

# DARIUS GOOD

## *The* **DIVORCED** CHRISTIAN



**FREE**

CHAPTER 1: I Want My People Healed  
CHAPTER 14: Except for Adultery

EXPERIENCE GOD'S HEALING POWER FROM...  
THE SHAME OF DIVORCE, TOXIC SOUL-TIES, AND DEMONIC COVENANTS.

FROM THE AUTHOR OF

*"UNLOCKING GODLY WISDOM: SOLOMON'S 7 PILLARS OF WISDOM"*

*"THE FEAR OF THE LORD"*

THE DIVORCED  
CHRISTIAN

DARIUS GOOD

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Dedicated to my brothers and sisters in Christ  
who have suffered the pain of divorce.  
Those who have carried shame and condemnation.  
And those who have searched for answers.



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## CHAPTER 1:

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# I WANT MY PEOPLE HEALED

When I was a teenager, I recall an incident that occurred at my church, during Sunday school. A minister was teaching the adult class. After reading Matthew 5:32, he explained to the class that anyone that was divorced other than for the reason of adultery had sinned. This statement began an intense argument. Most disagreed with the minister, but the minister stood fast stating, “That’s what the Bible says.”

I was young at the time. We had a small church and so people were aware of each other’s personal lives. I was aware that several of the members had been divorced and this was a very sensitive subject. My father, who was the pastor of the church, intervened telling the minister to leave the topic alone. His teaching along this line and the spirit in which it was taught had created strife and it was not profitable for the congregation.

This incident had an impact on me. I remember thinking God only permitted divorce if adultery has occurred. And every time I have read Matthew 5:32, my understanding was, Jesus said the only permissible reason for divorce was adultery.

As I grew older, I began hearing other statements regarding divorce that came from the Bible. In addition to adultery being the only God permissible excuse for divorce, I heard that God hates divorce. I heard that if a woman divorced her husband, she was not permitted to remarry. I heard that if you married someone that was divorced, your marriage was adulterous. I heard God would never tell anyone to get divorced. And in order to be qualified as a Bishop, a man could only be married one time.

All of these statements shaped my mindset as I had the desire to be married one day. My goal was to never get divorced. I wanted to live a life pleasing to God and obedient to His scriptures.



Once I got married, my intention was to never get divorced. My parents had a good marriage as well as my relatives on both sides of the family. I remember celebrating my grandparents' 50th anniversary. And so, I felt I grew up with a strong foundation and had seen good examples of strong healthy marriages.

Things did not work out that way. I was married in 2004 and in 2012, I was divorced. The marriage was disputatious and riddled with problems. Surprisingly, one of the areas of contention came after I accepted the call on my life for ministry. My decision added to the discord.

I prayed things would work out for us. And I maintained the hope that things would end differently. Especially, with us having two children.

I will never forget driving to court on the day of the divorce and the Lord speaking to me in the car. He asked me, "if things do not work out for you the way you would like, will you still walk with me." I told the Lord, "Of course," realizing at that point that divorce was imminent. The court process went drastically different than what I expected. Instead of being able to state my case to the judge, the judge explained the divorce laws for the state of Connecticut. He then banged the gavel, and the divorce was granted.

Following the divorce, I experienced tremendous shame. Looking back, I realized a lot of it was tied to my disappointment in displeasing God. God hates divorce and now, I was a divorcee. And in light of the scriptures, did this mean I could not remarry?

I remember telling the Lord I was not going to make any decisions regarding my life until I heard from Him. I was not expecting to be in the place I was in, and I had no sense of direction. The Lord spoke and said, "I will speak to you in six months." Six months?! That's a long time. I would have preferred an immediate answer. But I did have a confident word that we would be speaking at some point. Six months later, right on schedule, I had a visitation from the Lord.

I had gone to Maryland with my mother. She was spending time with friends, so I got a hotel and spent the day in prayer. The next morning on September 1, 2012, the Lord began talking about remarrying. This contradicted my interpretation of the scriptures. I was surprised God would permit me to remarry.

But the Lord reminded me that I said I would walk with Him. He reminded me of promises and prophecies that had been made to me that had not been fulfilled. He is a God of His word. He asked me if I would allow Him to select a wife for me and I told Him, "yes." He then told me, He had selected a wife for me and then gave me a lengthy detailed description of her. He told me about

her race and that she was ten years younger than me. She did not grow up with her father in the home. She had long hair. She was called to ministry and had already accepted the call so she would understand me being in ministry and would fit in perfectly as a pastor's wife. He finished by saying she was a very big deal. This description was so detailed that it made it easy to identify the woman God had chosen to be my wife. In that conversation, the Lord revealed other reasons why it was important that I remarried and what the next several years of my life would look like.

Around this time, I needed a place to live. The Lord told me to talk to an older cousin who had a two-family house. Even though she had a tenant, the Lord told me to tell her that I was interested in her apartment. She knew the Lord, so she told me "Okay" and that she would let me know if the apartment was to ever become available. Three weeks later, the tenant decided to move out and I received the keys to the apartment on my birthday. That was the birthday gift God gave me that year, which He had done for many years.

I moved into the apartment a week later. The first night I was at the apartment, the Lord said to me, "You will be here for two to three years." The Lord had spoken to me in this manner before, so I knew that meant sometime after the second year and sometime before the third year, I would be moving out of the apartment.

Even though I told the Lord I would remarry, I still had major reservations. There were several areas of concern that I made the Lord aware of. When I would ask the Lord questions or express my concerns, the Lord would answer with a dream. Over the next two years, I had four or five dreams regarding the woman I was to marry. The dreams detailed how she would be towards me, how she would be towards my children. One dream revealed how we would meet.

As I wrestled with the idea of remarrying, in addition to the dreams, God gave me a sign. I was friends with a married couple and the Lord told me to pay attention to their marriage. He said my next marriage would be like theirs. So, I began to ask the husband questions about his marriage. He shared details with me about their marriage and I saw the service they performed for each other and the honor, respect and love they had for one another. This couple became a real-life example to me of what to look forward to. The Lord answered all of my questions and eased my reservations about remarrying.

I met my wife two years later in 2014, exactly as what had been prophesied to me regarding the timing of our meeting. And she was exactly as God described to me, both physically and in character. Also, every single dream came to pass early on in our meeting. We were married in 2015, following a short engagement, another detail the Lord had revealed to me.

