

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XIV

May 29, 2005

No. 22

## When Fornication Occurs After The Divorce

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**F**esus’ teaching is clear as to the liberty one has to remarry after putting away or divorcing his or her fornicating mate. “*And I say unto , Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery, and he that marieth her when she is put away committeth adultery*” (Matt. 19:9). The force of Jesus’ statement is this: except for divorcing one’s mate because fornication has been committed, one who remarries will be committing adultery in one’s new marriage. It is pretty straight forward. Fornication coming before the divorce gives an innocent mate the right to divorce and remarry. But what is the scriptural option for one whose mate commits fornication, let’s say, a year after the divorce?

Some are publicly claiming that one who is divorced, and the cause is not for fornication, has the right to remarry whenever that person’s mate commits fornication. The fornication may occur one, two or even ten years after the divorce. Their claim is that whenever the fornication occurs, the innocent party can then divorce and remarry.

Such a claim ignores the binding effect that an unscriptural divorce has on the innocent mate. Jesus says, “*But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery*” (Matthew 5:32). The person initiating an unscriptural divorce has put his innocent wife in the position of being an adulteress because her next sexual relationship will be adultery, regardless if it is in marriage or outside of marriage.

Such a claim assumes from the silence of the Scriptures that an innocent mate always has the right to a scriptural divorce after an unscriptural one. By their own admission, Jesus’ statements do not address this situation of what happens when fornication is committed after the divorce. They just assume, that the unscriptural divorce changes nothing, though Paul says one is now “*unmarried*” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11), and presume that the innocent mate will always have the right to “put away his wife for fornication”. Jesus’ teaching does not speak of two divorces in every marriage.

He only speaks of one, with two possible causes, stressing the consequences of that one divorce upon each mate. Since when did faithful brethren start appealing to the silence of the Scriptures for their authority?

An appeal is often made to Mark 10:11: “*And He saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her...*” (Mark 10: 11). The belief is that since the adultery committed in the remarriage is “*against her*”, the marriage must still exist in God’s eyes and she can now divorce and scripturally remarry.

Most commentators say it is against her “best interest”. But this passage proves the opposite to what its claimants would like it prove. For the husband’s action would be against his wife’s best interest if he did not remarry. She would have to live a celibate life. By remarrying, his adultery, according to the claimants teaching, opens the door for his wife to remarry. Fornication after the divorce does not give one the right to another divorce.