

DIVORCE & DEUTERONOMY 24
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INTRO: Over the years I have pondered the subject of divorce and remarriage. It is a most difficult subject. In my estimation, Deuteronomy 24 is the one key passage that has been used to allow for divorce. You might turn to that passage.

As I needed to rethink the whole subject recently, my interest was tweaked to restudy this crucial passage. I thought if I could do it in one message, I would give that message now. So I studied the subject once more and want to do what I have wanted to do but have not done before and that is to give one message on Deuteronomy 24.

Now look at Deuteronomy 24:

1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,

2 "when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife,

3 "if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife,

4 "then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

The crux of the whole problem lies in the words in verse, "...because he has found some uncleanness in her." If you study the commentaries you will find there is little agreement as to what is meant by these words. I think it could be well summarized by the words of the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges which says, "The expression is so indefinite that it gave rise to controversy in the Rabbinic schools..." So the schools of thought of Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai are wrestled from this difficult passage.

I. THE PROPOSITION

I want to give a proposition as to the meaning of Deuteronomy 24, both why it was given and what the meaning of the troublesome words is. Before I give that let me give you the general view which has led to the view that divorce is permissible. Let me boil down in brief what most think is the reason why Moses gave Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The idea is that divorce had become so rampant among the Israelites that Moses could not put an end to the evil practices and so to seek to curb those practice he gave this law.

For those, like Rabbi Hillel or Rabbi Shammai, who gave the two major positions on the matter of divorce that were common in Jesus' day this concession to allow for divorce was given to all couples during any time in their lives. I think it must be clear to most that on this issue Rabbi Hillel was not right. He allowed for divorce for almost any reason at all. If God hates divorce, which I believe is the right interpretation of Malachi 2:16, it is not possible that a man could divorce his wife for such trivial things as burning the toast.

I think it is also clear that Shammai is not right. He said one could only divorce very serious issues such as unfaithfulness after having been married. However, Moses law required the death penalty, not divorce, for unfaithfulness. I will argue that Moses' concession to allow for divorce was only for unfaithfulness during the time of betrothal. And one might argue, "Well, the death penalty was also the requirement for unfaithfulness during the betrothal time." And that is true. I will explain later why I hold this view.

There is only one command in Deuteronomy 24. The KJV gives as a command that the man give the divorced wife a certificate of divorce. However, the only command given in this text is that if a man marries a wife and divorces her for the reason given, if she marries another, even if the other man dies, the first man is never to take her back as his wife.

So, I do not find any evidence in Deuteronomy 24 or from history that this command was to curb rampant divorce. I would be happy for any such information if anyone might have it. Some think Moses command to give a writing of

divorcement would help to curb divorce. But the original wording does not give it as a command and indicates they were already giving a certificate of divorce before this passage was given. The only instruction Moses gives is that if a man divorces his wife for the "some uncleanness," he may never take her back to wife again if she marries another even if that man dies. This instruction, it seems, could not affect a lot of marriages.

So here is my proposition: The meaning of the difficult words of Deuteronomy 24 "some uncleanness" is that a man may only divorce his wife if she had been unfaithful before marriage.

IV. THE EVIDENCE FOR THE PROPOSITION

I do not know of any historical evidence for the general view that divorce was rampant in Israel at this time. I believe it is an assumption reasoned from this passage alone. I would be happy for such information if anyone would have it.

So having given the proposition that if a young man claimed that his new wife was not a virgin and it was verified, he could divorce her instead of having her stoned to death as was required in 22:20-21 it falls to me to give evidence for that.

A. Evidence from Genesis 2:23-24:

We go first to Genesis 2:23-24. It says:

23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

I do not know where the Jews began the betrothal system of taking a wife. But the first time betrothal is mentioned in the Bible is in Exodus 21:8, some 2,500 years after creation. It is nowhere instructed in the Bible, so I expect the practice was begun by the Jews. So in Genesis 2:23-24, the marriage includes physical union as is indicated by the one flesh principles.

There is no ground given for divorce once the marriage has taken place. They are one flesh.

I find this as evidence that once a couple becomes one flesh, which happens at marriage, divorce is never again an option.

B. Evidence from Deuteronomy 22:13-21

We go now to Deuteronomy 22. Five cases related to marriage are dealt with in this chapter. The first case relates to the complaint of a husband of a new wife that he has found her not to be a virgin.

