



# **THE SPECIAL MINISTRIES OF WOMEN**

**PRO-HEADCOVERING, PRO-REMARriage  
in 1 CORINTHIANS 11, SONG of SOLOMON,  
and JESUS' TEACHING ON DIVORCE**

**WAYNE O'DONNELL**

**THE SPECIAL  
MINISTRIES  
OF WOMEN**



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in 1 Corinthians 11, Song of Solomon,  
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April 28, 2020

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ISBN: 979-8639299698

To Cora

## About the Front Cover

The Creation of Eve (1825) is an engraving by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794 - 1872). Carolsfeld was a German painter, associated with the Nazarene movement. This school of German Romantic painters sought to revive honesty and spirituality in Christian art.

Eve, at the center of the picture, receives her commission alone from God, while the angels look on. Adam is still asleep from surgery. The special ministries of women are between women and God, with the angels as witnesses. For example, regarding marriage, the Bible says "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord," Eph. 5:22. It never says anything like 'husbands, make your wives submit;' but only "husbands, love your wives," Eph. 5:25. This part of the picture represents the first section of this book: "Submission: The 1 Corinthians 11 Headcovering," because women wear scarfs on their heads during church meetings to symbolize submission.

The center of the picture shows the naked Eve, soon to be presented to her naked husband. This part of the picture symbolizes the second section of this book: "Affection: The Song of Solomon," because the Song of Solomon is God's lovemaking manual in the Bible.

The lower left of the picture shows Adam, still asleep from when God took one of his ribs to make Eve, who was thus one flesh with him. This part of the picture

symbolizes the third section of this book: "Chastity: Polygamy, Divorce, & Remarriage," because the one-flesh union is the foundation of marriage.

If people evolved from animals over millions of years, and women evolved to be physically weaker by natural selection by staying home and taking care of the children, then modern technology and economics might now allow women to change their roles to be the same as men's. But if God created women special characteristics, to fulfill their special purpose, then changing women's roles is harmful to women, families, and society.

Genesis 1:18-25. And the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him." And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called every living creature, that was its name. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam, there was not found a helper suitable for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 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." Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be

one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The special ministries of women in the home, church, and society are like the precious perfume Mary of Bethany poured on the head and feet of Jesus after breaking its alabaster container.

Matthew 26:1-15. Jesus ... said, "... After two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." ... When Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, "Why trouble you the woman? For she hath wrought a good work on me. For you have the poor always with you; but me you have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. ... Wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Then ... Judas Iscariot went unto the chief priests [to] deliver him. ... And they contracted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

Mark 14:1-10. After two days was the feast of the Passover. ... [And Jesus], being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of



spikenard very precious. And she broke the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, "Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor." And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has wrought a good work on me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you will you may do them good; but me you have not always. She has done what she could; she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying. ... Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

Luke 10:38-42. When the time was come that [Jesus] should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. ... As they went, ... he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was encumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore to help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

John 11:1-5; 12:1-8. Lazarus [was] of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. ... Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then Mary took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, "Why wasn't this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.



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## **Introduction**

All my books can be read online free at [wayneodonnell.com](http://wayneodonnell.com) or [bible.ag](http://bible.ag). “Freely you have received, freely give” (Mt. 10:8).

God uniquely created women for special ministries to the Lord, their families, their churches, and society. These ministries include submission, modesty, quietness, affection, and chastity. Such services women render to the Lord are like the precious ointment Mary of Bethany poured on the head and feet of Jesus.

Women have performed some of the greatest spiritual works of all time. Only a woman believed Jesus when he said he was going to die, and anointed him for his burial (Mt. 26:12-13). And only a woman was given the privilege, of not merely of being the first to see Jesus after his resurrection, but of seeing him even before he ascended to the Father (Jn. 20:16-18).

The first section of this book is about the Headcovering of 1 Corinthians 11, a church meeting observance, like the Lord’s Supper of the same chapter, that God gave the church through the apostles, to keep the church different from the world in regards to authority structures and gender roles, during this age of apostacy and rebellion when “the mystery of lawlessness is already at work,” 2 Thess. 2:7.

The second section is about the Song of Solomon, God’s engagement, marriage, and lovemaking manual, that he

gave us in the Bible because marriage and lovemaking are so important to him. God created sex, and wrote the manual. The Song of Solomon is the only book in the Bible written entirely from a woman's perspective, including even her thoughts by inspiration of the Spirit of God, though it was written by her husband. I present her story in the form of a play, adding a few comments, but mostly just helping the reader understand each scene and who is speaking.

The third section is about the one-flesh union and its implications for chastity, adultery, polygamy, divorce, and remarriage. Egalitarianism has made people misunderstand the one-flesh union, the Biblical definition of adultery, and polygamy; which has made people misinterpret Jesus' statements about divorce and remarriage; which has resulted in untold amounts of suffering over the centuries. A recurring theme of this book is that modern, egalitarian Bible teachers will bear the responsibility for the harm they do by letting their culture determine their interpretation of the Bible, instead of letting the Bible determine their evaluation of their culture.

This book covers some difficult topics. I recommend considering other interpretations of the passages I dealt with, as long as they're based on the details of the text itself, and not imposed on the text by the interpreter because of his culture. This book is intended to be both practical and polemical; for women, laymen, and theologians; and as a contribution to the battle of loving patriarchy against the increasing egalitarianism in



modern societies which does so much harm to women.

I think you'll see from these chapters, that I strongly believe in "giving HONOR unto [woman], as unto the weaker vessel," 1 Pet. 3:7. I also try to interpret the Bible according to "the law of kindness," Prov. 31:26.

All Bible quotations are from the King James Version, but I changed the archaic parts like "thou" to "you," etc. I also replaced "Christ" with "Messiah," because both are transliterations of words meaning "anointed," and everyone knows what a "messiah" is, but not what a "christ" is, except for its mostly harmful, religious overtones.

## Women Mentioned in this Book

Anna	Mary of Rome
Abigail	Mary, Joseph's Wife
Ahinoam	Michal
Bathsheba	Midianites (Num. 31)
Bilhah	Naomi
Chloe	Oholah
Daughters of Jer.	Oholibah
Deborah	Persis
Dinah	Phebe
Elizabeth	Philip's Daughters
Esther	Priscilla
Eve	Rachel
Foreign Wives (Ezra)	Rebekah
Gomer	Ruth
Hagar	Sarah
Hannah	Shulamith
Jephthah's Daughter	Susanna
Jezebel	Tabitha (Dorcas)
Joanna	Tamar, of David
Leah	Vashti
Lydia	Zilpah
Mary Magdalene	Zipporah
Mary of Bethany	



# Submission: The 1 Corinthians

## 11 Headcovering

### *The Headcovering Observance*

#### **A Church Meeting Observance, Like the Lord's Supper**

*1 Cor. 11:2. Now I praise you, brethren.*

*1 Cor. 11:17. Now ... I praise you not.*

*1 Cor. 12:1. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren.*

Textual context is the most important factor in interpreting any passage of scripture. The book of 1 Corinthians is about local church issues. "It has been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you," 1 Cor. 1:11.



Chapters 11 through 14 are about church meeting issues. There are lots of references to church meetings in these four chapters. 1 Cor. 11:17-21, 33, “You come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you. ... When you come therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper, ... [but each one’s] own supper. ... Wherefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait one for another.”

1 Cor. 14:23-35, “If therefore the whole church is come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad? ... When you come together, every one of you ... has a tongue. ... If there is no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church. ... As in all churches of the saints, let your women keep silence in the churches. ... It is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

Chapter 11 is about the two church meeting observances, and chapters 12-14 are about the church meeting use of spiritual gifts. The first half of chapter 11 (11a), is about the Headcovering church meeting observance; and the second half of chapter 11 (11b), is about the Lord’s Supper church meeting observance.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul used textual markers like “Now concerning” to introduce new topics. For example:

1 Cor. 7:1, “Now concerning the things whereof you



wrote unto me.”

1 Cor. 8:1, “Now as touching things offered unto idols.”

1 Cor. 12:1, “Now concerning spiritual gifts.”

1 Cor. 15:1, “Moreover [or ‘Now’], brethren, I declare unto you the gospel.”

1 Cor. 16:1, “Now concerning the collection for the saints.”

And chapter 11 verse 2, “Now I praise you, brethren, that ... you keep the ordinances.” Chapter 11 should begin in verse 2. The original Greek manuscripts didn’t have chapter divisions. They were added later, and aren’t inspired.

When you look at 1 Cor. 11, it’s obvious Paul is talking about one topic in the first half of the chapter, and another topic in the second half. God, through Paul, provided markers within the text itself to indicate the chapter’s structure. The beginning of the first half is marked by the phrase, “Now I praise you,” vs. 2; and the beginning of the second half is marked by the phrase “Now ... I praise you not,” vs. 17.

All of chapter 11, is tightly bound into one textual unit by the parallel phrases “I praise you,” and “I praise you not.” Paul praised the Corinthian church they were doing a good job keeping the Headcovering, and then started scolding them in verse 17 that they were doing a bad job keeping the Lord’s Supper.



Since chapter 11 is one textual unit, you can't join the Headcovering of 11a with the non-church content of chapter 10, "if any of them that believe not bid you to a feast," 1 Cor. 10:27; and then join the Lord's Supper of 11b with the other church meeting content of chapters 12-14.

Since the Lord's Supper obviously belongs with the church meeting content of the following chapters, so does the Headcovering. And since we know the Lord's Supper is a church meeting observance, our initial approach to the Headcovering should be that it's also a church meeting observance. As soon as you approach the Headcovering from the perspective that it's a church meeting observance, like the Lord's Supper, the rest of the chapter is easy to interpret.

Like the Lord's Supper, the Headcovering is something you do "when you come together in the church," 1 Cor. 11:18, not out in society, where temple prostitutes supposedly are. It's not about hair length, because you can't get a haircut or grow your hair long as part of each church service. And it wouldn't be much of a church meeting observance for people just to come to church wearing their hair the way they always do.

Like the Lord's Supper, the Headcovering is something you do at appointed times, like "prayer and prophecy," vss. 4-5 (also 13); but proper hair length is for all times.

Like the Lord's Supper, the Headcovering is a symbolic observance. The broken bread and wine of the Lord's



Supper symbolize the Lord's body and blood. The layer of cloth of the Headcovering symbolizes the layer of "authority on her head," vs. 10, that woman is under (vs. 3b). The headcovering scarf symbolizes the indirectness of woman's authority to God, even while praying directly to and prophesying directly from God (vss. 3b, 4-5). It symbolizes the indirect creation of woman, 'like,' 'of,' and 'for' man, as his helper (vss. 7-9).

Like the Lord's Supper, the Headcovering symbols are manipulated during its observance to demonstrate our participation. We symbolize our participation in the benefit of Lord's death for us by eating and drinking the bread and wine. We symbolize our submission to the God-ordained chain of command (vs. 3), when the women wear head scarfs.

Like the Lord's Supper, the Headcovering is a memorial of a historical event. The Lord's Supper commemorates the Lord's death for us, and the Headcovering commemorates the unique creation of woman on the sixth day (vss. 7-9).

Wearing long hair looks like wearing a head scarf, so vs. 15 says a woman's hair is "given her for a covering [Greek 'periboleo,' translated 'vesture' in Heb. 1:12];" but that's for outside in "nature," vs. 14, not for in church meetings. Women wear headcovering scarfs in church, and God gave them natural ones to wear outside church.

So how can we understand what 1 Cor. 11a is about?



God gave us a pretty good hint: just look at 1 Cor. 11b. The academicians who spend thousands of hours researching the historical, cultural context of first-century Corinth, should instead spend five minutes looking at the textual context of the Lord's Supper in the very next passage.

## **A Well-Kept Observance, Unlike the Lord's Supper**

*1 Cor. 11:2. Now I praise you.*

*1 Cor. 11:17. Now ... I praise you not.*

The most popular misinterpretation of 1 Cor. 11a is that Paul was scolding the Corinthian sisters for having short hair and thus looking like Corinthian temple prostitutes. But interpretations like those are impossible, because Paul was praising, not scolding, the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 11a.

Bible teachers love to talk about how bad the Corinthian church was, but Paul said, "I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you," 1 Cor. 11:2. First Corinthians is a letter about local church issues, and local churches, like families, are messy.

The epistle to the Romans is about the systematic theology of salvation, and the book of Ephesians is about the mystery of the universal church. It would be out of place to discuss the dirty laundry of the church in





those letters, but if Paul had discussed church problems in those letters we would think those churches were pretty bad too. If Paul had written a letter to your local assembly, the letter to the Corinthians might pale in comparison, possibly more for what you aren't doing than for what you are. The Corinthian church did a good job keeping the Headcovering observance.

It makes sense that in a letter about local church issues, Paul would have taken the time to praise the church for doing a good job keeping one of the two church meeting observances, especially to make them more receptive to the scolding he was about to give them about the other one. But it doesn't make sense Paul would have gone out of his way to praise the Corinthians for the nice job they were doing with their hair.

Paul also had to talk about the Headcovering in 1 Cor. 11a, even though the Corinthians were already doing a good job keeping it, because just as 1 Cor. 11 is the only place in the New Testament we learn the church is supposed to observe the Lord's Supper (except for five words in Luke 22:19, "this do in remembrance of me"), it's also the only place in the New Testament we learn the church is supposed to observe the Headcovering.

## **An Apostolic Ordinance, Like the Lord's Supper**

*1 Cor. 11:2. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered [ordinanced] them to you.*



The Headcovering and Lord's Supper were part of the "all things," 11:2, Paul taught in every church. "For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, ... who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which are in Messiah, as I teach everywhere in every church," 1 Cor. 4:17. Therefore, neither the Headcovering nor the Lord's Supper ordinances are cultural things local to the Corinth of that time, but are applicable to "every church," 4:17, "in all churches" 7:17, "in all churches of the saints," 14:33, in every age.

The words "ordinances" and "delivered" in verse 2 are the noun and verb forms of the same Greek word, meaning to 'transmit', or 'deliver.' Verse 2 could be translated "you keep the deliveries as I delivered them to you;" or "you keep the transmittals as I transmitted them to you," or "you keep the ordinances as I ordained them to you." The verb form is also used regarding the Lord's Supper in verse 23. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered [ordained, transmitted] unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread ... ." The verb form is also used regarding the gospel in chapter 15, "I declare unto you the gospel ... for I delivered [ordained, transmitted] unto you first of all that which I also received," 1 Cor. 15:1-3.

The Headcovering, the Lord's Supper, and the gospel are all 'apostolic transmissions' that the apostles received directly from the Lord, and delivered directly to the churches; not cultural accommodations to first-century Corinth. Sometimes the Greek word translated



“ordinances” is translated as “traditions,” because things can be passed from men to men, as well as from God to men. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees that “laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition [ordinances, transmissions] of men,” Mark 7:8. But ordinances from God through the apostles to the church are authoritative. “Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [ordinances, transmissions] which you have been taught, whether by [our spoken] word, or our epistle,” 2 Thess. 2:15.

The word “apostle” is a transliteration of the Greek word meaning “representative” or “messenger.” Sometimes a church, like the church of Antioch, sent out messengers like Barnabas and Paul on missions, “they are the messengers [‘apostolos’] of the churches,” 2 Cor. 8:23. But Paul was not only an apostle of the church of Antioch, he was also an apostle of Jesus Messiah, having been chosen directly by Jesus Messiah as his representative. “Paul, an apostle, not of men [like Barnabas], neither by man [like Matthias in Acts 1], but [of and] by Jesus Messiah,” Gal. 1:1. There are only twelve apostles of Jesus Messiah, and as his representatives, they had his authority.

In Acts 1, Peter was right in interpreting Ps. 109:8, “Let another take his office,” as meaning Judas would be replaced. And he was right that his replacement would have to “be a[n eye] witness with us of his resurrection,” Acts 1:20. An apostle couldn’t go around saying, “Peter says he saw the resurrected Jesus.” And Peter was right that Judas’ replacement had to receive the ordinances to



pass on to the church directly from Jesus, as the other apostles had, when Jesus “had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen ... being seen of them forty days [after his resurrection],” Acts 1:2-3.

But Peter was wrong that he and the other apostles had to choose Judas’ replacement. And he was wrong that they had to choose him from “these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us,” Acts 1:21-22.

Like Abraham tried to help God out by marrying Hagar because he couldn’t wait for a miraculous fulfillment of God’s promise of a son via Sarah, Peter tried to help Jesus out, not realizing Jesus would soon return to make his own choice of an apostle to replace Judas. Jesus had given the apostles a lot of authority, but no one has the authority to choose a representative for another person. Peter’s mistake caused a lot of trouble for Paul who constantly had to defend his apostleship. “Paul, an apostle, not of men [like Barnabas], neither by man [like Matthias], but [of and directly] by Jesus Messiah,” Gal. 1:1.

Paul received the apostolic ordinances, like the Headcovering and Lord’s Supper, directly from the resurrected Lord, when “last of all, he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time,” 1 Cor. 15:8, and when he “went into Arabia,” Gal. 1:17, shortly after his conversion. Paul said, “the gospel which was preached



of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Messiah," Gal. 1:12.

Paul delivered the apostolic transmissions to the Corinthians when he founded the church as recorded in Acts 18, "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; ... and he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them," Acts 18:1,11. The Headcovering, the Lord's Supper, and the gospel are all apostolic ordinances, received directly from the Lord and transmitted directly to the churches.

So, the Headcovering ordinance is no more about some cultural practice like the supposed hair length of temple prostitutes in Corinth, than the Lord's Supper and the gospel are. All the historical research scholars have done on the dress, hairstyles, and customs of first-century Corinth to try to understand this passage are worthless. The secular society of first-century Corinth knew nothing about the apostolic ordinances, since they were given to the church, not the world.

Why are there so many different theories about what particular Corinthian custom Paul is supposedly condemning in 1 Corinthians 11? Interpreters site all kinds of different stories about female Corinthian temple prostitutes that had short hair, or didn't put their hair up in buns, or didn't wear headcoverings or veils. And the admonitions of this chapter are first of all addressed to men. "Every man praying or prophesying



having his head covered,” 1 Cor. 11:4. Were the Christian men in Corinth running around looking like male temple prostitutes that had long hair, or put their hair up in buns, or wore hoods or veils? But Paul wasn’t scolding the Corinthian brothers or sisters about anything at this point in the chapter, but praising them.

Secular history is not reliable. God wouldn’t give us scripture that was dependent on secular history to be understandable. How would someone in China in 1000 AD understand 1 Corinthians 11 if its interpretation was dependent on Greek history, without access to Western libraries or the internet to do research? God didn’t even preserve the writings of the so-called church fathers. The apostate Roman Catholic Church preserved only the worst of the early writings and destroyed the best. God preserves only his word. “His truth endures unto all generations,” Ps. 100:5. We can correctly interpret this chapter without any knowledge of Corinthian history or culture.

It makes sense Jesus himself would have given the apostles the two church meeting observances he wanted passed on for the churches to observe throughout the church age, but proper hair length would hardly merit special attention by Jesus to the churches as an apostolic ordinance.



## *Symbolizes Authority and Submission*

### **Profitable Only by Understanding its Meaning**

*1 Cor. 11:3a. But I would have you know ...*

The word “but” in verse 3 doesn’t indicate Paul is ceasing to praise the Corinthians and beginning to scold them at this point, because he doesn’t stop praising them and start scolding them until verse 17, when he says, “Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not.”

What Paul is saying in verse 3 is that, even though the Corinthians were doing a great job keeping the Headcovering observance, he wants them to “know,” 1 Cor. 11:3, more about it, so they will gain even more benefit from observing it. Today, many churches have a brief meditation explaining the meaning of the symbolism of the Lord’s Supper before or during its observance, so people benefit more from it. Occasional meditations during church meetings on the meaning of symbolism of the Headcovering observance are important for the same reason.

Neither the Headcovering nor the Lord’s Supper observances are magic rituals that create some value just by performing them. They both only have value to the extent their symbolic message is understood by those who see them performed.



## Male Authority is Directly Under Messiah

**1 Cor. 11:3b. That the head of every man is Messiah.**

The word “head” in 1 Corinthians 11:3, “kephale” in Greek, includes the idea of ruling. The Septuagint says, “Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and all the people made him head [“kephalyn”] and leader over them,” Judg. 11:11. Egalitarians say the word “head” means “source,” like the ‘head of a river’, and doesn’t imply authority. Wayne Grudem has shown that of the thousands of occurrences of “kephale” he surveyed in Greek literature, not one meant “source.” (Wayne Grudem, “The Meaning Of κεφαλή (“Head”): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 1, Mar 2001: 25-65.)

