, where he said, **“I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”** Therefore by giving the Israelites a law to live by, they were able to know the will of God in every situation that arose. This is where God began His upbringing of that nation of people. Standing there at the foot of the mountain they received instructions that eventually lifted them to a higher standard of morality and spirituality, and in process of time, caused Gentile nations to take note of the fact that, truly, there is a God of reality that lives in those people. Now many people have the idea that under the law a man was justified while the woman was made to be no better than a dog. If you will look at the scriptures honestly you will see that there is no justification for such an idea. The law served to lift both the man and the woman to a higher place of life. We will read some scriptures that will balance the picture for you if you will pay attention. Certain things were set in the Old Testament as types, and all the types ended at Calvary in the Lord Jesus Christ. Certain types in the Old Testament pointed to Christ, but when He was manifested, those types stopped right there. To set a type, a man could divorce his wife for certain immoralities. We see that right in the law, and that has caused some people to say, If a woman commits an immoral act she could be stoned to death, but please remember, It takes two to commit an immoral act. Such people as this fall into the category with those who brought the little woman to Jesus one day, claiming they caught her in the very act of adultery, and wanted to stone her, according to the law of Moses. If they really wanted to obey the law they should have brought the man also, for the law demands that they both be stoned. Naturally they were just tempting Jesus. They could not have cared less about keeping the law in that respect. You say, Bro. Jackson: How do you know that? It is very simple; In order for them to have known that it was an act of adultery, and not just an act of fornication; they would have needed to know more about the case than just the fact than at illegal sex act had been committed. They called it adultery, and adultery is more than just a one time fling for pleasure. We will explain the difference between adultery and fornication

in more detail, later, but right now I just want to make the point that, in order to comply with the law of stoning adulterers, they needed to catch the guilty parties in the act, and then they had to stone them both; not just the woman. What I want you to see is that some people just use little parts of the law as a shield to hide behind while they promote their carnal ideas. They desire to project a certain image, and therefore use only the scripture that they can twist to suit their purpose. The only image I desire to promote is the image of the Lord Jesus Christ and His word of truth.

ANCIENT MARRIAGES

As we return to the scripture we were reading in **Deuteronomy 22**, let me explain the setting. In ancient times most marriages were arranged by the parents of the young boy and girl long before they ever reached a marriageable age of life. Therefore it was not unusual to find a situation where one or both of the newlyweds would not be altogether thrilled about the marriage, and I believe this scripture might just pertain to such a situation. In most cases the young people, when they reached a certain age, were ready to come together in a marriage relationship and fulfill the agreement made between their parents when they were yet little children, but just suppose we look at a situation where the young man has not grown to like the young woman that his parents chose to be his wife. He knows that he is bound by law, and by custom, to fulfill the marriage agreement, but he feels that he can possibly work his way out of the marriage later, because the law has a certain provision in it, and that provision is what we are reading here. We read down through **verse 17**, so let us see how the elders of the city handled the situation. He has accused the young woman of not being a virgin when she married him, and her parents have brought the proof of her virginity and spread it before the elders of the city, and **verse 18**, tells us this, **“And the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him; And they shall amerce him (fine him) in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.”** You certainly could not say that the law takes up for the man and puts the woman down in that situation, could you? He is forbidden to ever put her away as long as he lives. He might go out and take other wives, but he has one that he will have to provide for, and protect, for the rest of his life, and he will not soon live down the name that he has in that city. Everyone knows he is a schemer and should not be trusted until he has proved himself over a period of time. On the other hand, just to show both sides of the law, let us read **verses 20 & 21**. **“But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father’s house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.”** As you read the rest of this chapter, you will find other situations covered, including rape. I personally feel that such a law covering rape would fit well in our present society. I do not mean to sound hard hearted about this, but when I think of how the Supreme Court of our land has promoted the sentimental attitude that we ought not take a human life, and when I see how evil minded individuals have capitalized on their attitude, to the point where they feel they can do almost anything and get by with it, it makes me want to scream out to them, **GOD’S MORAL LAW HAS NEVER CHANGED!** The laws of our land may let a man commit terrible crimes and get by without having to pay with his life, but let me tell you this, If that man lives long enough, God will surely see that his flesh pays the bill for his wrong doing. I can see such a person when they reach an age of 65 or 70 years, their life will be nothing but constant torment. God has a way of making you pay the bill for your careless life, even if the Supreme Court does let you get by with it. God’s law of sowing and reaping works in either direction, for good, or bad, either way we sow. When people step across the borders of God’s law, even though they may be forgiven from a salvational standpoint, their flesh will still have to pay.

DIVORCE UNDER LAW

We are living in an age when very little thought is ever given to what the will of God might be in certain situations of life. Even a lot of professing Christians are very prone to follow their impulses first, then inquire about the will of God later, many times, after it is too late to avoid heartbreak and near despair. Then we find others who will reach into the Bible and pull out a verse or two in an effort to justify what they have already determined to do; therefore by the help of Almighty God, we will endeavor to establish exactly, where the word of God stands on the question of marriage and divorce. This is an area where the word of God seems to be walked over the most, so let us turn to Deuteronomy 24:1, and lay the groundwork for what we want to establish. Some of you may think this is just my idea or opinion, or my own version, but I will assure you right now, I am fully aware of the fact that if I teach you wrong, I will one day, have to stand in the judgement of God and answer for it. Nevertheless, God has called me to preach truth to you, and what I am going to present to you is the word of the Lord, so it will find lodging in the hearts of all who seek to know the truth about this subject. **24:1, "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass (OVER A PERIOD OF TIME) that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: (IN OTHER WORDS, WORD REACHES HIM THAT HIS WIFE HAS BEEN UNFAITHFUL AND HE CONFIRMS IT) then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."** Now this was a provision in the law of Moses, and Jesus had to deal with it more than once in His short ministry on earth. He first dealt with the subject in what we refer to as the sermon on the mount, in the **5th chapter of Matthew**. By reading what the law actually says, first, we can know assuredly that the law definitely does make a provision for divorcement in certain cases, but the Catholic church never would accept that as a fact. They just absolutely would not sanction a divorce among those of their congregation, nor would they participate in a marriage where one of the parties had been divorced. That did not keep a lot of Catholics from running off somewhere else for that purpose, then keeping it a secret for a while, to keep from being excommunicated from the church, but the point we are making is that they were holding to a creed of their own making, which had no scriptural authority.

We do not intend to present to you, something from a man-made church creed, we want to show every believer where they stand with the word of God. Of course we realize, this law was given to Jewish believers, offspring of the house of Israel, but Jesus kept it alive in His teaching, and the apostle to the Gentiles (PAUL) picked it right up to show where Gentile believers fit into the picture. The fact that God opened up the gospel message and all its benefits to Gentiles, in no way cancelled out His righteous standards for believers, whether they be Jew, or Gentile, and the law of Moses reveals those righteous standards. That does not put believers under bondage, to keep the letter of the law, but a genuine believer will certainly allow his life to be guided by those righteous principles layed down in the law. So the law says, If a man find his wife to be unfaithful, he may divorce her. He does not have to, but if he is unable to forgive her, or if she refuses to change her ways, he certainly may do so. Now we must see what provision the law makes for the woman who is divorced. **Verse 2**, says, **"And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife."** There are some who will jump up and down, and say, That is not fair; she should not be allowed to do that. Let me remind you that this is the word of God you are finding fault with. I am reminded of a time when the apostle Paul, in writing to the believers at Rome, was led to say of God, **"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will He hardeneth."** He was making reference to God's dealing with Pharaoh, and he knew the truth of his statement would not set well with everyone who heard it, so he added, **"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He (GOD) yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?"** Paul comes right back, and says, **"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"** I will ask you a similar question. Who do you think you are, that you should have the right to find fault with the word of God? The law says that this divorced woman may go and be another man's wife. This is the will of God, and we have no right to find

fault with it. But we do have the right to find out why God would make such a provision, if our motive is right, so here is why. When Adam and Eve walked out of the garden, Eve did not have an equal rights document in her hand, as women do in our day. God placed a curse upon her conception, and made her subject to Adam, because of her disobedience, and because Adam allowed her to seduce him, contrary to the revealed will of God, the ground was cursed, and Adam was sentenced to eat his bread in the sweat of his face, tilling the cursed ground, all the days of his life. We will read a few verses from **Genesis 3**, beginning with **verse 16**, God had already cursed the serpent which seduced Eve, causing her to go against the will of God. Now He turns to the woman, and says, **“I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and THY DESIRE SHALL BE TO THY HUSBAND, and HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return.”** Not only was the man to earn his own bread, but he was to feed and provide for his wife also. That was the custom for centuries of time after that. When a man took a wife he knew it was his responsibility to provide every bite of food that woman would have need of, from then on. Now that is why God allowed Moses to make provision for divorced women to marry again. He knew they would need a husband to provide for them. That same provision also carried a further stipulation. If the woman remarried and behaved herself, everything was fine; she was a legal wife, but if her new husband found occasion to divorce her, she was not allowed to go back to her first husband under any circumstances. We will read that in **verse 3**, then we will go to Hosea for scripture to go with this. **Verse 3, “And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.”**

SETTING A TYPE

Now let me say once again, for this is an important part of this message, a man was not required to divorce his unfaithful wife if he felt like she would behave herself and he could forgive her. The law did not force him to divorce her, but it allowed him to if that was his choice. The only condition was, once he had divorced her, he could never take her back again. In other words, he could allow her to remain as his wife, regardless of how she conducted herself, if he wanted to, but once he divorced her and she ever became another man's wife, he could never take her back no matter what happened. That is why God instructed Hosea, once of His prophets, to take a wife of whoredom. His marriage to such a woman was to set a type of God's relationship with the nation of Israel which was always whoring after other gods. Israel was an unfaithful wife to God; therefore through Hosea's marriage, God was actually saying to Israel, I could legally divorce you because of your unfaithfulness, but if I do you are without hope of ever returning to me, but, like Hosea, if I just let you run after your lovers until your heart is content with such, when you reach the end of your rope, you can return to me, and I can receive you back without breaking the law which I gave Moses for your benefit. Let us go to **Hosea, chapter 1:2**, for this type. We will read a few verses. **“The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea, And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms** (a thing like this was actually forbidden in the law: that this holy man could marry such a woman, but when people who know the will of God, begin to drift away to something else, God will allow certain things to be done in His dealing with the situation) **and**

children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord.”

