*Send Me!**

Isaiah 6:1-13 (1) In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.
(2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.
(3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.
(4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.
(5) Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.
(6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:
(7) And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.
(8) Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, **Here am I; send me.**
(9) And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.
(10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.
(11) Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,
(12) And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

(13) But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast [their leaves: so] the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

Above the throne stood the seraphim, members of the highest order of angels in the celestial hierarchies (British Dictionary); they burn in love to God, and zeal for His glory against sin. The seraphim showing their faces veiled, declare that they are ready to yield obedience to all God's commands, though they may not understand the secret reasons of His counsels, government, or promises. This impressive vision of the Divine Majesty overwhelmed the prophet with a sense of his own vileness. We are undone if there is not a Mediator between us and this holy God. A glimpse of heavenly glory is enough to convince us that all our own righteousness's are as filthy rags. Nor is there a man that would dare to speak to the Lord, if he saw the justice, holiness, and majesty of God, without discerning His glorious mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. All vain-glory, ambition, ignorance, and pride, would be done away by one view of Christ in His glory. The live coal may denote the assurance given to the prophet, of pardon, and acceptance in His work, through the atonement of Christ. The taking away of sin is necessary to our speaking with confidence and comfort, either to God in prayer, or from God in preaching; and those shall have their sin taken away who complain of it as a burden, and see themselves in danger of being undone by it. It is great comfort to those whom God sends, that they go for Him, and may therefore speak in His name, assured that He will bear them out.

***Here am I**: This shows at once his confidence in God, and his zeal. He had been qualified for it by the extraordinary commission, and he was now ready to bear the message to his countrymen. In this attitude "we" should stand, prompt to deliver the gospel message that God shall entrust to our hands, and to engage in the service that He calls on us to*

perform.
***Send me**: he who before thought himself undone, and unworthy to be employed in the service of God, now having a discovery and application of pardoning grace, freely offers himself to God: this shows the true nature and effect of an application of pardon; it gives a man freedom and boldness in the presence of God, and stimulates him to a ready and cheerful obedience to His will, and encouraging him with the utmost willingness in His service; so is the doctrine of free and full pardon by the blood of Christ. He came from God, and presents to you the will of Him. His is a mighty prophetic claim, more urgent, more complete, than that made by Moses or Isaiah. And though it be truth, the ministers of the gospel preach doctrine which is **not theirs**, but His that sent them; yet it is not necessary that they come by the knowledge of this doctrine in the same manner that Christ did, who was in the bosom of the Father, and knew His will, and came from Him to communicate it to the world; nor yet in the same manner that the prophets and the apostles came to the knowledge of it, as by Christ's vocal instruction, also by the influence of the Holy Spirit upon them in the days of Pentecost, which abode upon them.*
The condition of the nation of Israel at the time of the prophets, and what it was in the time of Christ and the apostles had many similarities. Because of this we will find numerous instances where a prophet will be instructed to write in such a way that his statements would apply to the Jews of both periods. He may not understand the reasoning of it and at times have an inquiring mind as to his safety in the face of men who are set against it. It is no different today for Christians, Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2Tim 3:12). *In such circumstances are we bold enough to say, **Here am I, send me!***
If you speak the truth, persecution will happen, example; Sep.10, 2014, Duck Dynasty' star Phil Robertson was accused of

*delivering another **anti-gay rant**. Here is what he actually said;* "God says, 'One woman, one man,' and everyone says, 'Oh, that's old hat, that's old Bible stuff. But I'm thinking, well let's see now. A clean guy — a disease-free guy and a disease-free woman — they marry and they keep their sex between the two of them. They're not going to get chlamydia, and gonorrhea, and syphilis, and AIDS. It's safe. To me, either it's the wildest coincidence ever that horrible diseases follow immoral conduct, or, it's God saying, 'There's a penalty for that kind of conduct, *he added*. "I'm leaning towards there's a penalty toward it." *How will people know unless they are warned, can you say Lord here am I, send me. The Bible gives counsel to avoid certain plagues already mentioned, here is what it says;* Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body (1Cor 6:18).