Verse 3 describes the chain of command from God, to Messiah, to Man, to Woman. God placed man in the position of authority directly under Messiah. One must be under authority to be in authority, as the Roman Centurion understood: “I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it,” Mt. 8:9.

The Greek word translated “man” in verse 3 can mean either ‘male’ or ‘husband’. We know it means ‘male’ in this passage because if it were consistently translated as ‘husband’, some verses wouldn’t make sense. Verse 12, “for as the woman is of the man [Eve was taken out of





Adam], even so is the man also by the woman," means all 'males' are born of 'females.' It wouldn't make sense to say "even so is the husband also by the wife," because even bachelors are born of women. Also, "if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him," 1 Cor. 11:14, doesn't mean having long hair is a shame only for husbands, but not for bachelors. 1 Corinthians 11a is about man/woman and male/female things, not about husband/wife things.

But the startling word of verse 3 is the word "every;" "the head of every man is Messiah!" In this authority structure in the physical realm, Messiah is the head of every male, even unsaved males; and he is not the direct head of any females [as females vs. as persons in general] even saved females. In the spiritual realm, both males and females "speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Messiah," Eph. 4:15. But in the physical realm, "the head of every male is Messiah; and the head of the female is the male."

We know the headship of Messiah over males exists only in the physical realm, because in the spiritual realm, "there is neither male nor female," Gal. 3:28. But there are certainly males and females in the physical realm, or homosexuality would not be wrong. Authority structures are important, but they are of limited importance. It was much more blessed to know God spiritually as savior, like Joseph and Mary; than merely to be in a position of authority, like Caiaphas and Judas.



In Israel, even unsaved, ungodly males, like Caiaphas, Mt. 26:57-65, were able to be priests; but not even godly females were able to be priests. And in the church, even unsaved, ungodly males, like Judas, Mt. 10:4, could be apostles; but not even godly females could be apostles. By the chain of command of verse 3, we can see that God has appointed for men to rule in the home, the church, and society.

HOME: In the home, "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Messiah is the head of the church, ... therefore as the church is subject unto Messiah, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything," Eph. 5:23-24. It's true Ephesians 5:21 says we are all to be "submitting yourselves to one another," but all the following verses show that the way we submit must be different and appropriate to our roles. The wife sacrifices her will for her husband, while the husband sacrifices his welfare for the wife. The wife submits by submitting, while the husband submits by loving. "Wives, submit; ... husbands, love," Eph. 5:22,25. It would be no more appropriate for a husband to submit to his wife by submitting to and obeying her, than it would be for Messiah to submit to the church by submitting to and obeying the church. By the way, wives are never commanded to love their husbands, but only to "be 'affectionate' (Greek) to their husbands," Titus 2:4.

CHURCH: In the church, only males can be pastors and deacons. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, ... that rules well his own house,



having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" 1 Tim. 3:1-5. "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well," 1 Tim. 3:8-12. The KJV is correct to 'translate' Romans 16:1 to read "Phebe our sister, which is a 'servant' of the church" instead of 'transliterating' it to read 'deaconess,' of the church, since deacons must be males, "the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well," 1 Tim. 3:12.

SOCIETY: Deborah was a prophetess that judged Israel, but she made her prophecies in private under a palm tree while Barak lead the armies (Jdg. 4:4-5:31). God says women rulers are a curse on any society, and that they cause suffering in society, because they were created for a different purpose. "The LORD of hosts doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah ... the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counselor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. ... As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths," Is. 3:1-12.

Even a good woman in public office would do more harm than good because of the example it would set. "Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command,



... therefore was the king very wroth, ... then the king said to the wise men ... what shall we do? ... Memucan answered, ... 'This deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes. ... Likewise, shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus, shall there arise too much contempt and wrath. ... Let there go a royal commandment ... that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. And ... all the wives shall give honor to their husbands, both to the great and small.' And the saying pleased the king and ... he sent letters into all the king's provinces, ... that every man should bear rule in his own house ... After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti," Est. 1:12-2:1. The king was wrong to act hastily in his "wrath," and was wrong in his treatment of Vashti, but his "wise men" were right in their philosophy of male leadership, as the Bible testifies by providing so much detail.

Contrast Vashti with her replacement, Queen Esther. "Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, ... who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity. ... And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter ... And the king [Ahasuerus] loved Esther above all the



women, and ... he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. ... Esther had not yet showed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him," Est. 2:5-7,17,20. Esther had not only become married, but had also become queen of the Persian empire, and yet she still rendered submission and obedience to her adopted father, to the extent it didn't conflict with her husband, the king.

## **Female Submission is Indirectly Under Messiah**

*1 Cor. 11:3c. And the head of the woman is the man.*

There is a layer of authority between Messiah and woman in the chain of command: God - Messiah - Man - Woman. How can this be when we know "there is one mediator between God and people, the person, Messiah Jesus," 1 Tim. 2:5? The answer is that 1 Timothy 2:5 is talking about salvation and spiritual things. "God our Savior desires all people to be saved, ... for there is one mediator," 1 Tim. 2:5. But the chain of command is talking about the offices of man, woman, and Messiah in the physical realm.

The Greek word translated "woman" in verse 3 can mean either 'female' or 'wife'. We know that it means 'female' in this passage because if we consistently translated it as 'wife', some verses would not make sense. Verse 12, "for as the woman is of the man [Eve



was taken out of Adam], even so is the man also by the woman," means all men are born of women, not all husbands are born of wives. Some men were born of women who were not wives when they gave birth. So, this passage is about all women, not just married women. 'Male' is the head of 'female' whether a woman ever marries or not.

"The head of the woman is the man," 1 Cor. 11:3, doesn't mean every female is under the authority of every male, but that all women have three special ministries in their roles as women: modest dress, quietness, and submission.

HOME: Peter covered the three ministries of women as they relate to the home in 1 Peter 3. "Likewise, you wives, ... (Modest Dress:) whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, (Quietness:) even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, (Submission:) being in subjection to their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord," 1 Pet. 3:1-6. Sarah is here called a holy woman who thought of her husband as her lord, meaning her master. Her thoughts are recorded in Gen. 18:12, "Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I've become old shall I have pleasure, my lord [adonai, referring to Abraham] being old also?" In modern



Hebrew and Arabic, the word for “husband” [baal], also means “lord” and “master.”

God speaks disparagingly of showiness and excess in women’s dress. “In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails,” Is. 3:18-23.

The quietness and submission aspects in this 1 Peter passage also mean that wives are not allowed to teach their husbands. “Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word [without teaching or nagging] be won by the conversation [from French ‘conversari,’ meaning conduct, not words] of the wives; while they behold [not hear] your chaste conversation coupled with fear,” 1 Pet. 3:1-2. Some Catholic monks so valued the virtue of quietness that they took vows of silence. They were wrong to do so however, because this ministry (in a less extreme form) belongs to women, not men.

CHURCH: Paul covered the three ministries of women as they relate to the church in 1 Corinthians. “Every woman that prays or prophesies (Modest Dress:) with her head uncovered dishonors her head; ... let her be



covered," 1 Cor. 11:5-6. "Let your women (Quietness:) keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak, (Submission:) but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law," 1 Cor. 14:34.

The quietness and submission aspects also prohibit women from teaching in the church. God hasn't approved any women as Bible teachers, even for other women. Titus 2:4-5 is the only reference to teaching responsibilities for women. "The aged women," Titus 2:3, all of them, not just certain ones that are 'teachers,' are to "teach the young women," Titus 2:4. If every older woman should teach, then no older woman has an office of teaching. And the older women are not to be Bible teachers, per se, but "teachers of good things," Titus 2:3; specifically, of the special ministries of women "to be sober, to be affectionate (Greek) towards their husbands, to be affectionate (Greek) towards their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands," Titus 2:4-5.

Priscilla had a part, along with her husband Aquila, in clarifying some things for Apollos, but "they took him unto them," Acts 18:26, speaking with him in the privacy of their home. Women are an invaluable asset in private discussions about even the heaviest topics and even in mixed groups, but they are not to be Bible teachers of even all-female groups. The women, as much as the men, need the teaching of the teachers God appointed by his grace to teach the church. The women shouldn't be separated out to sit under women teachers





because then they'll miss opportunities they have to hear God-provided teachers. "He gave some ... teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Messiah," Eph. 4:11-12.

SOCIETY: Paul covered the three ministries of women as they relate to society in 1 Timothy 2. All of 1 Timothy 2 describes how we should behave in society. Paul doesn't start talking about church roles until 1 Timothy 3:1, "If a man desire the office of a bishop," etc.

1 Timothy chapter 2 has three parts:

1) All People in 1 Timothy 2:1-7. God's desires that, "prayers ... be made for all people, ... who will have all people to be saved." Salvation is God's desire for people everywhere in society, not just in church.

2) Men in 1 Timothy 2:8: "I will therefore that men ('males' in Greek) pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." Males are not permitted to be silent, though many would like to be. Public prayer is God's will for males, but not females, "everywhere" in society, not just in church.

3) Women in 1 Timothy 2:9-15. "In like manner also, (Modest Dress:) that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, which becomes women professing godliness, with good works. (Quietness:) Let the woman learn in silence (Submission:) with all subjection," 1 Tim. 2:9-11.



God desires modesty, quietness, and submission for women everywhere, not just in church. “Braided hair,” 1 Tim. 2:9, is only an issue out in society, because women’s hair is covered in church meetings anyway. And women are to do “good works,” 1 Tim. 2:10, everywhere, not just in church. The quietness and submission aspects also mean a woman cannot teach men even in secular society: “I suffer [permit] not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence,” 1 Tim. 2:12. Women “shall be saved in childbearing,” 1 Tim. 2:15, because the importance and honor of motherhood unites all society, since we all have mothers, but “childbearing” hardly ever takes place at church meetings, and so it’s not only at church meetings that women are not permitted to teach or have authority over men.

## **Authority Structures are Good Even in the Godhead**

*1 Cor. 11:3d. And the head of Messiah is God.*

Authority structures exist even within the Godhead. This is the ultimate argument against every egalitarian opposition to authority structures.

Authority structures are always comprised of one superior and one or more inferiors (inferior in position, not value). For example, God and Messiah, Messiah and the church, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters (employers) and servants (employees), and



governors and the governed (Eph. 5:22-29, Col. 3:18-4:1, 1 Pet. 2:13-3:7). The basic duties are the same for all superiors, and the same for all inferiors. All superiors are responsible to lead, love, give, speak, teach, command, and send, for example; while all inferiors are responsible to follow, submit, receive, listen, learn, obey, and go, for example.

In value and essence, Messiah is equal to God the Father in every way. Jesus, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Php. 2:6. But externally, and in position, Jesus functions in the role that a son does to a father. The Father gives, the Son receives, "so has he given to the Son to have life in himself," Jn. 5:26. The Father teaches; the Son learns, "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me," Jn. 8:28. The Father sends; the Son goes, "he that sent me is with me," Jn. 8:28. The Father commands; the Son obeys, "I do always those things that please him," Jn. 8:29.

Messiah is not called the Son of God because he 'became' the Son of God at the incarnation. Messiah is called the Son of God because from eternity past, he 'functioned' in the role of a Son to the Father in the trinity. "His Son ... which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness," Rm. 1:3-4, Who was it that became flesh? It was the person who already was "his Son" as the beginning of the verse states. Also, he had to be "made," or 'become,' "the seed of David according to the flesh," but he only had to be



“declared” “to be the Son of God” that he already was from eternity past.

And for eternity future, Messiah will remain in an inferior position to the Father. “When all things shall be subdued unto him [the Son], then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [God the Father] that put all things under him [the Son], that God [the Father] may be all in all,” 1 Cor. 15:28.

Dr. Glenn Butner thinks verses like “I do always the things that please him,” Jn. 8:29, only indicate Messiah’s obedience to the Father from the human part of him. Perhaps he thinks Jesus should have said, “My ‘human will’ always does those things that please him.” But Jesus obeyed the Father before the incarnation also.

During the entire Old Testament period, the pre-incarnate Jesus went where the Father sent him, as “the Angel of the Lord.” He appeared to Moses as the fire in the bush; “the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, ... and when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush,” Ex. 3:2-4. He was also the fire in the shekinah glory cloud. “The angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them,” Ex. 14:19. And God the Father sent him ahead of the people as they journeyed to Canaan. God said, “Behold, I send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware



of him, and obey his voice, ... for my name is in him," Ex. 23:20-23.

Wayne Grudem lists many verses that indicate the Son was in submission to the Father before the incarnation, like at creation "God [the Father] ... by his Son ... made the worlds," Heb. 1:2; meaning the Father used the Son to create the worlds, the Son didn't use the Father to create the worlds. Grudem points out, "These relationships ... are never reversed, not once in the entire Bible. The Son does not predestine us in the Father, ... create through the Father, ... send his only Father into the world. The Father does not come and obey the Son's will, ... sit at the Son's right hand, ... pray to the Son." (Wayne Grudem, "Biblical Evidence for the Eternal Submission of the Son to the Father," in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism?* 6-15.)

Likewise, woman's subordination to man did not begin at the fall, when God said "your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you," Gen. 3:16, any more than man's labor began at the fall, when God said "in the sweat of your face shall you eat bread," Gen. 3:19. Man started laboring as soon as God created him and "put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it," Gen. 2:8; and woman started submitting to man as soon as God created her as "a helper," Gen. 2:18, and "brought her unto the man," Gen. 2:22; he didn't bring the man to her. What changed at the fall was that man's labor and woman's submission both became wearisome, instead of always being easy and delightful as it was before sin entered the world.



Servants have the same nature as their masters, so although Paul requires all servants to obey their masters while they're servants, he recommends they gain their freedom when possible. "Are you called being a servant? Care not for it: but if you may be made free, use it rather," 1 Cor. 7:21. But Paul never recommends women try to gain equality of position with men, because of the nature of woman, and the purpose of her creation.

Butner also thinks Jesus' submission to the Father will end in eternity future, including an "elimination of the mediatorial roles of kingship." (Butner, "Eternal Functional Subordination," 145.) But since, as stated earlier, Butner believes the humanity of Jesus submitted to the Father, doesn't he know the incarnation will never be undone? The Bible says "The Word was made flesh," Jn. 1:14, but never says "flesh will be remade into the Word." And if that happened, what would happen to our salvation and physical, glorified bodies that are based on our union with him? Besides, Revelation 21-22 indicates plenty of hierarchies will continue into the eternal state. "The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into [the New Jerusalem]," Rev. 21:24. Messiah "will be [each overcomer's] God, and [each overcomer] shall be [his] son," Rev. 21:7. Messiah's "servants shall serve him, and ... reign for ever and ever," Rev. 22:3-5.

And woman's submission to man, like Messiah's submission to the Father, will not end at Messiah's return. Only males will be in leadership positions in the



Messianic Kingdom. The 12 apostles (all males) will “sit upon twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel,” Mt. 19:28; Israel will “serve ... David [a male] their king, whom I will resurrect unto them,” Jer. 30:9; the priests in the millennial temple, “the sons [males] of Zadok ... shall enter into my sanctuary ... to minister unto me,” Ez. 44:15-16. Women will not receive any cities to rule during the Messianic Kingdom as a reward for faithful service, as some men will, “you good servant, ... have you authority over ten cities,” Lk. 19:17. But women’s rewards will be just as rewarding, like eternal glory, recognition, and opportunities for service.

This is not to say that any specific male-female relationships, like a specific husband-and-wife relationship, will continue forever because, “in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage,” Mt. 22:23-33. A husband’s authority ends at death, “for the woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband [only] so long as he lives,” Rm. 7:2.

Authority relationships are susceptible to abuse during this age; but the problem is not with authority relationships, but rather with our sin and weakness. Authority structures will not be removed in the future, but sin and the weakness of the flesh will someday be removed, and then such inequalities will be blessed indeed, as they are now within the Godhead.

Modern men deride authority and inequality; but inequality is essential for unity. Without inequality,



there can be no unity, because each person will go his own way. "Can two walk together unless they are agreed?" Amos 3:3. Someone has to give up the direction he wants to go, or soon both will be walking alone. The woman, in submission, chooses to follow the man, instead of choosing her own way. And the man, in love and self-sacrifice, chooses to lead in the direction that is best for the welfare of the woman, rather than that which is best for himself. If we were not different, we would all soon be alone.

For example, a husband must love his wife even when she doesn't submit to him, but he's built so that lack of submission to his leadership is the one thing that makes it most difficult for him to do so, because logically there's no responsibility where there's no authority or ability. On the other hand, while a wife must submit to her husband even when he doesn't love her, she's built so she can naturally endure a lot of second-best decisions as long as she's greatly loved and appreciated. By following God's commands, "wives, submit," and "husbands, love," married couples avoid the things that naturally cause the greatest difficulty to each other. Also, to say a husband should lead doesn't rule out leadership by consensus. It would be foolish for any imperfect, human leader not to trust and use the advice and talents of his crew, like Captain Kirk does.

Before the creation of all created things, "the Word was with God," Jn. 1:1, in perfect harmony and unity. "I and my Father are one," Jn. 10:30. The Son is always "in the bosom of the Father," Jn. 1:18. Perfect unity can only





exist where there is a superior who loves with perfect unselfishness, and an inferior who submits with perfect obedience, as within the Godhead.

Vertical relationships, not horizontal ones, bind people together. We are one with each other in the church horizontally, only because we are all in our same Lord vertically. Egalitarianism is like flat sand, spreading out horizontally, from which nothing can be built.

Egalitarians don't truly appreciate women, because they don't appreciate women as women. They consider women's special role of submission as demeaning, and only value men's special role of leadership. Egalitarians don't even try to learn or train their own spirits to submit to God or others, because they don't value submission. Egalitarians don't truly care about the welfare of women, but only care about their own philosophy. Their campaign to get women to live as men, in contradiction to women's created nature, is like trying to use clothes dryers as washing machines, which not only doesn't work very well, but also harms the clothes dryers.

According to the Bible, women are weaker than men. "Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life," 1 Pet. 3:7. It's not really kind to give those who are weaker the right to compete on an equal footing with those who are stronger, to require all women athletes to compete with all male athletes, for example. No more



restrictions on one hand, but no more protection or preference on the other. Making 'every man for himself' is not being kind to the weaker vessels, but puts them at an unprotected disadvantage in the world.

Much suffering has resulted from society's disregard of the role of women. Men today give their wives the 'right' to be separated from their children all day at an office or factory, and then to do most of the housework at night; and then those men feel no obligation to stay married to them because everything's 50-50. Men who push for 'equality' for women don't do so because they care about women, but because they want to escape their own obligations to care for their mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters, and to escape from being under any authority themselves.

Egalitarians think only those who are actually superior to others, God over men, smarter over less smart, more talented over less talented, etc., should rule, based on each person's individual merits, apart from any gender considerations. But the Bible teaches the Son submits to the Father even though they are equal in person, and that superiors don't become superiors because they're more talented, virtuous, or worthy, but because, "the authorities that be are ordained of God," Rom. 13:1, and that they're worthy of obedience simply because of their positions, not because they deserve obedience because they're better in some way.

Servants are to serve men who are less virtuous, less talented, and less wise than themselves simply because,



in God's providence, they are masters. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, ... in singleness of your heart, as unto Messiah, ... as the servants of Messiah, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men," Eph. 6:5-7. "Servants, be subject to your masters, ... not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward, ... for conscience toward God," 1 Pet. 2:18-19.

Egalitarian Bible teachers oppose authority structures because their teachings are part of "the mystery of lawlessness [ASV]" that "doth already work," 1 Thess. 2:7. The Amplified Version says, "The mystery of rebellion against divine authority and the coming reign of lawlessness is already at work," 1 Thess. 2:7. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy," 2 Tim. 3:1-2.

Authority relationships exist in the physical or external realm, not the spiritual realm. God said a husband and wife are "one flesh," Eph. 5:31; not 'one spirit'. Things in the physical realm, like authority structures, are important; but not as important as spiritual things. "The time is short: it remains, that both they that have wives will be as though they had none [because there is no marriage in the resurrection]; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not," 1 Cor. 7:30.



There is no spiritual advantage to being placed in a superior or inferior position. More authority means more responsibility. It's how we use the vessels, whether weaker or stronger; and the offices, whether higher or lower; we've been placed in, that's important and that determines eternal rewards. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Are you called being a servant? Care not for it: but if you may be made free, use it," 1 Cor. 7:20-21. Paul did not deserve to be an apostle; God picked him by grace (1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:10). Are we envious of the Apostle Paul because he's an apostle and we aren't?