1. Charge

In verses 13-15 we have these instructions regarding such a case:

13 "If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her,

14 "and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, 'I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she was not a virgin,'

15 "then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out the evidence of the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate.

2. Charge Proven False

If the charge is proven false we have the results of that in verses 16-19 like this:

16 "And the young woman's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her.

17 'Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, "I found your daughter was not a virgin," and yet these are the evidences of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

18 *"Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him;*

19 *"and they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days.*

Now it says if the charge is false, he shall be punished and pay a fine, and then she shall be his wife and he may not divorce her all the days of his life.

Now why does it say he may not divorce her all the days of his life? I propose that it is because the only reason God would ever allow for divorce is unfaithfulness before marriage. If it was proved that she had not been unfaithful before marriage, then he could never divorce her.

3. Charge Proven True

However, in the same case, if the charge is proved true she was to be stoned to death. Verses 20-21 then say:

20 *"But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman,*

21 *"then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.*

If the charge was true, the young woman was to be stoned to death. If she was stoned, no divorce would ever be needed because she is dead and he is free to marry again.

I believe that Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is a concession to the requirement that in this case a man might divorce her instead of having her stoned. We will see that later. The concession is not for marriages that have once gone past this first day.

C. Evidence from Deuteronomy 22:28-29

The fifth case in Deuteronomy 22 relates to our subject and is found in verses 28-29. It says:

28 *"If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out,*

29 *"then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.*

In this case, it is fornication, unfaithfulness before marriage with consent. This is not a case of rape because a different word is used when it says he *seizes her* than the word in verse 25 where he *forces her*.

In a case of a young couple where neither one is betrothed, and they commit fornication, then the young man has to pay a fine and they shall become husband and wife, and he may never divorce her. Why not? The only reason for which it would ever be allowed was if she had been unfaithful with someone other than the one she was betrothed to. In the case given here the man could never claim she had been unfaithful to him because he was unfaithful with her.

D. Evidence from Deuteronomy 24:1-4

That brings us now to Deuteronomy 24:1-4. This passage is the crux of the whole divorce debate. It believe it is this passage both Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai abused and through which divorce became a common thing in Israel. Their views arose just before the time of Christ, some 1,500 years after Moses. In my view they distorted it to refer to those who had been married for some time and the husband became unhappy about something regarding his wife. What that something is, few can agree on.

The difficulty of Deuteronomy 24:1 is this: What is by the words "some uncleanness" in verse 1?" In Hebrew the words are *ervah dabar*. There is little agreement among Bible scholars regarding the meaning of these words.

1. General views

What then is the general view among Christians regarding the meaning of *ervah dabar*, translated as "some uncleanness"? For the sake of time I will skip the views of commentators of these troublesome words who hold that divorce is allowed for some reason during the time of married life, and not specifically for unfaithfulness during betrothal.

You might study the commentaries and read various opinions. Let me just say they are things like some defect in the body or some filthy hateful thing or some loathful distemper of body etc. I find these views totally unacceptable if God hates divorce.

2. My view

My view of the meaning of these words is that in the Jewish system of betrothal, the marriage contract or vows took place at the time of betrothal. They were considered husband and wife at the betrothal. The wedding came later, often a year or so later. When a man took a wife and on the wedding night he claimed his wife was not a virgin, he could bring that claim to the elders. The father would have to give evidence this was not true and they had their ways. If his claim was true, he could divorce her. This, I believe, is the *ervah dabar*, the some uncleanness.

But if the husband accepted the woman as his wife after the first night, from that day onward no divorce was allowed. I believe Moses concession in Deuteronomy 24 does not relate to divorce after the woman had been accepted. This concession relates to that one-day window in which the husband could give his complaint. If that did not happen, he was now married for life. No divorce.

So, what about Deuteronomy 24? Here is what I see was happening. When a man married a wife and she had been untrue, instead of stoning her he divorced her. Then another man married her and he too let her go for the same reason, or if he passed away, the first husband would remarry this same woman.

By not commanding that the woman was to be stoned, the Lord was allowing them to divorce in such a case, but this was not His original intent. Jesus said it was their hardness of heart that caused them to divorce instead of having her stoned.

I would expect that Moses, as in other cases, went to the Lord about this and the Lord allowed divorce in such cases but instructed Moses that the first man must never take the same woman as a wife again. It would seem to me that such a case would not be common.

