

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." – Ephesians 5:23

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CAN THE DESERTED MATE DIVORCE AND REMARRY?

“HE HATES DIVORCE”

(Part Three)

by Ted J. Clarke

Introduction

We offer no apology for this extended series on divorce and remarriage. Unscriptural divorces and remarriages flourish in our country and across the world. Failing to keep Christians informed on what God's word says regarding these issues can only increase the problems which already threaten to divide the Lord's church (Hosea 4:6; John 8:32; 17:17).

Men have always sought to add to, subtract from, or in some way modify what God says on any topic. Warnings against such are found at both ends and in the middle of the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19). Still, the puny mind of mortal man seeks to find "loopholes" in God's legislation, believing that on the great day of judgment he will be able to convince an All-Knowing and All-Powerful God that His word was flawed and not understandable. Mankind does not want to accept the plain truth of Matthew 19:9, because we do not want to accept the consequences of our sins. Accordingly, we look for ways to broaden the teaching of Jesus that only the innocent party in a marriage marred by fornication has the right to divorce and remarry.

The Pauline Privilege

One such attempt to expand the Lord's teaching on divorce and remarriage is called "The Pauline Privilege," based on Paul's instructions to the Christians in First Corinthians 7:1-15. In verse 15 the statement is made that if an unbelieving mate departs from a Christian, the Christian is to "let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." The phrase "not under bondage" is taken by some to mean that the Christian is freed from the marriage and may marry another.

This position has been a small minori-

ty view in years past, but with the epidemic wave of divorce and remarriage in society filtering down into the church, multitudes of elders and preachers are looking for ways to justify the divorce and remarriage among Christians, as well as people of the world. This is being accomplished in large measure by teaching that Matthew 19:9 does not apply to people who are not Christians, and then by teaching that First Corinthians 7:15 gives Christians some reason to divorce and remarry other than fornication by one's mate.

A Brief Analysis of 1 Corinthians 7:1-15

Entire books have been written on this subject, so in our allotted space we cannot but give a brief presentation of the essential arguments against desertion as an additional cause for divorce and remarriage which is acceptable to the Lord.

After discussing some questions which the Corinthian Christians had submitted to him, asking whether or not it was advisable to marry and the mutual obligations of the husband and wife in sexual relations (verses 1-9), the apostle Paul dealt with some questions regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage (verses 10-15).

Verses 10-11 are a basic repetition of what Christ taught about the permanency of marriage (one man for one woman for life), although Paul does not mention the one exception the Lord allowed for divorce and remarriage (fornication by one's mate). See Matthew 5:32; 19:4-9; Mark 10:11-12.

Regarding the "rest" of the matters or questions which they asked, Paul said that the Lord did not speak directly on those issues, but he would (verse 12). Christians were not to sever marriages with unbelievers (verses 12-13). If the unbeliever was "pleased to dwell" with

the Christian, the child of God was not to initiate any action to "leave" and end the marriage. Verse 14 indicates that the Christian's influence in the home places the unbelieving mate and children in the home in a situation where they will at least be exposed to an example of righteousness and a knowledge of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. verse 16; 1 Peter 3:1-4).

"Not Under Bondage" To What or Whom?

In verse 15 Paul tells the Christian, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such case: but God hath called us to peace." Those who claim that the believer is "not under bondage" in the marriage any more, when the unbeliever departs, also contend that this gives the right of remarriage to such Christians.