Most things in this life, like washing a pot, are neither moral nor immoral, but rather amoral and neutral. But when we perform a work, like washing a pot, in submission to authority, we aren't only washing a pot, but also obeying the word of God to submit to authority. We receive no reward for washing the pot, because it just gets dirty again, (as the book of Ecclesiastes teaches us, "all is vanity"), but at the same time, obeying the word of God to submit to authority is a spiritual act, that produces eternal rewards. So being under authority gives us a chance to turn amoral, neutral things, that would pass away, into spiritual works, that will last forever, and "he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Women can "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in all things give thanks," 1 Th. 5:16-18, just as well as men, and these are the kinds of things that really matter. Women have performed some of the greatest spiritual



works that have ever been done. Only a woman believed Jesus when he said he was going to die, and she anointed him for his burial. "For in that she has poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Truly I say unto you, wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her," Mt. 26:12-13.

And only a woman was given the privilege, of not merely being the first to see Jesus after his resurrection, but of seeing him before he even ascended to the Father to offer his blood in the heavenly tabernacle. "Jesus said unto her, 'Mary.' She turned herself, and said unto him, 'Rabboni;' which is to say, Master. Jesus said unto her, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.' Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her," Jn. 20:16-18.

The Lord gave the church the Headcovering ordinance to help preserve the church in this age when, "the mystery of lawlessness is already at work," 2 Th. 2:7. When women wear headcoverings during church meetings, the whole church symbolizes our humble submission to our God-appointed roles, especially gender roles, and thus act as salt and light in the midst of a rebellious world that has almost finished throwing off every vestige of God-ordained authority.



## *With Headcovering Scarves*

### **Men's Naked Heads Symbolize Direct Authority**

*1 Cor. 11:4a. Every man praying or prophesying ...*

The reason prayer and prophecy are mentioned, is that they're activities that everyone, men and women, go directly to God for, in contrast to the chain of command of verse 3.

Prayer is man talking directly to God, and prophecy is God talking directly to man. Or we could say, prayer is man representing man to God, and prophecy is man representing God to man. Both prayer and prophecy involve authority. Messiah granted all Christians authority to pray in his name. "In that day ... whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you; prior to this you have asked nothing in my name," Jn. 16:23-24.

By the way, we see here that we pray to the Father in Jesus name. It's not scriptural to pray to Messiah. There's not a single instance in the New Testament of anyone praying to Messiah. Jesus taught us to say "Our Father ... ," Mt. 6:9. "Seeing that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, ... let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace," Heb. 4:16. We don't pray to, but rather through, a high priest.



(It would be appropriate for men to wear headcoverings in church meetings if the purpose of the Headcovering observance was to symbolize that even though men pray to the Father, the Messiah is a layer of authority between them and the Father. But the purpose of the Headcovering observance is to symbolize the roles of men and women, not Messiah and men. Also, even while praying to the Father, we pray through, and in the name of Messiah; but church women don't pray through or in the name of church men.)

Prayer is the humblest and most widespread of authorities given to people; it's been given to all. Prophecy is the greatest (besides being an apostle of Messiah) and rarest of authorities given to people; it was given to only a few, "God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, ... diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? ... Do all speak with tongues? ... But covet earnestly the best gifts," 1 Cor. 12:30.

Messiah gave some Christians authority to prophesy. "When he ascended up on high, he ... gave gifts unto men, ... and he gave some ... prophets," Eph. 4:8-11. Prophecy is always direct divine revelation, and is equally authoritative with scripture. The issue is not 'foretelling' vs. 'forth telling,' but rather direct revelation vs. commentary. We are not talking about mere preaching or teaching here. People that preach or teach are called "evangelists, ... pastors and teachers," Eph. 4:11, not prophets. We aren't talking about merely



expounding on scripture, but of speaking with equal authority to scripture, “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes,” Mt. 7:29.

*1 Cor. 11:4b. Having his head covered ...*

The word “covered” is not actually in the Greek of verse 4 about men. It doesn’t say “having his head covered,” but “down upon [kata] his head having.” It means “anything on his head having.” “Kata” is used in the passage where Mary of Bethany came to Jesus with the alabaster box of ointment and “poured it on [‘kata’] his head,” Mk. 14:3. According to verse 4, a man must not have ‘anything’ on his head during church meetings; merely not ‘covering’ his head would still be a violation. Wearing even a small kippah or yarmulke, as many of our dear Messianic Jewish brethren do, is prohibited.

On the other hand, men can have their own hair on their heads, because their hair is part of their heads. Some Catholic monks went so far as to shave a circle of hair off the top of their heads to avoid having anything on the top of their heads. If verse 4 was talking about hair, men would not be able to have any hair at all on their heads during church meetings, not merely not have long hair. “Kata” refers to something “down upon” men’s heads, not something “down from” their heads. Also, since we saw that the Headcovering is a church meeting observance, if the observance was about hair, all the men would have to shave their heads as part of each church service.





***1 Cor. 11:4c. Dishonors his head.***

We saw verse 3, that man is directly under the authority of Messiah in the chain of command God ordained in the physical realm, which means man is in authority over woman, who is not directly under Messiah in that authority structure. For a man to wear some article of clothing on his head during church meetings would be to symbolize he isn't directly under the authority of Messiah, and thus not in authority over woman. He would thus be rebelling against and dishonoring authority, his own God-ordained authority, which should be honored. He would not only be symbolizing the rejection of his own position of authority, but also be symbolizing his rebellion against the God who appointed him to this office.

There is a certain amount honor that rightly accompanies authority. "You ... have crowned him with glory and honor, you made him to have dominion over the works of your hands: you have put all things under his feet," Ps. 8:5-6. Men are to be the leaders in the church. The burden of the ministry rests on them. Some of them don't want to step forward and "pray everywhere lifting up holy hands," 1 Tim. 2:8, but they must do so anyway. Some may wish they had the ministry of silence that women have, but they must speak out. God has given them authority, and authority always carries responsibility.

Men can't avoid responsibility by pretending they don't have authority. "He which had received the one talent



came and said, Lord, I knew you that you are a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the earth: Look, there you have that is yours. His lord answered and said unto him, You wicked and slothful servant," Mt. 25:24-26.

We've all heard it said that women have to take on church ministries, because the men aren't doing them. This does more harm than good, because then the men feel even less need to step forward and do the work. The bare heads of the men during the Headcovering ordinance proclaim 'the buck stops here'.

There's nothing inherently dishonorable about a man having something on his head. Before the Headcovering ordinance was delivered to the church, the high priest had to wear a miter, and all the other priests had to wear bonnets, when they ministered in the tabernacle and the temple. "You shall make the miter of fine linen [for Aaron the high priest] ... and for Aaron's sons you shall make ... bonnets," Ex. 28:39-40.

The 24 elders of Revelation 4 may indicate resurrected church men will continue to remove their crowns whenever there is a worship service in heaven during the seven-year tribulation period. "When [at certain times] those beasts [the Cherubim] give glory and honor and thanks to him ... the four and twenty elders fall down before him ... and worship him ... and cast their crowns before the throne," Rev. 4:9-11.



But when the Lord returns, the Headcovering ordinance, like the Lord's Supper ordinance, will end, "you do show the Lord's death, till he come," 1 Cor. 11:26. In the Messianic Kingdom, the priests will again cover their heads when they minister. "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, ... shall enter into my sanctuary, ... they shall have linen bonnets upon their heads," Ez. 44:15-18.

Things that are inherently wrong, like pride and theft, are wrong in every time and place. Other things, which are external in nature, like dietary regulations, are wrong only during the time and for the people that God prohibits them. God told Adam he could eat only plants, "I have given you every herb ... for food," Gen. 1:29; then he told Noah he could eat every kind of meat, "every moving thing that lives shall be food for you," Gen. 9:3; then he told Moses he could eat only some meats, "these are the beasts which you shall eat," Lev. 11; then he cleansed all meats, "thus he declared all foods clean," Mk. 7:19 ASV; then he told the church there are some things we can't eat, "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled," Acts 15:29; 21:25.

If these things were inherently right or wrong in and of themselves, the commands couldn't change. The Headcovering ordinance is an external requirement that had a definite starting point when the church was created in Acts 2, that will have a definite ending point when the Lord returns, and that is only applicable to the church, not Israel or the world. Only during the church



meeting Headcovering observance is it wrong for males to have anything on their heads.

## **Women's Covered Heads Symbolize Indirect Authority**

*1 Cor. 11:5a. But every woman that prays or prophesies ...*

Women didn't lead in prayer publicly, in church, or anywhere else. "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, ... in like manner also, that women ... be in silence," 1 Tim. 1:8-12. But women do pray along silently with everyone else who is not leading in prayer at the moment.

And women didn't prophesy aloud in church, "for you may all prophesy one by one, ... let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak," 1 Cor. 14:31,34. But female prophets prophesied silently to themselves during church meetings, just like male prophets did whenever it was inappropriate for them to speak. "If anything is revealed to another that sits by, let the first hold his peace. ... The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," 1 Cor. 14:32.

Tongues was also prophesy, receiving revelation directly from God; but it was a less desirable gift than prophecy, because it needed a second person, an interpreter, to be of any value. "Follow after love, and



desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy. For, he that speaks in an unknown tongue ... no man understands him; however in the spirit he speaks mysteries. But he that prophesies speaks unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort," 1 Cor. 14:1-3.

The word "mysteries," in Greek ("in the spirit he speaks mysteries"), doesn't mean something hard to understand, but something previously hidden, but now revealed. The church at the time of the apostles didn't yet have the complete New Testament, so God provided the assemblies oral revelation during their meetings via spiritual gifts. But for tongues, like for other forms of prophesy, it was common for men to have to speak silently to themselves, and it was always the case for women. "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God," 1 Cor. 14:27-28.

By the way, 1 Corinthians 11-14 shows that early church meetings were extremely participatory. "When you come together, every one of you has a psalm, has a doctrine, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation." 1 Cor. 14:26. You can't have a healthy body if the members of the body aren't permitted to exercise their ministries to each other. The early church meetings were like current day Plymouth Brethren meetings, except that the early church didn't restrict participants to sharing only about the Lord's Supper, as



Plymouth Brethren do today.

Also, the early church met in houses. House churches today are usually very participatory, but they often do worse than non-participatory churches by abandoning the role of Bible teachers. I'm sure when Paul taught all night at Troas (Acts 20), he wasn't just asking what everyone thought about the passage he was teaching on. Frank Viola does great harm to house churches, because he teaches people to abandon the authority structures that the Headcovering ordinance says are good, and because he makes the unsaved, Roman Catholic mysticism of 'the Messiah within' inseparable from 'organic church.' This is the same 'light within' that the Quakers chose over the 'light without,' meaning the Bible, and it led to where Quakers today don't even believe that God, per se, exists.

Women sometimes did prophesy aloud in the Bible, but only in private. Elizabeth prophesied "with a loud voice," but it was in the privacy of her home. "Mary ... entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth, and ... Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and she spoke out with a loud voice," Lk. 1:39-42. Anna was "a prophetess," that spent her time in the temple, but there's no record she prophesied there publicly. Even Simeon's prophecy may have been heard by only Joseph and Mary (Lk. 2:25-38). Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters "which did prophesy," Acts 21:9, but there's no indication they prophesied publicly. While Paul and his fellow travelers were staying at Philip's house, Agabus had to come down



from Judaea to prophesy regarding Paul's imminent capture in Jerusalem, when it would have been more convenient to have one of Philip's daughters do it, if it had been appropriate (Acts 21:10-11).

***1 Cor. 11:5b. With her head uncovered ...***

We saw in verse 4 that the word "covered" was not actually in the Greek, and that men have to not only avoid 'covering' their heads, but to have absolutely nothing on their heads during church meetings. But when verse 5 talks about a woman's head being 'uncovered,' the word "uncovered" actually is in the Greek. If a woman's head is anything less than covered, her head is 'uncovered,' and the commandment is violated. Wearing a little hat or doily won't fulfill the command. Having long hair won't count as covering her head either, because hair is part of a person's head (which we saw is why men don't have to completely shave their heads to have 'nothing' on their heads). Also, a woman is to cover her head, 'kephalee' in Greek, not face, 'prosopon,' so these verses are talking about headcoverings, not veils.

It's common for Bible teachers to interpret the word "uncovered" in verse 5 as meaning 'to have short hair.' But the Greek word translated 'uncovered' is 'a - kata - kalupto,' literally 'not - down upon - covered.' The noun form of "kalupto," is "kaluma." A 'kaluma' ('covering') is a "veil," 2 Cor. 3:13; an 'epi - kaluma' ('over - covering') is a "cloak," 1 Pet. 2:16; a 'peri - kalupto' ('around - covering') is a "blindfold," Lk. 22:64; and thus



a 'kata - kalupto' ('down upon - covering') is a pretty good description of a headcovering scarf.

If I said to you, "Please uncover your head" would you think I wanted you to get a haircut? The New Testament considers hair as part of our heads. "The very hairs 'of' your head are numbered," Mt. 10:30, not "the very hairs 'on' your head are numbered." If Paul wanted to talk about whether or not a person had long hair, he could have used the Greek word "komao," meaning "long hair," as in verses 14 and 15, but he didn't.

Another problem with the hair-length interpretation, is that verses 4 and 5 talk about prayer and prophecy, which happen during church meetings, but proper hair length is required at all times. You can't change your hair length just for church meetings.

The purpose of the Headcovering is to symbolize male authority and female submission by doing something symbolic, just like the purpose of the Lord's Supper is to symbolize the Lord's death for us, by doing something symbolic. Everyone just continuing to wear their hair to church the way they always do would not be a good way to symbolize anything.

Philip Brown has shown that almost every Bible teacher before the 1900's interpreted the covering of 1 Cor. 11:4-5 to be a headcovering garment, not hair. (Brown, A. Philip II, "A Survey of the History of the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," additional session, Aldersgate Forum, West Harrison, IN., Oct. 25-27, 2011, 12.) After





all, where do you think the old custom that women have to wear hats to church came from?

R. J. Sproul has an explanation for the recent changes in interpretation. “What has happened in the last fifty years? We’ve had a feminist movement.” (R. C. Sproul, “Should Christians Only Sing Psalms in Local Churches?” Christianity.com video, 2012, <http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=FF0MMMNU>.) In other words, the majority of Bible teachers always let their current culture determine their interpretation of scripture, rather than letting scripture condemn the sins of our culture.

Headcovering scarves are incompatible with the feminist movement. In 1968, the National Organization for Women said, “NOW recommends ... all women participate in a “national unveiling” by sending their head coverings to the task force chairman. ... These veils will be publicly burned to protest the second-class status of women in all churches.” (National Organization for Women, *Issues Policy Manual* 1969-1996, 277, accessed December 15, 2016, <http://now.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/NOW-Issues-M-Z-Policy-Manual-1966-1996.pdf>.) NOW doesn’t get upset about women wearing long hair in church, because that would proclaim nothing; it would just look like some women like to wear their hair long. But when even a few women wear head scarves, it’s obvious to NOW and everyone else, the church is promoting some kind of inequality.

***1 Cor. 11:5c. Dishonors her head.***

It's a shame for any person to portray themselves as holding a higher office than they actually hold. "When you are invited of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest seat; lest a more honorable man than you be invited of him; and he that invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give this man place,' and you begin with shame to take the lowest seat," Lk. 14:8-9. "The great whore ... has glorified herself, ... for she says in her heart, I sit a queen, ... and shall see no sorrow," Rev. 17:1;18:7. When women don't cover their heads in church, they symbolize an equality of authority they don't have.

On the other hand, when women cover their heads in church, they put the men on the spot. "You men are the ones that must lead the church into the work. Look at our covered heads: you are responsible for our welfare too. You must "stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong," 1 Cor. 16:13. "Awake out of sleep! ... The night is far spent, the day is at hand," Rm. 14:11-12." Men need to be exercised by such responsibilities in order to mature into what God created men to be.

**Women's Uncovered Heads Would Symbolize Shame**

***1 Cor. 11:5d-6. For that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman is not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.***



In verses 4 and 5a, Paul gave a parallel description of the parts men and women perform in the Headcovering observance. Verse 4, "Every man praying or prophesying with anything on his head dishonors his head." Verse 5a, "But every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head." He didn't say regarding men after verse 4, "for that is even all one as if he had long hair. For if the man have anything on his head, let him also have long hair: but if it is a shame for a man to have long hair, let him have nothing on his head." But now Paul adds this additional warning regarding the part women perform in the observance.

Like the shabbat candle lighting in Rabbinic Judaism, it's the women of the church that perform the main actions of the Headcovering ordinance; the men merely have to 'not' do something. And women are rightly more concerned about their appearance than men are, since modest dress is one of the special ministries of women. These verses serve as an encouragement to give courage to women to dress in a way people around them might denigrate, but with which they can enjoy the approval of their Lord Messiah.

"God looks on the heart," 1 Sam. 16:7; but he also sees the outward appearance, especially when it represents intentions of the heart. As women picture themselves standing before the throne in God's presence while singing praises in the congregation while wearing headcoverings, they can be thankful they don't look bald to God as they would without a headcovering.



There's a natural shame in baldness for women. Some entertainers and women's equality protestors shave their heads for the shock value it has, and to symbolize defiance.

These verses also provide guidance as to what headcovering garments should look like. To be less than completely covered is like baldness. Little Mennonite doilies and fancy hats don't look like short hair to God, but like baldness, because they fail to symbolize the submission they're supposed to symbolize. Historically, the move away from wearing head scarves, to wearing fashionable hats that symbolize nothing except, "you're supposed to wear a hat to church," was probably a big step towards losing the meaning, and then the whole observance of the Headcovering.

Paul is still praising the Corinthians at this point (vs. 2), and doesn't start scolding them until verse 17. The Corinthian women were wearing head scarfs. But as part of his fuller explanation about the meaning of the Headcovering observance (vs. 3a), and for the sake of future generations that might be tempted to discontinue the observance, he describes how the absence of headcoverings would symbolize dishonor.

And although these verses can be an encouragement to women to see themselves as they look to God, they aren't addressed directly to women. "Let her ... be shorn. ... Let her be covered," 1 Cor. 11:6, because it's the duty of the congregation as a whole, and especially of the elders, to determine whether or not the



Headcovering is observed, not of individual women. The Headcovering observance is a church observance, not a woman observance. Individual women have no more responsibility for whether or not the Headcovering is performed, than they do to bring their own piece of bread into the church for their own Lord's Supper.

The men of the congregation love their mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and all the sisters in the church. Nobody wants the sisters to be shamed before God. Pastors, when you look out across the congregation of women without headcoverings because of your failure to teach and lead in this observance, picture it as it looks to the Lord. You've shaved the heads of the women in bold defiance of the apostolically-delivered commandments and of all God-ordained authority structures. You're presenting the women as "loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house," Prov. 7:11. You're like "Aaron [who] made them naked unto their shame among their enemies," Ex. 32:25, while Moses was away. What good is all your teaching about brotherly love if this is what your labor looks like to God?



## *As a Memorial to the Creation of Woman*

### **Gen 1:26. Woman's Indirect Pattern of Creation: LIKE Man**

*1 Cor. 11:7. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and GLORY OF GOD: but the woman is the GLORY OF THE MAN.*

The Headcovering observance is based on the historical account of the indirect creation of woman on the sixth day of creation. In Genesis 1:26-28, God said "Let us make man in our image." The word "image" in the Hebrew usually refers to a molten image, like the one in Daniel 3. The Greek word for "image" in 1 Corinthians 11:7 can also refer to a molten image, like the one in Revelation 13. In Matthew 22:20, it's used of the picture on a coin, "Whose is this image and superscription?" It refers to external appearance. In external appearance, males look like God, and females don't. Spiritually, women are as much like God as men are; but images are physical, external things, and women look different than men.

In Genesis 1:26, God says he'll create males in his image, but he's careful to avoid saying he'll create females in his image. "God said, 'Let us make man [singular, man alone] in our image, after our likeness: and let them [plural, man and woman] have dominion.'" The same is true for Genesis 1:27. "God created man [singular, man



alone] in his own image, in the image of God created he him [singular, man alone], male and female created he them [plural, man and woman].