***Flee fornication** - A solemn command of God - as explicit as any that thundered from Mount Sinai. None can disregard it with impunity - none can violate it without being exposed to the awful vengeance of the Almighty. How many a young man or woman would be saved from poverty, want, disease, curses, tears, and hell, could these two words be made to blaze before him like the writing before the astonished eyes of Belshazzar in Daniel chapter 5, and should terrify him from even the momentary contemplation of the crime. Sins in general; the common sins which people commit do not immediately and directly affect the body, or waste its energies, and destroy life. Such is the case with falsehood, theft, malice, dishonesty, pride, ambition, etc. They do not immediately and directly impair the constitution amid waste of its energies. They are without the body - The more immediate effect is on the mind; but the sin under consideration, fornication, produces an immediate and direct effect on the body itself. The sense is, It wastes the bodily energies; produces feebleness, weakness, and disease; it*

impairs the strength, and shortens life. Perhaps no single sin has done so much to produce the most painful and dreadful diseases, to weaken the constitution, and to shorten life as fornication. The fornicator alienates that body, and makes it one with a harlot's body, and so sinneth against his own body, it is a destroyer of marriage, he sinneth not only against his wife with whom he is one flesh, but may also infect her with dreadful diseases in which he abuseth her in his vile and sinful act of fornication, and which he imprints a mark of infamy and disgrace upon himself; Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (Romans 1:32), *such actions are worthy of warning, can you say;* ***Lord here am I, send me****. Obviously the persecution suffered by Jesus is an example, turn to;*

Matthew 9:10-13 (10) And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

(11) And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

(12) But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

(13) But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

To eat and drink with others denotes familiarity. The Pharisees, by asking this question, accused him of seeking the society of such people, and of being the companion of the wicked. The inference which they would draw was, that He could not be Himself righteous, since He delighted in the company of abandoned people. Here was a good chance for the critics, they spoke to the disciples, possibly to persuade them to doubt, to not be a partaker of what they considered "evil deeds;" relying instead on their own self-righteousness. The Pharisees pretended to greater strictness than Christ in

keeping at a distance from sinners, but they were far from being strict in reforming themselves, or in zeal for love and doing good to their fellow-creatures. It seems, though, they had not directed their discourse directly to Jesus, yet had spoken loud enough so as to let the guests hear their censure. Hence it was necessary that Christ should show them their unreasonableness. Those who suppose their souls to be without disease will not welcome the spiritual Physician. This was the case with the Pharisees; they despised Christ, because they thought themselves whole; but the poor publicans and sinners felt that they wanted instruction and amendment. It is easy, and too common, to put the worst constructions upon the best words and actions. It may justly be suspected that he hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins, or may not be pleased with others in whom they see as "still in sin" even tho obedient to the faith. Obviously Jesus and Paul were in tune with the prophecy in Isaiah chapter 6, Jesus quoted it; For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Matthew 13:15). *Paul quoted it;* For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Acts 28:27). *Are you listening?*

A great disservice has been committed against the present generation of Americans. An inaccurate picture of the character and nature of God has been created, however, only God's Word can provide us with a balanced healthy comprehension of God's personal attributes. Only the Bible can bestow upon us the appropriate interplay between the love and mercy of God, as well as the wrath and anger of God. Many people today have failed to assess properly the reality of

God's wrath. They have substituted emotion and human feelings for truth and the clear statements of God. A general attitude of permissiveness, laxity, and undiscriminating tolerance has blanketed American society. Her citizens comfortably relax in the presence of impenitent sin and open defiance of the laws of God—using the refrain that, after all, "nobody's perfect." Apostates demonstrate a willingness to toy with unscriptural innovation—after all, "God wants us to be happy and to express ourselves." LGBT members are allowed to officiate at religious functions; Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (Romans 1:32). *Church members may entertain fellowship with denominationalism and false religion—after all, "it's sincerity that counts," not whether you conform to the objective, absolute will of God. The prime objective of Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone and a host of other restoration preachers that made the commitment,* ***here am I, send me****, preached the Church that Christ built (Matt 16:18, Romans 16:16), not to reform an apostate church. Howbeit today, there are contentions concerning inventions of men that stand in place of the "cup of the Lord", an unbroken bread that stand in place of "His broken body", instrumental music that stand in place of "in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Science falsely so called that stand in place of "God's creativity." Marital advice originating out of the Catholic Council of Trent and misuse of words.*
One should observe the young Jewish woman Esther. Her marriage, if judged by the traditional view codified by the Catholic Council of Trent 1563, would be 'living in adultery. Why would such a marriage be recorded in the Bible for such good reasons if it were adulterous? Let's turn to;
Esther 2:15-17 (15) Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required

nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.
(16) So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.
(17) And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.
King Ahasuerus was a divorced man (Esther 1:19). Had he only "put away" Queen Vashti, but not divorced her, Esther could not have married the king because she would have been guilty of committing adultery. Esther being a virtuous woman would not have committed such a sin, it would have been an unreasonable price for her part in saving her people. God does not require that which is unreasonable or cause one to sin.
I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Romans 12:1). *I am sure God would have required the same of Queen Esther as well, however, I am fearful that there may be some who would object to Esther's marriage to king Ahasuerus as being adulterous. But I speak of those who, knowingly or unknowingly, accept the Catholic Counsel of Trent traditional view. But how could her marriage be adulterous in God's providence, if faith is the effect of belief in the word of God in which the story of Esther is effected to a high standard. Paul did teach to the married, do not divorce. Then he turned attention to the already divorced, do not seek a mate but if you marry you have not sinned, but such will have trouble in the flesh (1Cor 7:27-28). It is easy to preach against divorce, as should be, but difficult for a church to be constructive in providing preparation for marriage and strengthening of marriages. If couples fail in God ordained*

responsibilities as husband and wife, they may experience problems. Moving on, let's turn to;
Romans 10:17-21 (17) So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
(18) But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.
(19) But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.
(20) But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.
(21) But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.
This great doctrine is brought forth and defended, that the way of salvation is open for all the world. This doctrine is not less important now. And from this discussion we may learn the following truths:
(1) The world is in danger without the gospel.
(2) The provisions of the gospel are ample for all. Its power has been tried on many nations; and its mild and happy influence is seen in meliorated laws, customs, habits; in purer institutions; in intelligence and order; and in the various blessings conferred by a pure religion.
(3) The command of Jesus Christ remains the same, to preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. That command has never been repealed or changed. The apostles met the injunction, it remains for Christians to act as they did, to feel as they did, and put forth their efforts as they did in proclaiming one of the most plain and positive laws of Jesus Christ.
(4) If the gospel is to be proclaimed everywhere, people must go forth into the vast field. Every nation should be able to say, "How beautiful are the feet of him that preach the gospel of peace." Blessed are those nations for whom someone

declared, "Here am I, send me." Moving on;
The devil is a relentless adversary. He will use any means possible to deceive people, even adjustments to God's word. Consequently there has been ***no more error*** *taught in the supposed name of Christianity, than error concerning baptism. People are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. While He was on earth Jesus said;* If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15). *His commandment is this;*
Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 2819). *Can you say,* ***here am I, send me****. The truth is,*
Faith in Christ is the effect of belief in His gospel, therefore the ordinance of baptism is the effect of faith in Him. The gospel presents, only those who first believed the testimony of God, and by faith repent of their sins, and by faith confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and by faith are baptized for remission of sin, have the full and explicit testimony of God assuring them of pardon. It is in this saved condition that the Lord will add that person to the Church (Acts 2:47). This is the gospel. It is not all those who wish to be saved, who will be saved, only those who admit their need of salvation and accept God's grace on His terms. Believe, Faith, Repentance, Confession and Baptism for remission of sin. Do not dig a hole to deep to get out of. The gospel invitation is open, for your sake come and obey to escape destruction. If there is a need of prayer for other reasons, in either case come while we gently persuade with song.

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a Minister for Christ

Revised; 13112019
Ref. Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary
Matthew Poole's Commentary
Pulpit Commentary
E.M. Zerr Commentary
Aposogetics Press
Barnes' Notes on the Bible
MacLaren's Expositions
“Send Me” presented to; WestvilleOk-Oct2014/
RinggoldTx-Oct2014/PineMtAr-Oct2014/BrokenBowOk-Nov2014/

Divorce, The Law, and Jesus

Posted on May 23, 2013 by pattimorton under Repent America and Return to your First Love!

Walter L. Callison

Divorce and remarriage are topics of much debate.

The purpose of the following article is to invite the reader to reassess the church's attitude toward remarriage. We welcome your comments and opinions on the content of this article.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). Grace. Did grace come by Jesus Christ to those suffering marital tragedy, even as much grace as was provided by Old Testament law? Surely, we affirm, grace and truth did come by Jesus Christ. Then how does grace abound to those who have suffered the tragedy of a marriage failure and divorce?