While Paul used the word "bound" to refer to marriage in this chapter and in Romans 7:2, in those passages he used a different Greek word than he did in speaking of "bondage" in 1 Corinthians 7:15. The word "deo" (to bind) is Paul's word to refer to the marriage bond and he uses that in verses 27 & 39 of this chapter. However, in verse 15 Paul used a form of "doulou" which is never used of marriage in the New Testament. Its basic meaning is to be a "slave" or in "slavery." It also seems significant that Paul used the "perfect tense" of the word, which tells of an action that is past which carries a continuing present result. The meaning of Paul's use of "de-doulotai" (bondage/slavery) is "you have not been nor are you now in slavery to such." This means that "bondage" in 1 Corinthians 7:15 cannot mean marriage, for Paul had already told the believer that he/she was married to the unbeliever (verses 12-13). But Paul said the believer had never been in "bondage" as he was using the term in verse 15. Since the word "bondage" there does not refer to marriage, "not under bondage" cannot mean the believer is no longer married if the unbeliever leaves! If no fornication has taken place by the unbeliever, even though he/she departs

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from the marriage, the believer is still married to her/him. Why? Because fornication was the sole exception given by the Lord in Matthew 19:9 and Paul does not here teach that the believer is free to remarry. Paul does not even consider remarriage by the believer in verse 15. No other New Testament writer modifies what Jesus said in Matthew 19:1-9, so it stands as the **one exception for divorce and remarriage**.

To what or whom is the believer "not under bondage"? Having said above what the phrase does not mean, can we know what it does mean? Paul is teaching that people whom God recognized as properly married should stay married, living together, even a believer to an unbeliever. However, marriage is not and never has been a system of slavery in which one must surrender one's faith in God to keep the union intact. Neither does one's husband/wife assume ownership rights over a mate to demand that one must renounce faith in Christ because one's mate requires it. Marriage never has and does not now require unfaithfulness to God in order to be faithful to the desires of one's mate. Believers are "not under bondage" in that sense, even though they may be bound in marriage.

Conclusion

Many unbelieving men and women who desert their mates, perhaps most, will do so because they are already sexually unfaithful. However, one cannot assume that such is the case and the deserted believer must know that the deserter is guilty of fornication before

Matthew 19:9 could be used as grounds for any action of divorce and remarriage. Even though the deserted Christian is innocent of any blame in the unbeliever leaving, divorce is still not acceptable to God unless fornication takes place. If any situation is unknown or questionable, one should live as unmarried and dedicate one's life to serve the Lord (cf. Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 7:32 - although these verses are not specifically on this point, they do touch the issue).

Elders, preachers, all Christians - do not let the cultural problems of the day squeeze you into taking positions on divorce and remarriage that you know are violations of God's word that cannot be defended! All of us will stand in judgment for what we allow to be taught and practiced, as well as what we teach and practice (Romans 1:32; 2:1-2; James 3:1; Ephesians 5:11). [This series will be concluded in the next issue.]

THE BATTLE FOR THE MINDS AND SOULS OF AMERICA

by James Balcom

There is a social and psychological war heating up in America. It is a battle for hearts, minds and souls of America. Today's battle is geared toward the control of the minds of children. Whoever controls what a child hears, sees, thinks and feels, controls the child - and the future of the nation.

The conflict is a battle between the Creator and the created. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Rom. 1:22 KJ). On one side are those people who believe that "God Is" and created the world. On the other side is the "God Isn't" group, composed of the humanist/atheist, the radical feminist movement, the abortionist, the ACLU, the homosexual community, many in government bureaucracies, liberal politicians, and the educational forces that want to control the minds of our children. Forces dominated by the humanist/atheist have a well planned, coordinated conspiracy designed to mold and shape the minds of our children.

The two contestants in this battle have immensely differing and incompatible views of life. This is a bitter and decisive conflict that affects every level of society. There has been and will always be a war going on between the

forces of good and evil, the doctrines of God and the doctrines of men. Christ warns of this in Matt. 15:9, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Paul warns of this in Col. 2:8, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain (empty) deceit, after tradition of men, after the rudiments (basic) principles of the world, and not after Christ."

The battle will always rage back and forth in the minds of individuals as the philosophies of men oppose the will of God. In the end God will win out, but during the meantime, much damage will be done to our nation. "Howbeit, we speak wisdom among those who are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this age, that come to nought" (1 Cor. 2:6).