When my wife moved into the apartment, I made my wife aware that the Lord said I would be moving from the apartment soon. We were two months from hitting the three-year point. There were four of us living in a two-bedroom apartment and the children were soon to be teenagers. I held on to the promise God had made me regarding the apartment, but the Lord never said anything about purchasing a house or moving. At this point, it had passed three years and still, the Lord said nothing. I prayed. Maybe, I hadn't heard accurately or maybe my understanding was off in some way. The Lord explained to me that I had heard accurately, but I had focused on the wrong word. When the Lord said, "You will be here two to three years," I focused on the word "here." The Lord said I should have focused on the word, "you." I was no longer "you"; I was now "we." He explained that He was talking to me about marriage. He was making me aware after I had moved into the apartment that I would be married within two to three years. I had heard accurately but I did not rightly divide God's word.

About four months following the conversation with the Lord in the hotel room in 2012, my mother who was pastoring the church following the death of my father, announced unexpectedly she would be stepping down. I was to be installed as pastor in a few months. Having been divorced a little over a year at that point, I was installed as pastor of the church my parents helped plant and pastored over.

I was now a pastor. A divorced pastor. And this bothered me. I felt that I had a blemish on my record. And I have been questioned on several occasions about how I could be a divorced pastor in light of the scriptures. But the Lord had called me to this place of ministry following the divorce and I was not going to tell Him no.

I had another very interesting experience with my two marriages. While in my first marriage in 2007, when we were expecting our first child, I had an open vision. In the vision, at the doorway of the room I was in, stood a brown skin girl that had a chocolate complexion. Her skin was very even tone. She had a short haircut and her hair looked very fine. She looked to be early teens. She was very beautiful. She didn't say anything, she was just standing at the door. I assumed she was the girl we were expecting, but when the baby was born, she had a much lighter complexion. The next child was a boy. So, I was convinced I was to father a third child. Though I had seen all of my children in some form of vision or dream, I never saw what any of them looked like except this particular child. I was so convinced she was coming that all of my family members, friends, and co-workers knew the description of the child.

But then, we got divorced. Following the divorce, I asked the Lord who this child was. I thought maybe I assumed the girl I saw was my daughter, but maybe she wasn't. The divorce made me

question the image I saw in my mind, but I knew to trust the things I saw. The Lord explained to me that the child I saw was my daughter. But how was this supposed to come to pass?

I remarried in 2015. While dating my wife, I realized the girl I saw in the vision looked just like her. My wife soon after had a dream of the same girl. But we began having difficulties conceiving. However, dream after dream kept coming in. About 7 people had dreamed of this brown-skinned, chocolate girl. With each dream, I would question what the girl looked like, and they each had the same description, only most saw her as a baby with a head full of hair.

In 2019, she was finally born. When I laid eyes on her, I knew immediately it was her. I waited 12 years for this girl to come and she was finally here. Holding her was surreal. But it left me questioning why the Lord would show me this child while in my previous marriage. Especially if divorce and remarriage were wrong in God's eyes. I knew I hadn't made the image I saw up. And this child matched the exact description I told others about when I first saw her in 2007.

After my experiences and watching God's word come to pass in my life, I began to rethink some of my beliefs in God but my thoughts regarding the scriptures didn't change. I still believed adultery was the only clause for divorce. I knew God permitting people to remarry was an ongoing debate in the church world. I was as familiar with the scriptures as those that challenged me being in ministry as a divorced minister. But there was no question that God had called me into ministry. I was first prophesied to at the age of 12, that there was a call on my life. God said then He would let me know when the time was right, and I was ordained as a pastor after my divorce. My experiences contradicted what I felt the scriptures said. But I could not see how the scriptures said anything different than what I had heard echoed by many in the church for so many years.

The shame of divorce plagued me for years, even after remarrying, even though it was clear the Lord told me to remarry. Every word the Lord spoke, I watched come to pass, but I still carried shame. It was compounded by guilt caused by my understanding of the scriptures and inaccurate teachings. I did believe that the scriptures had to be taught out of context or there was some cultural understanding that was missing, but I could not figure it out. My heart said the teachings were inaccurate but my research (reading Christian books on the subject) and study (going through the scriptures) did not reveal the error.

The Lord healed me from the divorce before I remarried, but I was not healed from the shame. When the Lord finally explained what Jesus said in Matthew 5:32, I was stunned. I couldn't believe how wrong our understanding had been. I can't even imagine the number of lives that have been affected by this incorrect line of teaching.

*The Divorced Christian*

The Lord instructed me to share my experience, understanding, and revelation I came into regarding what the Bible explains regarding divorce. The Lord then said to me, "I want MY people healed." And so, I pray this book brings healing and wholeness and removes the shame caused by divorce.

## CHAPTER 14:

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### EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF ADULTERY (MATTHEW 5 & MATTHEW 19)

Matthew 5:32 (KJV) “But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

Matthew 19:9 (KJV) “And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

These two passages of scripture have been the foundation of Christian teachings on divorce. The most popular teaching of these two scriptures is Jesus stating that divorce is only permissible for adultery. Secondly, it is taught that the marriage following the first marriage is adulterous unless the first spouse dies. I must admit, that whenever I read this passage, I could not see any other conclusion. The problem with this conclusion is that it grossly violates the law of Moses.

When reading the scriptures; Jesus often discusses the law of Moses. His conversations with the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were experts on the law, were really legal debates. Our ignorance of the law has caused us to misinterpret the conversations recorded in the scripture. And our conclusions have led to teachings and church laws that have ruined the lives of so many Christians.

1 Timothy 1:7-8 (HNV)

7. “desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor about what they strongly affirm.

8. But we know that the law is good if a man uses it lawfully,”

Most people are ignorant of their own city, state, and federal laws (the laws of their nations.) In my state, a couple must be 18 before they can be legally married. Under the age of 18, written consent from a parent or guardian must be obtained. In the absence of such a parent or guardian, a probate court judge is required. If under the age of 16, you need to obtain written consent from a probate court judge. Both persons must personally appear. So, if a child was 15 and was legally married, the question should be how is that legally possible?

The scriptures reveal to us conversations Jesus was having with His disciples about the law. And the scriptures reveals the debates with those questioning Jesus about intricate parts of the law.