Christ did more than teach with words. He also taught with His life. Christ brought new ideas to his followers, rejecting their ancient "eye for an eye" and "tooth for a tooth" doctrines, encouraging love for those not their own, lifting up women from the status oaf "things" to recognition as people. Yet he also taught respect for the old Jewish law.

When we study what he said about divorce, we must also study the life he lived among those of broken marriages, as well as what he taught about Jewish law, especially their divorce law.

But what about His words? If a divorced person is remarried, what about the words, "Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18? We could emulate the compassionate and forgiving nature of Christ, as he sent the woman at the well into Samaria to be his witness. But do His words deny His actions? Are people who are divorced and married to another living in adultery? Are they forbidden service to Christ?

We also must hear the words of the Apostle Paul, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife" (I Tim. 3:2). Does he speak of a person who has been divorced and remarried? Luke records only one comment, and a very concise one, on this subject:

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:17-18).

Concise. But Jesus did make it clear that the Old Testament had something significant to say.

There is a law! When asked by the Pharisees, in the Gospel of Mark, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" (Mark 10:2), Jesus answered, "What did Moses command you?" (Mark 10:3) "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement" (Mark 10:4). There is a law.

The law is found in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, and at the time Christ lived, Favius

Josephus, who also lived then, paraphrased it and referred to it as the "law of the Jews":
"He that desires to be divorced from his wife for any cause whatsoever, (and many such causes happen among men), let him in writing give assurance that he will never use her as his wife any more; for by this means she may be at liberty to marry another husband, although before this bill of divorce be given, she is not to be permitted so to do…" (Antiquities of the Jews (The Life and Work of Flavius Josephus), Book IV. Ch. VIII, Sec. 23, p. 134; (tr. Wm. Whiston; Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, NY).
Here is the law from Deuteronomy:
"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house, and when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife." (Deut.24: 1-2).
Are people who are divorced and married to another living in adultery?
The law was still around in the time of Christ. We must, therefore, deal with the "tittles" of the law.
The Bible only records one divorce. God said he did it. In Jeremiah 3, God reminded Judah that she was heading for trouble. Israel had already been taken captive. God told Jeremiah to warn Judah that she had witnessed her sister Israel's infidelity and had seen God give her a bill of divorce and send her away; and yet she did not fear (Jer.3: 6-8).
There were other things men did with their wives. Many men of old married more than one wife, and without bothering about divorce. Some of these were God's revelation, but also products of their culture.
If he did not divorce her, what did a man of those days do with a wife when he took another? He put her away. There is a word for that in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word shalach. It is different than the Hebrew word for divorce, which iskeriythuwth. Heriythuwth (Jer.3: 8 above) literally means excision, a cutting of the marital bonds; legal divorce was written, as commanded in Deuteronomy 24, and permitted subsequent marriage. Shalach is usually translated "to put away." Women were "put away" when their men married others, put away to become mere property, as slaves, or put away in total dismissal; it was a cruel day for women. They were "put away" in favor of another, but not given a divorce and the right to marry again. This word described a cruel tradition, common, but contrary to Jewish law.
Some of the hardships and terror experienced by women who were "put away" can be seen as this Hebrew word shalach is described in the Langenscheid Pocket Hebrew Dictionary (McGraw Hill, 1969) – "to let loose, roaming at large, to be scared, abandoned, forsaken."
"The Christian faith took root and flourished in an atmosphere almost entirely pagan, where cruelty and sexual immorality were taken for granted, where slavery and the inferiority of women were almost universal, while superstition