Like external appearance, authority relationships, while very important, are at the same time, relatively unimportant. Everyone can “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks,” 1 Thess. 5:16-18. These are the important things. Spiritually, men and women are identical. Human authority relationships exist only in the physical realm. For example, your pastor has the authority to decide where the church will meet, but not what you will believe; he can only teach and try to persuade. It will be an invalid excuse when we meet God, to say my pastor, boss, husband, or parents told me to believe this or that doctrine.

God is always male in the Bible. He is our heavenly Father, not our heavenly mother. Whenever he appeared in the Old Testament, he appeared as a male, as the Angel of the Lord: To Hagar in Gen. 16:10-13; Abraham and Sarah in Gen. 18:1--19:1; Jacob in Gen. 32:24-30; Moses in Ex. 3:2-4:26; Joshua in Josh. 5:12-15; Samson’s parents in Jdg. 13:8-24; and the shekinah glory in Ezek. 1:26. And angels are all male. They were often mistaken for young men, never for young women. And Messiah is male. He’s the Son of God, the Son of Abraham, and the Son of David.

The testimony of Genesis 1:26-28 is that the pattern of woman’s creation is indirect, just like her position in the



chain of command. Man is the “glory of God, but the woman is the glory [not the ‘image’] of man.” Women not only don’t look like God, externally, but don’t even look like men. But both man and woman share in the glory of mankind’s dominion over the rest of the earth. “God said, ... let them [plural, man and woman] have dominion.” “What is man, that you are mindful of him? ... For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet: ... the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,” Ps. 8:4-8.

## **Gen 2:23. Woman’s Indirect Manner of Creation: OF Man**

*1 Cor. 11:8. For the man is not OF the woman; but the woman OF the man.*

The key word in this verse is the word “of,” or “out of” in Greek. 1 Corinthians 11:8 refers back to Genesis 2:21-23, again concerning the indirect manner of woman’s creation. “Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man,’” Gen. 2:23.

Woman’s creation was unique out of all that God created. The angels were created directly by God, “who makes his angels spirits,” Heb. 1:7. The animals were formed out of the ground. “And out of the ground the





Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air,” Gen. 2:19. Adam’s body was formed of the dust of the ground. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground,” Gen. 2:7. But, Mrs. Adam (“he ... called their name Adam,” Gen. 5:2), was made completely out of a piece of Adam. “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man,” Gen. 2:21-22.

God could have made Eve directly from the dust of the ground, as he had made Adam, or he could have created each person who would ever live, directly, as he did the myriads of angels. God made woman out of man, so that authority structures would be created, because inequalities are essential for unity, and “it is not good that man should be alone,” Gen. 2:18. This doesn’t mean that everyone should marry, but rather that God saw the need for everyone to be born into authority structures and family relationships, extended families, churches, neighborhoods, countries, etc.

Philosophically, the source of something is greater than that which comes from it; and that which existed earlier is greater than that which exists after it. John pointed to the pre-existence of Jesus as proof of his superiority, “after me [in time] comes a man which is preferred before me [in prestige]: for he was before me [in time],” Jn. 1:30. Jesus is lower in rank than the Father, because he is ‘of’ the Father; the Father is not ‘of’ the Son, “I came



forth from the Father,” Jn. 16:28. The Bible says that “we are ‘of’ God,” 1 Jn. 4:6; but it would be incorrect to say God is ‘of’ us. If Jesus had been merely of David, instead of being the pre-existent Son of God, he couldn’t have authority over David. “If David then call him [the Messiah] Lord [in Ps. 110:1], how is he his son?” Mt. 22:45.

### **Gen 2:20. Woman’s Indirect Purpose of Creation: FOR Man**

*1 Cor. 11:9. Neither was the man created FOR the woman; but the woman FOR the man.*

Man was created for a purpose, and then woman was created for the purpose of helping man fulfill his purpose. The key word in this verse is the word “for.” 1 Corinthians 11:9 refers back to Genesis 2:20, “there was not found a help meet ‘for’ him.” Woman was made to be man’s helper, not his leader or teacher. This word “help” in Genesis 2:20 is the best description of the special roles of women in the home, the church, and society.

And purpose is important in determining rank. “The Sabbath was made ‘for’ man, and not man ‘for’ the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath,” Mk. 2:27-28.

Genesis 2:20, “There was not found a help meet for him [Adam],” doesn’t mean unmarried women don’t fulfill



the purpose of Eve's creation. Far from it! Paul said if a person has enough self-control to avoid fornication, he can serve the Lord even better by remaining single. "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. ... But every man has his proper gift of God, ... The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but ... that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction," 1 Cor. 7:1-40.

If a woman remains single, she fulfills her role as helper in her extended family, in the church, and in society even better; but both married and unmarried women can serve. Women helped Jesus. "Certain women, ... Mary called Magdalene, ... and Joanna ... and Susanna, and many others, ... ministered unto him of their substance," Lk. 8:2-3.

Lydia, Paul's first convert in Macedonia, gave lodging to the missionaries. "When she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.' And she constrained us," Acts 16:15. Priscilla provided Paul lodging while he started the church Corinth. "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Aquila ... with his wife Priscilla, ... and because he was of the same craft, he abode with them," Acts 18:1-3. It's a lot of work and interruption to family



routine for a woman to have guests stay in her home; but it can also be a great spiritual service to God. Of course, women should not jeopardize their safety or propriety to do this service.

After they moved back to Rome, Priscilla and Aquila also helped Paul by hosting church meetings, and they also risked their lives for him at some point. "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Messiah Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks, unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise, greet the church that is in their house," Rm. 16:3-5. Hosting church gatherings involves a lot of sacrifice by the hostess and her family.

Paul asked the church in Rome to help Phebe with the secular business she had in Rome, and described her as "a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea [Corinth's eastern harbor], ... for she has been a succorer of many, and of myself," Rm. 16:1-2. Also, in Rome, was "Mary, who bestowed much labor on us," Rm. 16:6; and "the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord," Rm. 16:12.

In Joppa, there was "a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did." When she became sick and died, the disciples sent for Peter who "when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them," Acts 9:36-42.



And God allowed Peter to resurrect her back to life.

In 1 Timothy 5:9-10, Paul said, "Let not a widow be taken into the number [to receive regular financial support from the church] under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work."

Women were created to be helpers. It's a role women excel at, which they enjoy, and which is extremely needful. The home, the church, and society should provide safe spheres for them to do this work, and recognize the value of it, rather than demeaning helping roles, as egalitarians do.

## **A Memorial to the Indirect Creation of Woman**

The Headcovering is a memorial celebration of the unique creation of woman on the sixth day of creation. Verses 7-9 all refer back to that event. It's also a memorial celebration of the creation of the church, the Bride of Messiah, which began at Pentecost.

The Jewish Sabbath commemorates God's rest on the seventh day, but wasn't celebrated until God gave the observance to Israel at the Exodus, because it also commemorates Israel's rest from slavery in Egypt (Deut. 5:1), and also looks forward to the future Messianic



Kingdom rest. Israel considers the Sabbath a Bride, and only women may light the Sabbath candles. The Sabbath was given only to Israel, not the Gentiles (Ex. 31:16-17).

Likewise, the Headcovering commemorates God's creation of woman out of Adam on the sixth day, but it wasn't celebrated until God gave the observance through the apostles to the church, because it also commemorates the creation of the church, the Bride of Messiah, at Pentecost, from out of his body through his death on the cross (Eph. 5:30-32), and also looks forward to the future marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 18:6-9). Like the rabbinic Sabbath candle lighting, the Headcovering is performed only by women. Like the Old Testament specially honors women with the books of Ruth, the Song of Solomon, and Esther; so the New Testament specially honors women with this observance.

The Jewish Sabbath, the Headcovering, and the Lord's Supper all point back to historical events recorded in scripture, and not to first-century Corinthian customs. Paul doesn't mention a single cultural factor in this chapter about the Headcovering ordinance. He says its meaning is based on authority principles, like the eternal headship of the Father over the Son in the Godhead, and on the historical event and account of woman's creation in Genesis, and these things don't change from age to age or culture to culture.

Woman's submission to man is based on the purpose of her creation. As mentioned earlier, if people evolved



from animals over millions of years, woman's relative physical weakness served its purpose in the survival of the species, but now modern technology and economics allow women to change their roles to be the same as men's. But if God created women with certain characteristics, to fulfill a special purpose, then changing women's roles is harmful to women individually, and to society as a whole.

I doubt anyone who believes Adam evolved over millions of years, also believes God literally performed surgery on Adam at a specific point in time and formed Eve from a piece of him. The Headcovering celebration of the manner and purpose of woman's creation on the sixth day helps protect the church from "oppositions of science falsely so called," 1 Tim. 6:20.

## *As a Testimony to Everyone*

### **A Testimony to Serving Angels**

*1 Cor. 11:10. For this cause ought the woman to have [the symbol of] authority [KJV "power" means "authority"] on her head.*

A woman can't have the concept of "authority" on only her head, because authority affects a whole person. The only way a woman can localize 'authority' on her head is by wearing something that symbolizes authority; not a crown to symbolize being in authority, but a head



shawl to symbolize humbly being under authority. Instead of saying “for this cause ought the woman to have a headcovering on her head,” Paul said “for this cause ought the woman to have authority on her head,” so that when we see women with headcoverings on their heads, it looks to us like they have authority on their heads, and are thus under authority.

Some egalitarians teach that covered heads symbolize authority women have over their own heads to do whatever they want. I welcome them to wear headcoverings to church meetings, and see if it feels like a symbol of self-empowerment or of humble submission.

Headcoverings symbolize that women are under male authority, and the indirect manner and purpose of woman’s creation, and like a layer of cloth, the layer of male authority between Messiah and woman in the chain of command, and the existence and goodness of authority and submission in authority structures. We should see all that and more, when we see women wearing headcoverings. That’s why it’s important to have occasional meditations on the meaning of the observance, as Paul said, “I would have you know,” 1 Cor. 11:3, its meaning.

Just as the bread and wine are the symbols of the Lord’s Supper, the headcovering is the symbol of the Headcovering. Just as the bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Messiah, the headcovering symbolizes authority. Just as we eat and drink the bread





and wine to symbolize our participation in the benefits of the Lord's death, the women of the churches wear headcoverings to symbolize the whole church's participation in all God-ordained authority and submission.

Both the Headcovering and Lord's Supper use physical symbols that people can exercise their wills to use during a specific period of time to symbolize their truths. Like the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper, a headcovering scarf can be used, by putting on and taking off, at will for the observance, but proper hair length cannot.

***1 Cor. 11:10. Because of the angels.***

It's not only people who learn from the symbolism of the Headcovering; angels also learn by watching the church. "God, who created all things by Jesus Messiah, to the intent that now unto the principalities and authorities [KJV: powers] in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God," Eph. 3:9-10. When women wear headcoverings they testify to angels that frail men have been transformed by the work of Messiah, and that the church, the Bride of Messiah submits to authority, while the painted-faced Jezebel of the world mimics the prideful rebellion of Satan himself.

Physical things can be significant symbols to angels, like the blood on the Israelites' doorways, when the Lord passed through Egypt to smite the firstborn sons (Ex.



12:21-23). Angels' are very interested in authority and the chain of command. They were created for service. "Who makes his angels spirits, his ministers a flame of fire," Heb. 1:7. The "principalities and authorities in high places," Eph. 6:12, that we wrestle against are fallen angels. By showing symbolizing our submission, we demonstrate the justness of the future judgment of rebellious fallen angels.

And angels are interested in things relating to creation, especially the creation of woman, the only spiritual being that is female, and the one Satan used to get to Adam. They were there when God "laid the foundations of the earth ... when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God [the angels are all male] shouted for joy," Job 38:4,7.

Some interpreters have speculated women are supposed to wear headcoverings in church meetings to keep angels from lusting over their hair. : ) This is quite a humorous interpretation. If angels were really tempted to lust after women, they could use their invisibility to go around and peek at more than hairstyles.

But angels aren't tempted by those kinds of things, but by doctrinal things, and things having to do with authority. When Satan and his angels fell, their sin was that of rebellion against God. Angels are interested in promoting false doctrine and warring against God's authority, not in fleshly sins, except as a tool. "The LORD God said unto the serpent, ... I will put enmity



between your seed and her seed,” Gen. 3:15. Jesus didn’t have an earthly father, and neither will the Antichrist. Satan will impregnate a woman to produce an imitation of Messiah to deceive mankind, but not because of lust.

Angels are present at church meetings during the Headcovering observance. Nations have both good angels and bad angels assigned to them, which war against each other. “Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel, ... your words were heard, ... but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me. ... There is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael your prince,” Dan. 10:12-13, 21.

Churches also have angels assigned to them. “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write ...,” Rev. 2:1. And the guardian angel of every child in the church meeting is watching also. “Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven,” Mt. 18:10. And since angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation,” Heb. 1:14, they’re definitely present at church meetings where the “heirs of salvation” gather.

Angels are sometimes called ‘watchers.’ Angels watched the Lord’s ministry. “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,” 1 Tim. 3:16. Angels watched the apostles’



ministries. "For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men," 1 Cor. 4:9. Angels watch pastors' ministries. "I charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus Messiah, and the elect angels, that you observe these things without preferring one before another," 1 Tim. 5:21. And angels watch the women's ministry of the Headcovering observance in the church, so one reason we do it is as a testimony, "because of the angels," 1 Cor. 11:9.

## **A Testimony of Mutual Interdependence**

*1 Cor. 11:11-12. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman: but all things of God.*

Paul has been teaching the principle of male authority, and he knows such teaching is vulnerable to abuse by sinful men; so he tempers the teaching with the admonition of these verses. Men and women are not only completely equal in the spiritual realm; but even in the physical realm, God created mutual interdependence along with the inequalities. Therefore men shouldn't think of themselves too highly, or use their rightful authority as a cloak for their own selfishness and meanness.

Every person except Adam and Eve have been dependent on women for their existence. Eve came into existence by means of Adam's rib, but since that time,



every man, including the Savior, came into the world through women. The role of childbearing is the salvation, not spiritually, but physically, of women in the world. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness with sobriety," 1 Tim. 2:13-15. This is not to say a woman must give birth to obtain this benefit. God has ordained that we all come into the world through mothers, so that the status of all women is improved. This way men are taught to treat all women with respect, "the elder women as mothers; the younger women as sisters, with all purity," 1 Tim. 4:2.

Ultimately, both men and women were and are dependent only on God for their existence. Adam merely slept and provided the raw materials, but God made Eve. Women suffer through labor, but God fashions the bones, veins, and ligaments of children in the womb. "You have covered me in my mother's womb, ... I am fearfully and wonderfully made," Ps. 139:14. "He ... made us, and not we ourselves," Ps. 100:3. And we are not only made 'of' him, meaning he is our source, but we are also made 'for' and 'to' him, for his purpose. "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever," Rm. 11:36. Let all males remember this as they exercise their duties and responsibilities of authority, in humility, and love, and in fear of him to whom we must someday give an account.



## **A Testimony in Harmony with Beauty and Nature**

***1 Cor. 11:13. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?***

There's nothing inherently wrong for women to pray without headcoverings. It only became wrong during church meetings after the apostles transmitted the Headcovering ordinance to the church. But even outside church meetings, women's long hair makes it look like they're wearing headcoverings. God naturally covered women with long hair to symbolize their indirect position under Messiah in the chain of command, and their submission to male authority, even while directly praying to God outside church meetings.

***1 Cor. 11:14. Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him?***

Through most cultures and times, it's been shameful for men to have long hair. David's rebellious son Absalom cut his hair only "at every year's end," 2 Sam. 14:26; and his attempt to overthrow his father ended ignominiously when he was caught in battle as his "mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak," 2 Sam. 18:9. Men, like Samson, who took the Nazarite vow had long hair, but they were exceptions, and were not allowed to drink wine, or eat grapes, or go to funerals either (Num. 6:1-8). The priests in the millennial temple will not be permitted to "shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to



grow long; they shall only poll their heads [trim their hair short],” Ez. 44:20.

Jesus definitely didn’t have long hair, based on this chapter, 1 Corinthians 11. The Roman coins of his time pictured the Roman emperors with short hair, and though Jesus was Jewish, artists probably didn’t standardize painting Jesus with long hair until around the 6th century; and I don’t recommend looking to the art world for your guidance in life. Even though this passage is not about hair length, this part of the passage is authoritative for all who would go against nature as regards hair length.

***1 Cor. 11:15a. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her.***

Long hair has always been a glory to women. In the Song of Solomon, the King compares looking at his wife’s flowing hair to the beauty of watching a flock of goats lazily wend their way down the side of distant Mount Gilead on a warm, fragrant evening. “Your hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead,” Song 4:1, Song 6:5. Solomon also compared burying his fingers in his wife’s hair to being in a palace gallery surrounded by luxurious, flowing, purple curtains. “And the hair of your head like purple; the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant are you, O love, for delights,” Song 7:5-6.

How long is long? Mary of Bethany’s hair was long enough she could anoint the feet of Jesus with costly



spikenard for his burial, and wipe “his feet with her hair,” Jn. 12:3. In general, longer than men’s; probably longer than Absalom’s after one year’s growth. Also, notice that once the text mentions a woman’s hair is a glory to her, it never says she should cover it to avoid distracting from the glory of the men in the church. : ) This interpretation is almost as humorous as the one about covering it to keep angels from lusting.

*1 Cor. 11:15b. For her hair is given her for a covering.*

Women were naturally given hair that lends itself to being worn long, like a headcovering. Until recently, forensic hair tests couldn’t differentiate male and female hair shafts, but in the last few years, it’s been discovered that male and female hair consistently contains differing amounts of some chemicals.

At the same time a woman’s long hair is beautiful and a glory to her, it’s also a natural headcovering that naturally symbolizes women’s position under male authority. Long hair isn’t “given her for a covering,” vs. 15, for the Headcovering observance, but for out in nature. Women with long hair look like they’re wearing headcovering scarves, and most women have naturally looked this way through all ages and cultures. This is a witness to the appropriateness of the headcovering scarf as a symbol of the Headcovering observance.

It also means a headcovering garment should look like long hair. It should be a shawl or a scarf; not a hat or a doily. The word ‘covering’ here (‘periboleo’ in Greek) is





translated 'vesture' in Hebrews 1:12. A headcovering should be something you can fold; "as a vesture [peribolaïou] shall you fold them up," Heb. 1:12. Paul doesn't say the headcoverings have to be a solid gray color, or anything like that. Women's natural concern for beauty means their headcoverings can be individual and beautiful, just so they drape over the head like long hair.

## **A Testimony Resisted by Power-Hungry Critics**

*1 Cor. 11:16. But if any man seem to be contentious ...*

The word translated "contentious" is the Greek word 'philo-neikos'. 'Philo' means 'love of,' and 'neikos' means 'strife' and 'conquest'. So 'philo-neikos' carries our concept of 'love of power,' and of being 'power-hungry.'

The only other place this word appears in the New Testament is in Luke 22. "There was also a strife [philoneikos] among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be AS the younger; and he that is chief, AS he that doth serve. For which is greater, he that sits at meat, or he that serves? Is not he that sits at meat? But I am among you AS he that serves. You are they which have continued with me in my temptations,



and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me; that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,'" Lk. 22:24-30.

In Luke 22, the apostles were behaving in a power-hungry way, because they didn't yet understand authority. The Headcovering ordinance helps us understand authority as Jesus taught it in Luke 22. Jesus didn't say authority structures are bad and he would abolish them. He remained the "Master," with all authority, even while he acted AS a servant and washed the disciples' feet.

"You call me Master and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do AS I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him,'" Jn. 13:13-16.

Jesus taught that masters remain greater than servants in position and office, even while they serve LIKE servants. If Jesus were an egalitarian, he would have abdicated his position as Lord, rather than just act like a servant. He told the apostles to behave AS servants, but also gave them "all authority" Mt. 28:18-19, as his representatives during that time, and in the future Messianic Kingdom when they will "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," Lk. 30.



Power-hungry, contentious men give make two kinds of errors in response to authority structures. The first is that they strive to be on top, and give only grudging submission when they are under authority. The second is they try to do away with authority structures, and resist things like the headcovering observance, because they don't understand the goodness of authority structures.

As we saw from verse 3 at the beginning of this chapter, even in the Godhead, "the head of Messiah is God." God doesn't remove authority structures, as the world tries to do, but rather teaches those in superior positions to love and serve unselfishly. Those who rightly serve in positions of authority have to make greater sacrifices than those who are under their authority. Godly leaders sacrificially labor for the sake of those under their charge, not to exploit them.

