



FEED MY SHEEP

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Issue #3

January 1999

God's Divorce—Phase Two

In the previous issue we showed how the Creator of the universe, Yahweh¹ God, chose the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (i.e., the Israelites) to be his wife. It is generally understood that this marriage was in a spiritual and a metaphorical sense, and yet this is not entirely so. There were certainly literal and physical aspects to the divine marriage as well—an obvious example being that the Virgin Mary was physically impregnated by the Most High God! (Lk. 2:28-35) The result was the birth of the God-man, Jesus the Christ.

We showed how after the death of King Solomon in 921 B.C., God “split” his nation-wife, Israel, into two wives: the House of Israel and the House of Judah. Each became a separate nation comprising respectively the Kingdom of Israel (with ten of the twelve tribes giving allegiance thereto) and the Kingdom of Judah (with two tribes giving allegiance).² The direct cause of the split was the nation's idolatry, which God equated to spiritual adultery. The indirect cause of the split, however, was because God had a long-range Plan in mind. Though both Houses were “whoring around,” God decided to divorce only one of them—the northern House of Israel. This culminated in 721 B.C. We noted that although her treacherous sister Judah was even worse, God did not divorce this wife! Why not?

It was all part of the Plan. God appears to always follow his own laws. Before the foundation of the world (literally, “before the ages commenced”), God planned to send himself in the form of his son in order to redeem and save his wife and save the world in the process. In order for the savior to be born in the form of a man, God needed a wife. He chose the children of Israel. Then, of the descendants of Israel, he chose the tribe of Judah. Of them, he chose to be born of a direct descendant of King David, a virgin named Mary who was betrothed to one Joseph of

Nazareth.

Why did God not divorce Judah? Because if God had also divorced the Judah-wife, then his son, Jesus, the King of the Universe, would have been born out of wedlock; i.e., he would have been born illegitimately, thus disqualifying him as the legitimate heir of his father, Yahweh. In late twentieth century America, births out of wedlock are common and very little stigma is attached to it anymore, but it was not always this way. Throughout most of history, the matter of legitimate birth was very important to all civilized societies. This was especially so when it came to the rights of inheritance in a family, and it was of utmost importance when it came to the rights of inheritance concerning the “first family” of the nation—the monarchy. Bloody internecine wars, assassinations, and dark intrigues in the royal court often surrounded the matter of succession to the king.

Judah's divorce declared by Jesus.

But Judah did not escape the judgment of divorce either. When the mission of Jesus at his first advent was nearly complete, he then pronounced the divorce of the House of Judah. It happened this way: On Palm Sunday, Jesus was received and acclaimed by the people in a triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He then went into the temple and drove out the moneychangers, which may have been the “last straw” as far as his enemies were concerned, and they then proceeded to plan his capture and death. That evening he and his twelve apostles left Jerusalem and stayed overnight in the nearby village of Bethany.

Mat 21:18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee hence-

forward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

This was not simply a matter of Jesus wanting fruit for breakfast and getting upset at a fig tree because it did not have any figs on it yet. It was too early in the season for figs to be ripe! Jesus had a very specific reason for cursing the fig tree. This was a prophecy! To understand it, we need to go back to

Jeremiah's Vision.

Jeremiah 24:1 YHWH shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of YHWH, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

2 One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

Although in other places in Scripture figs could symbolize all (or portions of) Israel—as could grapes, olives, wheat, barley, etc.—here God is showing Jeremiah a very specific application of the fig symbol. It applies here to the Judah nation, to the two kinds of Judahites which will be found therein.

3 Then said unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

4 Again the word of YHWH came unto me, saying,

5 Thus saith YHWH, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.

6 For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up.

7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am YHWH: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

The first kind of Judahites are those whom God sends into captivity to Babylon for the 70 year period.

These “figs” accept the judgment of God for their sins and the sins of their fathers. Notice that God says this punishment is corrective in nature—it is “for their good.” In verse 6 he declares that he “will plant them and not pluck them up.” This refers to the fact that the families, the descendants of these “good figs” would become Christians, because in v. 7 God promises that they would “know” God, that he would be their God, and they would be his people. After the first advent of Christ, this can only apply to Christian believers.

