

Summary of Divorce Remarriage understanding

Studies can get quite long and sometimes the length itself is a hindrance to actually communicating well. Here is a short summary of why I believe scripture teaches divorce is permissible between believers and unbelievers.

1 Corinthians 7:12 - I, not the Master, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

Notice it says, "I, not the Master say..." regarding divorce being forbidden between believers and unbelievers.

There must be situations where the Master allows divorce, or Paul would never have said "I, not the Master say.." If divorce were never permitted, he would have to say, "Not I, but the Master says.."

Paul is right, the Master never commands a believer and unbeliever to remain married. In fact, He forbids the marriage altogether.

Ezra 9:1-2 - When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

² "For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this **trespass.**"

Because the Torah forbids it, marriages between believers and unbelievers are called a "trespass." Solomon did so, and fell into idolatry because of it, as did his son Rehoboam. Thus, the holy seed was corrupted.

Nehemiah also spoke against it:

Nehemiah 13:25-27 - So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by Elohim, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves.

²⁶ "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his Mighty One; and Elohim made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin.

²⁷ "Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our Mighty One by marrying pagan women?"

Thus, it would have been wrong for Paul, or anyone else, to say that the Master commands believers to remain married to unbelievers. He said "I, not the Master says..."

The specific situation Paul was addressing, however, is when someone was once an unbeliever and they became a believer while still married to an unbeliever. His advice, not command, was to remain together just in case the other partner might get saved.

But in other cases, the expectation is that believers will divorce the unbeliever:

Ezra 10:10-12 - Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel.

¹¹ "Now therefore, make confession to Yahweh Elohim of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives."

Ezra 10:19 - And they gave their promise that they would put away their wives; and *being guilty, they presented* a ram of the flock as their trespass offering.

Notice it says, "separate yourselves from the peoples of the land." This meant divorce. Also, in the cases where a two believers are married, and the one spouse becomes an unbeliever, scripture commands:

1 Corinthians 5:11-13 - But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner-- not even to eat with such a person.

¹² For what *have I to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

¹³ But those who are outside Elohim judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

Scripture says not to keep company with them, let alone be married to them, and to "put away from yourselves the evil

person.” This is in perfect line with what was done in the book of Ezra when separated themselves from the peoples of the land by putting away their wives.

This is also in perfect line with Yahushua’s statement:

Matthew 19:8-9 - He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

⁹ "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality <Greek word is #4202 ‘Porneia’>, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

In “the beginning” there were no unbelievers. So Yahushua says anyone who divorces his wives, except for “porneia” (A word that does refer to unbelievers [spiritual harlots] in Revelation 14:8, 17:2, 18:3 and 19:2).

The word “Porneia” also traces back to the Hebrew word Zenuth, which refers to spiritual harlots/unbelievers in Num. 14:33; Jer. 3:2, Jer. 3:9; Jer. 13:27; Ezek. 23:27; Ezek. 43:7, Ezek 43:9; and Hos. 4:11; 6:10

So Yahushua’s words are in perfect agreement with the Torah, the book of Ezra, Nehemiah and Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 7.

He said Moshe permitted Israel to divorce their wives because of the hardness of their hearts. If one has a hardened heart, they are not a believer. Thus, Paul was actually not contradicting Moshe. He was saying that when there were hardened hearts in Israel, divorce was indeed permitted, but anyone looking at how it was “in the beginning” when there were no unbelievers, there was no divorce.

So if one is divorced from an unbeliever, is remarriage permitted?

The reason why remarriage is not permitted between two believers who divorce is this: Yahweh did not honor or agree with the divorce.

Because Yahweh did not honor or agree with the divorce, remarriage would be adultery.

If Yahweh did honor the divorce, there is no reason why a remarriage would be adulterous. Since there is no command against the divorce, and there are even cases where divorce is actually commanded, there is no reason why a remarriage would be adultery.

For this reason, Paul says a believer is “under bondage” when there is divorce between believers/unbelievers (1 Corinthians 7:15).

1 Corinthians 7:15 - But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But Elohim has called us to peace

He is correct because Yahweh does not forbid the divorce. He said so when He declared “I, not the Master say..” to stay together.

The Greek word for “bondage” is #1402 Douloo. It is rooted in #1401 Doulos. Doulos comes from #1210 “Deo.” “Deo” means to “bind, or fasten” and is found in

1 Corinthians 7:27 - Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

So the same word family is used in relation to a divorce situation both in verse 10 and verse 27, of the same chapter. Paul’s words are in complete agreement with the rest of scripture.

Thus, in order for me to be in agreement with all of scripture, I must also concur. All of scripture speaks the same message and doctrine. Yahushua only pointed out that in the beginning when there were no unbelievers, there was no divorce. Paul agreed, saying “not I, but the Master” forbids divorce between two believers (1 Corinthians 7:10).

Yahweh Himself divorced unbelieving Israel and married the remnant, the believers. It seems that He would permit others to do the same, for we were made in His image. But they must truly be an unbeliever. If someone is claiming to be a believer but isn’t acting like one, a person must follow the steps in Matthew 18:15-17 and allow the assembly to make a judgment. It’s not for any one individual to decide, it must be an assembly. May He guide us all! Tom Martincic