So with this concession to allow for divorce in this one case, a young man now had three choices if he discovered his new wife had been unfaithful:

1. He could remain about it and keep her. We will see this later.
2. He could have her stoned.
3. He could divorce her.

Now is there any ground to see that Deuteronomy 24:1-4 speaks of the same case as 22:13? Consider first the similarity of the passages. In 22:13 the case clearly has to do with unfaithfulness during betrothal. Now consider the similarity of the two cases. Deuteronomy 22:13 says, "If any man take a wife and goes in to her." 24:1 says, "When a man takes a wife and marries her." Both take place at the very beginning of marriage not some later time in the marriage.

Then in 22:13 it says, "...and hates her and gives occasions of speech against her, and brings up an evil name upon her." In 24:1 it says, "...and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her." The similarity is quite clear.

Now 24:1 says the man has found some uncleanness in her. The Hebrew words are, *ervah dabar*. These are the crucial words of the whole debate. I would translate these words something like he has found something "to bring a charge of indecency." In

22:13 the Hebrew wording is *aleelaw dabar*. I would translate that as he brings "a charge of wantonness, or shameful conduct." Again there is considerable similarity.

Now 24:1 does not specify what the meaning of *ervah dabar* is. But 22:13 clearly tells us that *aleelaw dabar* is the claim that she is not a virgin. I find this as evidence that 22:13 and 24:1 speak of the same case.

Now in 24:1-4, the command is that if one man sends her away because he brings a charge of indecency against her, and a second man marries her and sends her away for the same reason or the second man remains married and then dies, the first man may not take her back again.

Now it appears to me that reason the second man divorced her was for the same reason as the first man. The evidence for this is that in 22:13 it says that if the man *detests* his wife after the wedding night, and the reason for the detesting is clearly given and that is that she is not a virgin. In 24:3 it also says of the second husband that he *detests* her. The same word is used in both texts. However, 24:3 does not give further explanation but 22:13 does and it is for unfaithfulness.

Imagine, say some 2 million people traveling through the wilderness, the number of marriages that would have taken place. Now it is possible that when there were so many marriages that in some cases it was very difficult to prove if the young lady was truly a virgin or not. It may be for some such reason that the Lord allowed them to put away a young wife instead of having her stoned. We are given no information on the context of this concession.

What seems to be clear is that God's desire was that He wanted to have the wife stoned if she was not a virgin. But in the case where they went ahead and divorced them, by not condemning that practice, He was permitting it.

If this is correct, there was only one day in the life of a man that he could divorce his wife and this was only in the case of a young woman who had not been married before was found to have been unfaithful. If that day passed and the husband did not bring such a charge or could not bring such a charge, then divorce was never possible, as we saw in two cases earlier.

Once more, I see this as evidence that *ervah dabar* refers to *pornia*, fornication or unfaithfulness before marriage.

E. Evidence from Matthew 1

We go now to Matthew chapter 1. We are now some 1,500 years after the time Moses wrote Deuteronomy 24. Joseph, a just man in Galilee, was betrothed to Mary, who became the mother of Jesus. No doubt he is excited and busy preparing a place for them to live at his father's house. He is waiting with anticipation for the day when he will go to her house and bring her back to his father's house. After the wedding, they will live here together.

So we read Matthew 1:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

While he is busy preparing, devastating news comes. Mary, his betrothed, is with child!

Verse 19:

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

Joseph was a just man. It seems he would not simply accept her as his wife, so he is pondering his other two options and has decided to divorce her instead of have her stoned, which would make her a public example.

It would seem from his decision to divorce her that this was a well-known practice and not objectionable to the family, community or spiritual leadership. Albert Barnes says of the sin of fornication, "In Egypt it was punished by cutting off the nose of the adulteress; in Persia the nose and ears were cut off; in Judea the punishment was death by stoning."

Verse 20:

20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

Here we see evidence from the Lord Himself that a young man in such a case could choose to marry the young woman or keep her if he discovered she had been unfaithful. Since the angel of the Lord recommended this, that shows God's approval as well. So with the angel recommending that he take Mary as his wife, he chooses this option.

Verse 24:

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

An amazing man, this Joseph! But if God did not allow for divorce in such cases, would He Himself not have

violated His own law? But notice it is the angel that says he should not be afraid to take Mary as his wife. So clearly, accepting such a woman as his wife in spite of the fact that she is expecting was acceptable to the Jews and much more so, to God Himself.