Everyone except God the Father is under someone's authority. A good heart is glad to serve without envy of others' positions. I believe most women really like their place in God's order. They like to have the freedom to perform their own service within safe environments full of love, appreciation, and respect without having to spend their time fighting to keep those environments safe. We shouldn't ever criticize or ridicule "women's libbers". It's our Bible teachers who keep sliding along with modern culture in their interpretations of scripture, and the male philosophers of this world, who have led women into the 'women's lib' movement. Women follow faithfully, conscientiously, and fervently



in whatever direction men lead them.

The world vehemently hates patriarchy and God-ordained authority structures, and so it vehemently hates the vision of a church meeting full of godly, submissive women wearing headcoverings. It's part of "the mystery of lawlessness [ASV]" that "doth already work," 1 Thess. 2:7. The Amplified Version says, "The mystery of rebellion against divine authority and the coming reign of lawlessness is already at work," 1 Thess. 2:7.

The Headcovering observance, and the doctrine of submission taught by it, is certainly subject to abuse because of the sinfulness of men. But godly men will be humbled by the responsibilities they learn about from the observance, rather than be emboldened to subjugate women. It's important we not only keep the observance, but also continue to explain its meaning, and use it to teach the saints about authority and submission, as Paul did, "I praise you that you ... keep the ordinances, ... but I would have you know ...," 1 Cor. 11:3.

*1 Cor. 11:16. We have no such custom, neither the churches of God.*

The most common assault against the Headcovering is the claim that it's a culturally-derived custom. The context provided by 1 Corinthians 11:2 shows the Headcovering is an apostolically-delivered ordinance, and its principles are based on the unchanging, historical account of God's creation of woman, not



culture. Paul only mentions one custom in this entire passage, the custom of rebellious contentiousness against the Headcovering observance, that no church of Paul's day, not even the church of Corinth, was guilty of.

"If any man seem to be contentious, we [the apostles] have no such custom [sunetheian], neither the churches of God," 1 Cor. 11:16. "Sunetheian" is the same word used in, "you have a custom that I should release unto you one at the Passover," Jn. 18:39. As for the worldly custom to "be contentious," 1 Cor. 11:16, against authority and the Headcovering, Paul says neither the apostles nor any of the churches have such a custom, which means all the churches of Paul's day were keeping the Headcovering observance, and so should we today.

I'm amazed, when I think back, that the first time I heard the long hair interpretation, wasn't from some liberal, modernist theologian; but from the pastor of the conservative, fundamental Baptist church I started attending after I accepted the Lord when I was fourteen. Almost all pastors today, except for Plymouth Brethren pastors, reject the headcovering scarf interpretation. One reason might be the ridiculous explanations of 1 Cor. 11a, like 'women should cover their heads to keep angels from lusting after their hair.' The main reason, though, is that most pastors in all ages interpret the Bible according their own culture. Also, pastors know if they believe and teach the headcovering scarf interpretation, almost everyone will leave their



congregation, because nowadays, church meetings are evangelistic outreaches to the world, instead of gatherings of born-again believers.

God was wise to give the church a symbolic observance like the Headcovering, to force each generation of the church to face the issue of how much we will accommodate the always increasing egalitarianism of the world. The Lord probably had Paul write this passage with enough ambiguity to allow people to misinterpret it if they would be unwilling to obey it anyway. But the passage has enough indications within the text itself, to understand it, when there's no egalitarian agenda to impose on it.

Pastors, you who believe that whatever God commanded is important, please restore the Headcovering observance to your assembly's meetings, as a teaching tool about authority and submission for the edification of the saints, and as a testimony to the world to slow the spread of lawlessness and rebellion. There are precious testimonies at <http://headcoveringmovement.com/testimonies>, by individual women who have chosen to go against the crowd and wear headcoverings to church meetings, but it's not their job to restore this observance. It's not a woman's observance; it's a church meeting observance. Pastors, except during times of physical persecution, it's your job to restore it!



## **Why the Headcovering Can't be About Hair or Customs**

### It's a Church Meeting Observance, Like the Lord's Supper.

Textual context is the most important factor in interpreting any passage of scripture. The Headcovering of the first half of chapter 11 is tightly bound to the Lord's Supper of the second half, by the textual markers "I praise you," about the Headcovering in verse 2, and "I praise you not," about the Lord's Supper in verse 17. Since the Lord's Supper has to go with the rest of the church meeting chapters 12-14, so does the Headcovering. Since the Headcovering is textually bound to the Lord's Supper church meeting observance, our first approach to the Headcovering should be that it's also a church meeting observance.

The Lord's Supper is something you do at appointed times, and the Headcovering is something you do at appointed times of "prayer and prophecy," vss. 4-5 (and 13); but proper hair length is for all times. You can't get a haircut or grow your hair long as part of each church service.

The Lord's Supper uses the symbols of bread and wine to symbolize the Lord's broken body and blood, and the Headcovering uses the symbol of the layer of cloth on women's heads to symbolize the layer of "authority on her head," vs. 10 (and 3b), that woman is under. During the Lord's Supper we eat and drink the bread and wine to show our participation in the Lord's death for us, and



during the Headcovering the women wear head scarves to symbolize our submission to God-ordained authority and gender roles. Headcoverings upset equal rights advocates, because they obviously represent different and subordinate roles for women, but no one is upset by women having long hair.

The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the historical event of the Lord's death for us, and the Headcovering is a memorial of the unique creation of woman on the sixth day. The headcovering layer of cloth symbolizes the indirect creation of woman, 'like,' 'from,' and 'for' man, as his helper (vss. 7-9). It acknowledges the indirectness of woman's authority to God even while praying directly to and prophesying directly from God (vss. 3b, 4-6). But seeing long hair usually reminds us of nothing, because lots of women wear long hair just because they like to.

Wearing long hair looks like a wearing a headcovering scarf, so vs. 15 says a woman's hair is "given her for a covering ['periboleo' in Greek, translated 'vesture' in Heb. 1:12];" but for outside in "nature," vs. 14, not for in church meetings.

### It's an Apostolic Ordinance, Like the Lord's Supper.

The first few verses of any passage are usually the most important for understanding what it's about. The text says, "you keep the ordinances, as I ordained them to you," 1 Cor. 11:2. The ordinances are the special commandments the twelve apostles, Messiah's official representatives, received directly from him to be passed





directly on to the churches, Therefore, the Headcovering has nothing to do with first-century Corinthian hair length or culture.

The Lord's Supper is also an apostolic ordinance. "I have received of the Lord that which also I ordained unto you," vs. 23. It makes sense Jesus himself would have ordained the two church meeting observances he wants the church to observe throughout the church age, but proper hair length would hardly merit special attention by Jesus as an apostolic ordinance to be given to the churches.

All the research scholars have done about Greek history to understand 1 Cor. 11a has been a waste of time and even harmful. God only preserves his Word. The best church histories were destroyed by the apostate Roman Catholic Church. It isn't possible God would have had passages like 1 Cor. 11a written in a way that would require present day knowledge of secular history to understand them, or a person in China in 1000 AD, without Western libraries and the internet, would have had no hope of understanding the Bible.

### It's Something Paul Praised the Corinthian Church About.

Paul said, "I praise you, brethren, that you ... keep the ordinances as I ordained them to you," 1 Cor. 11:2. He wasn't scolding men for looking like male temple prostitutes by having long hair, or wearing veils or head scarfs; and scolding women for looking like female temple prostitutes for having short hair, or not wearing



veils or head scarfs. He wasn't scolding the Corinthians for anything at all, but rather praising them for doing a good job keeping the observance. He just wanted them, and us, to understand its meaning better, "but I would have you know ...," vs. 3a.

It makes sense that in a letter about local church issues, and in a section about church meeting issues, Paul would have taken the time to praise the church for doing a good job keeping one of the two church meeting observances, especially to make them more receptive to receive the scolding he was going to give them about the other one. But it doesn't make sense Paul would have gone out of his way to praise the Corinthians that their hair length is good.

#### If it's About Hair, Men Have to Shave Their Heads.

The word "covered" in the ASV, ESV, KJV, NIV, NKJV, and RSV versions is not actually in the Greek in 1 Cor. 11:4 regarding men, "having his head [covered]." But it actually is in the Greek in 11:6 regarding women, "let her be covered."

The Greek in 11:4 for men is "kata [down upon] kephalys [head] echon [having]." The Darby, GNV, and NMB versions translate it "having [anything] on his head." The AMP, CSB, CEV, HSCB, ISV, LEB, NASB, NRSV, NTE versions translate it "having [something] on his head." If the "anything" and "something" Paul is talking about in 1 Cor. 11:4 is hair, men can't have any, not even some, hair on their heads.



But of course the “anything” and “something” Paul is talking about on men’s heads in vs. 4 doesn’t include hair. If I told an audience, “Please take everything off your heads,” would they think I meant for them to shave their heads? Hair is part of one’s head. Jesus said “the very hairs OF your head are all numbered,” Mt. 10:30, not ‘the very hairs ON your head are all numbered.’ Men are permitted to have hair on their heads in church, but not not even a small kippa. On the other hand, women aren’t “covered” simply by having a hat or little doily on their heads.

#### There Are No Cultural Arguments in the Passage.

In 1 Cor. 11a, Paul talked about the goodness of the eternal submission of the Son to the Father in the godhead (vs. 3c); the historical account of the creation of woman in Genesis 2, ‘like,’ ‘of,’ and ‘for’ man (vss. 7-9); the testimony of women to angels (vs. 10); and the agreement with the natural world order God created (vs. 13-15). None of these things are cultural or change from age to age or place to place. Seeing long hair on women doesn’t make us meditate about the submission of the Son to the Father, or the manner of woman’s creation as a subordinate to help man. But women wearing head scarves in church meetings makes us think about why they’re doing that.

#### It’s About Authority and Submission, not Culture.

Paul talked about the layers in the chain of command, God - Messiah - man - woman, in verse 3. About honoring and dishonoring authority in verses 4-6. About woman being created in a subordinate position



'like,' 'of,' and 'for' man in verses 7-9. About the woman being under "authority on her head" in verse 10. And about the resistance of power-hungry [philoneikos] men in verse 16, who hadn't learned the goodness of authority structures and how to rule by serving like Jesus in Luke 22:24-30. Nobody gets upset about women wearing long hair, but women wearing headcoverings in church clearly testifies - to the brethren, the world, and the angels - that the church believes in different, God-ordained roles for men and women.

## *Like the Lord's Supper*

### **The Lord's Supper, Not the Church's Supper**

*1 Cor. 11:17-19. Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be manifest among you.*

The Corinthians were, "not for the better, but for the worse," for going to church meetings, than if they had stayed home. First of all, there were the divisions Paul said he heard about in chapters 1 - 4. "For it has been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them of the house of Cloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you says, I am of Paul;



and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Messiah. Is Messiah divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul," 1 Cor. 1:11-13. What's wrong with saying, "I am of Messiah?" That's the worst of all because we ought to say, "We are all of Messiah," all that are born again believers, not just my group.

Secondly, there were divisions because there were heresies where some men wanted to be "approved," 1 Cor. 11:19, and held in esteem, by their own group of followers, for their own novel doctrines. If these men had learned the lessons of the Headcovering ordinance, they wouldn't have been seeking preeminence.

*1 Cor. 11:20-22. When you come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating everyone takes before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunk. What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*

All the early churches ate the Lord's Supper as a full meal at their church meetings. The word translated 'supper' in 1 Corinthians 11 means the chief meal of the day, usually taken in the evening. It's sometimes translated as 'feast' in the New Testament. The same Greek word is used to refer to the "marriage 'supper' of the Lamb," Rev. 19:17. I hope they serve us more than a cracker and a thimble of grape juice at the marriage supper of the Lamb!



The phrase 'breaking of bread' often refers to the Lord's Supper. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers ... and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," Acts 2:42,46. Likewise in Acts 20, "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ... when he therefore ... had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed," Acts 20:7,11.

Jude and Peter said, "For there are certain men crept in unawares. ... These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear," Jude 1:4,12. And, "spots they are and blemishes ... while they feast with you," 2 Pet. 2:13. Would Jude and Peter be able to refer to the Lord's Supper at your church as a 'feast?'

The problem with the Corinthians' observance of the Lord's Supper was that they disrespected the meaning of the observance by their behavior at the meal. Some were gluttonous and some even drunken. Those that were wealthy enough brought an abundant amount of food and wine to the meal for the people sitting at their tables; while the poorer brethren, "them that have not," 1 Cor. 11:22, went "hungry," 1 Cor. 11:21. They also started eating as soon as their clique was ready, rather than waiting for everyone to begin the meal together. "Everyone takes before other his own supper," 1 Cor.



11:21-22. Individuals were so focused on eating their own suppers, and so ignored the symbolic meaning of the meal, that it didn't even count as the "Lord's Supper," but only counted as their "own supper." "This is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in eating, everyone takes before other his own supper," 1 Cor. 11:21-22.

We are not to show favoritism. Paul charged Timothy to lead and serve the church without, "preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality," 1 Tim. 5:21. James said it is wrong to treat people in meetings "with respect of persons, for if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and you have respect to him that wears the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit you here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand you there, or sit here under my footstool [since the early churches always met in houses], are you not then partial?" James 2:1-13.

In Luke 14, while sitting at a meal, Jesus gave three different parables about meals. One of them talked about our attitudes towards the poor and handicapped. "When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your relatives, nor your rich neighbors; lest they also invite you again, and a recompense be made you. But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you; for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just," Lk. 14:12-14.



We are not to prefer one person before another, but we are to prefer others before ourselves. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another," Rm. 12:10. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves," Phil. 2:3. The Corinthians suppers which should have been "feasts of love," Jude 1:12, and unity, were tools of unkindness and division. Paul said, "shall I praise you in this" kind of keeping of the Lord's Supper? "I praise you not," vs. 22.

## Symbolizes Messiah's Death

*1 Cor. 11:23-26. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come.*

The main point, mentioned twice in this passage, is that the purpose of the observance is to remember the Lord. We use the symbols of the bread and cup to remember him. It doesn't explicitly say so in this passage, but the bread we use to symbolize his body should be unleavened. Spiritual things are more important than physical things, but if God tells the church to symbolize





something spiritual through something physical, then the physical item we use for the symbolism is important.

Leaven is consistently used as a symbol of sin and false doctrine in the Bible. We know the bread Jesus held up when he said, "this is my body," was unleavened because the last supper was a Passover meal. "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, 'Where wilt you that we prepare for you to eat the Passover?'" Mt. 26:17. Even though Paul didn't say, "as often as you eat this 'unleavened' bread" in verse 26, we know he explained the Jewish feasts and their symbolism to the Corinthians while he was with them because he refers to them in 1 Corinthians.

God gave seven feasts to Israel in two groups; the four spring feasts represent the first coming of Messiah, and the three fall feasts represent the future second coming of Messiah. The four spring feasts representing Messiah's first coming all have some relationship to leaven, and all four were mentioned in 1 Corinthians.

First comes Passover on the 14th day of the first month of the Jewish calendar. "Your lamb shall be without blemish, ... and they shall eat the flesh that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread," Ex. 12:5,8. "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the feast of the Passover be left unto the morning," Ex. 34:25. Jesus fulfilled this feast by dying on the cross the same hour the Passover lamb was offered by the priests in the temple (which is different from the lamb



eaten in homes the night before). Passover was mentioned in 1 Cor. 5:7, "Messiah our Passover is sacrificed for us."

Then comes the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the 15th through the 22nd. "And on the fifteenth day of the same month at even is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days must you eat unleavened bread," Lev. 23:6. "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses," Ex. 12:19. This feast was a symbol of Messiah's sinlessness, and his offering his sinless blood in the heavenly tabernacle. That's why Mary could not touch him immediately after the resurrection. "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father," Jn. 20:17.

Moses patterned the tabernacle on earth after the real tabernacle in heaven which God showed him. The tabernacle Moses made was purified with animal blood, but Jesus purified the "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched," Heb. 8:2, in heaven with his own blood. "It was therefore necessary that the patterns [on earth] of things in the heavens should be purified with these [the blood of calves and goats]; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Messiah is not entered into the holy places made with hands," Heb. 9:23-24. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:8, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."



The third spring feast is the Feast of Firstfruits. The numerical day of the month changed from year to year, but the day of the week was essential. It had to be observed on the Sunday after Passover, which always fell on a day during the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread. "And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it," Lev. 23:11. This feast was fulfilled by the resurrection of Messiah, the firstfruits from the dead, on the Sunday this feast was being observed in Israel. The Feast of Firstfruits was mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, "But now is Messiah risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept, ... but every man in his own order, Messiah the firstfruits; afterward they that are Messiah's at his coming."

The fourth spring feast is the Feast of Weeks, also called Pentecost. It occurred fifty days after firstfruits. Leaven was also conspicuous in this feast, not by its absence, but because it was required. "You shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD," Lev. 23:17. This feast symbolized the birth of the church which is made up of sinful men redeemed from among Jews and Gentiles, the two loaves. The Feast of Weeks was mentioned in 1 Cor. 16:8, "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost."

The three fall feasts that will be fulfilled by the second coming are: Rosh Hashanah (New Year's Day, Feast of



Trumpets), when the rapture, or catching away of the church will occur, (1 Cor. 15:52) (we don't know the specific day because we don't know which year); Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), which represents the 7-year tribulation period which will start on Yom Kippur when Israel makes a treaty with the Antichrist; and Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles), which represents the Messianic Kingdom, which will start on Sukkot right after the tribulation period.

Leaven consistently represents sin and false doctrine in the Bible. Three groups opposed Jesus and eventually delivered him to Pilate: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians. In Mt. 16:6, Jesus said, "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"; and in Mk. 8:15 he warns of the "leaven of Herod." "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees," Mt. 16:12.

Two characteristics make leaven an excellent symbol of sin and false doctrine. First, leaven is pervasive. If you put a little leaven in one part of some dough, pretty soon the thing the whole thing becomes leavened, and sin in a group is pervasive. "That he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you ... know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump," 1 Cor. 5:2,6. False doctrine is also pervasive. Matthew 13 says that false doctrine will dominate the earth by the time Messiah returns to set up the Messianic Kingdom, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman [who is not supposed to be teaching] took, and hid in



three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened," Mt. 13:33. (If you think the seven parables of Matthew 13 are all about good things, remember that after the abnormal growth of the mustard seed, birds lodge in its branches, and the birds were interpreted by the first parable to be "the wicked one," Mt. 13:19.)

Secondly, leaven is old. "Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump," 1 Cor. 5:7. Yeast is comprised of one-celled fungi that reproduce by budding or splitting, rather than by dying and germinating like wheat. The yeast in the bread we eat comes from other living yeast in an unbroken chain back to Eden. In contrast, the wheat in the bread got here by a life and death purification cycle. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit," Jn. 12:24. For Messiah to qualify to be a sacrifice for sin he could not himself inherit the sin of Adam as we did (Rm. 5:12). He had to be the virgin-born seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), not of man.

Leavened bread is a very poor symbol to use for Messiah, "who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God," Heb. 9:14. Messiah was the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices, but Old Testament sacrifices couldn't include leaven. "No meat offering, which you shall bring unto the LORD shall be made with leaven: for you shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire," Lev. 3:11. God has given the church very few physical symbols, compared to Israel, so we should be faithful in



the few we've been given. In symbols, the external details really matter because symbols are externals. We should never symbolize our Lord as having sin, which is what we do if we use leavened bread at the Lord's Supper.

If we're going to perform an observance God has commanded us to perform, we ought to perform it the way he told us to perform it. "Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD," Num. 3:4. Saul obeyed God, but not the way he was commanded, and it cost him his throne. "Saul said, ... 'I have performed the commandment of the LORD.' And Samuel said, 'What means then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears. ... Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king,'" 1 Sam. 15:13-23.

Our modern custom of using grape juice instead of wine is not as bad as our use of leavened bread, since at least it's still 'the fruit of the vine,' and it doesn't symbolize our Lord as having sin, but it's still wrong. Psalm 104:14-15 says God brings, "forth food out of the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man." I don't think anyone's heart gets made especially glad from drinking grape juice.

Some people in our society today don't know how to drink wine without abusing it, so grape juice should also be provided for those who want to avoid wine. Some people say that the wine back then was mingled with water to weaken it. Fine, mix it with some water,



and then drink it. Don't be unwilling to drink wine just because of Fundamentalist Baptist, and other, customs of men that contradict the word of God.