and rival religions, with all kinds of bogus claims, existed on every hand."
God hated this "putting away." Malachi the prophet broken-heartedly pleaded with God's people to stop the practice. Hear Malachi plead with them. The word translated "putting away" in Malachi 2:16 is not the Hebrew word for divorce but it is shalach, put away. Hear Malachi respond to leaders who asked how they had dealt treacherously, and committed abomination in Israel, and profaned the holiness of the Lord.
"Yet ye say, wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of the covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away?" (italics mine) (Mal. 2: 14-16).
And Jesus came. And His words do not deny His actions! He spoke of this when He said, "Whosoever putteth away His wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16: 18). Whosoever does this, commits adultery! This practice was cruel and was adulterous, but it was not divorce.
The New Testament word, translated "put away" in the King James Version, is a form of the Greek word apoluo. It is the word in Greek, the language of the New Testament, which parallels the Hebrew word shalach (put away).
There is an Old Testament Hebrew word for divorce, keriythuwth, and a New Testament Greek word, apostasion. The Arnait-Gingrich Lexicon of the New Testament cites usage of the word apostasion as the technical term for a bill or writing of divorce as far back as 258 B.C.
Apoluo, the Greek word for putting away, was not technically divorce, though often used synonomously. In that age of total male domination, men often took additional wives, and did not provide written release when they forsook wives and married others. The Jewish law demanding written divorce (Deut. 24: 1-2) was largely ignored. If a man married another woman, so what? If a man "put away"(apoluo) his wife without bothering with a written divorce who was going to object? The woman?
Jesus had some objections. Jesus even loved mistreated women! He told them that this earth would go up in smoke before the law requiring a written bill of divorce would fail (Lk. 16:17). And he said, when you put away a wife (without written divorce), and marry another (while still married), you are guilty of adultery (Lk.16:18). Moreover, she who is put away is in real trouble. She has no divorce paper. She is abandoned, but still married. She would commit adultery if she married again (Lk.16:18). The distinction between "put away" and "divorce," between the Greek apoluo andapostasion is critical. Apoluo indicated that women were enslaved, put away, with no rights, no

recourse; deprived of the basic right to monogamous marriage. Apostasion ended marriage and permitted a legal subsequent marriage. The paper makes a difference. "Let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife" (Deut. 24:2). That was the law.

How did we ever begin to read "whosoever divorces his wife" into those places where Jesus literally said "whosoever puts away, or abandons, his wife"?

There are passages, other than Luke 16:17-18 (above) where Jesus spoke on this matter. They include Matt. 19:9, Mark 10:10-12 (where Mark records that Jesus laid down the same law for women as for men), and Matt. 5:32. Jesus used a form of the word apoluo eleven times in these passages. In every passage he forbadeapoluo, putting away. He never forbade giving apostasion, written divorce, required by Jewish law.

Should the Greek word apoluo be translated divorce? Kenneth S. Wuest in theNew Testament, an Expanded Translation always translated it "dismissed" or "put away," never "divorced." The old, and very literal American Standard Version always translated it "put away." The King James Version translated it "put away" ten out of the eleven times Jesus used it. That eleventh instance seems to be the source of the problem. In 1611, in ONE place the King James translators wrote "divorced" instead of "put away." In Matt. 5:32, they wrote, "and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced (italics mine) committeth adultery." The word is not the Greek word apostasion (divorce), but is a form of that same Greek word apoluowhich did not include a writing of divorce for the woman. She, technically, would still be married.

Matt. 19:3-10 records the Pharisees taunting Jesus about this matter, asking him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" He responded that marriage is a permanent relationship, and said, "Whatsoever God hat joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

They then asked, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement (apostasion), and to put her away?" (Matt. 19:7) Jesus answered, "because of the hardness of your hearts!" (Matt.19:8). The first basic human right God gave us was the right to be married. No other companionship was adequate. Hard-hearted men unilaterally put away women and married others, considering themselves divorced, but leaving the women without recourse and deprived of that first basic human right. Human rights were for men only in those days. Jesus changed that! He demanded obedience to the law; he demanded equal marriage rights for women. Grace does abound in Jesus Christ!

Jesus told those men that to put away a wife and to marry another was adultery! Adultery! The law (Deut. 22:22) called for the death penalty for adultery, for both the woman and the man! That was bitter medicine for men who did as they pleased with women. Matt. 19:10 records their shock: "If the case of a man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." They did not