Let's dissect Jesus' statement so that we can clearly see what Jesus was teaching in Matthew 5 and in his rebuttal to the Pharisees in Matthew 19.

### **Jesus fixed Moses' law**

There is a popular teaching that Jesus changed the law of Moses. Let's first look at how Jesus responded to a group of Pharisees and addressed their teachings regarding the law.

In Mark 7:9-13 Jesus argued with a group of Pharisees explaining that they had rejected the commandments of God. Jesus said, "For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death." These are two different laws. The first is found in Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16. The second law can be found in Exodus 21:17 and Leviticus 20:9. The Pharisees were teaching people that they were freed from these commandments by Corban. Corban (*karbanot*) was required by God which included the burnt offering, peace offering, sin offering, guilt offering and more. I highly recommend you search "Jewish Practices & Rituals: Sacrifices and Offerings (Karbonot)" on [jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://jewishvirtuallibrary.org) to learn more about the extensive practice of *Karbonot*. But Carban was not a replacement or substitute for the other commands of God. Worship to God through sacrifices and offerings did not exempt people from the obligation of caring for their parents. Jesus explained that these teachings and practices violated the law of Moses and made God's word "of none effect."

Mark 7:

9. "And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;
13. Making the word of God of none affect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their erroneous teachings and alterations of the law of Moses. Jesus did not then turn around and alter the law pertaining to divorce. Jesus did not alter any of the laws.

In Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Moses instituted the system of divorce. He required the husband to give the woman a “bill of divorcement” called a *get*. And then she was to be “put away” which means she was to leave the home. Before then, the man would only “put away” his wife. Moses required a bill of divorce to be given to her first. This had to be done through the rabbinical court with the priest(s), a scribe, and witnesses present.

Before the couple was engaged, the couple was required to draft a *ketubah*. This was also established in Deuteronomy 24:1. The *ketubah* is a marriage agreement. Amongst other things, it would outline what the woman would receive in the case of the marriage ending in death or divorce. The *ketubah* served as both a life insurance policy and a (kind of) “prenuptial” agreement. The husband would stipulate in the *ketubah* the amount the woman would receive for the dissolution of the marriage as well as the dowry he was responsible for keeping in safe care.

Jewishvirtuallibrary.com (search: Marriage in Judaism) explains couples that did not have a *ketubah* were viewed as not taking marriage seriously. “The rabbis instituted severe punishments (usually flogging and compelled divorce) where marriage was undertaken without proper planning and solemnity.” This means every Jewish couple discussed divorce and those agreed-upon outcomes were detailed in their *ketubah*. The *ketubah* was later read aloud at the wedding ceremony as part of the service. This custom is still practiced today in Judaism.

Many teach that based on Jesus’ statement “from the beginning it was not so” Jesus came to fix the mistake Moses made by permitting divorce.

Matthew 19:8 (KJV) “He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”

Moses established the law at Mount Sinai. Including the Ten Commandments, Moses instituted 613 laws (the 613 mitzvot) in total. These laws ranged from dietary laws, business laws (employees, servants, and slaves) and practices, sacred days and festivals, civil laws, court and judicial procedures, family divorce and marriage laws and so much more. Moses’ law was the law given by God to govern a nation. The law of Moses would be equivalent to the US Constitution, or any laws created



to govern and run a nation or country. The law of Moses was governmental order established by God for the governing of the nation of Israel.

In Matthew 5, before Jesus made His statement regarding divorce, He made a statement we cannot overlook but is always ignored in regard to the topic of divorce. Jesus stated He did not come to change the law.

Matthew 5:17 (KJV) “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”

Matthew 5:17 (BBE) “Let there be no thought that I have come to put an end to the law or the prophets. I have not come for destruction, but to make complete.”

If Jesus fixed Moses’ law that would mean He changed it. The law, the prophets, and faith are the three requirements for righteousness. We can see this when Moses, Elijah and Jesus meet on Mount of Transfiguration. Faith did not bring about an end of the law, it brought a fulfillment (maturation) to the law as God required the just to live by faith, which was really established through Abraham before the law. But faith and the coming of Jesus did not void the law of Moses. Paul explains this balance in Romans.

Romans 3:31 (KJV) “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

Romans 8:4 (NIV) “In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

We are under grace; we are no longer under the law. But this does not free us to commit adultery, lie, steal, or break any of the other commandments of God. The righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us when we live according to the Spirit. If we are led by the Spirit of God, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. It is through grace and obedience to the Spirit of God that we are able to keep the laws of God.

Matthew 5: (KJV)

17. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19. Whosoever therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Notice Jesus’ statement after He said He did not come to destroy the law. Jesus said the law would not come to an end until “all” has been fulfilled and heaven and earth pass away. The last trump has not sounded, we have not been caught up to meet Jesus in the air, and Jesus has not returned yet, so “all” has not been fulfilled. Jesus went on to say in verse 19 that anyone that broke or ignored even the smallest laws and taught others to do the same would be “the least” in His kingdom. This is kingdom teaching!

And yet we teach that Jesus changed the law of Moses in regard to the laws on divorce. The majority of the popular teachings on what Jesus said regarding divorce violates the law of Moses. So, either Jesus was not truthful in verses 17 through 19 and He then turned around and changed the law or our conclusion of what Jesus said regarding divorce is in error. Interestingly, out of the 613 laws of Moses, the law regarding divorce is the only law that is commonly taught that Jesus changed.

Based on Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus did not change or violate the law and so the conclusion of what Jesus said in Matthew 5:32 regarding divorce has to be presented in a way that does not violate or alter Moses’ law. Jesus is the law. He was the word made flesh.

### **Jesus is the law**

Acts 28:23 (KJV) “And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into [his] lodging; to whom he **expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law** of Moses and [out of] the prophets, from morning till evening.”

After Jesus was raised from the dead, he met with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. Notice what Jesus said regarding himself during their conversation.

Luke 24:27 (KJV) “**And beginning at Moses** and all the prophets, **he expounded** unto them in all the scriptures the **things concerning himself.**”

Notice what the disciple Philip said to Nathanael after he meet Jesus. The entire nation of Israel understood that the law pointed to the Messiah.

John 1:45 (KJV) “Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, **We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write,** Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Jesus could not then come and alter or violate the laws of God. He would have been a lawbreaker. He would have disqualified Himself from being the lamb of God “without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

It’s important to note Jesus’ audience in Matthew 5. He was speaking to Jews. Chapter 4 verse 25 reveals where those that were following Him were from.