The "God Is" group's beliefs are rooted in Scripture, both Old and New Testament teachings. Our faith is centered in the Christ as God's Son and Redeemer of the world. Everything we believe, every moral issue, behavior, thought and decision is based on this concept. We are constantly trying to bring them into subjection to Christ. For some of us, it is always a struggle.

Research by David Barton documents with convincing data that the benchmark for decline began in the 1962-1963 decisions of the Supreme Court and Congress that took the Bible, prayer and religious study out of public education. (I heartily recommend his video **AMERICAN'S GODLY HERITAGE!**) He shows with convincing proof that this nation was to be based on Christian principles but not favoring a particular religious group. Until about thirty years ago our nation was basically guided by the "God Is" precepts. Legislation, judicial decisions, and education usually reflected the belief that "God Is." Then, very slowly, another way of looking at the world began to appear. It evolved from the assumption that "God Isn't."

Slowly, everything that was believed to come from God began to disappear. Reverence for scripture began to decrease, Bible reading in public schools was banned along with prayer. Before long morality was no longer taught, nor modeled by many molders of youthful minds. Church attendance declined, Bible knowledge waned and many children no longer had any moral underpinnings. "If it feels good" became the new philosophy. What was "right"

was determined by the immediacy of the moment.

In the view and teaching of the humanist/atheist religion, all the old rules had to be reconsidered. The humanist/atheist teaches that we have no soul and are not any better than animals, just a little higher on the "evolutionary chain." So, with the liberal Supreme Court ruling of "Roe versus Wade," life was cheapened. The humanist/atheist easily embraced abortion, infanticide and euthanasia as a convenience. Since that time we have seen the murder of over 30 million children in the womb. Little bodies cut apart, burned with salt and suctioned out of the mother's womb. (For a true depiction of abortion I suggest viewing the video, ULTRA SOUND. A WINDOW TO THE WOMB, BY SHERI RICHARD).

As this "new morality" based on humanism began to unfold, social attitudes began to change. Prohibition gave way, rules changed, restrictions faded and yes, guilt became an anachronism. Soon this "new morality" became more dominant and old laws were challenged and overthrown. It has been said that never before in history has a culture discarded its belief system more quickly than America has done. The humanistic/atheistic system of "values" has now become the dominant way of thinking in the power centers of America. Who would argue that the entertainment industry, judiciary, federal bureaucracy, psychology, sociology, the arts, medicine, law and Congress have bought into this philosophy?

What strongholds then exist to combat this heresy? The church and the family are left, both under pressure from the "left." In recent years it appears the Church has lost its desire for battle. A few individuals have answered the call, but the call to arms must be answered by all Christians. Use your pen, paper and phone to contact your elected representatives at the local, state and national levels and insist they pass legislation that supports Christian principles and defeat legislation that is opposed to Christian beliefs. Paul Harvey said on his radio show that one letter represents the views of one thousand people. A handwritten or typed personal letter has much more effect than duplicated copies of letters. Speak up - Speak out - Let our voices be heard! I call on you to combat this evil

that is already taking its toll in the lives of children and adults. We are on the frontline dealing with the victims of the "God Isn't" movement. We need your help. The children need your help!

"...walk as children of light: ...proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:8-16)

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EVOLUTION

Maybe people did descend from animals, because some of the church members are as stubborn as mules about church work, sly as a fox in their business dealings, busy as bees spreading the latest gossip, and quiet as a mouse in spreading the Gospel. They have eyes like a hawk to see faults in others, and are mean as snakes when they do not get their way. They are eager as beavers about a barbecue, but lazy as a dog about prayer meeting. They are noisy as crows between Sunday school and church, and slow as a snail about visiting for the Lord.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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THE RAPTURE (2)

by Dennis Gullledge

What is the Rapture? The dictionary defines the term as "the state or experience of being carried away with overwhelming emotion." According to the advocates of this theory in religion it means, "The Rapture or snatching away of the church" which will immediately result in the sudden and inexplicable departure of millions of living and dead from this earth. The proof-text commonly used to sustain this view is 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17.

