

How did Jesus answer the Pharisee when asked about divorce?

1. Matthew's view – Matt 19:3-9

³Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"

⁴"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' ⁵and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" ⁶"So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." ⁷"Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" ⁸Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

馬太福音19:3-9 有法利賽人來試探耶穌說、人無論甚麼緣故、都可以休妻麼。耶穌回答說、那起初造人的、是造男造女、並且說、『因此、人要離開父母、與妻子連合、二人成爲一體。』這經你們沒有念過麼。既然如此、夫妻不再是兩個人、乃是一體的了、所以神配合的、人不可分開。法利賽人說、這樣、摩西爲甚麼吩咐給妻子休書、就可以休他呢。耶穌說、摩西因爲你們的心硬、所以許你們休妻、但起初並不是這樣。我告訴你們、凡休妻另娶的、就是不爲淫亂的緣故、就是犯姦淫了、有人娶那被休的婦人、也是犯姦淫了。

2. Matthew's view – Matt 5:31-32

³¹"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

馬太福音5:31-32 又有話說、人若休妻、就當給他休書。只是我告訴你們、凡休妻的、若不是爲淫亂的緣故、就是叫他作淫婦了。人若要這被休的婦人、也是犯姦淫了。

3. Mark's view – Mark 10:2-12

²Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³"What did Moses command you?" he replied. ⁴They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." ⁵"It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. ⁶"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' ⁷"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, ⁸and the two will become one flesh.' ⁹So they are no longer two, but one. ¹⁰Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." ¹¹When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. ¹²He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. ¹³And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

馬可福音10:2-12 有法利賽人來問他說、人休妻可以不可以、意思要試探他。耶穌回答說、摩西吩咐你們的是甚麼。他們說、摩西許人寫了休書便可以休妻。耶穌說、摩西因爲你們的心硬、所以寫這條例給你們。但從起初創造的時候、神造人是造男造女。因此人要離開父母、與妻子連合、二人成爲一體。既然如此、夫妻不再是兩個人、乃是一體的了。所以神配合的、人不可分開。到了屋裡、門徒就問他這事。耶穌對他們說、凡休妻另娶的、就是犯姦淫、辜負他的妻子。妻子若離棄丈夫另嫁、也是犯姦淫了。

5. Luke's view – Luke 16:18

¹⁸"Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

路加福音16:18 凡休妻另娶的、就是犯姦淫。娶被休之妻的、也是犯姦淫。

6. Paul's view – 1 Cor 7:10-11

¹⁰To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. ¹¹But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

歌林多前書7:10-11 至於那已經嫁娶的、我吩咐他們、其實不是我吩咐乃是主吩咐、說、妻子不可離開丈夫。若是離開了、不可再嫁。或是仍同丈夫和好。丈夫也不可離棄妻子。

- Jesus answered the Pharisee by going back to the original intent of God on marriage.

耶穌用神起初對婚姻的定義來回答

- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul all recorded that re-marriage after a divorce is not allowed. However, Matthew added an exception clause – 'except for marital unfaithfulness'.

馬太、馬可、路加、和保羅都說離婚以後不可以再結婚。只是馬太加上了說、"若不爲淫亂的緣故"

God original intent on marriage?

1. Gen. 2:24

²⁴For this reason a man will **leave** his father and mother and be **united** to his wife, and they will become **one flesh**.

創世記2:24 因此、人要離開父母、與妻子連合、二人成爲一體。

2. Mal. 2:10-16

¹⁰ Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another? ¹¹ Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. ¹² As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord cut him off from the tents of Jacob -even though he brings offerings to the Lord Almighty. ¹³ Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴ You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your **marriage covenant**. ¹⁵ Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

¹⁶ "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

瑪拉基書2:10-16 我們豈不都是一位父麼，豈不是一位神所造的麼，我們各人怎麼以詭詐待弟兄、背棄了神與我們列祖所立的約呢。猶大人行事詭詐、並且在以色列和耶路撒冷中、行一件可憎的事。因為猶大人褻瀆耶和華所喜愛的聖潔、〔或作聖地〕娶事奉外邦神的女子為妻。凡行這事的、無論何人、〔何人原文作叫醒的答應的〕、就是獻供物給萬軍之耶和華、耶和華也必從雅各的帳棚中剪除他。你們又行了一件這樣的事、使前妻歎息哭泣的眼淚、遮蓋耶和華的壇、以致耶和華不再看顧那供物、也不樂意從你們手中收納。你們還說、這是為甚麼呢、因耶和華在你和你幼年所娶的妻中間作見證。他雖是你的配偶、又是你盟約的妻、你卻以詭詐待他。雖然神有靈的餘力能造多人、他不是單造一人麼、為何只造一人呢、乃是他願人得虔誠的後裔。所以當謹守你們的心、誰也不可以詭詐待幼年所娶的妻。耶和華以色列的神說、休妻的事、和以強暴待妻的人、都是我所恨惡的、所以當謹守你們的心、不可行詭詐。這是萬軍之耶和華說的。

3. Numbers 30:2

² When a man makes a **vow** to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.