Matthew 4:25 (KJV) “And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and [from] Decapolis, and [from] Jerusalem, and [from] Judaea, and [from] beyond Jordan.”

Jews knew the law of Moses. The Israelites knew the law. They were taught the laws from birth. Anyone that joined the nation of Israel was required to know the laws of Moses. For this reason, Jesus did not have to explain or go into further detail for his audience to understand. The audience was astonished at Jesus’ doctrine, but they did not view His teachings as heresy.

Matthew 7:28-29 (KJV)

28. “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29. For he taught them as [one] having authority, and not as the scribes.”

The Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, the elders, the chief priests, and scribes all tried to tempt and entrap Jesus on many occasions (i.e., Matthew 12:10) to bring an accusation to the court. They questioned Jesus about the disciples eating without washing their hands, His healing on the Sabbath, paying taxes to Caesar, and other areas that pertained to the law. Even when Jesus healed those that were required to be viewed by the priest, Jesus instructed them to keep the law. If Jesus had said something that violated the law of Moses, they would have had a case to bring Jesus before the Sanhedrin to be tried as a heretic. The best they could do was accuse Jesus of saying He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Jesus was charged with blasphemy for stating He was the son of God (Matthew 26:64-65). Jesus never violated the laws of Moses.

In Jesus teaching in Matthew 5 and in His conversation with the Pharisees in Matthew 19 Jesus was never accused of changing the law of Moses. So, we have little understanding of the law and therefore; have drawn a grossly wrong conclusion from Jesus’s statements. Let’s look at the laws that pertained to Jesus’ statement.

## **Mosaic Laws on Adultery**

The law of Moses stated that they could not commit adultery. This law was one of the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:14 (KJV) “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

Adultery was a sin punishable by death. If a man and woman were caught in the act of adultery, they were put to death. A sin offering could not be presented to the priest for adultery. Sin offerings were only permitted for sins committed in ignorance. Thou shalt not commit adultery was reiterated several times throughout the Mosaic law as well as its consequence.

Leviticus 18:20 (KJV) “Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour’s wife, to defile thyself with her.”

Leviticus 20:10 (KJV) “And the man that committeth adultery with [another] man’s wife, [even he] that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer, and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”

Deuteronomy 22:22 (KJV) “If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, [both] the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.”

## **Only Married Women Could Commit Adultery**

Another interesting fact is the law of adultery primarily applied to women. If a married man had sex with a woman outside of his wife, it was not considered adultery. Adultery only applied to a woman who was married and had sex with a man other than her husband. Under Jewish law, married men are considered adulterers only if they have an affair with a married woman, whereas married women are adulterers even if the man they had the affair with was single. This law remains the same today.

Jewishencyclopedia.com explains adultery as the following. “Sexual intercourse of a married woman with any man other than her husband. The crime can be committed only by and with a married woman; for the unlawful intercourse of a married man with an unmarried woman is not technically Adultery in Jewish law. Under the Biblical law, the detection of actual sexual intercourse was necessary to establish the crime.” “The woman is made sacred by the ceremony of *kiddushin* (the wedding) and is thereby set apart for her husband alone.”

We can see this explanation of adultery as a crime primarily committed by a married woman in the following scriptures.

Leviticus 18:20 (KJV) “Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy **neighbour’s wife**, to defile thyself with her.”

Leviticus 20:10 (KJV) “And the man that committeth adultery with [another] **man’s wife**, [even he] that committeth adultery with his **neighbour’s wife**, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”

Deuteronomy 22:22 (KJV) “If a man be found lying with a **woman married to an husband**, then they shall both of them die, [both] the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.”

In the case of suspicion of adultery, the priest was required to perform the law of Jealousy (called a *sotah* in Hebrew) found in Numbers 5. It is believed by Jesus’ time, that priests were no longer performing this act. It is taught that suspicion of adultery in Jesus’ time required a mandatory divorce so that the man would not be defiled.

## **Mosaic Laws on Divorce**

Another important detail regarding laws on divorce is that Jewish women could not divorce their husbands. Only men could divorce their wives.

Deuteronomy 24:1 (KJV) “When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she finds 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.”

Look at the language Jesus used. He did not address women in either statement. Jesus was addressing only the men because the Jewish court would not allow women to divorce their husbands. Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 are clear statements that do not apply to wives. It applies to husbands only.

Matthew 5:32 (KJV) “But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

Matthew 19:9 (KJV) “And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

A Jewish woman could request the court to divorce her husband. And at times, the court would intervene on behalf of the woman and compel the husband to divorce the woman. But only the man could divorce his wife. If the woman did not receive the bill of divorce, she could not enter into a second marriage. The bill of divorce (the *get*) had to be presented to the priest before she was allowed to remarry. And this practice still persists today. A priest would never remarry a divorced woman without her *get* as this would violate the law of Moses.

Deuteronomy 24 (KJV)

1. “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.
2. And when she is departed out of his house, **she may go and be another man’s [wife].”**

A priest would not marry a woman that had a binding *ketubah*. The divorce severed the marriage bond allowing her to be another man’s wife. The bill of divorcement, the *get*, was and is required to end a Jewish marriage and for the woman to become another man’s wife.

Isaiah 50:1 (KJV) “Thus saith the LORD, Where [is] the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away?”

The men on the other hand were not required to have a bill of divorce. So, the priest did not require a *get* and would allow the men to remarry.

## **Polygamy was legal**

Adultery did not include men because they could have multiple wives and also concubines. For this reason, men were not required to have a *get*. But a woman could only have one husband and one legally binding *ketubah*. The man could have additional wives as long as he maintained the provision of food, clothing, and sexual relations for the first wife. The first wife could not suffer because of the additional wife. If the first wife did suffer, she could appeal to the court, a law established based on the history the patriarchs’ wives (Sarah and Hagar and more specifically Rachal and Leah.)

Exodus 21:10 (KJV) “If he take him another [wife]; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.”

We find men with multiple wives throughout the scriptures: Abraham, Jacob, Esau, Elkanah the father of the prophet Samuel, and others. There were laws established regarding how inheritance for children was required to be handled in cases of bigamy. Deuteronomy 21:15-17 explains how the children’s inheritance had to be distributed in a marriage where the man hated one wife and loved the other. Polygamy was legal but it was not commonly practiced in Israel.

