

## God Hates Divorce

Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

**"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel,** "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

Malachi 2:13-16 (New International Version)

You fill the place of worship with your whining and sniveling because you don't get what you want from God. Do you know why? Simple. Because God was there as a witness when you spoke your marriage vows to your young bride, and now you've broken those vows, broken the faith-bond with your vowed companion, your covenant wife. God, not you, made marriage. His Spirit inhabits even the smallest details of marriage. And what does he want from marriage? Children of God, that's what.

So guard the spirit of marriage within you. Don't cheat on your spouse. "I hate divorce," says the God of Israel. God-of-the-Angel-Armies says, **"I hate the violent dismembering of the 'one flesh' of marriage."** So watch yourselves. Don't let your guard down. Don't cheat.

Malachi 2:13-16 (The Message)

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"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be **one flesh**." Genesis 2:24

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And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, **and the two shall become one flesh**'? So they are **no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.**" ...

Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and **do not hinder them from coming to Me**; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

Matthew 19:4-6, 13-15

"But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother **and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.**" ...

And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; **do not hinder them**; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all." And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16

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"Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery." Luke 16:18; also Matt. 19:9 and Mark 10:11-12

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**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her**, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. **So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies.** He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. **For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.** This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

Ephesians 5:25-33.

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The Old Testament has three Hebrew words that are translated as "divorce" in various versions of the Bible: SALAH, GARAS and KERITUT. The first two of these often are used outside of the context of divorce, too. SALAH and GARAS both are used in the Genesis account of God expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden:

"Therefore the Lord God **sent him out** [SALAH] from the garden of Eden." Genesis 3:23. "He **drove the man out** [GARAS]." Genesis 3:24.

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This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, **he had in mind to divorce her** quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary

home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ... **When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.**

Matthew 1:18-21, 24.

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"Are you married? Do not seek a divorce." 1 Corinthians 7:27.

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Jesus expressly condemns divorce four separate times in the New Testament. (Matthew. 5:31-32; Matthew. 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18). In Matthew, and only in Matthew, does Jesus say something that might seem to indicate there may be an exception:

"But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery." Matt. 5:32 (NIV)

"I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." Matt. 19:9 (NIV)

This is, at most, a very limited exception.

- The exception, if it is one, applies only to situations in which a wife has engaged in "marital unfaithfulness."
- The original Greek word that is translated as "marital unfaithfulness" in the NIV translation -- or "unchastity" and "fornication" in other translations -- is "PORNEA." PORNEA is a loaded word. It often is used in the Bible for prostitution and incest.
- Matthew 5:32 can be read to mean that if a wife already is an adulteress, then by divorcing her the husband has not caused her to be one, because she already was in that condition. This, however, is not the same as excusing the divorce. Similarly, though Matthew 19:9 indicates that divorce in situations of wifely fornication may not make the husband an adulterer, this does not mean that divorce is excusable. Nowhere does Jesus condone divorce or say it is acceptable.
- The Book of Hosea tells how Hosea's wife abandoned him, was an adulteress with multiple men and became a prostitute. But God told Hosea to take her back: "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods." Hosea 3:1-2
- An overall theme of the Bible -- both the Old and New Testaments -- is strong opposition to divorce.
- Forgiveness, of course, is an overarching theme of the Bible.

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Jesus' first miracle -- turning water into wine -- took place at the wedding in Cana. John 2:1-11

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Jesus tells two parables about weddings. Matt. 22:1-14 and 25:1-13

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Jesus uses a wedding or a bridegroom as a metaphor four other times. Matt. 9:15; Luke 12:36 and 14:8; John 3:29

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"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God." Revelation 19:7-9. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. Revelation 21:2. The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. Revelation 22:17