

FOR THIS CAUSE

Matthew 19:5

SELF EVIDENT MORALS

Some moral principals are self evident and require no legislation to be seen to be correct. Unselfish love, honesty and trustworthiness are obviously right. Coveting what belongs to another, lying and deceit are clearly wrong. The honest mind confronted with these principles, does not require an authoritative statement from a higher power to satisfy it that these things are so.

LEGISLATION

Other issues might be the subject of authoritative legislation and their validity depend on the rank of the authority.

On which side of the road we should drive is decided arbitrarily by the government of the country we happen to be in. In America it is the right side. In Britain it is the left. We are required to obey the laws of the country we are in. If however a civil law conflicts with that of one whose rank is higher, then the requirement of the higher authority takes precedence.

Acts 5:29 *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*

DIVINE LEGISLATION

Sometimes God, the supreme authority of all, has re-stated self evident moral rules, for example "*Thou shalt not kill*". The right to take life is obviously the prerogative of the giver of life.

Sometimes God has bound on man rules that would seem arbitrary, for example "*Thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*", "*This do in remembrance of me*".

Such rules might be bound up in covenants with particular people, for example "*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*" is directed at the children of Israel reminding them they were servants in the land of Egypt, and the LORD God brought them out with a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm, therefore the LORD their God commanded them to keep the Sabbath day (Deut. 5:15).

On the other hand, the underlying principles of moral laws are not confined to the covenant under which the

enactments were made. Consider for example "*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*". Even though this legislation was made as part of God's covenant with Israel, the underlying moral principle, that coveting is sinful, is universal.

Because of the universality of moral and Divinely established principles, Paul was able to say to Timothy:-

II Timothy 3:16-17 *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.*

DIVINE PRINCIPLES

Sometimes the very fact that God did a particular thing in a particular way shows without question that God requires it to be that way, and anyone who dares interfere with the arrangement is guilty of sinning against the Creator. For example, in Genesis 2:18-24, God makes one woman from one man to be his "*help meet for him*" thus establishing for all time the principle of one man/one woman for life.

It was this principle that Jesus appealed to when he made his pronouncement on marriage and divorce.

Matthew 19:3-6 *The Pharisees also came unto him, 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 no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

This had nothing to do with any restricted covenant relationship between God and a selected company of people, whether Patriarchal, Jewish or Christian. Neither was the Lord Jesus making a choice between two current Jewish schools of thought on the subject. Jesus was making it clear that the whole principle of one man/one woman for life is based on the historical

fact 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 woman* (Gk. γυναικι from γυνή, woman): *and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but ONE FLESH. What therefore God hath joined together, LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER.*"

This principle was bound on ALL mankind right at the beginning. This accounts for Jesus statement with regard to deviation from this principle; "*but from the beginning it was not so.*" Matt.19:8.

THE EXCEPTION CLAUSE

What about the exception clause?

In Matthew 19:9 "*fornication*"(Gk. πορνεία) is given as an exception to marrying another being the sin of committing "*adultery*" (Gk. μοιχεία).

The exception clause is recorded by Matthew only, (Matt. 5:32. and 19:9). These passages must not be interpreted to teach something different from the parallel passage in Mark 10:2-12 where, permitting no exception, it states; "*Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery* (Gk. μοιχεύει) *against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery* (Gk. μοιχεύεται) (vv11-12)".

Why then is the exception clause in Matthew but not in Mark or in Luke (Luke 16:18)? Did the Greek, whom Luke addressed and the Romans, whom Mark addressed, not need to know of the exception clause? Were only the Jews, whom Matthew addressed, permitted this liberty?

In Matthew 19 the Lord Jesus, is clarifying an issue for the Jews about a rule in the Law of Moses which had to do with the peculiar way that Jews contracted marriage. [Matthew 19:7 Deuteronomy 24:1-4]. It did not concern gentiles. We are not under the Law of Moses. It does not concern us. [Colossians 2:14]

Two erroneous liberal views prevailed, both of which contradicted the Divine principle which, from the creation, God has bound on all mankind:

"*What God Has joined together, let not man put assunder*". The Lord Jesus did not interpret the Law of Moses so as to, in any way, negate this Divine principle.

JEWISH BETROTHAL

How did the Jews contract marriage?

Has it never struck you as odd that Joseph was considering divorcing Mary BEFORE the marriage?

Matthew 1:18-20 *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was ESPOUSED to Joseph, BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded TO PUT her AWAY privily. ("to put away" Gk. απολυω divorce). But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, FEAR NOT TO TAKE UNTO THEE Mary thy wife (Gk. γυναικα σου lit. thy woman): for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

Jewish custom differed significantly from that of the gentiles with regard to marriage. Before a Jewish marriage took place, an espousal contract was entered into. Then a period of several months betrothal preceded the marriage ceremony. During this period the couple were not allowed to come together as man and wife. Even so this espousal contract could only be broken by a writing of divorcement. That is how Joseph, finding his betrothed was having a baby, came to be thinking of divorce, even though they were not yet married.

It is evident from Matthew's account of Jesus' words on divorce, that a man having undertaken an espousal contract to marry a woman at the end of a betrothal period, the only legitimate ground he could have for breaking that contract would be that of FORNICATION, i.e. premarital sex.

In Matthew 19:9 the NIV pointlessly translates "*fornication*" (Gk. πορνεια) by the words "*marital unfaithfulness*". It is true that in some contexts πορνεια can include adultery but in this passage two different Greek words are used; πορνεια for fornication and μοιχος for adultery. This signifies that two different types of action are being referred to. In passages where both words appear, "*fornication*" (Gk. πορνεια) is not used as an alternative word for "*adultery*" (Gk. μοιχος). It is used for a sin distinctively different from adultery, that of premarital

sex. See for example Matthew 15:19, Mark 7:21 and 1.Cor.6:9. The exception clause is not relevant to the gentile situation. It cannot be used as justification for the divorce of one who has been joined by God's design and purpose being married to another person. The new couple would be committing adultery.

FORGIVENESS

Adultery has to be regretted, and repented of, to be forgiven. Repentance is a change of mind which produces a change of action. In this case from committing adultery to ceasing to commit adultery. God is gracious and he will forgive the contrite heart and cleans us from all unrighteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord (Acts 2:38, 1 John 1:7-2:2).

HARDNESS OF HEART

Some think they see a loophole in Jesus' statement "Moses for the hardness of your heart suffered you to put away your wives" Matt.19:8. To understand this we need to see exactly what the Old Covenant legislation was regarding illicit intercourse.

1) If a married woman was convicted of adultery, both she and the co-respondent were to be executed Lev.20:10. Deut.22:22 ASV.

2) If she was suspected but not convicted the husband had to take her to the priest with a "jealousy" offering. Num.5:11-31 ASV.

3) If an espoused virgin was convicted of fornication both she and the co-respondent were to be executed Deut.22:23 ASV.

Note: there is no provision for divorce in any of the above situations.

4) If an unbetrothed virgin and a man copulated, they had to marry. Deut.22:28 ASV.

5) The only remaining possibility is that of a betrothed girl who is the innocent victim of fornication. She was not to be executed. Deut.22::25-27 ASV. But her fiance might not want to go through with the marriage. He was allowed to divorce her (i.e. break off the espousal contract) even though what had happened was not her fault. Deut.24:1-2 ASV ["some unseamly thing" Heb. ERVAH = "matter of nakedness" Ellicot]. This then was allowed because of their "hardness of heart"

www.eusebos.info

[m3 frthiscs]

For This Cause