Again, this is evidence for the view of the *ervah dabar* of Deuteronomy 24 is as I have suggested.

F. Evidence from Matthew 5

That brings us to Matthew 5. In this chapter Jesus has been pointing out the spirit not the letter of the law. Paul teaches that the law is spiritual. The Jews made many errors because they failed to see the spirit of the law. So you will read here numerous times that Jesus says, "You have heard...but I say to you." He is correcting their views. He corrects the error of their Jewish learning and in 5:31-32 He points out their error in the matter of divorce.

We'll read verses 31-32:

31 *"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'*

32 *"But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.*

Jesus is saying that the Jewish practice of verse 31 is wrong. They said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce." Well, what was wrong with that? Is that not what Deuteronomy 24 said? Here is my conclusion: They were wrong in saying this was a command, it was not. And they were wrong in not giving the right qualification to the allowance for divorce.

So Jesus now explains the difficult words *ervat debar*. He explains the reason the man detests the woman. It is the case of *pornia*. Now if the word *pornia*, which almost all say means physical immorality of any kind, is a broad term, then there is nothing wrong with what the Jews were doing, at least those who followed Rabbi Shammai.

But Jesus indicates the Jews were wrong so He says that divorce is only allowed in the case of *pornea*, that is unfaithfulness before marriage. Here, I believe, is Jesus' interpretation of *ervah dabar*. Also, as I see it, Jesus is saying that the reason the man of Deuteronomy 24 "detested" his new wife is the claim that she is not a virgin.

Now it is interesting to me that the word "but" of verse 32 is the original word "de." The conjunction "and" indicates a continuation of the same. The conjunction "but" indicates a contrast. We do not have a conjunction to translate the Greek conjunction "de." It is a slight conversative, somewhere between "and" and "but."

Jesus is not saying, "The Jews say this BUT I say this." He is saying, "The Jews say this though that really is not quite right. They need to understand that the *ervah dabar* refers to *pornea*, unfaithfulness before marriage, not after.

Again, I see Jesus' teaching in this passage as evidence for the view I have proposed for Deuteronomy 24.

G. Evidence Matthew 19

That brings us now to a most crucial passage, Matthew 19. And again I believe it gives more evidence for the view I have suggested.

Verse 1:

1 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

2 And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

3 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

The Jewish leaders were getting more and more hostile with Jesus and tried to trap or test Him. And now they will test Him regarding divorce. And it may be that

here they are testing to see if He agrees with Rabbi Hillel, who allowed for divorce for very trivial reasons; or if He agrees with Rabbia Shammai. When they questioned if it was lawful to divorce for just any reason, that is a reference to the school of thought of Rabbi Hillel.

Jesus then gives His answer in verses 4-5 like this:

4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

5 "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

Let me give Jesus' words in my own words. "Why would you Pharisees ask me such a simple question? I mean, have you never even read Genesis 2? This is most amazing. Your question is answered right there." Jesus then explains what Genesis 2:23-24 means in verse 6. If God makes two one flesh, the conclusion is you are commanded not to divorce at all. Verse 6:

6 "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Now, from Jesus' perspective, the question is answered completely. It needs no addition. But if what He has said is true, then neither Rabbi Hillel nor Shammai are right, and the Pharisees are wrong too! But all three groups did not get their view from Genesis 2, they got it from wrongly interpreting Deuteronomy 24. This is where all errors are made.

Verse 7:

7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

Here we see where they made their errors. First they said, "Why did Moses then command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away." We have seen already that Moses did not command such a thing.

By the way, let me just say that allowing divorce in such cases was not actually a Mosaic exception. I believe Moses was expressing what God allowed. Moses only wrote it down.

So look at how Jesus points out their error in verse 8:

8 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."

I have wondered, could it be that the Lord permitted divorce in such cases because the Jews had come to use the betrothal system of marriage? In this system, the covenant took place some time before the actual marriage. This betrothal bound them together as husband and wife, but the marriage had not yet been consummated. The betrothal system then allowed time for sin to take place between the betrothal and the wedding day. Could it be that the Lord allowed for divorce if unfaithfulness took place before the wedding, because physical union had not yet taken place?

However that was, only if the woman was unfaithful during this time a divorce was permitted, and it was a concession to having her stoned to death. After Moses allowed divorce in such cases, it became a practice in Israel as Joseph in Matthew 1 indicates.