## And Sacrilege Will Be Judged

*1 Cor. 11:27-32. Therefore whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

In most church meetings today, these verses are used to say Christians should confess their sins before they eat of the Lord's Supper. However, in context, the eating and drinking "unworthily" means to eat and drink 'in an unworthy manner,' like being disrespectful towards the poor, and forgetting the purpose of the meal. It means to commit sacrilege, not to eat and drink with 'unconfessed sin'.

The only passage in the New Testament that seems to imply Christians should enumerate their sins to God is 1 John 1:9, but one of the purposes of that book was to help us know who are Christians and who aren't. "These things have I written unto you ... that you may know that you have eternal life," 1 Jn. 5:13. We can know



someone is not a Christian if they are self-righteous, “if we say that we have no sin,” 1 Jn. 1:8. But 1 John 1:9 says you can know someone is a Christian if they admit they’re a sinner and trust in Messiah’s righteousness, “if we confess [meaning “agree about”] our sins.”

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, ... The publican ... smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other,” Lk. 18:14. All unbelievers are self-righteous and trust in their own righteousness, while all believers agree with God (confess) they are sinners, and trust in God’s provision of “the righteousness of God,” Rm. 1:16. (More information on 1 John 1:9 in its context is available on my website.)

All our sins, even the ones we haven’t committed yet, were future to Messiah when he died for them, so all our sins, even ones we haven’t committed yet, were forgiven when we believed on him. We are counted as, and will always be counted as, perfectly righteous in Messiah. If we have to confess our sins to be clean enough to observe the Lord’s Supper, then we can never be clean enough, because we can’t even confess all the sins we’re aware of.

It’s sad that the observance to remember the Lord’s substitutionary death that washed away all our sins, is used to teach people they need to take additional steps





to be clean, when one of the first things we should learn as believers, is that our sins are already forgiven. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake," 1 Jn. 2:12.

The word "damnation" in verse 29, "he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body," should be translated "judgment," because it refers to the physical judgment described in the next verse, "for this reason many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep," 1 Cor. 11:29-30. Many Christians were sick and many died in Corinth because of the physical judgment they experienced because they observed the Lord's Supper improperly, not because they ate it with 'unconfessed sin'.

But how well does your assembly keep the Lord's Supper? We should call it the Lord's breakfast, because we eat it in the morning. We should call it the Lord's snack, because it's smaller than hors d'oeuvres. We don't have any problems with gluttony or drunkenness at our Lord's Suppers, because we've gotten rid of both the supper and the wine!

Paul could write to us, "When you come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For a cracker and thimble of grape juice are no supper." Of course a full meal is more inconvenient than passing around tiny plastic cups, and nowadays we generally don't want to be inconvenienced by spending too much time gathering with the brethren.



## So Fix the Problem

*1 Cor. 11:33-34a. Wherefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation.*

Paul says, “when you come together to eat.” The Lord’s Supper was not an occasional add-on to the real business of preaching, singing, and having church. The fellowship with the brethren, and the remembrance of the Lord around the table at the full love feast, was the primary purpose of the gatherings. Paul is simply telling them to fix the one specific problem this passage mentions: “in eating everyone takes before other his own supper,” 1 Cor. 11:21. He said they could fix it if they “tarry one for another,” 1 Cor. 11:33. He didn’t tell them to stop having a full meal, the sterile solution we’ve adopted today.

If the Corinthians had the teaching portion of their meeting first, like Paul did in Troas, that might have solved the problem. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ... and continued his speech unto midnight. ... When he therefore ... had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed,” Acts 20:7-12.

Biblically, all days start in the evening and end the next afternoon, “The evening and the morning were the first day,” Gen. 1:5. The first day of the week, Sunday, starts



at sundown Saturday evening. So the Acts 20 passage shows churches common met on Saturday nights. The Troas meeting couldn't have started Sunday morning, have Paul preach all the way to midnight, and then through till Monday morning. So if the Corinthians met on Saturday evenings, and some people were too hungry to wait for everyone to arrive before they started eating the Lord's Supper, they could eat a little at home before they went to the meeting. "If any man hunger, let him eat at home," 1 Cor. 11:34.

The Corinthians experienced the physical judgments of weakness, sickness, and death because of the way they kept the Lord's Supper. We are probably experiencing some of the same things today for having virtually thrown out the "supper," part of the observance. And if the improper observance of the Lord's Supper exposes a congregation to physical judgment, what about complete non-observance of the Headcovering ordinance? The Lord has given the church only two church meeting observances, and we aren't keeping either one. Elders, lead the way to restore the proper obedience of these ordinances to your assemblies, to help ensure "that you come not together unto condemnation," 1 Cor. 11:34.

***1 Cor. 11:34b. And the rest will I set in order when I come.***

The last phrase of verse 34 ends the second half of the chapter on the Lord's Supper, and also ends the whole chapter on the church meeting ordinances. Paul told the



Corinthians they were doing a good job keeping the Headcovering ordinance, but he wanted them to continually gain a fuller understanding of its meaning. He said they weren't doing a good job in the way they observed the Lord's Supper, and then he closed by telling them there were more things he would correct when he returned to them.

What else would Paul need to "set in order," 1 Cor. 11:34, in your church meetings if he were to visit? Are your meetings participatory like the meetings described in chapters 12-14?



## *Affection: The Song of Solomon*

God Created SEX, and Wrote the MANUAL! There are three books in the Bible about a woman: the books of Ruth, Esther, and the Song of Solomon (about Shulamith). The Song of Solomon is written entirely from a woman's perspective, even giving her thoughts, by divine revelation, though the book was written by her husband, Solomon. The Song of Solomon has been so abused by Jewish and Christian Bible teachers, I won't even consider any allegoric aspects it might have about the relationship between God and men. Such interpretations make us lose the book's primary purpose and value, as instruction about the affectionate relationship between husbands and wives.



## *Act 1. From the Country to the Palace (1:2-2:7)*

### **Act 1, Scene 1. Introducing the Play**

**Shulamith** [*narrating to the audience*]

1:1 The song of songs, which is Solomon's.

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth

**Shulamith** [*narrating regarding Solomon*]

For your love is better than wine.

3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments,  
Your name is ointment poured forth;

Therefore the virgins love you.

4 Draw me away!

(Shulamith likes Solomon because he has a good 'name,' meaning a good reputation and character. He treats waiters and waitresses with respect, for example.)

**Daughters of Jerusalem** [*Narrating re. Solomon*]

We will run after you [masc. sing.]!

### **Act 1, Scene 2. In the Throne Room**

**Shulamith** [*narrating the scene*]

The king has brought me into his chambers.

**The Daughters of Jerusalem** [*to Solomon*]

We will be glad and rejoice in you [masc. sing.].

We will remember your [masc. sing] love more than wine.



**Shulamith** [*narrating her thoughts re. Solomon*]

Rightly do they love you.

(Shulamith is very nervous when she, a hard-working country girl, tanned by the sun, is first brought to the palace and introduced to the women of the court. She is worried they might not accept her.)

**Shulamith** [*to the Daughters of Jerusalem*]

5 I am dark, but lovely,

O daughters of Jerusalem,

Like the tents of Kedar,

Like the curtains of Solomon.

6 Do not look upon me, because I am dark,

Because the sun has tanned me.

My mother's sons were angry with me;

They made me the keeper of the vineyards,

But my own vineyard [her body, because she's too tanned] I have not kept.

(Now Shulamith wants to know Solomon's schedule and the proper times he will have available for her. As king of Israel, he's a busy man with a lot of responsibilities, and she doesn't want to be chasing him around or interrupting him during government business.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

7 Tell me, O you whom I love,

Where you feed your flock,

Where you make it rest at noon.

For why should I be as one who veils herself [or 'wanders']

By the flocks of your companions?

(The women of the court are not very kind in their first



interaction with Shulamith. They are leaving it up to her to prove herself to them.)

**Daughters of Jerusalem** *[to Shulamith]*

8 If you do not know, O fairest among women,  
Follow in the footsteps of the flock,  
And feed your little goats  
Beside the shepherds' tents.

(Solomon is sensitive to Shulamith's situation, and publicly stands up for her, and thereby wins over the support of the women of the court for her.)

**Solomon** *[to Shulamith]*

9 I have compared you, my love,  
To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.  
10 Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,  
Your neck with chains of gold.

**Daughters of Jerusalem** *[to Shulamith]*

11 We will make you [fem. sing.] ornaments of gold  
With studs of silver.

**Act 1, Scene 3. At the Welcome Banquet**

(Shulamith notices the fragrance from her necklace that has a container of myrrh on it.)

**Shulamith** *[narrating the scene]*

12 While the king is at his table,  
My spikenard sends forth its fragrance.

(The container of myrrh on her necklace dangles between her breasts, and she looks forward to the night





when Solomon will be like that to her.)

**Shulamith** [*narrating her thoughts*]

13 A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me,

That lies all night between my breasts.

14 My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms

In the vineyards of En Gedi

[an oasis along the Dead Sea].

## **Act 1, Scene 4. The Picnic**

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

15 Behold, you are fair, my love!

Behold, you are fair!

You have dove's eyes.

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

16 Behold, you are handsome, my beloved!

Yes, pleasant!

(Shulamith begins playing and pretending they are in a house made of the grass and trees around them.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

Also our bed is green.

17 The beams of our houses are cedar,

And our rafters of fir.

(She humbly compares herself to a common, meadow wild-flower.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

2:1 I am the rose of Sharon

[the plain along the Mediterranean Sea],

And the lily of the valleys.



(Solomon doesn't deny the truth of her humble origins, but he won't let her speak lowly of herself.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

2 Like a lily among thorns,  
So is my love among the daughters.

(Shulamith returns his compliment. She compares him to a fruit tree among non-fruit trees, because he provides for her and shelters her. He is a safe place for her, free of criticism.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods,  
So is my beloved among the sons.  
I sat down in his shade with great delight,  
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.

## **Act 1, Scene 5. The Second Banquet**

**Shulamith** [*narrating the scene*]

4 He brought me to the banqueting house,  
And his banner over me was love.

**Shulamith** [*in her thoughts to Solomon as she watches him across the tables*]

5 Sustain me with cakes of raisins,  
Refresh me with apples,  
For I am lovesick.

**Shulamith** [*imagining the future*]

6 His left hand is under my head,  
And his right hand embraces me.

(Having just mentioned the pain of waiting, and having



just imagined the time when they will be married and able to express themselves to each other physically, Shulamith gives the first warning which is repeated over and over in this book, and one of its main themes; that unmarried couples must be very careful not to have any physical contact that could arouse physical desires before the wedding night.)

### **Warning #1**

**Shulamith** *[narrating to the Daughters of Jerusalem]*

7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
By the gazelles or by the doe of the field,  
Do not stir up nor awaken love  
Until it pleases [until the proper time, which is the wedding night].

## ***Act 2. Engaged Life (2:8-3:5)***

### **Act 2, Scene 1. Solomon Arrives for an Outing**

**Shulamith** *[narrating the scene as Solomon arrives at her apartment in the palace and peeks through the lattice in his eagerness to see her]*

8 The voice of my beloved!

Behold, he comes

Leaping upon the mountains,

Skiping upon the hills.

9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.

Behold, he stands behind our wall;

He is looking through the windows,

Gazing through the lattice.

10 My beloved spoke, and said to me:



**Solomon** *[to Shulamith]*

Rise up, my love, my fair one,  
And come away.

11 For lo, the winter is past,  
The rain is over and gone.

12 The flowers appear on the earth;  
The time of singing has come,  
And the voice of the turtledove  
Is heard in our land.

13 The fig tree puts forth her green figs,  
And the vines with the tender grapes  
Give a good smell.

Rise up, my love, my fair one,  
And come away!

## **Act 2, Scene 2. At the Mountains**

**Solomon** *[to Shulamith]*

14 O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,  
In the secret places of the cliff,  
Let me see your face,  
Let me hear your voice;  
For your voice is sweet,  
And your face is lovely.

(They've made it this far, and they mutually decide to be diligent to ensure nothing prevents them from reaching the wedding day.)

**Solomon and Shulamith** *[to each other, summing up their conversation among the vineyards]*

15 Catch us the foxes,  
The little foxes that spoil the vines,  
For our vines have tender grapes.

**Shulamith** [*her thoughts*]

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his.  
He feeds his flock among the lilies.

(Feeding his flock among the lilies shows that she appreciates that Solomon, though strong, is a kind, peaceful, refined man that appreciates beauty and sentimental things. No crass, beer-drinking couch potato here!)

**Shulamith** [*expressing her wish for the future*]

17 Until the day breaks  
And the shadows flee away,  
Turn, my beloved,  
And be like a gazelle  
Or a young stag  
Upon the mountains of Bether  
[meaning 'mountains of separation', i.e. her breasts].

**Act 2, Scene 3. A Separation Dream**

(Subconsciously worried something might go wrong and prevent the wedding from taking place, Shulamith's anxiety causes her to have a separation dream.)

**Shulamith** [*narrating a separation dream*]

3:1 By night on my bed I sought the one I love;  
I sought him, but I did not find him.  
2 "I will rise now," I said,  
"And go about the city;  
In the streets and in the squares  
I will seek the one I love."  
I sought him, but I did not find him.  
3 The watchmen who go about the city found me;



I said, "Have you seen the one I love?"  
 4 Scarcely had I passed by them,  
 When I found the one I love.  
 I held him and would not let him go,  
 Until I had brought him to the house of my mother,  
 And into the chamber of her who conceived me.

(This is how Isaac and Rebekah were married. "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death," Gen. 24:67.)

### **Warning #2**

**Shulamith** [*narrating to the Daughters of Jerusalem*]

5 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
 By the gazelles or by the doe of the field,  
 Do not stir up nor awaken love  
 Until it pleases.

## *Act 3. The Wedding Day (3:6-5:1)*

### **Act 3, Scene 1. The Wedding Procession**

**Shulamith** [*narrating the scene*]

6 Who is this coming out of the wilderness  
 Like pillars of smoke,  
 Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,  
 With all the merchant's fragrant powders?  
 7 Behold, it is Solomon's couch,  
 With sixty valiant men around it,  
 Of the valiant of Israel.  
 8 They all hold swords,



Being expert in war.  
Every man has his sword on his thigh  
Because of fear in the night.  
9 Of the wood of Lebanon  
Solomon the King  
Made himself a palanquin [a portable enclosed chair  
carried by men]:  
10 He made its pillars of silver,  
Its support of gold,  
Its seat of purple,  
Its interior paved with love  
By the daughters of Jerusalem.  
11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion,  
And see King Solomon with the crown  
With which his mother crowned him  
On the day of his wedding,  
The day of the gladness of his heart.

## **Act 3, Scene 2. The Wedding Night**

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

4:1 Behold, you are fair, my love!  
Behold, you are fair!  
You have dove's eyes behind your veil.  
Your hair is like a flock of goats,  
Going down from Mount Gilead.

(Solomon is not telling her she has goat-like hair. He is telling her that her wavy hair gives him the same feeling he has on a warm, lazy evening, with the smells of summer in the air, as he watches the flocks on distant Mount Gilead wend their ways down the mountain. He saw scenes like this while visiting Shulamith's hometown since she was from the area of Mahanaim near Mount Gilead, so this would evoke fond memories



for Shulamith.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

2 Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep  
Which have come up from the washing,  
Every one of which bears twins,  
And none is barren among them.

(Again, Solomon is not saying it's nice she's not missing a lot of teeth. He's saying the sight of her teeth, as he and she smile and laugh together, gives him the same kind of happy feeling he gets when he watches the sheep and lambs coming up out of the water and jumping about, shaking the water off, etc. These kinds of compliments include the feelings, looks, smells, sounds, memories, etc. that they evoke.)

(It should also be noted at this point that the Song of Solomon is not only a romance, engagement, and marriage manual, but also a manual of physical lovemaking. So when you read these compliments, they are not just verbal compliments. Solomon is giving physical attention to the area that he is talking about. In this passage, he starts with Shulamith's hair and face and then works his way down her body, complimenting, caressing, kissing, etc.)

**Lovemaking Manual, Lesson #1**

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

3 Your lips are like a strand of scarlet,  
And your mouth is lovely.  
Your temples behind your veil  
Are like a piece of pomegranate.  
4 Your neck is like the tower of David,





Built for an armory,  
On which hang a thousand bucklers,  
All shields of mighty men.  
5 Your two breasts are like two fawns,  
Twins of a gazelle,  
Which feed among the lilies.

(In the previous verse, Solomon is caressing her breasts gently with feather-touches, like he would pet fawns. In the next verse he arrives at “the mound of myrrh,” “the hill of frankincense.” Since her breasts were the “mountains of separation,” and he is working down her body from there, you can figure out for yourself what the “mound of frankincense” refers to.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

6 Until the day breaks  
And the shadows flee away,  
I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh  
And to the hill of frankincense.

(At this point, Solomon pauses. He is waiting for Shulamith to become as aroused as he is.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

7 You are all fair, my love,  
And there is no spot in you.

(He tells her to put her worries behind her and concentrate on their enjoyment of each other.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

8 Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse,  
With me from Lebanon.  
Look from the top of Amana,  
From the top of Senir and Hermon,



From the lions' dens,  
From the mountains of the leopards.

(Notice Solomon's love making involves verbal expressions, and is not all silent touching. He doesn't 'talk dirty' or mean or crass, like is popular in our culture, but is gentle and complimentary and expresses his love and feelings and enjoyment.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

9 You have ravished my heart,

My sister, my spouse;

You have ravished my heart

With one look of your eyes,

With one link of your necklace.

10 How fair is your love,

My sister, my spouse!

How much better than wine is your love,

And the scent of your perfumes

Than all spices!

(Whereas earlier Solomon gently kissed her "lips like a strand of scarlet," now he more passionately 'French' or deep kisses her mouth to reach the tastes of 'honey and milk' under her tongue.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

11 Your lips, O my spouse,

Drip as the honeycomb;

Honey and milk are under your tongue;

And the fragrance of your garments

Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

(Now Solomon is waiting for Shulamith to be ready to open her "enclosed garden.")



**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

12 A garden enclosed

Is my sister, my spouse,

A spring shut up,

A fountain sealed.

13 Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates

With pleasant fruits,

(Solomon is becoming quite passionate while waiting,  
and starting to mix his metaphors in his urgency.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

Fragrant henna with spikenard,

14 Spikenard and saffron,

Calamus and cinnamon,

With all trees of frankincense,

Myrrh and aloes,

With all the chief spices —

15 A fountain of gardens,

A well of living waters,

And streams from Lebanon.

(Finally Shulamith is also ready.)

**Shulamith** [*in Solomon's hearing*]

16 Awake, O north wind,

And come, O south!

Blow upon my garden,

That its spices may flow out.

Let my beloved come to his garden

And eat its pleasant fruits.

(A curtain discreetly descends to hide the couple at this time.)

(Solomon doesn't immediately roll over and go to sleep,  
but continues to give Shulamith some attention after



making love, and expresses his satisfaction.)

**Solomon** [*to a sleepy Shulamith*]

5:1 I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse;  
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;  
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;  
I have drunk my wine with my milk.

### CENTRAL VERSE OF THE CHIASM

(The following verse is at the center of the book and forms a chiasm where the same sections follow afterwards in reverse order as the sections that came before.

Act 1: From the Country to the Palace  
including a trip to the country

Act 2: Engaged Life  
including a separation dream

Act 3: The Wedding Day  
including the central verse God speaks

Act 4: Life During Marriage  
including a separation dream

Act 5: From the Palace to the Country  
including a trip to the country

The central verse portrays God as the creator of physical lovemaking, and as deriving pleasure from seeing the couple happy and satisfied thereby. This is the only 'direct reference' to God in the book.)



**God** *[narrating to the couple]*  
Eat, O friends!  
Drink, yes, drink deeply,  
O beloved ones!

## *Act 4. Married Life (5:2-7:10)*

### **Act 4, Scene 1. At Shulamith's Room**

(Shulamith has gone to bed and is falling asleep.)

**Shulamith** *[narrating the scene]*  
2 I sleep, but my heart is awake;  
It is the voice of my beloved!  
He knocks, saying,

(Solomon unexpectedly had some time freed up from a cancelled trip or something, and with great happiness he runs to Shulamith's room to spend the night with her.)

**Solomon** *[to Shulamith]*  
Open for me, my sister, my love,  
My dove, my perfect one;  
For my head is covered with dew,  
My locks with the drops of the night.