Hosea lived at a time when the 10 Northern tribes of the children of Israel were already given over to whoredoms in their worshiping of Baal. Jehovah, the great eternal spirit had taken unto Himself this nation of people to deal with them, and care for them as a husband does his beloved wife, and they had been unfaithful to Him, especially the 10 Northern tribes, so God speaks to Hosea on this wise, that he should marry a woman that was no more than a prostitute, and when they had children, God instructed Hosea as to what names to give them, for the names of these children were to complete the type. Each child was given a name that spoke of God's dealing with those idolatrous tribes that were given over to whoredoms, and everything that the type pointed to was carried out to the most minute detail. The third child, a son, was given a name that pointed to a certain action involving the two Southern tribes. We will not read all the verses; you can do that later. Go to **verse 8**, where we pick up this third child. **“Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.”** This is to the two Southern tribes. Paul picked that up, got a revelation on it, and dealt with it in the **9th chapter of Romans**. Notice, as we continue reading here in **Hosea, verse 10**, for this is where the Gentiles came into a place with God. **“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place (or at a time when) it was said unto them, (The Gentiles who believed the gospel) ye are the sons of the living God.”** Brothers and sisters, we are living under the benefits of that type even until this very hour, but Gentile time is running out; the type is nearing its fulness, and **verse 11**, is just about to be fulfilled. **“Then (when Gentile time runs out) shall the children of Judah (TWO SOUTHERN TRIBES) and the children of Israel (TEN NORTHERN TRIBES) be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head.”** That head will be the Lord Jesus Christ, and when all those tribes are represented back in the land of Israel to sufficiently fulfill this scripture she will never be put away again. Jehovah put her away, cast her out and refused to be a husband unto her, but He did not write her a bill of divorcement; therefore, just as Hosea took Gomer back after she had run her course of unfaithfulness, so will God take Israel back, but He could not do it if He had divorced her. We do not have the space here, but it will help you, if you will go ahead and read through those chapters of Hosea. You will see that Hosea just put her away and refused to be a husband to her as long as she was running with her lovers, but he did not write her a bill of divorcement, therefore when her fling was over, when she had lost her beauty, became unattractive to her lovers, and wound up as an outcast, a vagabond: Hosea saw her in that latter state and bought her back for so much barley and so many pieces of silver. He could do that because he had never divorced her. By the same law, God can receive Israel back when her days of whoredoms come to an end. She has played the whore all over this Gentile world for almost two thousand years, and now they are going back to the land of their forefathers with every rotten, immoral spirit that has ever been among pagan Gentiles. On the plane, coming back from Norway, I talked with a young Jewish fellow about these things. He even told me that about 80 percent of the young people in Israel today have fell under the influence of alcohol and dope, and that they became such as a result of their exposure to the Western nations. I just thought to myself, yes, **Revelation 2**, speaks of the two prophets being killed, and how their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our LORD was crucified. Of course that refers to Jerusalem which, in that day will be an internationally controlled city, full of perverted young people that have come there from all over the world. They go there because of its historical significance for one thing along with many others, but by that time the city of Jerusalem will have become a cesspool of immorality, with every kind of perversion. Their immorality likens them unto the Sodomites, and the captivity of their souls is likened unto the bondage to the Antichrist. Nevertheless out of all those Jews who are in the land of Israel in those days, those two prophets who will prophesy for 3 ½ years before they are killed in the middle of that week of years, will glean enough souls to fulfill **Revelation 7:1-8**, where one hundred and forty four thousand Jewish men are sealed with the Holy Ghost, and a revelation of the gospel and their long awaited Messiah. Also

there will be another great element of Jews, men, women, boys and girls who will receive such a revelation, and will fulfill the scripture that speaks of the woman (ISRAEL) that produced the man child (JESUS) fleeing into the wilderness to a place prepared for her, where God will protect her, and provide for her throughout the last 3 ½ years of that week of Daniel. **(Rev. 12:5-6, 14)** All the rest of those Jews will be at the disposal of the Antichrist and his beast system.

WHO MUST TAKE HEED?

Saints: I hope these examples are helping you to see the very delicate means God has set forth to govern his people in righteousness. I refer to it as delicate, only because of the fine line between keeping the righteousness of God's law, and legalism. There are scores of people in this old world who could not care less about living for God when everything is going well for them, but you let them begin to have trouble in their marriage; and immediately, they start searching the Bible for a scripture to justify what they have already determined to do. It is sad to say, but I am afraid that is true even in the ranks of professing Christians. There are people in just about every denomination, religiously speaking, that live very careless lives, caring little about God's perfecting truth. But when their carelessness leads them into one of Satan's traps, they immediately run to the Bible and try to lay hold on a provision that is placed in there to guide the life of a believer. I have been asked the question, Does the Bible truth apply to everyone, regardless of what religious denominations they are in and what they believe otherwise? My answer is, NO! If you do not care enough about truth to separate from your denominational, man-made creeds and follow truth with your whole life, please do not feel that you can reach over in to the Bible teaching of an assembly of truth, and grab a scripture to justify the desires of your flesh when you get into a tight spot with your life. I will just be plain about it. If you have opportunity to follow truth, and you continually choose to turn your back upon it to follow church creeds, there is sure to come a day when you will lose out completely with God. I will use some illustrations to clarify my statements. Just suppose a Catholic man would divorce his Methodist wife because she refused to convert to Catholicism; Does this allow either one of the two parties to use Bible truth to justify their case? Absolutely not! If they will not accept the truth of the oneness of God, and of baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they have no right to use any other Bible truth to justify their flesh. I am inserting these illustrations here for you to hold in your mind as you study the rest of this message, for we intend to go to the gospels to pick up the words of Jesus, and also to Corinthians, to pick up the teaching of Paul, who was the apostle to the Gentiles, and who wrote most of the New Testament letters that Christians use as a guide for their lives. Now for another illustration, just suppose a Baptist woman would divorce her husband because he saw the light of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. She thought he had gotten a demon spirit, and because he refused to deny his experience with God, she refuses to be a wife to him, and it ends in a divorce: Then, let us say a young Pentecostal couple which had been raised up to believe in the trinity doctrine of Pentecost, came to a time when the husband saw the light of truth on the oneness of God, and of baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, according to **Acts 2:38**. The wife rejected that truth, and divorced her husband because he accepted it, and the husband has made up his mind to follow truth, no matter what: That person who is following truth is free to choose another mate, but the mate must be a Christian. Another similar case would be, if the couple had been raised in oneness of the Godhead doctrine, and we will say (in order to show the other side of the picture) that the wife receives a revelation of this end-time truth for the bride of Christ, as a result of a deep hunger in her soul, and she is led to separate from the oneness denominational church in order to follow truth: When the husband cannot get her to return to the former church, he becomes angry, and divorces her. That believer of truth is free in Jesus to choose another mate, but only in the Lord. We will back that up with the scriptures a little later. As for the case where the Baptist woman divorced her husband because he received the light on the baptism of the Holy Ghost, let me say this, If he had a genuine experience of receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, then that Spirit of God in him will lead

him eventually, into this end-time truth, and that will bring him under a believers provision in the laws and principles of God. Otherwise he will go with all the rest who fail to walk on with God. Now some will no doubt say, Bro. Jackson: What right do you have to say such things? I say them by the word of the Lord. We will get to the **7th chapter of 1 Corinthians** later, but in the meantime you can think on these things as we consider some other scriptures. We intend to cover this subject thoroughly.

WILL YOU WALK OVER TRUTH?

Some of you will probably remember that when I preached these sermons in Faith Assembly, I said, When we print this, I will say some things that I am not going to say from the pulpit. You have just been reading some of those things that I wanted to say, but there is yet another, and I am sure some of you will not like this, but it is true just the same. **IF YOU ARE A PERSON THAT WILL WALK RIGHT OVER TRUTH TO FEED THE DESIRES OF YOUR FLESH, YOU ARE ALSO THE KIND OF PERSON THAT WILL WEAR THE MARK OF THE BEAST IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND BE DAMNED.** Also, if you divorce your mate because he, or she, has received more light from the word of God, you fall into the place of the unbeliever according to the teaching of the apostle Paul, no matter what you may profess to be. Your very actions prove that you do not have proper respect for truth. Let me say one other thing while we are on this thought. If you, as the professed believer in your marriage, deliberately provoke your unbelieving mate to divorce you, you are walking on very shaky ground yourself, for you are not following instructions from the Bible on how to set an example before your mate. God's laws and statutes are very precise; following them will produce righteousness in our daily lives, and ignoring them will lead to ship wreck sooner or later. Do not think for one minute that because we are living under grace. God has changed His mind about how His people should conduct their lives. His standard of righteousness never changes. He is merciful though; He only holds a person accountable for what they know, unless that person chooses to remain ignorant of His word. God's revealed word for every age has always been sufficient to keep the true believer free from bondage. That is why the law allowed a man to divorce his unfaithful wife if he felt that he just could not continue to live with her. That is also why the law allowed the divorced woman to remarry, so she would not be caught in an impossible situation herself. You may say, I can see him putting her away, but I sure cannot see her having the right to marry another man. Brother! Sister! Do not find fault with the word of God. Whatever is written in the word of God ought to be good enough for every true believer to stand for. Would you not agree?