John 5:23 ... He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him

I cannot help but point out also the very stupendous statement of the sovereignty of God in v. 7: it is not a matter of anyone “making a decision for Christ.” No, God always initiates the process. He first “give(s) them a heart to know me;” then, our so-called “decision” is only a response to what God has done, for then we “shall return unto [God].” If he did not give us the heart to know him, we would not know him. It is that simple.

Thus, the good figs are those people who have the right attitude, the right spirit, the right mindset towards their punishment as exiles in Babylon. They accept it for their good. They are sharply contrasted with the Judahites who are classified as the evil figs.

8 And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith YHWH, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt:

These represent those who have a bad attitude towards God's just judgment upon them. They refuse to accept it. Some go down to Egypt to try to avoid the punishment. Some remain in the land and try to fight the Babylonians. In other words, they are fighting against the stick with which their father is chastising them. Because of their stiff-necked refusal to accept the punishment decreed, God declares:

9 And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

These verses had a fulfillment at the time of Jeremiah. But they were to have a greater fulfillment shortly after the time of Christ, and they are having another fulfillment in our day during our captivity to Mystery Babylon (Rev. 17). But our focus today is upon the first advent of

Christ, so let us examine it in more detail.

As already mentioned, the good figs at the time of Christ would represent those Judahites (including Benjaminites and Levites) who turned their hearts to the Lord, that is, they became Christ-followers. The bad figs manifested in those who refused the savior. (**John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.**) Indeed, there was an admixture of Edomites among the true Judahites, and all are called “Jews” in our New Testaments today, but not all the Christ-haters and Christ-deniers were Edomite Judahites; many were Israelite-Judahites. Caiaphas, the high priest, for one, had to have been an Israelite Levite, to fulfill the Old Testament type of the high priest sacrificing the Passover lamb, in this case, the true Lamb of God.

It was concerning these “bad figs” who refused him—whether Edomite- or Israelite-Judahites—that Jesus was prophesying when he cursed the fig tree. He was announcing the soon-coming fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy, specifically, vs. 9 and 10 above—that these people, who would henceforth come to be known to us as “Jews,” would be scattered into all the world “for their hurt,” that they would be despised and taunted, that they would be considered a “cursed” people. All this is true still to this day concerning this people called “Jews.” The “fig tree” nation of the Jews came to an abrupt end in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The Jews who were not slaughtered in the destruction by Titus’ Roman armies were scattered hither and yon...and have complained about their plight ever since.³

But a monumental fact which is often overlooked is that Jesus’ cursing of the fig tree, was effectively the divorce decree of the Judah wife, carried out in 70 A.D. When God married Israel at Mount Sinai, she promised obedience to her husband. He promised her, among other things, the kingdom. When God divorced Israel (the ten-tribed nation), one of the results was the removal of the kingdom from her.

Hosea 1:4 And said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

Another indication that Jesus was indeed declaring a divorce decree to Judah is evidenced in Mat. 21.

Mat. 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [Judah], and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

If the kingdom was removed from Israel at their divorce, it follows that the same would happen to Judah at her divorce. The context of Jesus’ statement here is very enlightening. We had spoken earlier of the importance of

legitimacy in regard to inheritance rights, especially as concerning a monarchy (i.e., kingdom). In Matthew 21, Jesus was telling a parable in the presence of the wicked leaders of the Judah nation. Jesus is the son in the parable; the wicked leaders of the Judah nation are the husbandmen:

Mat. 21:38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

By the way, this matter of the inheritance is no small matter. It is not about some warm, fuzzy, vague pie-in-the-sky, go-to heaven-when-you-die, type of inheritance. Jesus is the heir of the world, (and the kingdom *of* heaven) and this inheritance he intends to share with his wife.

39 And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. ...

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. ...