(But Shulamith isn't immediately thrilled with his arrival. Why didn't he tell her he was coming? She's sleepy and in bed already.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

3 I have taken off my robe;  
How can I put it on again?  
I have washed my feet;  
How can I defile them?

(After some delay, she realizes the situation and is happy they will have some time together, so she puts on some perfume and goes to the door.)

**Shulamith** [*narrating*]

4 My beloved put his hand  
By the latch of the door,  
And my heart yearned for him.  
5 I arose to open for my beloved,  
And my hands dripped with myrrh,  
My fingers with liquid myrrh,  
On the handles of the lock.

(But Solomon was offended by her first response. He was so happy to be able to spend the time with her, and she apparently didn't feel the same way, so instead of being understanding and patient, he was offended and left.)

**Shulamith** [*narrating*]

6 I opened for my beloved,  
But my beloved had turned away and was gone.  
My heart leaped up when he spoke.  
I sought him, but I could not find him;  
I called him, but he gave me no answer.

(Shulamith goes back to bed and has another anxiety dream.)



**Shulamith** *[narrating her dream]*

7 The watchmen who went about the city found me.  
They struck me, they wounded me;  
The keepers of the walls  
Took my veil away from me.

**Shulamith** *[narrating to the Daughters of Jerusalem]*

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
If you find my beloved,  
That you tell him I am lovesick!

**Daughters of Jerusalem** *[narrating to Shulamith]*

9 What is your beloved  
More than another beloved,  
O fairest among women?  
What is your beloved  
More than another beloved,  
That you so charge us?

(The following is a description of Shulamith's enjoyment of Solomon's physique, but it's also another set of love making instructions for when the woman takes the initiative. Here Shulamith starts at Solomon's head and works down. Again, she is caressing and kissing as well as complimenting.)

**Lovemaking Manual, Lesson #2**

**Shulamith** *[narrating to the Daughters of Jerusalem]*

10 My beloved is white and ruddy,  
Chief among ten thousand.  
11 His head is like the finest gold;  
His locks are wavy,  
And black as a raven.  
12 His eyes are like doves  
By the rivers of waters,  
Washed with milk,  
And fitly set.



13 His cheeks are like a bed of spices,

Banks of scented herbs.

His lips are lilies,

Dripping liquid myrrh.

14 His hands are rods of gold

Set with beryl.

His body is carved ivory

Inlaid with sapphires.

15 His legs are pillars of marble

Set on bases of fine gold.

(Solomon would probably especially enjoy the attention at this point.)

His countenance is like Lebanon,

Excellent as the cedars.

16 His mouth is most sweet,

Yes, he is altogether lovely.

(Though they are lovers, they are friends also.)

This is my beloved,

And this is my friend,

O daughters of Jerusalem!

## Act 4, Scene 2. At Solomon's Garden

### **The Daughters of Jerusalem** *[narrating to Shulamith]*

6:1 Where has your beloved gone,

O fairest among women?

Where has your beloved turned aside,

That we may seek him with you?

(Shulamith knows Solomon usually takes a walk in his ornamental gardens when he's upset. She takes the initiative and goes to him. Once again, she points out his gentleness, refinement, and sensitivity.)





**Shulamith** [*narrating to the Daughters*]

2 My beloved has gone to his garden,  
To the beds of spices,  
To feed his flock in the gardens,  
And to gather lilies.

3 I am my beloved's,  
And my beloved is mine.  
He feeds his flock among the lilies.

(Solomon doesn't hold a grudge. When he sees Shulamith coming, he doesn't make some snide remark. He would soon have taken the initiative to make up, but he is happy to see her coming to him, and immediately welcomes and praises her. Some of his praises to her are the same as on their wedding night, and he is still as passionate for her as ever.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

4 O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah,  
Lovely as Jerusalem,  
Awesome as an army with banners!

5 Turn your eyes away from me,  
For they have overcome me.  
Your hair is like a flock of goats  
Going down from Gilead.

6 Your teeth are like a flock of sheep  
Which have come up from the washing;  
Every one bears twins,  
And none is barren among them.

7 Like a piece of pomegranate  
Are your temples behind your veil.

(The make-up session moves towards Shulamith's bedroom at this point.)

(Shulamith is wife number sixty of Solomon, who



eventually was married to a thousand wives and concubines.)

**Solomon** [*narrating to Shulamith*]

8 There are sixty queens,  
And eighty concubines,  
And virgins without number.  
9 My dove, my perfect one,  
Is the only one,  
The only one of her mother,  
The favorite of the one who bore her.  
The daughters saw her  
And called her blessed,  
The queens and the concubines,  
And they praised her.  
10 Who is she who looks forth as the morning,  
Fair as the moon,  
Clear as the sun,  
Awesome as an army with banners?

(Solomon had met Shulamith when he went to inspect some vineyards he had leased out. Shulamith had taken some time off from her work to take a walk in the orchards and vineyards. Solomon saw her and spoke with her, one thing led to another, and soon they were engaged.)

**Shulamith** [*narrating how she met Solomon*]

11 I went down to the garden of nuts  
To see the verdure of the valley,  
To see whether the vine had budded  
And the pomegranates had bloomed.  
12 Before I was even aware,  
My soul had made me  
As the chariots of my noble people [Hebrew 'Ammi  
Nadib'].



### Act 4, Scene 3. Back at Shulamith's Room

(Everyone's happy the couple made up.)

**The Daughters of Jerusalem** *[narrating to Shulamith]*

13 Return, return, O Shulamite;

Return, return, that we may look upon you!

("Shulamith" or "Shulamit" is the feminine form of "Solomon" meaning "peace," so her actual name may have been something else. Below are the Hebrew and English versions "Shalom/Peace," "Shlomo/Solomon," and "Salome/Shulamith". The same three root letters make up all three words in Hebrew, which is written from right-to-left, "Sh - l - m," but the 'm' is drawn a little differently whenever it ends a word.)

שָׁלוֹם

Shalom - Peace

שְׁלֹמֹה

Shlomo - Solomon

שׁוּלָמִית

Shulamith - Salome

(Shulamith was from the town of Mahanaim, east of the Jordan River, near the Jabbok River in Gilead. 'Mahanaim' means "two camps" or "two hosts." It was so named by Jacob because God's host of angels met Jacob's host of his family there, and also because Jacob divided his family into two hosts out of fear of Esau, Gen. 32:1-10.)



**Shulamith** [*narrating to the Daughters of Jerusalem.*  
*Shulamith dances for Solomon*]

What would you see in Shulamith —  
As it were, the dance of the Mahanaim

(The love making after making up. This time, Solomon begins at her feet and moves upwards.)

### **Lovemaking Manual, Lesson #3**

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

7:1 How beautiful are your feet in sandals,

O prince's daughter!

The curves of your thighs are like jewels,

The work of the hands of a skillful workman.

2 Your navel is a rounded goblet;

It lacks no blended [intoxicating] beverage.

Your waist is a heap of wheat

Set about with lilies.

3 Your two breasts are like two fawns,

Twins of a gazelle.

4 Your neck is like an ivory tower,

Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon

By the gate of Bath Rabbim.

Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon

Which looks toward Damascus.

5 Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel,

(Her hair entangles Solomon's fingers and holds him like a purple-curtained gallery would do during the presentation of music or a play. It's extremely difficult for one army to conquer another and put its king in shackles, but she has taken him, the king of Israel, captive in her hair.)



**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

And the hair of your head is like purple [cloth];

A king is held captive by your tresses.

6 How fair and how pleasant you are,

O love, with your delights!

7 This stature of yours is like a palm tree,

And your breasts like its clusters.

8 I said, "I will go up to the palm tree,

I will take hold of its branches."

(In verse 3 above, as in 4:5, Solomon again gently caressed her breasts, but now he is going to passionately squeeze them.)

Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine,

The fragrance of your breath like apples,

(In a previous chapter, Solomon French kissed under her tongue for the taste of honey and milk, but now he will French kiss the roof of her mouth for the taste and intoxicating effect of wine.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

9 And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.

(Shulamith is also ready.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

The wine which goes down smoothly for my beloved,

(They make love and fall asleep again.)

**Daughters of Jerusalem** [*narrating*]

Moving gently the lips of sleepers.

(Someone has said, "The woman is the desire of the



man, and to be desired is the desire of the woman.”)

**Shulamith** [*narrating*]

10 I am my beloved's,  
And his desire is toward me.

### *Act 5. From the Palace to the Country (7:11-8:14)*

#### **Act 5, Scene 1. Arrival at Mahanaim**

(Shulamith and Solomon take a trip to Mahanaim where Shulamith grew up. They revisit the spot where they first met. Shulamith joyfully shows Solomon around the places she is so familiar with, and they visit her relatives.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

11 Come, my beloved,  
Let us go forth to the field;  
Let us lodge in the villages.  
12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;  
Let us see if the vine has budded,  
[where they first met, see 6:11]  
Whether the grape blossoms are open,  
And the pomegranates are in bloom.  
There I will give you my love.  
13 The mandrakes give off a fragrance,  
And at our gates are pleasant fruits,  
All manner, new and old,  
Which I have laid up for you, my beloved.

(Shulamith imagines how great it would have been to



have grown up with Solomon during her childhood years.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

8:1 Oh, that you were like my brother,  
Who nursed at my mother's breasts!  
If I should find you outside,  
I would kiss you;  
I would not be despised.  
2 I would lead you and bring you  
Into the house of my mother,  
She who used to instruct me.  
I would cause you to drink of spiced wine,  
Of the juice of my pomegranate.

## **Act 5, Scene 2. Staying Overnight in Mahanaim**

(Shulamith is happy she doesn't have to imagine now, because her and Solomon are together and he is holding her. Isolated verses like these are also part of the love making manual. This one, for example, presents a good position for cuddling.)

**Shulamith** [*narrating the scene*]

3 His left hand is under my head,  
And his right hand embraces me.

(Once again, Shulamith warns the unmarried against getting physical before marriage. Aroused passions cloud one's judgment, and put the obtaining of a good and lasting marriage at risk.)

**Warning #3****Shulamith** [*narrating to the Daughters of Jerusalem*]

4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
Do not stir up nor awaken love  
Until it pleases  
[until the right time, i.e. at marriage].

**Act 5, Scene 3. Visit to Shulamith's Relatives****Shulamith** [*narrating the scene thinking of the change in herself since the time of her childhood*]

5 Who is this coming up from the wilderness,  
Leaning upon her beloved?

(Here is another reference to the provisions and shelter of the apple tree. Solomon speaks of Shulamith having been protected and provided for throughout her life to maintain her chastity, honor, and safety. First, she was loved and protected by her own family, and then Solomon was careful to treat her properly and safely throughout their courtship and engagement. Solomon didn't believe in breaking women's hearts, or selfishly using and then leaving them. Solomon awoke Shulamith's passion in a safe, legitimate, protected environment, that her parents would have approved of; not while in a parked car on skyline drive.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

5b I awakened you under the apple tree.  
There your mother brought you forth;  
There she who bore you brought you forth.



**Shulamith** *[to Solomon]*

6 Set me as a seal upon your heart,  
As a seal upon your arm;

**Warning to Be Faithful in Engagement and Marriage**  
**Solomon** *[to the audience]*

For love is as strong as death,  
Jealousy as cruel as the grave [sheol, hell];  
Its flames are flames of fire,  
A most vehement flame  
[Literally, A flame of Jehovah].  
7 Many waters cannot quench love,  
Nor can the floods drown it.  
If a man would give for love  
All the wealth of his house,  
It would be utterly despised.

(Shulamith was protected by her brothers before she met Solomon. Probably her father had died while she was young. Her brothers decided that if Shulamith was too shy to meet people ("a wall"), they would help her safely do so; but if she was too open and vulnerable ("a door"), they would filter her potential suitors and restrict access to her.)

**Shulamith's Brothers** *[narrating to each other and the audience in a flashback to the past]*

8 We have a little sister,  
And she has no breasts.  
What shall we do for our sister  
In the day when she is spoken for?  
9 If she is a wall,  
We will build upon her  
A battlement of silver;  
And if she is a door,



We will enclose her  
With boards of cedar.

(Shulamith was not shy, and she was not too open.)

**Shulamith** [*to her brothers and the audience*]

10 I am a wall,  
And my breasts like towers.

(The time of uncertainty and risk while Shulamith was single became a time of peace when she was blessed to be chosen by good man, unlike many men that make marriage worse than singleness for their wives.)

**Shulamith** [*to the audience*]

Then I became in his eyes  
As one who found peace.

(Shulamith tells how she met Solomon while she was working in the vineyards that her brothers leased from Solomon for 1000 silver coins per year. As she said back in 1:6, "The sun has tanned me. My mother's sons ... made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept." Baal Ammon would have been near Mahanaim where the tribe of Gad settled, because the country of Ammon was near Mahanaim. Today, the whole area is Jordan with its capital in Amman, Jordon.)

**Shulamith** [*to the audience*]

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon  
[Baal Ammon].  
He leased the vineyard to keepers.  
Everyone was to bring for its fruit  
A thousand silver coins.



(Solomon gets the full benefit, the 1000 silver coins, of Shulamith and her physical love; but she asks that her brothers be granted a stipend of 200 silver coins per year in appreciation of their care and protection of her in the past, which made it possible for Shulamith and Solomon to be together now.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

12 My own vineyard is before me.  
You, O Solomon, may have a thousand,  
And those who tend its fruit two hundred.

## **Act 5, Scene 4. Conclusion**

(Solomon loves his country girl. He loves to see her, talk with her, and hear the sound of her voice. He doesn't make jokes that his wife talks too much, like people today do. He wants to spend as much time as possible with her. Having a husband that talks with her is as important to a woman, as having a woman that makes love with him is to a man.)

**Solomon** [*to Shulamith*]

13 You who dwell in the gardens,  
The companions listen for your voice —  
Let me hear it!

(Shulamith appreciates all Solomon's attention, and looks forward to his enthusiastic and joyful physical enjoyment of her. As the New Testament admonishes, in less poetic terms, "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due



benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife doesn't have power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband doesn't have power of his own body, but the wife. Don't defraud one the other, unless it be with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, so that Satan doesn't tempt you for your incontinency," 1 Cor. 7:2-5.)

**Shulamith** [*to Solomon*]

14 Make haste, my beloved,  
And be like a gazelle  
Or a young stag  
On the mountains of spices!!!



# Chastity: Polygamy, Divorce, & Remarriage

## *Chastity*

### **Women's Special Ministry of Chastity**

Women have a special ministry of purity and chastity which requires virginity before marriage and faithfulness to one husband after engagement and marriage. Paul told the Corinthian church, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Messiah," 2 Cor. 11:2. The word "chaste" here, is the Greek word "agnos," which is usually translated as "pure."

Webster's 1828 dictionary defines chastity as, "before



marriage, purity from all commerce of sexes; after marriage, fidelity to the marriage bed." Faithfulness after marriage is just as chaste as virginity before marriage, because, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," Heb. 13:4.

A married woman stays chaste by making love to only one man as long as he lives. "The woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband is dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she is married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband is dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she is married to another man," Rm. 7:1-2.

The Bible never says the reciprocal: "The man which has a wife is bound by the law to his wife so long as she lives; but if the wife is dead, he is loosed from the law of his wife. So then if, while his wife lives, he is married to another woman, he shall be called an adulterer: but if his wife is dead, he is free from that law; so that he is no adulterer, though he is married to another woman." The Bible doesn't treat genders symmetrically. Men also need to be pure in thought and deed, but their sexual purity is determined by how they treat the chastity of women.



## **Virginity Matters for Women but not Men**

When Abraham sent his servant from Canaan to his relatives in Haran to find a wife for his son, Isaac, the scriptures made it very clear that Rebekah was a virgin. “Rebekah came out ... with her pitcher upon her shoulder, and the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her,” Gen. 24:15-16. Why didn’t the Bible also say Isaac was ‘a virgin, neither had he known any woman?’

The same could be said regarding the “four hundred young virgins” the men of Benjamin kidnapped (Jdg. 21:12), or the “young virgin” that was found to keep King David (not a virgin) warm when he was old and had poor circulation (1 Kgs 1:2), or the “fair young virgins” gathered for King Ahasuerus (not a virgin) to choose a wife from (Est. 2:3).

In Deuteronomy 22:13-21, a man could charge his new bride with not having been a virgin. “I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she was not a virgin, 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.” Why couldn’t a new bride make a similar charge against her husband? “My husband later told me he wasn’t a virgin when we got married.” Of course, there’s no “evidence of virginity” for men (and probably not dependable evidence for women either), but other people could have testified as to the groom’s lack of ‘virginity’ if it was relevant.



There's a chapter in the Bible about a bitter water test for women suspected of adultery, but none for men. "The priest shall put her under oath, and say to the woman, 'If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to uncleanness while under your husband's authority, be free from this bitter water that brings a curse.' ... Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall scrape them off into the bitter water. And he shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse," Num. 5:17-23. This would not work today, by the way, because there's no tabernacle, temple, or priests, or indication God would honor this test in any way today.

The high priest could only marry a virgin. "He that is the high priest ... shall take a wife in her virginity; a widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot, these shall he not take," Lev. 21:10-14. But the scripture never says of any woman, "she shall take a husband in his virginity."

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word 'bethulah' denotes a virgin woman, whereas there's no Hebrew word to denote a 'virgin' man. For example: "Both young men, and maidens, [virgins, 'bethulah'] ... let them praise the name of the Lord," Ps. 148:12-13. "My virgins ['bethulah'] and my young men are gone into captivity, ... my virgins ['bethulah'] and my young men are fallen by the sword," Lam. 1:18;2:21. "Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids ['virgins', 'bethulah']," Zech. 9:17.





In the New Testament, the Greek word 'parthenos' denotes a virgin woman. "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin [parthenos] to Messiah," 2 Cor. 11:2. 'Parthenos' can, by extension, refer to a 'virgin' man, as it does in only one place in the Bible, in Revelation 14:4, but that's an abnormal usage.

Even traditional English, before the recent invention and popularizing of 'Ms.', differentiated between married and unmarried women by the titles 'Mrs.' and 'Miss,' but all men were just called 'Mr.' And it's only recently in our [ungodly] culture the word 'virgin' started to be used in reference to men, like in the movie, "The 40-Year-Old Virgin."

Webster's 1828 dictionary defines a virgin as, "A WOMAN who has had no carnal knowledge of man." But Webster's modern Learner's dictionary defines a virgin as "a PERSON who has not had sexual intercourse." So the definition of virgin has changed over the years, and most Bible teachers let our changing culture determine their interpretation of the Bible.

Young women start with a natural desire for chastity, but modern societies are very effective at chipping away at that mindset. David gave Solomon advice that would deliver him "from the strange woman ... which forsakes the guide of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God, for her house inclines unto death," Prov. 2:16-18. But any woman, regardless of her past, can be chaste from any point onward by not having physical relations



with any man if she's single, and by only having physical relations with her husband if she's married.

The Bible is concerned about sexual purity for both men and women; and prohibits fornication and adultery for both men and women. But men can only be chaste by not violating the chastity of any woman, and men can only be unchaste by violating the chastity of a woman. "You [married or unmarried man] shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife [a married woman], to defile yourself with her," Lev. 18:20. The Bible doesn't view the 'virginity' of men as relevant in getting married, because, Biblically, it's perfectly moral for the man to already have a wife when he gets married.

## **The Old Testament Definition of Adultery**

Our modern definition of adultery is "a married person having physical relations with someone other than their spouse." But the Bible's definition of adultery is "a man having physical relations with a married or engaged woman other than his spouse." Biblically, if a man, married or unmarried, has physical relations with an unengaged and unmarried woman, he is guilty of fornication, not adultery. Biblically, only the marital status of the woman is relevant in determining adultery. Our modern definition talks about a married "person," but the biblical definition talks about a married or engaged "woman."

This is an important distinction because the biblical



definition of adultery underlies everything the Bible says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. You can't understand these things apart from the definition of adultery. Here are some examples of the Bible's definition of adultery that show that only the marital status of the woman is relevant.

"The man [married or unmarried] that commits adultery with another man's wife [a married woman], even he that commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death," Lev. 20:10. The woman was married, so the sin is adultery. (Hopefully, the death penalty was probably almost never carried out, but it does indicate the seriousness of the guilt.)

"They [married or unmarried men] ... have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives [married women]," Jer. 29:23. The women were married, so the sin is adultery.

"He [married or unmarried] that goes in to his neighbor's wife [a married woman]; whoever touches her shall not be innocent; ... whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding," Prov. 6:29-32. The woman was someone's wife, so the sin is adultery.