## **Laws Regarding an Adulterous Marriage**

A very important law we must be familiar with is laws regarding adulterous marriages. Many teach that Jesus was establishing what an adulterous marriage is. The conclusion drawn from Jesus’ statement is that if a person gets divorced and then enters into a second marriage that marriage is an adulterous marriage.

Matthew 5:32 (KJV) “But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and **whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.**”

Could men marry divorced women? Obviously, they could.

Deuteronomy 24:2-2 (KJV) “And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s [wife].”

If a divorced woman was divorced a second time, she was free to remarry again. The only stipulation was she could not return to her former husband.

Deuteronomy 24:4 (KJV) “Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that [is] abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance.”

By returning to the former husband, he would be defiled because she had been with another man. Also, some explain this law also prevented the scam of the woman collecting on the *ketubah* of a second husband and then returning to the first husband. If the couple divorced but she remained untouched, then she was free to return to her husband and he would not be defiled. We can see this entire scenario played out between David and his wife Michal. King Saul gave his daughter Michal to another man after David left in 1 Samuel 26:44.

A divorced woman was not permitted to marry for 90 days after her bill of divorce was handed to her. Jewishencyclopedia.com explains that this was to avoid any paternity issues.

The only men that could not marry a divorced woman were those from the tribe of Levi. Priest could only marry virgins.

Leviticus 21:7 (KJV) “They shall not take a wife [that is] a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he [is] Holy unto his God.”

Then what is an adulterous marriage according to the law of Moses? A search on Jewishvirtuallibrary.org for “bigamy and polygamy” explains an adulterous marriage as such. “A married woman (eshet ish) purporting to contract a second marriage to another man (or to other men) during the subsistence of her first marriage.”

Every Jewish couple drafted a *ketubah* (wedding agreement) to begin their betrothal (engagement). The *ketubah* was drafted by a scribe and was later read publicly during the wedding ceremony. The Jewish Virtual Library explains the *ketubah* “spells out the husband’s obligations to the wife during marriage, conditions of inheritance upon his death, and obligations regarding the support of children of the marriage. It also provides for the wife’s support in the event of divorce.”

The *ketubah* outlines the rights and responsibilities of the groom to his bride. On the day of the wedding, the groom hands the *ketubah* to the bride. She takes it and displays it on the wall in their home. After a divorce has been rendered, the man takes possession of the *ketubah* having fulfilled his financial obligation. The woman then receives the *get* in her hand according to Deuteronomy 24:1. If a woman is required to have a *get* to enter into a second marriage, how is it possible for a woman to have two *ketubahs*?

The priest would not remarry a Jewish woman that did not have a *get*. As long as the first *kiddushin* subsists, the purported marriage to another man is thus totally invalid. This sort of situation might occur if a woman received word her husband had died. The court required two or three witnesses to report the death of the husband. The woman would then be loosed from the marriage bond by death (of the husband). As a widow, having settled her *ketubah*, she would be free to enter into a second marriage. But if the first husband turned out to be alive, ie. having been captured in battle or missing due to the dangers of travel, then her second marriage and *ketubah* were then invalid. The woman was required to be divorced from her first husband. For him to take her back would cause him to be defiled. She was also required to be divorced from her adulterous “husband,” *mi-de-Rabbanan*. She was required to receive a *get* from both men and was forbidden from both men



forever but she was able to remarry now being freed from the laws of marriage. If children were produced in the second adulterous marriage they were viewed as bastards (*mamzer*) thus affecting their inheritance and status in the community.

### **Laws on illegitimate children (mamzer)**

In Jewish law, a child born out of wedlock is not necessarily illegitimate. The court would consider the relationship between the mother and father if the child was born of a relationship that cannot be legitimized. Moses explained these forbidden relationships in Leviticus 20:11-21. In a case when the paternity relationship does not violate the law, but the father claims the child is not his, the child belongs to the class called *shetuki*, “the silence,” i.e., those of whom we cannot say who is the father. Central Conference of American Rabbis explains in an article entitled, “Name the Child of an Unmarried Mother,” that in “such cases the law is according to Abba Saul (M. Kiddushin, IV, 1 and 2 and b. Kiddushin 74a) who says that if the child is a *shetuki* the mother is asked about the father of the child. If she says that the father was one whom she would have been permitted to marry (L’kosher Nivalti) i.e., not one too close in blood kin-ship and not a non-Jew, then she is to be believed and the child is not a *mamzer*.” The point is children born out of wedlock were not considered *mamzer* and the law of adultery was not broken since no *ketubah* (marriage contract) was involved.

The term “bastard” or *mamzer* is often used in Western society to label a child who was born out of wedlock. One King James dictionary explains once the parents were married the child then became legitimate, but this is false. This is not based on the law of Moses (Deuteronomy 23:2) and there are no biblical examples that supports this explanation. Whereas the story of Jephthah (Judges 11) follows the law of Moses. According to *halacha* (Jewish law), a child born to an unwed mother is simply that – a child born out of wedlock. There is no *halachic* ramification for the child. There was no denial of rights of inheritance or pedigree. According to the Mosaic law, a *mamzer* (bastard) is only a child born of either an incestuous or adulterous relationship and not one born out of wedlock.

### **What was Jesus really saying?**

All of these laws are important in understanding Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 5 and 19.

To avoid Jesus’ teachings from being taken out of context, we will start several verses before the statement made on divorce. By only looking at verses 31 and 32, we misinterpret what Jesus was saying.

Matthew 5:27-28 (KJV)

27. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery:

28. “But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

Jesus begins this passage by stating the law of Moses and addressing the laws that pertain to adultery. God said they were not permitted to commit adultery. Notice Jesus uses the word “but” in verse 28. It’s important to note Jesus does not use this word and then presents a conflicting thought or contrary command. Jesus did not say adultery was now lawful. Instead, Jesus ties two laws together. Jesus explains that God does not only view the act of adultery as a sin but also the thoughts entertained in the heart and mind of a person. God judges the thoughts and intents of man (people). Lustful thoughts are adultery in God’s eyes. Lust means to desire, to covet things that are forbidden.