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

The only reason Judah was not divorced much earlier along with her sister, Israel, is that she had to be legitimately married to Yahweh *in order to give legitimate birth to the son of God*. That having been done, she was now (in 70 A.D.) also sent packing out of God’s house, the old land of Palestine. But God was not concerned over his empty house; he had known for a long time that this little shack was too small for the family that he intended to have. He had a much larger house in mind, not Palestine with its cramped “forty acres,” but a Texas-sized ranch. It would be the second Promised Land. But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

Remarriage promised to Israel!

There is much more significance to God’s marriage and divorces which must be discussed first. Last issue, we quoted one verse of God’s law regarding divorce (Deut. 24:1). Let us return there and read it again with its fuller context now.

KJV 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.

3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;

4 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 YHWH: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which YHWH thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

What we wish to focus on at this juncture is how these statutes apply to Yahweh-God and his wives, Israel and Judah. To summarize the above, verse 1 allows for divorce; verse 2 allows for remarriage. (For those who have been taught otherwise in their churches, we suggest you request our two-tape message, tapes #125 & 126: *Divorce and Remarriage*, to clarify some confusing passages in the New Testament which appear to contradict the laws here in Deuteronomy. They do not contradict. \$8 offering.) Verse 3 and 4 states that if a woman is divorced and she remarries, and if that second husband then divorces her, or if that second husband dies, that the first husband is not permitted to remarry her.

God had married Israel. Israel whored around with numerous lovers, both before and after the divorce. Although I can find no place in the Scriptures where it states that Israel was "married" to one or more of her lovers, she was certainly "living with" them. The point is that even though the letter of the law in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was not technically violated, certainly the spirit of the law was broken.

If I may digress from the figurative to the literal for a moment, it would be like a situation today where a woman has been divorced, but does not remarry. Yet she "shacks up" with another man (or her former husband lives with another woman; it works both ways). Can the previously divorced couple remarry each other? While it may not technically violate the letter of the law, it certainly violates the spirit of the law.

Applying this principle to God and Israel then, if we accept that Israel, the wife, has violated the spirit of the law, then she is not permitted to remarry God. Is all hope lost for her? Has she "blown it" with her one and only "chance?" Is that why some churches teach that "God is finished with the Israel people now and he has turned to the 'Gentiles' (by which they mean 'non-Israelites')? No! A thousand times "no!" All is of God's doing and is part of his marvelous Plan.

True, she sinned; and she is paying the price with the judgments put upon her nationally. But all hope is not lost. God actually prophesied that he will remarry his former wife. When Hosea prophesied the judgment that the northern House of Israel would be divorced (Hos. 1 & 2:2), yet almost in the same breath, God also promised that he would remarry this same wife whom he was about to divorce! Speaking to the ten-tribed House of Israel, God said:

Hos. 2:19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth⁴ thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know YHWH.

What! How can God possibly remarry this whoring, divorced wife without violating his own laws on remarriage? Will he remarry her, knowing she has been "sleeping around?" And what about the "Gentiles," then? Are they left out in the cold? *To be continued.*

ENDNOTES

1. (For the benefit of new readers, we will continue to run this footnote for a number of issues.) In most English Bibles, when one sees the word "Lord" in either all caps [LORD] or in upper and lower caps [LORD], it indicates that the Bible translators have removed the sacred name of our God, which is YHWH (as transliterated from the Hebrew letters, and pronounced Yahweh {Yah-way}). It will be our general practice to re-insert the sacred name where it belongs, either as the tetragrammaton (YHWH) or as the pronounced name (Yahweh).

2. At this point we are trying to keep it relatively simple to understand, so we are not going to confuse some novice readers by delving into the fine details concerning the tribe of Levi, and the 12 tribes of Israel versus the 13 tribes, and other complexities. Both are correct when understood in their proper context.

3. Again for the sake of simplicity, we will not introduce the Khazar connection at this point of our studies.

4. Betrothal is a contract to marriage. In Old Testament times and at the time of Jesus' birth, it was considered virtually the same as marriage, lacking only the ceremony and the consummation.

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