AS MATTHEW HEARD JESUS

We are going into the gospel now, for there are some very interesting things to take note of as you study all four gospels together. Matthew was a disciple of Jesus at the time Jesus preached the sermon on the mount, recorded in **Matthew chapter 5**. Luke and Mark were not disciples at that time. What Matthew wrote about Jesus was from an eye witness viewpoint. Mark wrote his account from what was told to him by others, and so did Luke. Luke was a historian that felt he should write an account of the things that were believed among them concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, but he was not an eye witness himself. John was a disciple and an eye witness to the miracles and teachings of Jesus, but it seems that he was more interested in showing the deity of Christ when he wrote his gospel; therefore we must take into consideration the fact that each gospel writer wrote the events that seemed most important to him. In the **5th chapter of Matthew's** gospel, we find Jesus preaching a sermon right in the beginning of His ministry that included the subjects of adultery, fornication, and marriage and divorce. This is the only time He ever outrightly preached a sermon to include these issues. He knew all about the immoral structure of the Jewish society in that day. They had fallen to about the same level as our present society has fallen to. They had placed a modern, compromising interpretation on the law of Moses, just about the equal of what modern, so called, Christianity has done with the whole Bible in our day.

Everything is interpreted to allow an undisciplined society to use the Bible to hide behind. That Jewish society in the days of Jesus had their marriage relationships all twisted up and they were stretching the law of Moses to the uttermost extremes in an effort to justify their actions, just like the modernists of our day. So as Jesus preached that day, that same bunch of Pharisees and Sadducees that followed Him around trying to trap Him, was standing in the background. Remember now; this is a sermon. Jesus is not saying these things in answer to questions that someone has asked. He talks about people who break the least of the commandments; He tells them their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees; He speaks of those who are angry with their brother without a cause and many other things. Then in **verse 27**, we read these words. **“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, (The old timers lived strictly by the word.) Thou shalt not commit adultery.”** They knew what the law of Moses taught, and the old timers did everything they could in order to discipline their lives by the law, but Jesus was standing there looking at a bunch of modernists when He uttered these words. He knew that in spite of their legalistic attitude, they were just as ornery as they could be. They would not actually commit adultery, but their eyes were full of lust, so Jesus added this to what the old timers had said, **“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”** That hit home to them just about like driving a nail through the quick of your finger. Do you know why? They had stretched the law to the place where they were granting, and obtaining divorces on almost any grounds that caused a man and his wife to disagree with each other. Then to make it even worse, some of them, no doubt, were guilty of looking the field over, ahead of time, before they even obtained a divorce. You can be sure, Jesus did not make a statement like that for no reason. He knew they were guilty. He caught them off guard with that statement, and before they could say anything, He began to say, If your right eye offends you, pluck it out, for it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that the whole body should be cast into hell. He spoke also, of one hand offending, then He came right back around and hits them again. **Verse 31, “It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:** (That is exactly what the law said, but they were misusing the provision and granting divorces for all kinds of reasons, and Jesus was going to let them know that He was wise to them.) **But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving (or except) for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commiteth adultery.”** Why did He say that? Because the law allowed the woman to remarry if she was divorced legally, but it had to be because she had been unfaithful, and not just because they could not agree on how to decorate the house, discipline the children and so forth. If she was divorced for any other reason, then she was not free to marry another man, according to law, therefore if another man married such a woman they were both committing adultery, and that is the way that modern bunch was allowing it to be. They were using the law to fulfill the lustful desires of their flesh, when their careless living finally made a wreck of their marriage, just like scores of people are doing in our day. If people would just love God first, more than their home, their car, the clothes they wear, and all the other material things that so many are so busy with, they would be able to cultivate a love for each other that none of these little disagreements would ever be able to break through. If a couple has the right attitude toward God, it will make them so they would even be willing to live in a dog house if necessary; not that you would ever have to, but that is the kind of attitude that will keep you out of the divorce courts. Young people, in this age, seem to feel that they cannot start housekeeping unless they have a whole house full of the best furniture; they are not willing to sacrifice a little on material things for a while and just enjoy being together. No. They go out and obligate themselves to the point where they both have to work, and sometimes, even on two jobs, and after awhile, nerves get strung tight, and too often, a divorce seems to be their only solution. Material things have robbed them of the feelings they once had for each other, and the law that would have tried to help such a couple work out their problems and be reconciled, forty years ago, in our day, just grants a divorce. There is nothing wrong with having nice things if you can handle them, but when they separate you from each other, and keep you from giving God first place in your life, it is obvious,

you cannot handle them. This was the kind of conditions that led Jesus to deal with this subject, as He did in His sermon that day. He had a mad bunch of Pharisees on His hands, but that is exactly what **Deuteronomy 24** said, and He wanted them to know, if they were going to be legalistic; they had some changing to do in order to line up with the scriptures. Remember now, this is a sermon Jesus is preaching, in the early part of His ministry on earth, and remember also, He never changed His mind later; He upheld the law throughout His ministry. **“Whosoever shall put away his wife, (divorce her) except for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is divorced (for any other reason) committeth adultery.”**

WHAT SOMEONE TOLD MARK & LUKE

Let us go to the **10th chapter of St. Mark**, where we will pick up a setting that took place more than two years after what we just read in **Matthew 5**, coming down toward the end of His earthly ministry. Mark is writing this from what someone else has related to him; therefore we must keep in mind that he wrote of those things that stood out in his mind of what he had heard. In this **10th chapter**, he said Jesus came into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people came to Him again; therefore as His custom was, He began to teach them again. That same bunch of Pharisees that followed Him, to heckle Him, was there also, and they still remembered how He had scorched them in that sermon two years before, and they knew exactly what the law said, and that Jesus upheld the law, but they were always trying to trap Him, so they popped right up and said unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? They did not even qualify their question; they just left it open on both ends, hoping Jesus would get just as careless in answering, as they did in asking, but, not so; He was wise to them, and was going to make them ask the question a little more specifically. He answered, **“What did Moses command you?”** Notice how they still avoided being honest with Him. They said, **“Moses suffered (or allowed us) to write a bill of divorcement, and put her away.”** They still only quoted part of what Moses taught in the law, so Jesus just climbed upon the merry go round with them; if they wanted to play games with their questions; He would just take them the long way around with His answer. **5 “And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh; so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.** (He took them all the way back to **Genesis 2:24** with His answer, and then left them hanging there with His last remark.) **What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”** His disciples were left hanging also, but they came to Him later, in the house, and asked Him to explain it a little further. At that, He said, **“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, (He showed here that the man, nor the woman had any special privilege in this matter) and be married to another, she committeth adultery.”** Please notice that He answered their questions strictly on the basis of the way they were applying the law in that day. Probably 90 percent of the divorces were granted for reasons other than fornication, which was the only lawful grounds Moses gave them. Therefore Mark is not making Jesus say something contrary to what He had already taught them in **Matthew 5**, two years before. He had every right to remind them of God’s true law, God’s perfect plan from the beginning. What you really must see from these examples, is that when Jesus taught the people; He took the law just as it was written but when mockers asked Him a loaded question, He answered them on the same basis in which they asked the question, according to their modern day application of the law. Let us go to **Luke 16:18**, for just a moment. Remember, Luke was not a disciple when Jesus taught the lesson we read from **Matthew 5**. Luke was a historian, setting in order the things he had been told that Jesus said, so let us read this one verse. **“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her**

husband committeth adultery.” That was all Luke had to say on the subject, and what he said was right, but was not all that Jesus had said on this occasion. What we read from Mark, and the one verse from Luke was what they each wrote of what they had heard. Let us go back to the gospel of Matthew. This time we are going to the **19th chapter** to pick up this same account, recorded in the words of a disciple who was present when it took place. Matthew was right there when it happened, so let us pay attention to what he wrote. We will begin reading with **verse 3**, and you will notice right there, why He answered them as He did. **“The Pharisees also came to Jesus, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for EVERY CAUSE? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are not more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?”** This was the same framework that Mark used, but Matthew put in all the details. Let us go on. **“He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. AND I SAY UNTO YOU, WHOSOEVER SHALL PUT AWAY HIS WIFE, EXCEPT IT BE FOR FORNICATION, AND SHALL MARRY ANOTHER, COMMITTETH ADULTERY: AND WHOSO MARRIETH HER WHICH IS PUT AWAY DOTHS COMMIT ADULTERY.”**

ALL SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE

Some of you may be wondering why we went through all those scriptures to show what the law of Moses had to say about this subject; if you are, you failed to see where we put the emphasis. People have been guilty of taking statements from the gospel of Mark, and also from Luke, and using them as a club to beat some poor soul over the head, where, if they would have studied their subject from all the gospel accounts they would not have had a club at all. For instance, if you just use **Luke 16:18** in dealing with a problem of divorce and remarriage, you fail to take into account the provision of the law that could justify the action on the part of one of the two parties. You can be sure that when the apostle Paul dealt with this subject in his first letter to the Corinthians, he had more than just the words of Mark and Luke to base his answers on. He was not a disciple of Jesus in the days of His earthly ministry, but you can believe me, he knew what Jesus taught, and he had a revelation of what He meant. That is why you can put your confidence in what Paul taught the New Testament churches. He had received, by divine revelation, the things he taught; they were not just some ideas of his own. The same God that gave Moses the law for Israel, also gave Paul what he wrote in his epistles. Well, Bro. Jackson, that may be true, but why are you using the law God gave to Israel, to teach Gentiles in the dispensation of Grace? Brothers and sisters, listen carefully. We do not throw the Old Testament away simply because God made a covenant of grace to include Gentiles. Though we are not required to keep the letter of the law of Moses; I want you to know that every New Testament teaching compliments that law. Go back to **chapter 20**, in the book of Exodus, and then tell us whether the New Testament cancels out those commandments or not. What did Jesus say about it in **Matt. 5:17-18**? **“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”** Some of those who heard Jesus say that were in that upper room when the Holy Ghost fell, **Acts. 2:4**. Do you think they disregarded everything Jesus had taught them from the law when He walked with them? Absolutely not! Paul wrote to **Timothy, 2 Tim. 3:16**, **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for DOCTRINE, for REPROOF, for CORRECTION, for INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”** Then in **Romans 15:4**, we read, **“For whatsoever things were written afore**

time were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of scriptures might have hope.” Many a poor soul has been tossed out into the world of sin at a time when they were looking for help, a hope, something to hold on to, and instead of help they were given **Luke 16:18**, when **1st Corinthians 7:15**, (which we will get to later) was what they needed. Some people seem to have trouble remembering that unbelief is the only unpardonable sin and that God will forgive you for every other sin that you have ever been guilty of, when you genuinely repent. And, Saints! Please do not think that I am finding fault with Mark and Luke. I am not. My only purpose in these comparisons is to help you realize that one should never make an important decision, based only upon one verse of scripture, or even upon one passage of scripture apart from all the others that deal with the same subject. The Bible does not contradict itself as some claim, it is just that not every writer was impressed to write every detail of every occurrence. I will call your attention to a couple of other examples, and then we will go into **1st Corinthians**.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF GOD