Though many present this statement by Jesus as a new concept, it is not. Jesus was teaching the law of Moses. Keep in mind the law of adultery only applied to a married woman. So, Jesus really said if any man looks at a married woman with lust in his heart this is adultery in God’s eyes.

The law of Moses forbade them to covet their neighbor’s wife. To covet means to desire. This is an inward working of the mind and heart. This was not a foreign concept to their understanding of the Mosaic law.

Exodus 20:17 “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, **thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife**, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”

Deuteronomy 5:21 “**Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s wife**, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”

Paul explained how the law revealed the sin of lust in Romans 7. The law “thou shalt not covet” was about the sin of lust.

Romans 7:7 (KJV) “What shall we say then? [Is] the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for **I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.**”

In the next verse of Matthew 5, people fail to realize Jesus is still discussing adultery and the consequence of sin. Jesus uses the word “offend” which is skandalizō. This is where we get the

word “scandal” from. It means “to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall.”

Matthew 5:29-30 (KJV)

29. “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

Jesus explains in verse 29 that if the right eye is given to sin, it must be addressed. Ignoring it causes the entire body to end up in hell. Jesus is stating it is better for a sinful member of the body to be cut off and removed from the body rather than for the entire body to end up in hell. This message would apply to sin in the congregation. When one member of the nation of Israel sinned as Joshua lead them into battle against Ai, it proved fatal for the entire nation. God said all of them were accursed as a result of one man’s decision. God required the person guilty of sin to be put to death. Deuteronomy 22:22 explains that the sin of adultery must be put away from the nation of Israel.

By highlighting the “right” eye and the “right” hand Jesus was explaining that it was better to lose those things most relied upon, a dominant source of strength and sight, than to end up in hell.

Cutting off a body part (a hand) is the same as the concept of divorce. Divorce is a separation, a severance, the killing of a covenant, and the cutting away from something that you were once connected to. Jesus said to detach it or “cut it off” and cast (throw) it away. “Cut it off” is the Greek word “*ekkoptō*.” The apostle Paul explained in his letter to the Church of Rome that God is kind and stern. We must continue in the goodness and kindness of God. If we take His grace for granted, He will cut us off [*ekkoptō*.]

Romans 11:22 (KJV) “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.”

Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 5:29-30 lines up with Deuteronomy 22:22. The adulterer and the adulteress had to be put to death so that the evil would be put away from Israel. The source of sin (habitual, unrepentant) must be removed for the sake of the congregation.

Deuteronomy 22:22 (KJV) “If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman and the woman: **so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.**”

### **Matthew 5:31-32, Jesus’ statement regarding divorce**

Now let’s look at what Jesus said in verses 31 and 32.

Matthew 5: (KJV)

31. “It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:  
32. But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

Jesus begins by stating the law of Moses found in Deuteronomy 24:1.

Deuteronomy 24:

1. “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.”
2. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s [wife].”

Every scenario taught from this passage in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19 violates the law of Moses. Let’s examine some of the popular teachings.

It is taught that Jesus said a man could only divorce his wife for “fornication.” According to the law of Moses, if a wife committed adultery, she was to be stoned to death along with the man. So, this would be a change to the law. Was Jesus now allowing adultery to be a divorceable offense rather than the capital punishment required by the law? And if so the ramification of this change is never examined. Such a change would change the purpose of the dowry. It would have required an alteration to every binding ketubah and those going forward. Also, the laws pertaining to divorce, remarriage, inheritance, and other such family laws would have had to be altered due to this change.

Some teach that Jesus was only referring to cases that involve suspicion of adultery and not the act of adultery. The man could not be defiled and so the Jewish court mandated a divorce when infidelity was in question. Also, the law did permit the woman to remarry in such cases, but she

could never marry the man she was accused of being with. The priest maintained a list and would never marry the woman to the accused man. This practice is still in effect today. There is an article on Haartz.com entitled “Rabbinical Courts Keep Blacklist of Allegedly ‘Adulterous Women.’” Written in April 2015, Yair Ettinger brings to light a blacklist kept by the Jewish court of women who were suspected of having affairs. Priest still refuses to remarry women accused of affairs to the accused man. A woman suspected of adultery would apply to Jesus’ first statement, but the woman’s second marriage would not be viewed as adulterous having been divorced through the court, she would be free to remarry. And her second husband would not be an adulterer.

Some teach that Jesus taught that the woman’s first marriage remained valid after the divorce. The woman’s second marriage is considered adulterous. A divorce for any other cause than adultery is invalid. Such teaching would have violated the law of Moses. The law of Moses allowed the divorced woman to remarry. The scenario presented by Moses in Deuteronomy 24 was of a woman who was divorced multiple times and was still permitted to remarry but could not return to her former husband(s). Once the woman received her bill of divorcement (*get*) her marriage was severed. Marriage and remarriage were encouraged in Israel for widows and divorcees because God’s law stated it was not good for man to be alone.

Another popular teaching is that once the woman remarried, Jesus was now stating her second marriage was an adulterous marriage. This idea also violates the law of Moses. An adulterous marriage required the woman to have two *ketubah*’s. If the first marriage did not end in a legal divorce through the Jewish court, her second *ketubah* would be viewed as nonbinding, and therefore, the second marriage would be viewed as adulterous. In an adulterous marriage, the offense was not punishable by death, unlike the sin of adultery. Divorce was mandatory by the court with the first and also the second (adulterous) husband. But the woman would be free to enter into a third marriage that would not be adulterous according to the law.

So, all of these teachings would require major alterations to the law of Moses. There is only one scenario in which Jesus’ statement makes sense according to the laws and customs. The couple Jesus described would have to be separated and not divorced. In this scenario, the laws can be applied, and it makes perfect sense.

The sin of adultery requires the woman to be married with a legally binding *ketubah*. The law of adultery only applied to married women, not divorced, widowed, or single women. In Jesus’ scenario, the woman then entered into a second marriage while the first marriage persisted. So, this would not be the sin of adultery but it would be the sin of an adulterous marriage. This offence

would not have been punishable by death. The man who entered into a marriage with a married woman would have been viewed as an adulterer. And the second marriage would have been viewed by the court as an adulterous marriage and any children would carry the status of *mamzer*. This scenario Jesus described lines up with the laws on adulterous marriages. In such cases the Jewish court would require the woman to be divorced by both men but she'd be free to remarry.