live in a culture wherein a man was expected to live with only one woman for life, much less, give her equal rights if marriage failed.
How did we ever begin to read, “whosoever divorces his wife” into those places where Jesus literally said, “whosoever puts away, or abandons, his wife”?
It may be that the one place where apoluo was mis-translated “divorced” in 1611 started the whole process. The American Standard Version corrected the error in 1901. It never became popular enough to make much difference. Wuest was careful to avoid such misstates, as noted earlier. But almost everything that has ever come off a printing press has been influenced by the King James Version of the Bible, even Greek-English lexicons, and most modern translators seem to be influenced by that one occurrence in it and translate aapoluo “divorce,” even though the meaning of the word does not include a writing of divorce (apostasion). Now, tradition has taught us to record “divorced” in our minds though our eyes actually read “put away” in the King James Version.
Is written divorce, as commanded in Deuteronomy, the solution to the cruel practice of “putting away”? The twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy is evidence that, even as God heard the groaning of his people in Egypt and provided deliverance from slavery, he also heard the groans of enslaved women and provided deliverance from abuse by means of that tragic necessity, divorce; tragic because it ends that which should never end, marriage; necessary to protect the victims of those who do not obey the rules of our Creator, all-mighty God. Necessary, originally, because men “put away” women, trapping them in illegal and adulterous multiple marriages.
Divorce is a privilege, provided as a corrective for an intolerable situation. It is a privilege, which can be, and often is, abused. Divorce is not a pretty picture in most cases. Loneliness, rejection, a deep sense of failure, loss of self-esteem, critical relatives, child care problems, property settlements – these concerns and more confront the divorced.
Divorce is Tragedy
Divorce can be more traumatic than the death of a mate. Grief following the death of a spouse is hard to bear, as is the grief of divorce. But a dead spouse does not keep coming back. The divorced one often does, thus prolonging the often-renewing grief. Divorce is still only what it was in Jesus’ day, a partial solution to a serious and cruel situation and maybe the only reasonable solution. It may be necessary, but it is always a tragedy!
It is easy to preach against divorce, but difficult for a church to be constructive in providing preparation for marriage.
We might be able to prevent some divorces by tightening our divorce laws or by religious prohibitions against divorce, but such actions would not prevent broken marriages. When couples stay together only because of fear of the notoriety required by divorce laws, or because of church prohibitions, or “for the sake of the children,” tragedy can result. Disastrous marital triangles, domestic cruelty, child abuse, murder, and suicide are some of the documented

consequences of marriage, which had failed but was not terminated. What is a fearful choice! A broken home is a tragedy, but I will never forget a young man who put a gun barrel in his mouth and ended his marriage, his alternative to divorce. His church had forbidden divorce.

Our high divorce rate is not the real problem. Marriage failure comes first, and then divorce. The divorce rate is only an indicator of our high bad marriage rate. To correct this, we must more than preach against divorce! It will be more difficult. It is easy to preach against divorce, but difficult for a church to be constructive in providing preparation for marriage and strengthening of marriages. Our challenge lies here!

Can a divorced person be ordained as a deacon or a preacher? The Apostle Paul, and educated man, knew the Greek word for divorce (apostasion) and knew his culture. He also knew Christ would accept anyone, even him, the "chiefest of sinners" (I Tim. 1:15). Unquestionable some early converts had multiple wives, slave wives, and concubines. Each of these relationships, though given the nicer title, polygamy, was adultery. Paul rejected the heads of such households as leaders in the church. The command to give a writing of divorcement in Deuteronomy 24 limited a man to only one wife and thus prohibited polygamy and the adultery inherent in it. Paul seemed to concur fully when he said, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife" (I Tim. 3:2). He rejected polygamy, not divorce.

Despite serious abuse, the divorce law (Deuteronomy 24) still has validity. Divorce is a radical solution to insurmountable marriage problems. It ends all hope that the marriage might be saved, and declares publicly that the marriage has failed. This moment of truth can be shattering. Sin, related to this failure, must be confessed if there is to be any forgiveness, any peace with God. "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). This includes forgiveness for marital failure.

As opposed to putting away, written divorce, commanded by the law, provided a degree of human dignity for women subjected to cruel abuse, adulterous polygamy, and the whims of hard-hearted men. Nothing so flimsy as an oral "I divorce you" would do. Divorce declared the legal end of a marriage, thereby precluding any charge of adultery or bigamy should either party ever marry again. Divorce severed all marital ties and all control by the former spouse. Divorce demanded strict monogamy. Divorce prevented unilateral dismissal and preserved the basic right to be married. Divorce does the same today. Abandonment, desertion, putting away, or whatever one calls that hard-hearted forsaking of a wife for another, without divorce was and is forbidden by the Lord Jesus himself (Mt. 19:9, Mt. 5:32, Mk. 10:11-13, Lk. 16:18).