In the **20th chapter of Matthew**, we find this gospel writer speaking of two blind men that were sitting by the wayside when Jesus, followed by a great multitude, departed from Jericho. They, according to Matthew, began calling to Jesus to have mercy upon them, when they heard that He was passing by. **“Have mercy upon us, O Lord, thou son of David.”** The multitude rebuked them for carrying on so, but they continued their cry until they got His attention. He asked what they wanted, and they said, **“Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.”** Please take note of the fact that Matthew said there were two blind men healed by the wayside as Jesus departed from Jericho, but when Mark wrote of the same occurrence, he only referred to one man, and he called him by name, and even named his father. In this instance Mark is giving more details than Matthew, but he is only speaking of the one man that stood out to him, a man he probably knew personally. It is obvious they are both writing of the same occurrence, but there was something about Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, that caught Mark’s attention, so he just concentrated on him. This does not make a contradiction. I hope you can see that. You will find that in the **10th chapter of Mark**, beginning with **verse 46**. In **Matthew 8:28-34**, we read Matthew’s account of what happened when Jesus went in to the country of the Gergesenes. Matthew says He was met by two demon possessed men, coming out of the tombs, men who were so fierce no man dared to pass by that way. The men came to Jesus, and the demons in them began to cry out, **“What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?”** He goes on to tell how they asked to be permitted to go into a herd of swine if He was going to cast them out of the men, and how the swine ran violently into the sea and drowned when the demons entered them. That is all Matthew says about them, but he does speak of two men, where Mark and Luke, in reporting the same occurrence, speak only of one man, but they give more details of what happened after the demons were cast out. You can read their accounts in **Mark 5:1-19**, and **Luke 8:26-50**. We do not have the space to print it here. I just use these examples to show you how necessary it is to harmonize the gospels, if you want to get the complete story of all that is recorded. When it comes to the great commission Jesus gave to His disciples, we find the same thing. He did not say what **Matthew** recorded, **(28:18-20)** at one time, and what **Luke** recorded, **(24:44-49)** at another time. They were both writing of the same occurrence, the time when Jesus (just before He ascended to heaven) commissioned His disciples to go into all the world preaching the gospel and baptizing disciples. Matthew says He told them to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and he did not bother to mention that the only name which could be applied to these three titles was Jesus, but Luke just simplified it and wrote, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His (JESUS’) name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Can you see why a person needs to read both accounts? Matthew just wrote the literal words that Jesus spoke, while Luke included

the revelation of the name that went with those titles. Then on the day of Pentecost when those Jews had been cut to the heart by the short sermon Peter preached, they looked at him and the other apostles, and asked, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter did not even mention the three titles that Matthew used; he just spoke right out, Repent, and be baptized every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. He did not need to mention those titles; he was using the keys that Jesus had given to him, **(Matt. 16:19)** to unlock the kingdom for these repentant Jews who had taken part in condemning the Lord of Glory. Then some trinitarian people who are completely without revelation on the Godhead, have been so carnal as to say, I had rather take the words of Jesus anytime **(Matt. 28:19)** than those of Peter, **(Acts 2:38)** who cursed and denied the Lord when He was arrested. Brother! How carnal can a person be? Peter's weakness at that moment had nothing in the world to do with the revelation he had in his bosom of who Jesus was, and of the commission Jesus had given them. That is why I say, without the Holy Ghost to guide them into all truth, people have been guilty of using just one verse of scripture to build a doctrine off of. Such a practice leads to spiritual bondage. That is why we are using many scriptures to tie this message together; people's lives ought not be left hanging in the balances of confusion and distrust, all because someone grabbed one verse of scripture and used it as a club. No, it is just like Jesus said in **John 8:32**, **"And ye shall know the truth, and THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."** There is nothing whatsoever in the Bible that will place a true believer in an impossible situation where there is no hope. That is not God's purpose; neither under law, nor grace.

ADULTERY OR FORNICATION

Before going into Corinthians, I want to take a little time to clarify the usage of certain words, namely ADULTERY and FORNICATION. When Jesus used the word FORNICATION, He was referring to a sex act committed for pleasure only. Some have said, **"I thought fornication was applicable only when two single people have that relationship together."** But please understand, fornication is an act that is committed for pleasure only, outside of a marriage relationship. On the other hand, if those same two people decide to start living together, outside of a marriage relationship, then that same act becomes adultery. It could apply to people who were married to someone else other than the person they were committing the act with, just the same as it does to single people. Let us go back and read **Matthew 5:32**, and you can see the difference in the usage of the two words. **"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, (SEX WITH SOMEONE ELSE FOR PLEASURE) causeth her to commit ADULTERY."** Why? Because that divorced woman will go be another man's wife, and according to the law of Moses, she has been illegally divorced; therefore in the eyes of God this woman is still married to her first husband, and here she is living with another man. Remember, we are talking about a woman that has been divorced for some reason other than unfaithfulness to her husband. You have to keep the application where it belongs or you will get everything all tangled up. So, a woman that committed fornication could be divorced by her husband if she had one, but he did not have to divorce her; that was his choice. On the other hand, those who were caught in the act of adultery were to be stoned to death, both the man and the woman, with no exceptions. That is why Jesus reacted as He did, in the **8th chapter of John**. They only brought the woman, claiming to have caught her in the very act of adultery. If they truly had, they were obligated by the law to bring the man, and the woman both, to be stoned, but they were tempting Jesus, trying to get Him to say something wrong. While they stood there asking Jesus, What have you got to say about this; notice what Jesus did; He just stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger, probably the name of the man that was found with her, but when they kept insisting that He answer them He stood up and said, He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone, then He stooped and began to write in the sand again. This time He was probably writing the names of those standing there, for when He looked up again everyone was gone except the woman. Without anyone to accuse her, Jesus said,

Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more. They could not stone anyone just because they heard they had committed adultery; they had to catch them in the act, and those who caught them were required to stand and bear witness against them.

EXAMPLE OF FORNICATION

For an example of fornication, let us go to **1 Corinthians 5:1**, where we will begin reading. Paul says, **“It is commonly reported that there is fornication among you, and such FORNICATION as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.”** Paul is not saying that this man is committing fornication with his own mother; it is a case where a man is having an affair with a woman that is married to his own father. You can see here, that, even though one of the two parties is married, Paul still called it fornication. Why? Because it was an affair for pleasure; they were not actually living together. I will not read all the verses, but I do want you to notice **verse 5**. Even though this man is guilty of this sin, Paul did not condemn him to hell; he just instructed them to cast him out of the church, and give the devil an opportunity to destroy his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. In other words, stop covering up for him, keep him out of church, and let the devil buffet him until he repents. What about the woman in that case? Paul did not go any farther with the individuals, but that will depend a lot on her attitude toward the word of God as well as that of the father of the man. Any further questions may be answered when we go to **chapter 7**, where Paul deals with how to avoid fornication. If they are in the church assembly because they are true believers, they will be guided by the word of God, but if they are tares (make believers) they will eventually reject sound doctrine and go their own way. What you must keep in mind as we look into Paul’s instructions on this subject of marriage and divorce and proper conduct, is that it was written to believers. Do not try to cram it down the throats of people who do not respect the word of God.

DEALING WITH CIRCUMSTANCES

There are some who would say, Why not just stay with what Jesus said in **Matthew 19:8**, when he said, In the beginning it was not so? Did He not mean that God never meant for people to divorce and re-marry? Jesus was dealing with conditions as they were two thousand years ago when He was on earth, just before He went to the cross, and He reached back into Genesis to show what God’s perfect will for man would have been, but man’s sin, and world conditions has moved man away from that perfect beginning. It could not be reinstated, so God permitted Moses to deal with conditions as they were at that time. Let me explain what was involved. First we have to remember that the law of Moses was given to the Israelites who had just been delivered from hundreds of years of Egyptian captivity. It was not given for pagan Gentiles to live by, but that God’s chosen people might have something to guide their lives as He worked through them to reveal His plan and purpose for mankind. In the beginning, God made male and female and joined them together when He brought the woman to the man. Jesus reminded those critics who tempted Him, of this, and quoted what Adam said, **“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh.”** Then Jesus said, **“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”** That does not apply to pagans, but it applies to all who are subject to the law of God, whether under the law of Moses, or under the law of grace. Why did Moses allow for a divorce then? And how could people who are remarried be in the will of God? Let us go back in time about 3500 years, and look in upon the society of Egypt, where God’s chosen people were held captive. I can see some of those poor Jewish homes, where, maybe a man and his wife had two or three little children growing up. The Egyptians looked upon them only as a servant type of people, and treated them more like animals than human beings who were made in the image and likeness of God. These immoral pagans would come into a Jewish home, grab a little 5 year old girl and send her off someplace to grow up as a slave, a maid for some Egyptian