民數記30:2 人若向耶和華許願、或起誓、要約束自己、就不可食言、必要按口中所出的一切話行。

4. Matt. 19:6

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

馬太福音19:6 既然如此、夫妻不再是兩個人、乃是一體的了、所以神配合的、人不可分開。

- A marriage involves 1) **leave**, 2) **united**, 3) **one flesh**, 4) **covenant**, 5) **vow**, and 6) **joined together**.
婚姻包括 1) 離開, 2) 連合, 3) 一體, 4) 盟約, 5) 許願, 6) 配合。
- A marriage is a covenant. A vow is made. Divorce does not relief the couple from the covenant nor the vow.
婚姻是盟約, 也許了願, 人離婚不等於就脫離了盟約或許過的願。

The exception clause – ‘except for marital unfaithfulness’

- Other translation – fornication, immorality, sexual immorality, unchastity.
 - Greek – *porneia* – used to refer to unlawful sexual activity, including unchastity, prostitution, homosexuality, and incest.
1. The “porneia” of a homosexual marriage – used also in Romans 1 concerning homosexuality.
Re-phrase - 'I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness (*a homosexual marriage involving two men or two women “marrying” each other*), and marries another woman commits adultery.
 2. The “porneia” of an incestuous marriage – used also in 1 Cor. 5 concerning the man in Corinthian church married his father’s wife.
Re-phrase - 'I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness (*a man marrying his mother or his sister*), and marries another woman commits adultery.
 3. The “porneia” of a fraudulent marriage – as in the case of Joseph and Mary that he was about to divorce Mary because she was pregnant. The Jewish marriage starts at the time of betrothal when the bridegroom made agreement to the bride’s father. He will come back later (about 1 year) to take the bride. If the bride is found not to be a virgin, the bridegroom has the right to divorce the bride. Matthew is writing to Jewish readers while Mark, Luke, and Paul are writing to Roman and Greek readers. The Jews understand the problem of “porneia” while the Gentiles would not.
Re-phrase - 'I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness (*concealed immorality before marriage*), and marries another woman commits adultery.
 4. The “porneia” of unfaithfulness in marriage
 - The spirit of marriage is unconditional commitment, with love, forgiving and longsuffering. The couple are united as one flesh. An unfaithfulness in marriage does not constitute a divorce.
 - A marriage covenant is based on unlimited trust and unconditional and lifelong commitment. There are no provisions in a marriage covenant for ending a relationship because of unfaithfulness.

- When the Pharisees came to ask, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" Jesus did answer them by going back to God's original intent. God pictured Himself as married to Israel. Even Israel became unfaithful like an adulterous wife, God still loved Israel when they returned.
- Salvation is compared to the Jewish betrothal and marriage customs. In order for marriage to picture accurately the permanence of a person's redemption, divorce must be prohibited.
- Christians are guilty of spiritual adultery. Yet, Christ will not divorce His bride.

What do we do if we had been divorced?

- Recognize that we have violated the original will of God. We must confess and repent of our wrongdoings. If we repent and return to God, He will bless us, beginning at that point.
- Trust God and do everything possible to restore the previous marriage. It is very unlikely but God is looking for opportunity to show Himself strong towards those whose hearts are perfect towards Him.
- If restoring of previous marriage is not possible, remain unmarried and dedicate ourselves for the service of God.
- If our friends and/or brothers and sisters had sinned, we must help them to understand God's principle and to help them going through this process.
- Remember that we are all sinners, saved by Grace.

Other references

- Marriage between believer and non-believer - 1 Cor 7:15 (bound = douloo – under bondage)
¹⁵But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.
 歌林多前書7:15 倘若那不信的人要離去、就由他離去罷。無論是弟兄、是姐妹、遇著這樣的事、都不必拘束。神召我們原是要我們和睦。
- When does the marriage covenant end? - Bound until one spouse died – 1 Cor 7:39 (bound = deo - binding)
³⁹A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.
 歌林多前書7:39 丈夫活著的時候、妻子是被約束的。丈夫若死了、妻子就可以自由、隨意再嫁。只是要嫁這在主裡面的人。
- Marrying a divorced spouse who had remarried - Deuteronomy 24:1-4
¹ If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, ² and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, ³ and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, ⁴ then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord. Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.
 申命記24:1-4 人若要娶妻以後、見他有甚麼不合理的事、不喜悅他、就可以寫休書交在他手中、打發他離開夫家。婦人離開夫家以後、可以去嫁別人。後夫若恨惡他、寫休書交在他手中、打發他離開夫家、或是要他為妻的後夫死了、打發他去的前夫、不可在婦人玷污之後再娶他為妻、因為這是耶和華所憎惡的、不可使耶和華你神所賜為業之地被玷污了。
- Sexual relationship before marriage – Deuteronomy 22:28-29
²⁸ If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, ²⁹ he shall pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the girl, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.
 申命記22:28-29 若有男子遇見沒有許配人的處女、抓住他與他行淫、被人看見、這男子就要拿五十舍客勒銀子、給女子的父親、因他玷污了這女子、就要娶他為妻、終身不可休他。
- Marriage – 1 Cor. 7