Does the scriptures in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19 support this theory? You may think the scripture says the husband and wife were divorced, not separated. When you look at the Greek words used in this passage you will see that several words have been mistranslated.

In Matthew 5:31, there are two important phrases: “put away” and “writing of divorcement.” “Put away” is the Greek word *apolyo* which means: to set free, to let go, dismiss, to bid depart, or send away. Divorce is the Greek word *apostasion* which means: divorce, repudiation, or a bill of divorce.

In verse 32, Jesus uses the word “but” again as He does several times during this teaching, but not once does Jesus’ following statement alter the law of Moses. This is the only passage in which popular teachings present an abolishment of the law of Moses. This conclusion is erroneous.

Matthew 5:32 (KJV) “But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

The word “divorced” used in verse 32 is mistranslated in many popular translations of the Bible. It’s found in the KJV, NLT, NIV, CSB, ESV, NET, RSV, and WEB versions of the Bible. Versions like HNV, ASV, YLT, DBY, and BBE versions of the Bible use the term “put away” which is from the original text. No matter the translation you use, the Greek word for “divorce” in this passage is *apolyo* which is defined as: to set free, to let go, dismiss, to bid depart, or send away. Today, we would use the word “separate.” This is how the passage should read with the correct Greek word in place.

Matthew 5: (KJV)

31. “It hath been said, whosoever shall “put away” (*apolyo* = separate) from his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement (*apostasion* = divorce):

32. But I say unto you, that whosoever shall “put away” (*apolyo* = separate) his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is “divorced” (*apolyo* = separated) committeth adultery.”

The Hebrew Names Version of the Bible reads this way.

Matthew 5:

31. (HNV) “It was also said, ‘Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce,’

32. (HNV) but I tell you that whoever puts away his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries her when she is put away commits adultery.”

In verse 32, Jesus was not addressing divorce laws. He was addressing couples that were separated, not couples that were divorced. Jesus said whoever “separates” from his wife causes her to be an adulteress and if someone marries her that is “separated” commits adultery. This makes perfect sense!

Now, we must examine this conclusion because this scenario would never occur in the Jewish community. As Jesus stated the woman entered into a second marriage and she and the new husband had committed adultery. A rabbi would never remarry a woman who does not have her *get*. This was forbidden because of the laws on adulterous marriage. A man could marry a divorced woman as long as she had her *get* (Isaiah 50:1.) Only a priest was not permitted to marry a divorced woman (Ezekiel 44:22.) A woman that was separated would never have been able to remarry in Israel then or in the Jewish community today.

So how does Jesus’ statement make sense? How would Jesus’ teachings on the law of adultery and adulterous marriages make sense to those Jewish men present?

The law of polygamy allowed the man to marry multiple women. But the law of polygamy created a loophole in the law. The priest did not require men to have a *get*. So, the men would simply abandon their wife and marry another woman and not get divorced. The man could not neglect one wife for the other, she was his responsibility until he released her according to the law through divorce or until he died.

The *ketubah* that was agreed upon by the man and woman before marriage spelled out several items: the dowry from the father and the agreed-upon sum of money to be given to the woman if the marriage ended in divorce or in death. By divorcing the woman, she was to receive what was listed in the *ketubah*.

But the men were not following the law of Moses. They were only “putting away” their wives rather than divorcing and putting them away. This allowed the men to avoid the costly expense and transfer of wealth required if the divorce was to be done through the court. By not divorcing

the men were avoided paying the agreed upon divorce settlement stated in their wedding agreement (*ketubah*) and they were keeping the woman's dowry. The dowry was a portion or percentage of the father's (generational) wealth. In some cases, it was gold and other valuables. Some daughters received land. The sons received an inheritance, the oldest son received a double portion, but the daughters' received dowries. And the inheritance was not bestowed upon the sons when the father died, which is another bad teaching in the Church. Inheritance was not a will. Isaac lived another 43 years after blessing Esau and Jacob. Also, in the story Jesus told of the prodigal son, the Father still had much after he had given his sons their inheritance. We find Caleb blessing his children in Joshua 15. Caleb gave his daughter (Achsah) the south land and the upper and lower springs. In Numbers 27 God told Moses to amend the law of inheritance allowing a father to pass inheritance to the daughters when there was no male heir or kindred after Zelophehad challenged the customary practice and the law of inheritance. Jewish women had wealth and also owned land. When father's gave their daughter's their dowry, the husband was to keep it in safe keeping only to be returned to the wife upon divorce. In cases where the wife died, the father of the woman and the husband would have an agreement in place for such cases and that was also listed in the *ketubah*.

In addition to keeping what was rightful owed the women, by abandoning the wife she could not remarry. She was still legally bound to her husband. Moses required the man to be responsible for all his wives if the man married multiple wives (Exodus 21:10) but this law was not enforceable by the court. Men were abandoning their wives and there was nothing the women could do about it. Though a woman could request a divorce through the court, that still required the man's consent, the court cannot initiate a divorce, and abandonment was not divorceable. The man had to place the *get* in the woman's hand in front of the priest according to Deuteronomy 24:1, but if the man could not be found, then there was nothing that could be done.

Jesus was only talking to men in Matthew 5:31. Jesus was making Jewish men aware that if they abandoned their wives and if the wives were to remarry without being divorced, they would enter into an adulterous marriage. "That whosoever shall put away his wife, "causeth" her to commit adultery..." If a man was to marry a woman in this situation, he too would be an adulterer. By not divorcing their wives, if another man was interested in her, he would not be able to marry her because she was still bound to the husband by the laws of marriage. They had to keep the law of Moses and not just put their wives away, but they must get divorced.

Now, would there be a need for Jesus to address such an issue? Was this a problem in Israel that Jesus felt the need to address it on multiple occasions?



It was in fact a major problem in Israel that many women were experiencing. If a Jewish man refuses to give his wife a *get*, his wife becomes an *agunah* (which means anchored or chained in Hebrew.) She cannot remarry under traditional Jewish law. If she were to marry the marriage would be an adulterous marriage, the man that marries her would have been an adulterer and any children produced in that marriage receives the status of *mamzer*, which had massive repercussions on the children. Without the “get” the priest would not allow these women to remarry so they remained “chained” to their husbands.

## **Joseph, the just man**

Matthew 1:19 (KJV) “Then Joseph her husband, **being a just man**, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.”