household and so forth. The little boys would be taken, and sold to someone, to grow up as a servant, or a slave to work in the fields. Husbands and wives were ripped apart and treated the same way. What did those Egyptians care about the moral structure of the Israelites? They had no care at all about morals, nor what kind of conditions they forced upon their slaves, but their cruel treatment of those poor Jews did not change the masculine and feminine law that God had placed in their bodies. (I say this with all purity of thought and motive, to help you understand why certain things were necessitated.) God created His human family with these organs, and when He sent them out of the garden; He told the woman her desire would be to her own husband, but standing there at the foot of Mt. Sinai was a great host of people that had been abused by their captors. They had been ripped, torn and scattered so that God could not deal with them according to His perfect law. If He judged them by the fact that, IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS NOT SO, those poor souls did not have a chance in the world. Conditions beyond their control had brought them to the place where they were, and now that God has released them from those conditions, He is giving them a law that will eventually lift them above the pagan plane of life they have been exposed to. He could not make a law that would undo what had been done, but He did give them a law that would straighten their lives out and set them on a true course. The law stated that only death was to separate a man and his wife, with one exception. Because of the hardness of their hearts that made them unable to forgive, God allowed a divorce to be granted for fornication only. Why do you suppose they were not able to forgive? It was because they had not been born again. Can you see that? Now, if we are going to use, In the beginning, it was not so, then Deuteronomy never should have been written at all. But, Deuteronomy absolutely shows it is a new beginning, just like when Adam and Eve were driven from the garden, and every Jewish boy and girl became subject to the law the very minute they were born into that Jewish family. That is why it was placed over the door of every Jewish home. When those little children went out the door they were reminded that they were subject to the law; then when they came back in it was right there for them to see. Therefore if they had walked in the light of that law, there never would have been a divorce granted for any reason other than fornication. That is what the law taught, and Jesus was not trying to change the law; He was just simply reminding them of the grace and mercy of God, how that in the beginning it was not like that, but when they were so far below that perfect beginning, God still made a way for them. When Jesus stood there talking to those people, they had drifted so far from that law, they were getting divorces for almost every reason imaginable, yet they were still hiding behind the law. Jesus was just reminding them of how far down the ladder they were from the way God's human family started out in the beginning. Looking at those Jews through the eyes of the law was a pitiful sight, but had God looked at the Gentile society through the law, every last one of use would have been condemned. I am so thankful God saw fit to allow another beginning, so that we could be included in His mercy and grace. Before the gospel came most Gentiles were filthy and corrupt, and had no moral principles whatsoever, but God, in His mercy, allowed for Gentiles who would believe His word, to be lifted out of their corruption, into an acceptable place to be called sons of God.

GENTILES BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Let us go to **1st Corinthians 6:9**, where we will begin reading. In this letter Paul tells these Corinthian Christians that they are still babes in the faith, and so carnal in their ways, that he cannot even speak to them on a spiritual plane. So he just starts right with the foundation of the Christian faith and goes through every phase of Christian living. Brothers and sisters: you would not even want to hear from this pulpit, what conditions were like in old Corinth before the gospel came to them. In 1968 I stood looking at the ruins of that city, as our guide told us some of what life was like there in ancient times. High on a mountain top, beyond the city of Corinth, stood a pagan temple, called the temple of Venus. (The Greeks worship the feminine gods and goddesses, as well as masculine gods.) This temple had hundreds of priestesses, (young women) which they called maidens, but every last one of them were

religious prostitutes. From their temple atop this high mountain, they could look upon the harbor, see the ships come in, and know when the city would be full of sailors. They would go down into the streets, approach the sailors, and say, Let us go worship the god of Venus. It was all done through an act of fornication. This is just the way the Gentile society lived and conducted themselves. They were immoral, filthy, so debased that if Paul had not had a revelation in his soul that he was to be a light to them; that little Jew would have been shaking the dust of old Corinth off his feet when he saw how corrupt they actually were. But he knew that God had called him to be a channel of salvation to many Gentiles who until that time were without any such hope. Then later as he finds it necessary to write this letter to them, notice how he speaks of the things that were common to them before the gospel of Christ came. **Verse 9, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers,** (notice that Paul is striking out against their former way of life, for they had, before their conversion, been idolators, 'WORSHIPERS OF IDOLS', fornicators and adulterers in their manner of life, or as they looked upon life, but Paul says, No such will inherit the kingdom of God.) **nor effeminate."** Let me just say, We are living in an age when this effeminate spirit is a strong one. Men have become so sissified, and act so much like women, that it is hard to tell which is which when you see them on the streets. God made the man to look like a man, walk like a man, talk like a man, and certainly God never meant for men to allow their hair to grow until it makes them look like women. I see boys and girls, men and women walking down the streets dressed exactly alike, and if you cannot see the bulge of their breast, you cannot tell which ones are the females. Brothers! That is effeminate on the part of the males, and Paul says, No such will inherit the kingdom of God. **"Neither abusers of themselves with mankind."** That is speaking of homosexuals, sodomites, and all such like. When I think of how some of these, "SUPPOSED TO BE CHURCHES" are allowing these degenerate perverts to hold places of leadership in their organizations, it lets me know that Gentiles are fast returning to the ungodly ways of their ancestors, and that it is because the Spirit of God is leaving them. Gentile time is short. Let us continue reading the list of those who shall not inherit the kingdom of God. **"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."** Why? Because the law had already condemned them. The law condemns all who practice such, so what hope did these Gentiles have? Watch what Paul says in **verse 11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God."** What had sanctified them? They had believed the gospel that was preached to them, **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."** (Eph. 2:8-9) Who had preached the gospel to them? Paul, of course. After the Jews rejected the gospel, Paul moved from the synagogue into the house of one of the citizens, and continued his ministry there for 18 months. That was the beginning of this Corinthian church which Paul wrote the two epistles to five or six years later. Please keep in mind also that Paul did not go in to the streets looking for every Corinthian that had not committed fornication, neither adultery, nor told a lie, nor stole anything, etc. No. He first went into the synagogue where he got a few Jews to believe the gospel, but when the old Rabbi, and some of the others began to blaspheme, Paul departed from them and opened up the gospel to every Gentile who would believe it. That is why Paul wrote as he did in **verse 11**. He was reminding them of what the grace of God had delivered them from. He was reminding them that they are now looked upon as though they had never done any of those things. But the fact that they had believed the gospel and entered into a new way of life did not automatically clear up every situation. They had problems in the church, and they had a lot of questions that needed to be answered. Therefore, Paul, being aware of this, took time during a great revival he was having at Ephesus, and wrote this letter to the Corinthian church.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Notice how Paul begins **chapter 7, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me:** (He is

going to answer some specific questions now.) **It is good for a man not to touch a woman.** (In other words, a man would avoid a lot of problems in life if he just stayed single and behaved himself.) **Nevertheless TO AVOID FORNICATION, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.**” Brothers and sisters, as we study these next few verses, please keep in mind that the whole context of thought is, HOW TO AVOID FORNICATION. If you will keep that up front, it will clear up what is said later. He did not start out answering a question on how to avoid fornication, and end up talking about a soup supper. Let us keep it in the same channel. If you wrote me a question, wanting to know how to raise strawberries, do you think my answer to you would be instruction on how to raise corn? Of course not. I would tell you what I knew about strawberries. That is exactly what I want you to see here. These people have been converted from a pagan, undisciplined society, and they have some questions on proper conduct. They want to know how they can keep themselves clean in the sight of God, and avoid the temptations and traps of Satan, such as fornication. So Paul answers the question on how to avoid fornication. **“Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.”** Some people feel that a subject like this should not be preached from the pulpit, but I say, if there had been a lot more preaching on this subject, we might not have the degenerate conditions all around us that have become so common in our day. This governs the very avenue through which God ordained that the whole earth be repopulated, and the lack of proper teaching has just left more room for these X-rated movie houses and such like to operate. They take the very thing that God ordained to reproduce His human family, pervert it, and entertain vulgar talking degenerate mankind with it. They abuse a relationship that the creator ordained to be something sacred. Paul wrote to the Hebrews, **“Marriage is honorable, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge.”** Therefore God intended for His true children to know the absolute truth about this relationship. **Verse 4. “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, (Do not cheat, do not deprive the other mate by any form of deception) except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; (with agreement or consent you may withhold yourselves from each other for a period while you are fasting and praying) and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. (Your lack of control) But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.”** This lets me know that Paul had conferred with other men in the Jerusalem church on these matters, for he goes on to say, **verse 7, “For I would that all men were even as myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.** (Every person has been physically endowed by the creator to be like he is, and Paul realizes that some men can be satisfied to remain single, and at the same time exercise self control, and others cannot.) **I say therefore to be unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. (Unmarried) But if they cannot contain, (exercise self control) let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.”** (To be inflamed with passion and lust.) Paul believed time was short, and that the coming of the Lord was close at hand, therefore those who were single would stay free from a lot of problems and unnecessary obligations if they could see fit to remain so, but he was just giving advice, and not commanding them to do so. These verses have caused a lot of people to believe that the apostle Paul was never married, and I am sure that at the time of this letter, he was no longer married, and did not intend to remarry. But in 1968 I had opportunity to talk with a Jewish Rabbi, and in the course of the conversation, I asked him about the qualifications of those who sat on the Sanhedrin council. I did not want to ask him directly, about the apostle Paul, but the Bible tells us he was a member of the Sanhedrin, so I just inquired about the marital status of those who were chosen to govern the people through that court. He replied, We do not have concrete proof, but we are reasonably certain that every member of the Sanhedrin was not only required to be a married man, but they had to be family men as well. In that era of time the Sanhedrin court was the judicial body that governed and judged the whole society in moral, temporal and material matters, therefore we believe it required the experience

of a family man to fulfill this obligation properly. That is the impression you get from Paul's letters, that he writes like a man that has had experience in all phases of family life and responsibilities. One thing you need to keep in mind as you read these verses, Paul is writing to those single persons in the church, his advice was never meant for people outside the body of Christ.