For centuries much of the Christian community has interpreted these teachings of Jesus to say: 1)

Divorce is absolutely not permitted, or at best, is permitted only in the case of

admitted or proven adultery. 2) A divorced person is not allowed to marry again. 3) A divorced person who does marry again lives in adultery. 4) A person who is divorced cannot be ordained as a deacon or a minister. Every one of these beliefs could be wrong. The first three are contrary to Mosaic Law and are based on scripture in which Jesus did not even use the Greek word for divorce (apostasion); the fourth is based on scripture in which Paul did not use it. The word Jesus used was apoluo, to put away. This was the problem with which he dealt, not divorce.

A divorced person must have great grace and determination to serve in a church, which holds to the four positions listed above. How can this be, when the church is the body of Christ on earth, to function and to serve as he did, in person?

Christ, who once wept over Jerusalem must look down from heaven and weep over us. He came and called Simon the Zealot, a radical anti-Roman, and Matthew, a hated lackey of Rome, a pair as incompatible as any you could find in America today; but he put them to work, together, in his kingdom. The he went to Samaria, revealed himself to a woman with a shameful background of marital failures, and sent her out to share the revelation of God in Christ as if she were as good as anyone else. He must weep when he sees us wasting our time trying to figure out whom we can disbar from serving him in his church. Jesus openly ministered to all who came to him. Yet many of our divorced friends are afraid of our churches. They know what we say the Bible teaches about divorce. Can we be right and so unlike Christ? Do our traditional interpretations separate us from people whom Christ would have received? If so, we must be wrong. He came to save sinners. The only people he ever rejected were the self-righteously religious. Is our understanding of His words correct if it does not square with His life? Divorced people are real people! For centuries churches have excluded these people from fellowship and usefulness, from joy and equality, even from salvation; people for whom Christ died. Whether or not divorce is sin, this certainly is! May God Grant us the grace to mediate that grace which did come in Jesus Christ to the divorced.

THE CHOOSING OF THE SEVENTY HOLY APOSTLES

As recounted by Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre, an ancient and pious man, who became a martyr in the reign of the emperors Licinius and Constantine.

This above-mentioned and exemplary man left us various writings in Greek and Latin, for he was proficient in both languages and possessed of great intelligence. After the death of Diocletian and Licinius, he returned home and ruled the church of Tyre until Julian the torturer came to power; for Julian did not kill Christians openly, but secretly through his princes. Dorotheus came once more to the city of Odessus polis, where he was seized by Julian's princes and suffered many tortures in his very old age for confessing Christ, and died as a martyr at the age of one hundred and seventy. This saintly Dorotheus speaks of the seventy apostles and disciples of Christ, many of whom were bishops among different peoples, while others served as preachers, whom the divine Paul mentions in tile salutations in his epistles. Many years after the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he found all of them and recorded them, their names being as follows:

JACOB , brother of the Lord, first bishop of Jerusalem, who was ordained by the Lord Himself, whose head was crushed by a whiffletree and he died.

CLEOPAS was the second bishop of Jerusalem like Simeon, brother of the Lord; he saw the Lord after the resurrection, and died crucified by Emperor Dometian.

THADDEUS , who carried the letter to Avgar in Edessa: he cured the latter of his illness.

ANANIAS , who baptized the holy Apostle Paul, was bishop of Damascus.

STEPHEN , the first martyr, died after being stoned by the Jews.

PHILIP , one of the seven [deacons], who baptized Simon the sorcerer and Canalace's eunuch, was bishop of Asian Tralia.

PROCHORUS , also one of the seven, was bishop of Bithynian Nicomedia.

NICANOR , one of the seven, died on the same day as Saint

Stephen , together with two thousand believers in Christ.

TIMON , one of the seven, was bishop of the island of Arabia, and died after being burned by the Hellenes.

PARMENAS , also one of the seven, died in front of the apostles' eyes while he was serving.

NICOLAS , also one of the seven, was bishop of Samaria; but he deviated from the true faith together with Simon.

BARNABAS , who served the Word together with Paul, and preached Christ in peace, was bishop of Milan.

MARK the Evangelist was ordained bishop of Alexandria by the Apostle Peter.

SILAS who preached the Gospel together with Paul, was bishop of Corinth.

LUKE , who preached the Gospel all over the world together with Paul, was bishop of Salonika. Luke the Evangelist came from Syrian Antioch, and went to Macedonian Thebes as a doctor during the reign of Emperor Trajan. He first wrote the holy Gospel to a certain ruler Theophilus, who believed in Christ. Then, many years after the passion of our Lord, and the holy Apostle Peter having commanded him to narrate the acts of the holy apostles, Saint Luke narrated the acts of the holy apostles to the same Theophilus, And having done this, he gave up his soul to God in peace; and thus he died in Thebes. His holy relics were translated from Thebes to the church of the Holy Apostles, and were layed under the altar table.