But Jesus will now explain further in verse 9:

9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for (pornia, unfaithfulness before marriage), and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

If I am correct that the Lord through Moses allowed divorce for unfaithfulness before marriage and this unfaithfulness is the *ervah dabar* of Deuteronomy 24, we could read verse 9 like this:

9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for pornia (the ervah dabar, or unfaithfulness before marriage), and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

If the interpretation is correct, He is then saying, "Not only did Moses say it, I say it as well." If this is correct, the evidence now is overwhelming!

So we ask, is there evidence that this interpretation is correct? First, this ends Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees. It seems they leave disappointed, knowing that Jesus agrees with neither Rabbi Hillel nor Shammai, and so He doesn't agree with them either.

Second, if you study the harmonizing passages, verse 10 takes place later in some house. Jesus' answer to the Pharisees has caused grave concern for His own disciples. They say this in verse 10:

10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

What did Jesus' disciples understand Him to say? They understood Him to say, "If anyone gets divorced for any reason other than unfaithfulness before marriage, ponia; then they are living in a continual state of adultery." It seems to me that they are so used to the common views of the day that even they find Jesus' answer shocking! They are astonished! It brings them to one conclusion: If that is the case of a man with his wife, then it is better to never marry. There is no ground for divorce. There is no out!

But I believe the opposite is true: If the case of the man is such with his wife, now it is safe to marry! At least the wife is now safe!

Even if Jesus had only given marital unfaithfulness or any serious issue as ground for divorce, He would have been in agreement with Shammai and the Pharisees and the disciples would not have been shocked.

Verse 11:

11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:

Not all can receive this saying that it is better not to marry. Almost all should get married. That is how God set it out to be and is also what all honest people know.

But if some can receive this saying, who are they?
Verse 12:

12 "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

Let me just say to that what Jesus means is that this saying, *it is better not to marry*, is only for some people. And He says some are born like that. Some have had this done to themselves for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Jesus then says, "Whoever can receive that saying, let him receive it." In other words, most of you should get married. There is an option when a man cannot have a wife. But from Jesus' words it is clear that there have been cases where men who were truly committed to God resorted to this. I ask, how serious then is marriage?

But to conclude on this passage, once more, I take this passage as more evidence for the view of *ervah dabar* I have taken.

H. Evidence Mark 10

We go not to Mark 10. It is a parallel account to Matthew 19 with one notable exception. For the sake of time I'll leaven out verses 1-9. The wording is basically the same as Matthew 19:1-6. We'll start in verse 10 and notice how plain it makes divorce and remarriage in verses 11-12:

11 So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her."

12 "And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

You will not get a more clear and concise answer to the question on divorce than this. Let me remind you that it says nothing about whether this takes place by a believer or a non-believer. However, there is a major difference between this account and Matthew's and that is that Mark leaves out the exception clause.

That raises this pressing question: Why does Mark leave out the exception clause? Or, for that matter, we might ask, why does Matthew include it? I think it is generally agreed that Matthew includes it because he is writing to the Jews who used the betrothal method of marriage. It seems evident that Mark leaves it out because he is writing to Gentiles, and they do not have a betrothal system. Once they marry, the whole process is complete. For Gentiles, the covenant is made on the wedding day, not a year or more before.

Again, I find this as evidence for the view I have expressed of *ervah dabar*.

I. Evidence Luke 16:18

Luke's Gospel shortens the whole passage of Matthew 19:1-9 and Mark 10:1-12 to one verse and it is this:

18 "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.

Once again, it is very clear and concise but once more he leaves out the exception clause. And once again, it is viewed that he had a Gentile audience in mind. And once again, I find this as evidence for the proposition I have given. How then is it with divorce and remarriage among Gentiles? No divorce!

CONCL: To conclude, if anyone can give me some historical evidence for the common view that Deuteronomy 24 is given because divorce and remarriage was a big problem during the Exodus, I would be happy to receive that. I do not find historical evidence for that.

However, I have given a number of evidences for the view that the Mosaic concession, which is really a divine concession, refers to unfaithfulness before marriage. It is the *ervah dabar*. It is *pornia*. I do not have time to deal with it here, but I see *pornia* as a narrow term, not a broad term. To see this, you may study 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21.

This message does not deal with all problems related to divorce and remarriage, it only deals with the issue related to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, but I see this as the most crucial passage of all related to the subject of divorce and remarriage.