IF CHRISTIANS SEPARATE

When we look at **verse 10**, it is no longer just advice; he is giving a command from the Lord. **“And unto the married I COMMAND, yet not I, but the Lord, (where both parties are Christians) let not the wife depart from her husband: But if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”** These people have been converted from paganism, but now they are both born into the family of God, and they are both subject to the law of God. But suppose they are emotionally unadjusted to each other. What will the law of God allow them to do? It is very plain. They can separate if they allow their disagreements to go that far, but if they do, they are both to remain unmarried. Then we come back to the theme of what Paul is dealing with; (FORNICATION) if they find that they cannot exercise self control over the desires of their physical makeup, they only have one resort, they must be reconciled to each other. God does not allow any room for a Christian man and woman to divorce each other. But Bro. Jackson, did you say that God will not make a law that will victimize any one person? Yes, I did, and I still say it. If Christian people will submit themselves to Bible doctrine they will not be seeking divorces. If you, as a professing Christian, are seeking a divorce from your mate, it might pay you to re-examine your own life, for the Bible has instructions for you. Are you following them? You cannot step over the word of God to satisfy the desires of your flesh, and still reap all the benefits of God's grace. If you try it, you will be a candidate for the mark of the beast, after the bride has gone to the marriage supper. The law of Moses would not justify the break up of a marriage for any reason except fornication, and neither will the New Testament law of grace. For that reason, let me say to you young people, even as Paul did to the Corinthians in his second letter, Do not be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. Light and darkness are not compatible. But Bro. Jackson, I might be able to win him to the Lord. It is possible for such a thing to happen, but the chances are much greater that he will pull you out into worldliness, for you must step over the word of God in the first place, even to marry him. My advice and warning to everyone who may be thinking like that is, you win him to the Lord first so you will not have to turn your back to the word of God in order to marry him. None of us have any control over what unbelievers do, but if believers take heed to what Paul has written in these few verses, they will avoid much trouble in life.

ONE A CHRISTIAN THE OTHER AN UNBELIEVER

Coming to **verse 12**, we find Paul making this statement, **“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.”** Before reading the rest of that verse let me show you why it was necessary for Paul to state it like he did. When he dealt with marriages where the husband and the wife were both Christians, he had much scripture to back him up; therefore he presented it as a command of the Lord, but when he comes to the situation where only one of the two is a Christian, he must approach it from the standpoint of the revelation that God has given to him, and by the authority of his office as an apostle of the Lord, for there is nothing written in the law of Moses that will spell it out in detail for Gentiles. However, do not question Paul's authority in the matter, or you will need to throw away most of your New Testament. Paul wrote 14 epistles, and the **last 16 chapters of the book of Acts** gives us a good look at how the Holy Ghost led Paul, and allows us to see how his life stood out as the apostle and founder of the Gentile churches. If you question what he taught on this subject, you may as well question anything else he taught, also. He either had the word of the Lord, or he did not. But knowing beyond any shadow of doubt that Paul did have the word of the Lord, by revelation, and that, even though he said, I speak this, and not he Lord,

it is still the law of God for believers in this dispensation of grace. Now we will read the rest of **verse 12**. **“If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.”** Brothers and sisters, that is just as plain as the nose on your face. There are many examples that each one of us could think of right now, where some man has heard the gospel preached, realized his need for God, and surrendered his life to the Lord, while his wife is still out in the world. She feels no need for God herself, but if he wants to be a Christian, it is fine with her. Then in **verse 13**, he says, **“And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.”** That is the same example just turned around to show that the same principle applies to either the man or the woman. The man does not have any advantage over the woman, nor the woman over the man. But in either case, if the unbeliever is pleased to dwell with the believer; the believer should never try to high pressure their mate to become a Christian. Just be sure you live a good example before that unbelieving mate. It will take the Spirit of God to draw them, before they can ever be born again, so whatever you do, please do not nag your mate, and do not talk church to them all the time. They are not too interested in what you have to say; they want to see what kind of effect your experience is going to have on the way you live, and on your attitude in general. In dealing with Jews, they were both subject to the law of Moses at all times, both the men, and the women. The very fact that they were born into a Jewish family made them subject to the law. But being born into a Gentile family did not make anyone subject to God’s law of grace; only the new birth does that. So it is up to the believer to hold to the word of God without trying to force it upon the unbeliever. **Verse 14** tells why. **“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”** Now the word, SANCTIFIED, does not mean that the other mate is saved by your faith, it just means that your marriage relationship is sanctified (recognized by God) so that your children do not have to be looked upon as unclean. (born out of wedlock) Under the law of Moses the Israelites were commanded not to give their sons and daughters unto the heathen, (Gentiles) in marriage. Such a marriage relationship was looked upon as unclean, the same as living together out of wedlock. Over in the book of Ezra we find that those Israelites who had disregarded the law and taken strange wives of the heathen nations were required to put them away, along with the children of those wives. They sent them all back home where they came from, for God would not have the land polluted with these mixed marriages. In this Corinthian letter we are seeing the difference grace makes. (There was no way for Gentiles to be justified by the law of Moses, but Jesus opened up a way at Calvary, and that way is the only way for mankind to be reconciled to God.) Paul, believing that he has the mind of Christ on these matters, gives his advice, and those who follow his advice will avoid a lot of heartache and trouble. By following Paul’s instruction, a Christian man, or woman, can avoid fornication, and have their marriage sanctioned by God, as long as the unbelieving one chooses to remain with them. But let us look at a third example and see what the believer is to do if the unbelieving mate chooses to depart.

LET THE UNBELIEVER GO

Verse 15, **“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother, OR SISTER is not under bondage in such cases: but God has called us to peace.”** This is a very controversial verse of scripture; therefore I urge you once again to remember what Paul is dealing with here, (HOW TO AVOID FORNICATION) and now I will ask you a question. The unbelieving mate has departed, so how will the believer avoid fornication? And why did Paul say, A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases? It simply means that the believer is free to choose another companion, but, Please! Brother! Sister! If you should happen to be in this situation; do not go to the world to choose a companion; choose one within the family of God. Bro. Jackson: Paul did not say the believer would be free to choose another companion in such a case. I beg your pardon! He did not have to come right out and say it; those Corinthians knew what he meant when he said, A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such

cases. It means they are not morally obligated to remain unmarried. The fact that the unbelieving mate chose to depart, does not change the natural law in the believer's body that requires companionship. Therefore, if that believer is forbidden to remarry when there is no chance of being reconciled, (as in the case where both are believers) you would have to admit, that would be bondage. Furthermore, if God would not allow a person to be victimized under the law of Moses, do you think He would make a law in this dispensation of grace, that would leave one of His redeemed children a victim of circumstances? You know He would not. Some women have followed their "good for nothing" husbands around the world (so to speak) trying to hold on to them, all because they did not understand their situation, scripturally. You believe me, If that unbeliever wants to leave, you let him go, or her, which ever the case may be; (just be sure you are not deliberately doing something to run him away) you are not obligated; you are free. Paul said **"But God hath called us to peace."** How could there be any peace if you were left without a husband, or without a wife as the case may be, and you were forbidden to marry again, leaving you without any possible solution to your plight? How could you abide by the instruction Paul gave in **verse 2? "NEVERTHELESS, TO AVOID FORNICATION, LET EVERY MAN HAVE HIS OWN WIFE, AND LET EVERY WOMAN HAVE HER OWN HUSBAND."** Whether some of you like it or not, Paul is teaching that a believer is free to remarry, if their unbelieving mate just moves out and leaves them because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you could have come to Paul, personally, with this problem in that first age, he would have said, Son: If you have done your best, by the grace of God, and she is still determined to go, then let her go; you are not under bondage. You are not morally obligated to hold on to her, because God has called us to peace. Paul, how am I going to have any peace when my mind is tormented with these physical feelings of my body? Besides that, Paul, I have prayed for my wife and claimed her for God; Isn't He obligated to save her? I would never discourage anyone from praying like that, for I believe we should have that kind of concern for our loved ones, but we cannot obligate God to save every one of them, or else, How would the words of Jesus, recorded in **Matt. 10:36**, be fulfilled? (A MAN'S FOES SHALL BE THEY OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.) Let us see how Paul might have responded to a similar question, **verse 16, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband, or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"** In other words, we just cannot know who God is going to save, so we do our utmost to set a Christian example, and above all else, try to balance the scriptures, so we will not be found blaming God when some of those loved ones are never saved. Therefore, pray for your mate, do your utmost to set a good example, and then, after having done all that you know to do as a Christian, if that unbelieving mate chooses to break the marriage vows and leave you, please do not feel that you have failed God, nor that you are snared in an impossible trap. Paul said, you are not morally obligated to that unbeliever any longer. You are not under bondage. In process of time you may choose a Christian mate and remarry. I stress the word, CHRISTIAN mate, for if you marry another unbeliever, you are willingly violating every moral principle that the word of God stands for. If every believer would get an understanding of what Paul is teaching here, and do their utmost to live by these principles, you would not find them running to Psychiatrists, nor in the psychiatric ward of the local hospital on the verge of a nervous breakdown. God has called us to peace, but there can be no peace unless we follow the word of God. Some people will say, I sure do not believe that a divorced Christian should ever remarry; they just need to pray more. That just goes to show that you are a person who would rather trust your own idea than to abide by the word of God. Your advice will be bad advice in such cases. God has put it in my heart to tell you that He will not allow any innocent person to be victimized by circumstances which they have no control over. He did not require it under the law of Moses, and He will not require it under the law of Grace.