SILVANUS , who preached the Gospel together with bishop of Salonika.

CRISPUS , whom the apostle (Paul) mentions in his epistle to Timothy, was bishop of Galilean Chalcedon.

EPENETUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle Romans, was bishop of Carthage.

ANDRONICUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Pannonia.

AMPLIAS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans. was bishop of Odissa.

URBAN , whom the apostle mentions in the epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Macedonia.

STACHYS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans; when Andrew the

apostle, traversing the sea of Hellespont, reached Agricopolis, he ordained Stachys as bishop of Byzantium.

APELLES , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Heraklion.

PHYGELLUS was bishop of Ephesus; later he converted to Simon's teaching.

HERMOGENES was bishop of Thracian Megara.

DEMAS , whom the apostle mentions in his second epistle to Timothy, opposed the teaching of God just as Phygellus and Hermogenes did; Demas loved this present world and in Salonika was a priest of the idols; he was one of whom the apostle John writes: they came from us, but were not one of us. APOLLOS, whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Smyrna before Saint Polycarpus.

ARISTOBULUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Britannia.

NARCISSUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Athens.

HERODION , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Patfas.

AGABUS , who is mentioned in the acts of the apostles, who received the gift of prophecy.

RUFUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Thebes.

ASYNCRITUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Hyrcania.

PHLEGON , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Colossians, was bishop of Marathon.

HERMAS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Dalmatia.

PATROBAS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Pottole.

HERMES , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Philipopolis.

LINUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Rome after the holy apostle Peter.

GAIUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Ephesus after the apostle Timotheus.

PHILOGOGUS , whom the apostle [Paul] mentions, was ordained bishop of Sinope by Andrew the apostle.

RODION , whom the apostle mentions, was beheaded by Nero in Rome, together with the holy apostle Peter.

LUCIUS , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Syrian Laodicea.

JASON , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Tarsis.

SOSIPATER , whom the apostle mentions in his epistle to the Romans, was bishop of Iconium.

TERTIUS , who wrote the epistle to the Romans, was the second bishop of Iconium.

ERASTUS , whom the apostle mentions, was chamberlain of the church in Jerusalem; later he was bishop of Paneas.

APOLLOS , whom the apostle mentions to the Corinthians, was bishop of Caesarea.

CEPHAS was bishop of Iconium.

SOSTHENES , whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Colophon.

TYCHICUS . whom the apostle mentions, was also bishop of Colophon.

EPAPHRAS , whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Andriaca.

CAESAR , whom the apostle mentions, was bishop in Dyrrhachium.

MARK , the nephew of Barnabas, whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Apollonias.

JESUS , called Justus, whom the apostle mentions in the Acts, was bishop of Eleutheropolis.

ARTEMUS , whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Lystra.

CLEMENT , whom the apostle mentions, saying: "and with Clement, and with my other fellowworkers," was bishop of Sardice.

ONESIPHORUS , whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Cyrene.

TYCHICUS , whom the apostle mentions, was the first bishop of Bithynian Chalcedon.
QUARTUS , whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Berytus.
CARPUS , whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Thracian Berrhoe.
EUODIUS was bishop of Antioch after Saint Peter.
ARISTARCHUS , whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Syrian Apamea.
MARK , called John, who is mentioned by Luke in the Acts, was bishop of Byblos.
ZENAS the lawyer, whom the apostle mentions, was bishop of Giospolis.
PHILEMON , to whom the apostle Paul wrote an epistle, was bishop of Gaza.
Another ARISTARCHUS,
PUDENS ,
TROPHIMUS : these three suffered together with the apostle Paul through all his persecutions; in the end they were beheaded in Rome by Emperor Nero.
ONESIMUS died in Potiole at the hands of the Roman ruler Tertillus.
All of these were bishops among the pagans. The saintly and most-blessed Dorotheus, while he was bishop of the church of Tyre, wrote about them and left his writings to the church, in order to commemorate the holy apostles, about whom even Paul wrote, saying: they were servants of God before us. May no one disbelieve it, for it is the truth.