The doctrine further explains that the Rapture will usher in a seven year period of great "tribulation," the last three and a half years of which will be the most awesome in human history. The events of Matthew 24 are appealed to in order to explain the tribulation process. A brochure from "Mission For The Coming Days" is bold enough to say, "The Lord has revealed the time of the Rapture (October 28, 1992) and the Great Tribulation (1993-1999) to many... through visions, dreams, prophecies and voice."

The fact that neither the word Rapture, nor the concept which it represents is found in the Bible seems not to concern those who believe in it. The theory is so unbiblical and anti-scriptural that it would require one to be "carried away with overwhelming emotion" to buy into it, because simple logic and a proper handling of the word of truth will not permit it.

One of the major problems of the Rapture hypothesis is that it presents too many "comings" of Christ. It allows for two within a seven year period, which is two more than the Bible speaks of (Hebrews 9:28). The Rapture envisions Christ coming "for his saints" at the end of this age - the Rapture, and then it envisions him returning "with his saints" to begin the 1000 year millennial reign in Jerusalem on the throne of David. It is believed by the advocates of it that 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 and Matthew 24:21 clearly establish this theory. Do they?

These passages, far from establishing this theory, actually disprove it conclusively! First, there is no mention of the Rapture in either of the passages in word or thought. Second, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 deals with the final coming of Christ at the end of time, not a Rapturous coming to usher in a great tribulation; and the tribulation of Matthew 24:21 is

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an undeniable reference to the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70. Third, there is nothing to suggest either a secret or a public Rapture. Fourth, there is no evidence to suggest that Jesus will ever set foot on this earth again, because when the Lord returns this globe will be a fire ball (2 Peter 3:10). Fifth, there is no kingdom to yet be established. The Kingdom has already been established and Christ is even now reigning as King (Colossians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26). The Rapture theory virtually denies that Christ is now reigning.

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WHAT IS WRONG WITH DENOMINATIONALISM?

by Garry Stanton

In the United States today there are over 300 separate denominations. The doctrines taught and followed by these groups differ sometimes as much as day from night. It is hard to believe that they all claim the same source book. The question which must concern us is whether or not God and His Son approve of this arrangement.

We know that Jesus does not approve of division because He prayed earnestly for unity. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:20-21). The apostles showed the need for unity as they condemned division. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10) and "that there should be no schism (division) in the body" (1 Cor. 12:25). One reason that Jesus does not approve of division is that it causes unbelief as Jesus prayed that those who believe in Him would be one "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). Denominationalism is divisive and condemned by Jesus.

Jesus established only one church! Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18), he never promised to build two, or 12, or 25, and certainly not the 300+ churches that we see today!

Denominations did not have their origin by the will of Christ but by the will of men. The root of the problem lies in the tendency of men to follow other men and not the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul exposed this problem when he wrote, "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:12-13). When men follow the teaching of men, they are guilty of doing that which is condemned by the Lord Jesus. Jesus only built one church and all others are without scriptural authority to exist.

Jesus has only one body! Denominationalism presents Jesus Christ as some sort of freak with one head and over 300 bodies! Jesus is the head of the church, and the church is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). We are plainly told that there is only "one body" (Eph. 4:4). There is only one body of Christ and therefore there is only one church which belongs to Christ!

God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). Denominationalism is certainly confusing! God did not give us 300+ churches to confuse us. Denominationalism is not the product of God's work! It is the result of man's work.

It is not necessary to trace a church all the way back to the first century to see if it is the right church, all you need is the right seed! A watermelon seed will never produce a tomato, nor will an acorn produce a Maple tree! The seed for the church is the Word of God (Luke 8:11) and it will not produce a denomination, it will only produce the one true church, the one we read about in the New Testament.

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What Others Can Do For You

*The teacher educates your children;
The banker looks after your money;
The doctor treats your illnesses;
The armed forces defend your liberty;
The lawyer draws up your will;
The funeral director buries you;
But only the Lord Jesus Christ
Can save your soul!*

God helps those who help others rather than themselves.

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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