REMAIN IN YOUR CALLING

In **verses 17**, and following, Paul leaves the thought he was on, to bring in some examples. It is not that he is going to teach on circumcision, nor is he going to teach on servants, but he uses these illustrations

to show why some people are able to bear more, of certain conditions, than others. Notice **verse 17**, **“But as God hath distributed to every man, (and every woman) as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.”** Those Gentiles had come into the grace of God from all walks of life, and some of them were wondering what to do. Some people think as soon as they get saved they ought to drop everything they have been doing and do something else. What Paul is saying here is that God has distributed a measure of His grace to every believer. He has even given some the grace to remain unmarried, having no need, nor desire for a companion in marriage. If that be the case, then so be it; there is no argument. Others have found that they can cope with the constant abuse of their unbelieving mates, better than some of their brothers and sisters in the faith. That is because of the measure God granted to them. Others who are actually servants have found the grace to go right on being a servant. Those Jews who had been circumcised according to the law of Moses, and the Gentiles who had never been circumcised, all came under the same covenant of grace when they believed and obeyed the gospel of Christ. God made no difference between them, and He gave each one of them sufficient grace by measure to fulfill their responsibility to God, and man. In Paul’s day there were always a few characters around that wanted to add a little something to grace; they would try to add circumcision or something else from the law of Moses, to grace. Then there were some who thought that being free in Jesus Christ meant they should not be any man’s servant after that, but if a person had been bought to be a slave, the gospel did not automatically set them free from their owner. That is why Paul found it necessary to say what he did in the verses we are now going to read. **Verse 18, “Is any man called being circumcised? (That means called to salvation; nothing more.) Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. (That is what is important.) Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. (For the glory of God) for he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. (Now he is talking about not becoming the servants of sinful men that would place you under bondage.) Brethren let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.”** He keeps stressing the importance of holding steady, wherever you may be when the gospel comes to you. Of course you are to depart from your sinful ways, but if you are some farmer’s field hand when you get saved, you can keep right on plowing corn, or putting hay in the barn, and sing Amazing Grace every step of the way. This is what Paul is getting at in these verses.

TO MARRY OR NOT TO MARRY

We are down to **verse 25**, now, and we find Paul ready to approach another thought on this thing of avoiding fornication, and so forth. **“Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgement, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.”** In other words, Paul knows there is no place in the Old Testament where he can go to read up on this. He also knows that Jesus never did preach on this subject; therefore this leaves him utterly dependant upon the Holy Ghost to inspire him to say the right thing. **Verse 26, “I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, (The present situation, or circumstances) I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed.”** This takes you right back to **verses 12, 13 and 14**, if the unbeliever is pleased to abide, then let not the one put the other away. You will not find Paul contradicting himself. **“Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife.”** This is another situation. You will notice that he did not say, after you are loosed from a wife. This lets us know that he is referring to those who were already widowed or divorced at the time they became believers. He gives the same advice to these, Stay single; seek not a wife. That is his first exhortation. Then he goes on to say, **“But**

and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh; but I spare you.” Why do you suppose Paul suddenly jumped to a statement like that? What kind of question could have been asked about virgins marrying? Isn't it the will of God for everyone to be virgins until they are married? I just asked those questions to provoke thought on your part. In ancient times, and even yet today in some parts of the world, it is a custom for the parents of a young man, and a young woman to enter into a marriage agreement on behalf of the young folks. This was especially true in Jewish families. The parents of a young man would approach the parents of the young woman and ask them to give her in marriage to their son, maybe not right then, but when they are both old enough to marry. The next thing is for either the young man or his parents to pay a dowry, they agree to raise the young woman properly, preparing her for the day of her marriage to this young man. For the sake of illustration we will say that a certain such case was brought to Paul; this young virgin who was already spoken for, and her dowry had already been paid, went to hear Paul preach, and got under conviction. After repenting and being baptized, she sits under Paul's teaching, and hears him say, **“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?”** Paul: Does that mean that a Christian ought not marry a Jewish person, even if that Christian was born a Jew, also? Yes, young lady, if that young man is bound and determined to be a Judaistic Jew the rest of his days, he will make life miserable for you in your new found Christian experience. Someone else speaks up, Paul: Is she free to marry another man, one who is a Christian also? Yes. In such a case the word of God must have priority over a custom. She is free in the sight of God to marry, but she will have trouble in the flesh. The others will not take it lightly, that she did not remain true to their custom, and she will have trouble in the flesh as she settles down to a home life of rearing children and taking care of her obligations and responsibilities as a wife. Paul had to be talking about virgins that were pledged to someone already, or pledged to God for a life of celibacy, such as the case over in **Judges, chapter 11**, where Jephthah (in **verse 30**) made a vow unto the Lord, and said, **“If thou shalt deliver without fail the children of Ammon into my hands, Then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lords, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.”** I will not read the rest of the chapter, but if you will, you will see what happened. The first to come through his doors to meet him was his little daughter, his only child, but he had made a vow unto the Lord and he must keep it. He cannot offer his daughter upon the altar for a burnt offering, as he would have a sheep or a goat or something of that sort, so as their custom was, he pledged her to a life of celibacy. This was not the girl's choosing; it was a very common practice among ancient Jews, that the parents would pledge their daughter to a life of virginity. According to their custom that probably made them feel more holy in the eyes of God. But remember, this was a custom of man, not a commandment of the Lord; therefore if such a young lady became a Christian and learned the truth, met some young man, and decided to get married, Paul's judgment was, **“If a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.”** One reason I maintain that Paul had to be referring to this type of situation, is because he said in some other letters, such as **1st Tim. 5:14**, **“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”** That was the normal, so someone must have asked him a question about virgins, such as the two examples we used. His reply was, **“If a virgin marry, she hath not sinned, Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh.”**

STAY FREE FROM WORLDLY CARES

Verse 29, helps us to better understand why Paul, in 59 A.D., would advise people to stay single and avoid the unnecessary responsibility, and material burdens of married life. It was because he had a feeling that the coming of the Lord was so near, that people should just give their thoughts to seeking God. He was not establishing doctrine when he said, Seek not a wife, he was merely offering advice on

how to avoid entanglements in material things which would soon pass away. **29, “But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none:** (do not think Paul is saying, run off and leave your wife to take care of herself; that would be contrary to what he told the Ephesians and the Colossians) **and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness,** (excessive involvements) **He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.”** I believe those verses are almost self explanatory; Paul is admonishing those people not to get so caught up in things of this world that they have not time for God. Not even the death of loved ones should get us so caught up in weeping and mourning, that we have no time for God. Do not become so obsessed with material things that you allow yourself to constantly think about them. You will become a prisoner if you do. Many times it might take hours to do something that you could have done in just a few minutes if your life had been in harmony with the Spirit of God. Put Him first, then let everything else fall into place. The Catholics use **verse 32**, to justify celibacy, **“He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.”** If that had been made a doctrine, then that would be man’s highest calling; it should have the preeminence, but remember, in the beginning the Creator said, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. God does not come along and say something that cancels out something He has already said. Besides that, as I search through the Bible, I find that most of the men that have been used by God as a mouthpiece, or we will say, as an instrument of God, have been married men, usually family men. When we get to **verse 34**, we find Paul changing the focus from the man to the woman. **“There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.”** Of course Paul is directing these remarks to Christian men and women who truly have a desire to walk with the Lord. In our day of “Women’s Liberation” you will find a lot of young women saying, I do not ever intend to get married, but their motive is a worldly one most of the time. They want to be completely free to pursue their chosen careers without the hindrances of home responsibilities. They can be vice president of this company, or supervisor of another, and not have to be concerned about pleasing a husband. Such attitudes as this are wrecking the home structure that God ordained in the very beginning, and I will say also, any young woman who makes such a declaration in our age, will usually, eventually wind up as a prostitute; not to sell her body, but she will choose to go to bed with any man that suits her liking, to satisfy her desires. She can do that, and still elevate herself in her chosen field of business. Such women do not want the responsibility of rearing children, washing dishes, cleaning floors and cooking meals; they would rather sit behind a desk somewhere, telling 100 men what to do. I say, If time goes on for another 10 years, and the present trend continues as it is going, the day will come that young Christian girls will detest their own species.

A FEMININE SPIRIT

I think often of how our own Nation’s image is changing in the eyes of the world. America was never known as a feminine nation, except maybe in a social way, until recent years. Through the years of World War I and World War II, and even afterwards, this nation was pictured as a masculine nation. Remember the posters that pictured a man in a striped suit with a derby hat on his head, and a finger pointing, with the words, “I WANT YOU”? It was Uncle Sam, not a woman. But now our nation is going completely to a feminine image, and because of that our whole military structure is decaying and falling to pieces. Our military men know there needs to be something done to correct that decaying image, but they cannot get a man in government to make a decision on a thing like that. Even now our president

is telling us that the presence of 3000 Russian soldiers in Cuba poses no threat to our country. Saints! Do not believe that! Even grade school children ought to know better than that. I am going to tell you something: (This message was preached in September 1979) Those soldiers down there are not infantrymen, as they claim; they are skilled technicians that know how to press buttons to fire missiles. Russia has timed this thing just right. They would have us sign this arms limitation thing, stop worrying about their long range missiles, and all the while they have everything they need, right in our back door, to knock our industrial cities right out of business. Do not allow yourselves to believe that they are there as innocently as Russia would have us believe they are. If I was going to be alarmed at all: I would be alarmed at what they have down there in Cuba, than all of what they have in long range missiles, yet our leaders will tell us we have nothing to be alarmed about. It just proves that America has taken the heart of a woman, just like the ancient Babylonian Empire. Daniel saw it like a lion, in a vision, but later, a man's heart was given to it, showing that its nature had changed. Let me urge you, saints of God, hide yourselves in Jesus Christ; He is the only refuge we have in a time such as this. We are more than 1900 years closer to the coming of the Lord Jesus, than when Paul wrote this Corinthian letter. To conclude what he had said about the unmarried being occupied with thoughts of how to please a mate, he continued, **“And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, (or more pleasant) and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction,”** (or without unnecessary complications and hindrances.)