Joseph was described as a just man meaning he would have kept the law of Moses. Joseph and Mary would’ve signed their marriage agreement (ketubah) before becoming betrothed (*kiddushin*) as required in Deuteronomy 24:1. This document would’ve made Mary a married woman even though no vows (*nissuin – the wedding*) had been exchanged and thus a divorce would’ve been required by the law to settle the binding agreement and go their separate ways. Mary being found with child would’ve been a violation of their marriage agreement, the status of the woman whether virgin, widowed, or divorced was always disclosed during the arrangements with the bride’s father. Mary, now being legally married, to be found with child after signing the ketubah would have been a breach of contract and would’ve caused Joseph to be defiled according to the law, Deuteronomy 24:4. A betrothed (espoused) woman is considered by the law of Moses to be a married woman as explained in Deuteronomy 22:24, which would have made Mary guilty of adultery if her pregnancy was consensual.

Deuteronomy 22: (KJV)

23. “If a damsel that is **a virgin be betrothed unto an husband**, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

24. Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled **his neighbour’s wife**: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.”

If Mary was pregnant while unwed (single), before signing the *ketubah*, she would not have been guilty of adultery with the law of adultery only applying to married women. A child birthed in that scenario also would not be a *mamzer*. Laws protected the woman and her family’s reputation

from shame by claiming a false breach of contract (Deuteronomy 22). In such cases, the man was whipped, fined, and required to pay damages to the woman's father, and he was never able to divorce her.

Deuteronomy 22:18 (ESV) "Then the elders of that city shall take the man and whip him,"

Deuteronomy 22:19 (HNV) "and **they shall fine him** one hundred shekels of silver, and give them to the father of the young lady, because he has brought up an evil name on a virgin of Yisrael: and **she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.**"

We focus on Joseph not making Mary a public example or him deciding to divorce Mary "privily." However, another important detail is that Joseph, being just, was going to divorce Mary and not abandon her making her *agunah*.

### **Agunah (chained women)**

The term *agunah* (pl. *agunot*) refers to a Jewish woman who is separated from her husband but is unable to obtain a legal Jewish divorce from him, leaving her barred from remarriage under Judaism's adultery laws.

The "*agunah* crisis" is still a major problem in the Jewish community even today because of this loophole. The men labeled "get refusers" continue to take advantage of these loopholes. Though couples are divorced through civil courts, the priest still requires a *get* to remarry the woman. Men have other alternatives because of the laws of polygamy although polygamy is no longer practiced. This loophole has affected countless women since the law of Moses was established.

Timesofisrael.com has a shocking case of a man named Meir Gorodetsky who was released from prison in 2019 after being imprisoned for refusing to grant his wife a divorce. He faced "unprecedented criminal charges over his recalcitrance" and opted to spend 19 years in prison rather than grant a *get*. The article is entitled "Longest-jailed Israeli divorce-refuser freed after 19 years" by Marissa Newman.

Jesus was not changing the law the Moses. He was addressing the loophole in the law; men had taken advantage of since the days of Moses. He was teaching the Jewish men present from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea, and *from* beyond Jordan that they must keep the entire law of Moses.

## **Except it be for fornication?**

Matthew 5:32-32 (KJV) “But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, **saving for the cause of fornication**, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

Matthew 19:9-9 (KJV) “And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, **except [it be] for fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

So then how does Jesus’ statement of “saving for the cause of fornication” make sense?

The law of adultery requires the woman and the man (the adulteress and the adulterer) to be killed. They were to be stoned to death or strangled.

Leviticus 20:10 “And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer, and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”

The act of adultery is the exception to the law of divorce. In order for the *ketubah* to be settled, it required the husband to divorce his wife or die. But if the woman was found guilty of adultery, then she was put to death. There was no requirement for the *ketubah* to be settled.

The *ketubah* outlined the financial obligation of the husband to the bride but not vis versa. Through the death of the adulteress wife, the man became free from his financial obligation. Fornication was the only exception to Jesus’ scenario because there was no need to divorce a dead wife. Or if the woman was suspected of fornication, then divorce was mandatory. In such cases, the woman forfeited her *ketubah*, but she was still entitled to receive her dowry.

The search “ketubah, ketubbah” on Jewishencyclopedia.com explains under the section “Ketubah Forfeited” that “the woman forfeited her right to the settlement made upon her in the *ketubah* not only when she was found guilty of adultery or of antenuptial incontinence, but also when she committed wrongs or follies of a less serious character.”

## **The Conclusion**

Jesus began his teaching by stating adultery is wrong in God’s eye. He then explains lusting after your neighbor’s wife (married woman) is also adultery. Jesus further explained adultery affects the

entire body causing it to stumble. So, the sin of adultery cannot be ignored and must be cut off for the sake of the nation. Jesus then concluded by explaining adulterous marriages are also adultery in God's eyes. Without a legal divorce through the court as required by Moses, if the woman was to remarry that marriage would be in an adulterous marriage. Jesus was not changing the law of Moses, establishing new laws, or teaching something contrary to the law, He was telling them to keep the law.

John 7:19 (KJV) **“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?”**

# The **DIVORCED** CHRISTIAN

"I want my people healed" was the mandate the Lord spoke to Rev. Darius Good. There are many erroneous teachings on the subject of divorce in the church. The majority of these teachings are based on Jesus changing the law of Moses regarding divorce, even though Jesus clearly stated in Matthew 5:17 that He did not come to change the law. Unfamiliarity with the law of Moses have lead to conclusions that misinterprets Jesus' teachings and debates with the Jewish religious leaders. Many teachers on the subject of divorce do not know the difference between the law of adultery and the laws on an adulterous marriage and how this relates to Jesus teachings in Matthew 5 and 19. In this book we will take a look at divorce throughout the scriptures. We will look at family laws, required documents, and proceedings of the Jewish court established by Moses. We will explore the error in translation that has led to gross misunderstanding of the scriptures and we will examine Jewish customs, practices, and laws that are overlooked or unknown in current teachings that will bring clarity to Jesus' teachings on divorce. Many Christians have experienced the devastation of divorce. In addition to hurt and shame, many Christians wrestle with tremendous condemnation. Fresh revelation will bring understanding and freedom from guilt and shame. If you are a divorced Christian that is plagued by shame and condemnation, this book will bring healing and deliverance through the power of God's word.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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