A FATHER'S CONCERN

In these next verses Paul comes back to dealing with a moral condition. **Verses 36, 37 & 38**, are so tied together in a thought, that you have to study the wording of all three verses very carefully, or you are likely to become confused. We are trusting the Lord to make it very clear and easy to understand. Let us read, **“But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely (UNBECOMINGLY) toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.”** I am going to approach this verse from two angles. The first is a very popular interpretation that has been attached to this verse, which I do not agree with, but it will allow you to look at both lines of thought when I show you what I see here, and why I see it like that. I will show you why you must keep all three verses together. Many have thought **verse 36**, is referring to a case where a man has spoken for a certain young virgin girl to be his wife when she is old enough to get married, or we will say, when she reaches an age where she has come into full bloom of womanhood. (In this line of thought it could involve a certain age that has been established by custom.) Then there comes a time when the man begins to realize that he is not behaving himself properly around the young lady, and the case is presented to Paul. Paul: What should we do about this? (Naturally the question could be asked, What is he doing that could be looked upon in such a way?) If this were the case in question, I would have to say that it has gotten to the place where the very presence of this girl brings a great temptation to the young man. Do you catch the thought? Just being around her creates a temptation to him. If that were the case, then Paul would say, if she has passed the flower of her age, (meaning the juvenile period) and has reached womanhood, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not; let them marry. That is one thought that some people get from this verse, but I do not believe that is the true picture here. Let us read the first part again, and pay close attention, please! **“But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, (I say, the man here, is the girl's father) if she pass the flower of her age, (the juvenile period) and need so require. (The need is on the part of the girl) let him (the father) do what he will, he (the father) sinneth not; let them (the girl and her fiancé) marry.”** Now I will put it together for you as I see it. Suppose this certain man has determined that he will not allow his daughter to get married until she reaches a certain age, and he is very strict about it, and very set in his ideas about how old a girl should be before she gets married. In ancient times people were more prone to hold to certain ideas, or customs such as this, especially among the

more elite society, and especially in Jewish families. Nevertheless I believe the man here is the father of the girl, and he has been withholding her from marriage, but in the meanwhile she has met a young man and fallen very much in love with him, and he with her. They desire to be married, but her father constantly refuses to give her up. He is not a cruel man; he is just very set in his ways, but at the same time he can see the affect it is having on the girl. Let me stop right here and say, This is a setting that must be kept within the church. Paul is not meddling in a situation that has arisen among the worldly population in Corinth. This no doubt, is a family in the church, people who have believed the gospel, but are not yet free of all their former traditions. So the father seeing the mental anguish of his young daughter, and beginning to question his own motive in the matter, goes to Paul, presents the case, and says, Paul: What should I do? **“If she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.”** The way I presented this here was just to more or less get your attention focused on the details of the case at hand. Naturally these inquiries have come to Paul from the church, and Paul is writing this epistle back to the church, to answer the different questions that have been asked. This was one of the problems the local assembly at Corinth had to deal with, so what we are seeing here is what he wrote to the church about that particular case. In other words, the father is realizing that his attitude toward his daughter is very unbecoming, but he is so bound by his traditions that he actually does not know whether it would be right to give in to her request to be married to the young man she has fallen in love with, before she has reached the set age, or not. They present the case to the local church, and the church elders contact Paul. Paul writes back, (I am going to put this in my words, you can read Paul's exact words in the Bible.) If the girl in question has reached an adult age, and she feels the NEED TO BE MARRIED, let her father go ahead and give her in marriage, he is not bound by that old custom any longer. There is certainly no sin involved in it; let the young folks go ahead and get married.

A CERTAIN YOUNG MAN

While **verse 36** deals with the young girl and her father, **verse 37**, goes to a young man involved in another question. Notice now, Paul goes right into this. **“Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.”** This is where you see that there is a young man with a question also. If such a young man (any young man) has desired to be a virgin all his life, and he has power over his own will, so that his physical need does not drive him, he does well. Now **verse 38**, goes back to the father of a young girl, or young lady. **“So then he (the father) that giveth her in marriage doeth well; (There is nothing wrong with it.) But he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.”** Paul just could not get away from the idea that people would avoid a lot of unnecessary involvements if they would remain single, but at the same time he realized that most of them would eventually marry, and he made sure they knew exactly what their standing was in the eyes of the Lord. As we consider these three verses together, I will ask you a question. If **verse 36**, is talking about a young man all way, (according to tradition) and **verse 37**, is talking about a young man, then why does Paul jump to the father in **verse 38**? We know **verse 38**, is speaking of the father of a girl, for it is the father that gives his daughter in marriage, or withholds her from marriage. It has been the Christian faith that has influenced, and changed the social picture of how marriages are brought together. But there are still many areas of the world where the girl has nothing whatsoever to say about who she will marry. There are yet some areas where even the young man does not choose his wife to be. I sometimes wonder how real, true, human love could even be projected in a marriage, when it is not that love that brings them together in the first place.

LAW TO GRACE

We have one more key verse in this chapter which just serves to furnish the basis for what Paul has been saying in the prior verses. He reaches back over into the law of Moses and carries it straight over into grace. To me it is a beautiful picture to see the mind of God set forth in the law, as it is implanted in the hearts of believers under grace, who are not even required to keep the letter of the law, yet they fulfill the righteousness of that law in their daily walk with the Lord. Let us look at verse 39, for just a moment. **“The wife is bound by law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; ONLY IN THE LORD.”** Do you see how Paul carried that thought from the Jewish man and woman who were subject to the law of Moses because of their natural birth, right over into grace, where we are subject to the law of grace because of our spiritual birth? It just goes right back to **verses 10 & 11**, to what he said about two believers who are married to each other, and for some reason or the other they just do not get along well together: He said, If such a woman should depart from her husband, then let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her own husband. Why did he make such a judgment? Because that is the mind of God on the matter, as set forth in the law. Grace did not change that. Neither could that man who is a believer divorce his wife; it is a twofold application. A believer is not to take the initiative in a divorce action. But on the other side of the picture, if there is an unbeliever involved in the marriage and that unbeliever divorces the believer, God would not have that believer victimized. He would not require a believer to remain under bondage to an unbeliever who is not even subject to the law of God. Do you see how beautifully it all ties together when you get everything in its proper place? There is nothing about a message like this, that should upset a true believer who is desiring to follow the Lord in truth. It is true we are living in a day of separation, and many homes are being broken up for one reason or the other. Some are broken up because of religious beliefs that differ, but far too many are broken up because of petty differences that could easily be reconciled. What is really pathetic, though, when you think about it, is when you see a couple that has went to church all their lives, and as long as they were both Baptists, Methodists or whatever, they were able to handle their differences of opinion and remain together, but you let one of them come in contact with this end time message of truth, and 9 times out of 10, the other one will wind up getting so mad and upset that it leads to a divorce. In such cases that person assumes the part of the unbeliever in **verse 15** of Paul’s examples. As I said before, any person who will walk over this word of God to fulfill the desires of their flesh will walk right into the great tribulation wearing the mark of the beast, no matter how many years they have gone to church. When you crucify truth to justify the flesh, you will have to reap the consequences, no matter where you go to church. Many sincere hearts have heard the call to truth, and in many of their homes they have experienced the results that Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 10**, **“A man’s foes (or a believers foes, to make it more applicable) shall be they of his own household,”** but I have always felt (at least ever since I learned the truth myself) that a person who would hold on to a man made creed, and walk right over truth is no better than a pagan. A true Christian will not deliberately step over the word of God. In our weak moments the devil may get us down and pound our face in the mud, but if we are a true Christian, we will never look a truth in the face and step over it to pacify the flesh. Brother, truth will make you free. When God comes knocking on your heart’s door with truth, He wants you to take a look at the book.

SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

We are going to use one other scripture, then try to bring this message to a close. Let us go to **Romans 7:1**. **“Know ye not brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by law to her**

husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress, but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Now I say to you, brothers and sisters, be sure you rightly divide the word of truth. Do not ever use a verse out of context trying to prove anything. **1st Corinthians 7:39, and Romans 7:1-2**, both say almost the same thing, but they are not written for the same reason. When Paul wrote these words to the Romans, he was not dealing with the moral subject of marriage and divorce, as he was in the **7th chapter of 1st Corinthians**. He is using this same thought to show how, before Christ, Israel was bound by the law. He is using it as a type. Israel was bound to God through the law, but once grace came, then they became dead to the law; (speaking to those who had believed the gospel) they were no longer bound by the letter of the law. Having accepted the grace of God, they were freed from the law of Moses, to be married to Jesus. Therefore He wants them to understand that if they should try to go back and justify themselves by the keeping of the law, it would be the same as adultery, spiritual adultery. He wrote basically the same thing to the Galatian Christians. Just to paraphrase it, he said something like this, If you go back and try to justify yourselves by keeping the law of Moses, you are fallen from grace; Christ has become of no effect to you. Let me say this to every one of you who read, or hear this message, as a believer of the gospel you are subject only to the law of grace; therefore I beg you, do not try to mix in a little something from the law of Moses. The law has served its purpose, that of conveying the mind of God, and of setting types and shadows that pointed to Christ Jesus who was the fulfillment of that law. So let us be guided by the teaching of the New Testament which is in harmony with the law, but without the keeping of the letter of it. Do not allow yourselves to be troubled by those who would seek to add something to grace. Furthermore let me say, there are some who resent my dealing with a subject like this, but I am not doing it for them; I am doing it for the many dear souls who appreciate what we stand for here at Faith assembly. This is not the kind of subject I enjoy dealing with, but I have to try to get whatever is in my heart, out to the people. One man has just wrote for extra copies of this message, and we have come to know that many souls throughout the world want to know just where the New Testament stands on marriage and divorce, so here it is, and I say, as Paul did to the Corinthians, I believe that I have the spirit, and the mind of Christ on this matter. If you disagree with what you read here, that is your privilege, but do not come to me with anything other than the scriptures. I am not interested in your opinions, for I heard a little man, who was a prophet sent to this age to turn our hearts back to the father. Ever since then, I have wanted to know what our spiritual fathers believed and taught. I am not trying to outrun anyone; I just want to preach like my father's preached, if you know what I mean. Not to be competitive, but to preach with the same zeal and understanding, and to stand steadfast with the same assurance that I know what I am saying, and know why I am saying it. I sincerely pray that this article will help many people see that they have been under bondage to men's creeds and traditions, and that they have been victimized by man, and not by the word of God. Remember the words of Jesus, in **John 8:32, “AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.”** I say amen to that, God bless you. Live true to Him, for time is short. Amen.