"As a wife [a married woman] that commits adultery, which takes strangers [married or unmarried] instead of her husband," Ez. 16:31-33. She's "a wife," so the sin is adultery.



“You [married or unmarried] shall not lie carnally with your neighbor’s wife [a married woman], to defile yourself with her,” Lev. 18:20. Neighbor’s wife = married woman = adultery.

“If a man [married or unmarried] is found lying with a woman married to a husband [a married woman], then they shall both of them die,” Deut. 22:22. Only the woman’s marital status is relevant; the man’s marital status isn’t mentioned.

The Bible never says the reciprocal of any of these verses, like, “if a man married to a wife [a married man] is found lying with a woman [married or unmarried], then they shall both of them die,” because the marital status of the man is always irrelevant, and the marital status of the woman is always relevant.

There are four cases in Exodus 22 and Deuteronomy 22 that also make this clear. The penalty for adultery with a married woman was death; whereas the penalty for fornication with an unmarried woman was that the man must offer to marry her.

#### Case 1: Seduction - Unmarried Woman - Not Adultery

“If a man [married or unmarried] entice a maid that is not betrothed [unmarried and unengaged], and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife,” Ex. 22:16. It’s not adultery when the woman is not engaged or married.

But the man is required to offer to marry her because he



became one flesh with her. If he doesn't marry her, her chastity will be violated when she breaks her one-flesh union with him, when she later consummates her marriage to another man. However, marriage is too life-changing to be entered just because a man and woman have become one flesh. The one-flesh union is just one factor to be aware of, and to serve as a motivation to avoid fornication, because the consequences are so significant.

### Case 2: Seduction - Married Woman - Adultery

"If a man [married or unmarried] is found lying with a woman married to a husband [a married woman], then they shall both of them die," Deut. 22:22. It's adultery.

### Case 3: Rape - Married Woman - Adultery (with all the guilt on the man)

"If a man [married or unmarried] find a betrothed damsel [an engaged woman] in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die, but unto the damsel you shall do nothing," Deut. 22:25-26. "Unto the damsel you shall do nothing," unlike the unimaginably cruel and ungodly practices of so-called 'honor killings' in Islam. After a gentle woman suffers such great violence from rape, instead of being helped and comforted, the false religion of Islam not only doesn't comfort her, but allows her to suffer even worse violence from those who should be helping her.



Case 4: Rape - Unmarried Woman - Not Adultery  
(with the guilt of the violation of chastity on the man)

“If a man [married or unmarried] find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed [unmarried and unengaged], and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they are found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife [if she and her father so choose],” Deut. 22:28-29. Rape is horrible violence, but it’s fornication, not adultery, if the woman is unmarried.

Like in the case of the seduction of an unmarried and unengaged woman, the man is required to offer to marry her because he became one flesh with her. If he doesn’t marry her, her chastity will be violated when she breaks her one-flesh union with him when she later consummates her marriage to another man, but all the guilt of the violation of chastity will be put on the man that forced her. It would be unusual for such a man to be a good match, so the woman should usually refuse his offer of marriage.

The man is required to pay fifty shekels to be held by her father for her future financial security in either case. David paid 50 shekels for an area of the temple mount (2 Sam. 24:24), Jacob paid 100 pieces of money for his land in Shechem (Gen. 33:19), and Abraham paid 400 shekels for his land in Hebron (Gen. 23:16). The fifty shekels and offer to marry are probably the minimum penalty, with harsher punishment depending on the circumstances. The word for “lay hold on,” “taphas,” in



Deut. 22:28 is less violent than the word for “force,” “chazaq,” in Deut. 22:25, and the phrase “and they are found” may indicate a whole range of circumstances and penalties ranging from the penalties for the seduction of a virgin in Deut. 22:22, to the death penalty for the rape of a married woman in Deut. 22:25-26.

According to Webster’s 1828 dictionary, Connecticut’s laws of that time gave an almost biblical definition of adultery. “The sexual intercourse of ANY man, with a MARRIED woman, is the crime of ADULTERY in both: such intercourse of a MARRIED man, with an UNMARRIED woman, is FORNICATION in both.” Today’s Webster’s Learner’s dictionary defines adultery in total contradiction to the Bible, but in harmony with our modern gender-equality culture, as “sex between a married PERSON and someone who is not that person’s wife or husband.”

So the definition of adultery in American society has changed from an almost biblical one back in 1828, in which only the marital status of the woman was relevant, to a totally unbiblical one today. The problem is that most Bible teachers today use society’s definition of adultery to interpret the Bible without realizing they are using an unbiblical definition.



## *Polygamy in the Old Testament*

### **The OT Definition of Adultery Permits Polygamy**

No one can understand the biblical definition of adultery without understanding that it allows polygamy. I'm not writing about polygamy to promote it, but because modern Bible teachers have let our modern culture determine their interpretation of scripture. Every misinterpretation of scripture causes harm to people, so we need to revisit this topic regardless of the risks and difficulties. Teachers that don't understand that the biblical definition of adultery allows polygamy cannot understand Jesus' teachings about divorce and remarriage, and untold suffering has been inflicted on conscientious believers because of misinterpretations about those issues.

Since the definition of adultery only considers the marital status of the woman as relevant, then for a married man to add a second wife cannot be adultery, as long as that woman herself is unmarried and unengaged. The Bible is very concerned about whether a woman is a virgin when she marries, but considers the 'virginity' of men irrelevant, because the Bible allows a man to already be married when he marries.

Going back to the four cases that defined adultery in Exodus 22 and Deuteronomy 22, if the woman was unmarried, the act was not adultery, and the man was





required to offer marriage, so the woman had the option to choose to maintain her chastity, even if the man was already married.

#### Case 1: Seduction - Unmarried Woman - Not Adultery

"If a man [married or unmarried] entice a maid that is not betrothed [unmarried and unengaged], and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife," Ex. 22:16, even if he's already married. The rabbis preferred an unmarried man propose to her, but married men were also required to offer marriage. "If a rumor went out concerning that she had relations with two men, ... [and] the rumor is of equal strength with regard to both, one is married and one is not married, the second has a mitzvah [obligation] to [offer to] marry her," Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 117:5.

#### Case 4: Rape - Unmarried Woman - Not Adultery

"If a man [married or unmarried] find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed [unmarried and unengaged], and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they are found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife [if she and her father so choose]," Deut. 22:28-29, even if the man is already married. The rabbis said, "One who rapes a virgin must marry her, as long as she and her father so desire. ... And he may never divorce her except with her consent," Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 117:3.

Rape is a horrible and often violent sin, but it's not 'adultery' if the woman is not married, and so the man



is required to offer to marry her, and no exception is made for if he's already married. The woman is totally innocent, even if she refuses his offer, which is almost always the best choice, and the violation of her chastity when she marries someone else later will be laid to the account of the man that forced her. Usually, a rapist is only suited for jail, not marriage; but there are possible exceptions, like Shechem and Amnon.

Before Moses gave the law, "Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spoke kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spoke unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife," Gen. 34:1-4. But Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, didn't ask Dinah what she thought. They killed Shechem, and all the men of his city, and added their wives and children to their own.

And after Moses gave the law, much trouble may have been avoided if the requirement for a rapist to offer marriage had been followed in the case of Amnon. "Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his [half] sister Tamar," and was "lean from day to day," 2 Sam. 13:1-2. He eventually forced her and as soon as his lust was satisfied, he hated her, and "said unto her, Arise, be



gone. And she said unto him, 'There is no cause. This evil in sending me away is greater than the other that you did unto me.' ... When king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth," 1 Sam. 13:15-21. But Amnon was never required to offer to marry her; and Absalom, Tamar's brother, eventually killed Amnon, which led to a civil war that almost took David's life also.

God also commanded Jewish men to offer to marry their brother's wife if their brother died without children, even if they themselves were already married. Would God ever have commanded a married man to marry an additional wife if it were adultery?

"If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead [now unmarried] shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother [married or unmarried] shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she bears shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel," Deut. 25:5.

The surviving brothers were not forced to marry the widow, but the eldest was shamed by a "Release," or "Chalitza" ceremony if none of them did. "Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done



unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.' And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him that hath his shoe loosed,'" Deut. 25:8-10.

The Jewish rabbis recognized a man can't marry his brother's widow if he's already married to her sister, for example. "You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter. ... Neither shall you take a wife with her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time," Lev. 18:17-18. But just already being married isn't a valid excuse.

"Someone who has many wives, and dies, and has a brother, the intercourse or Release of one of them removes the obligations of the others, and the brother can only marry one of them. ... One [brother] marries or releases one of the wives and [this act] allows the rest of them [to marry someone else]. The [primacy of] commandment is on the eldest brother to marry ... or release. If he doesn't want, ... or he can't free her or marry her, e.g. he's married to her sister ... [the commandment] returns to each brother in the order of their age. If none of them want, we return to the eldest and say to him; the commandment is yours, either Release her or marry her. If he doesn't want to ... marry or Release her, we force him to Release her, but we don't force him to marry her. ... In our times, Chalitza is given priority." Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 161:4.

I don't believe rabbinic writings are authoritative. In fact, the rabbis of Jesus generation didn't reject him for offering a spiritual kingdom, since he actually offered a



physical Messianic Kingdom just like they were expecting; but they rejected him because he rejected their “oral law” they claimed their ancestors had received at Mt. Sinai from Moses, on the side, as it were (Mt. 12:1-14). But I reference rabbinic texts because the rabbis have put a lot of thought and discussion into these issues, since they actually had to apply them as law, though their ability to apply them was limited while they were outside the land since 132 AD.

David’s life also shows that the biblical definition of adultery allows polygamy. When David was young he married Michal, Saul’s daughter. Later, while fleeing from Saul, David married two more single women, Ahinoam, and the virtuous Abigail (1 Sam. 25). God didn’t rebuke David for marrying the single women Ahinoam and Abigail while he was already married to Michal. But when David committed adultery with Bathsheba, a married woman, God rebuked him through Nathan the prophet, and punished him for an extended period of time.

“Nathan said to David, ... thus says the Lord God of Israel, I anointed you king over Israel, ... and I gave you ... your master’s wives into your bosom, ... and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto you such and such things. ... Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house. Because you have ... taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife, ... I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them unto your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ... And the Lord struck the child



that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick," 2 Sam. 12:7-24.

Notice that Bathsheba was not referred to by name in this part of the passage, but as "the wife of Uriah," and "Uriah's wife," because it was her marital status that made David's action sinful, not his marital status in already having several wives. "Because you have ... taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife, ... the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David," 2 Sam. 12:10,15. However, from that point on, she's referred to by name in the passage, and the marriage was legitimate, though what led to it was not. "And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon [the future king]: and the Lord loved him," 2 Sam. 12:24.

Thus, a man having physical relations with the wife of another man, like Uriah's, is adultery; but being married to multiple wives is not adultery. Notice also that back in verse 8, God told David he "gave you ... your master's wives [plural] into your bosom." God wouldn't have given David multiple wives if polygamy was in any way sinful.

At least one Bible scholar had enough respect for God's word to change his opinion from the current, popular one to the biblical one. The Rev. William F. Luck, Sr., is a former Professor of Moody Bible Institute. He's published numerous articles in Moody Monthly, Christianity Today, the Southern Presbyterian Journal,



and the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society.

In the 2nd edition of his book, "Divorce and Remarriage; Recovering the Biblical View," he says "In ... writing a book on marriage, divorce and remarriage in the Bible, I was motivated by the fact that God didn't ask me my opinion about the issue. He expected me to represent His. I've tried. If you can prove I'm mistaken, I'll be the first to thank you. But I'm not holding my breath in the meanwhile. It never crossed my mind, when I started my research on the book, that the Old Testament law allowed polygyny. Of course I knew that some people in ancient times practiced it, but I thought it was a sin, perhaps one that God winked at. My first clue that I was mistaken came when I attempted to define "adultery" from a biblical perspective. I had no doubt in my mind that "adultery" would be defined as "any sexual relationship between a married person and someone other than their spouse." I could not even imagine another definition. So imagine my surprise when I sought, like a good little Evangelical fundamentalist, to find verses which "proved up" that (working) definition, and found instead that adultery was always defined by the woman's marital status, never the man's."

When I use the term "polygamy" in this chapter, I'm actually referring only to "polygyny," the form of polygamy where a man marries more than one woman. "Polyandry," the form of polygamy where a woman marries more than one man, is obviously strictly forbidden by the Bible's definition of adultery.



Many Bible teachers today will say polygamy was never right, but that God overlooked it in the lives of a few men in the Old Testament, the same way he overlooked other sins in their lives, like murder. But 1) God explicitly forbade things like murder and sodomy while he never explicitly forbade polygamy; 2) it's not true that God overlooked sins like adultery and murder as we saw in the example of David; and 3) the Bible doesn't present God as merely overlooking the polygamy of a few people, but as going out of his way to use polygamists as some of his greatest servants from the time of Abraham onward. God even portrays himself as a polygamist.

## **God Portrays Himself as a Polygamist**

Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Jerusalem was the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah. God was married to both of them at the same time. They both committed adultery, so God allowed them both to be carried away into captivity into the lands of their lovers. First Israel was carried to Assyria, and then Judah was carried into Babylon.

Ezekiel 23, "Son of man, there were two women. ... They were mine, and they bore sons and daughters. As for their names, Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah. ... Oholah [Samaria] played the harlot even though she was mine; and she lusted for her lovers, the neighboring Assyrians; ... with all their idols, she defiled herself. ... Therefore I have delivered her into the hand





of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, for whom she lusted. ... Now although her sister Oholibah [Jerusalem] saw this, she became more corrupt in her lust than she, and in her harlotry more corrupt than her sister's harlotry. ... The Babylonians came to her, into the bed of love. ... Then I alienated myself from her, as I had alienated myself from her sister."

God tells the same story in Jeremiah 2 and 3. "Of Jerusalem, ... thus says the Lord. I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after me in the wilderness. ... Have you seen what backsliding Israel [the northern kingdom] has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me,' but she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah [the southern kingdom] saw it. Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. ... Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married to you."

God divorced the northern kingdom of Israel. Once they were taken into captivity by Assyria they never returned to Canaan as a nation, though some individuals from the northern kingdom undoubtedly returned and their descendants will someday be gathered back. God didn't divorce the southern kingdom of Judah, but only separated from her. After



seventy years in Babylon, many captives returned together to reestablish the kingdom of Judah. Whereas God says he gave the northern kingdom a writ of divorce, "I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce," Jer. 3:8; he says he never gave the southern kingdom one, "Thus says the Lord, 'Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away?'" Is. 50:1.

And God tells the same story in Ezekiel 16. Notice the story will eventually have a happy ending. "Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem. ... When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love. ... I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became mine, says the Lord God. ... But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame. ... Behold, therefore, I ... will judge you as women who break wedlock ... are judged. ... Your elder sister is Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you. ... You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways. ... I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you."

Would the eternal, unchangeable God ever portray himself as being married to more than one woman at the same time if polygamy was, is, or ever will be sinful in



any way? God would never portray himself as an adulterer or a homosexual (God forbid), and he would never portray himself as a polygamist if there was anything immoral about it.

By the time of the Messianic Kingdom, the houses of Israel and Judah will be recombined into one nation, but even then, God will have two wives, Israel and the Church, since by then the “marriage supper of the Lamb,” Rev. 19:9, will have taken place. Some say God the Father is married to Israel, and Jesus Messiah will be married to the church, but God is one. God will be married to a reunited Israel and Judah and also to the church. So God has and always will portray himself as a polygamist, and therefore polygamy can’t be wrong. “Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!” Rm. 9:14. “Let God be true, but every man a liar,” Rm. 3:4.

## **God Chose a Polygamist to Write His Marriage Manual**

Solomon sinned by marrying too many wives. He had 1000 wives and concubines, and God had said the kings of Israel “shall not multiply horses to himself, ... neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold,” Deut. 17:16-17. Now this didn’t mean Solomon wasn’t allowed to have more than one wife, any more than it meant he wasn’t allowed to have more than one horse, or more than one piece of silver or gold. He was permitted to ‘add wives to himself’, but he was



not permitted to “multiply wives to himself,” Deut. 17:17. He was permitted more than one, but not a great many.

And though Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, he took so many foreign wives for political alliances that they led him into idolatry, which resulted in his kingdom being split into Israel and Judah. “King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. ... But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. ... Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. And ... it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods. ... The Lord said to Solomon, ‘Because you have done this, ... I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. ... However, ... I will give one tribe [Judah] to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.’” 1 Kgs. 10:23-11:13.

But despite the fact that Solomon sinned by “multiplying” wives, God chose him, the most extreme polygamist in the Bible, possibly in history, to write the Bible’s marriage manual. It’s called the Song of Songs, and it’s the love story of Solomon and his one hundred and fortieth wife, Shulamith. We know more about the romance, wedding, and married life of Shulamith than of any other woman in the Bible because Solomon wrote



the book from her perspective, often narrating even her own thoughts by divine revelation.

(As the book begins we share in Shulamith's nervousness the first time that she, a poor country girl, was brought to the palace and presented to the women of the court.)

*[Shulamith's narration]*

"The king has brought me into his chambers," Song 1:4.

*[Shulamith to the women of the court]*

"I *am* dark, but lovely,  
O daughters of Jerusalem,  
Like the tents of Kedar,  
Like the curtains of Solomon.  
Do not look upon me, because I *am* dark,  
Because the sun has tanned me," Song 1:5-6.

(Solomon publicly expressed his support for her and thus won over the women of the court to her.)

*[Solomon]*

"I have compared you, my love,  
To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.  
Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,  
Your neck with chains of gold," Song 1:9-10.

*[Women of the court to Shulamith]*

"We will make you ornaments of gold  
With studs of silver," Song 1:11.



(Shulamith liked Solomon because of his good character and reputation.)

*[Shulamith]*

“Your name is as ointment poured forth,” Song 1:3.

(And she liked his gentleness and appreciation of beauty.)

*[Shulamith]*

“He feeds his flock among the lilies,” Song 4:16.

(Solomon cared for, protected, and provided for Shulamith. He was a safe haven for her; a place free of criticism.)

*[Shulamith]*

“Like an apple tree among the [non-fruit] trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight,” Song 2:3.

(We learn about their outings to the countryside, their wedding day, the details of their wedding night, and some of their arguments and making up afterwards. And we are admonished over and over in the book not to arouse passion by physical contact before marriage.)

*[Shulamith]*

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
By the gazelles or by the doe of the field,



Do not stir up nor awaken love  
Until it pleases," Song 4:7.

(We even get to meet her brothers who helped protect her chastity after their father died. If she was too shy, they would help her meet people; and if she was too open, they would chase away undesirable suitors.)

*[Shulamith's Brothers]*

"We have a little sister,  
And she has no breasts.  
What shall we do for our sister  
In the day when she is spoken for?  
If she is a wall,  
We will build upon her  
A battlement of silver;  
And if she is a door,  
We will enclose her  
With boards of cedar," Song 8:8-9.

Why would God have chosen the most extreme polygamist in the Bible to write the Bible's marriage manual if polygamy was in any way sinful? Couldn't he have found a single monogamist in all the years from Moses to Solomon to write it instead? Wouldn't he be sending the wrong message about marriage by using a polygamous marriage as the Bible's model marriage if polygamy is ever wrong?



## **Every Book in the Bible About Women Is About Polygamists**

There are three books in the Old Testament that focus on a woman: The Book of Ruth, the Song of Solomon, and the Book of Esther. All three are about polygamists. Ruth was a Moabitess who married one of Naomi's sons when she and her husband moved to Moab to escape a famine in Israel. Naomi's husband and sons died in Moab, and so she told her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab, while she returned to Bethlehem. But Ruth said the famous words, "Where you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried," Ruth 1:16-17.

After they arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth went out to glean the harvest leftovers, as the poor were allowed to do under the law, and by God's grace she chose to glean in the field of Boaz, a near kinsman of her deceased husband, who was willing to perform the duty of a kinsman redeemer, and marry her. Though we don't know for sure, Boaz probably already had a wife when he married Ruth, because he was old, wealthy, and a ruler in the tribe of Judah; and there was no allowance in scripture for a man to avoid becoming a kinsman redeemer because he was already married.

The Book of Esther is also about polygamists. Esther, a beautiful and humble orphan of the captives in Persia, was raised by her uncle Mordecai, and competed with





other maidens to become Queen of Persia. Esther was chosen as queen without revealing she was Jewish, and then the enemy Haman convinced the king to kill all Jewish people in the empire. Mordecai asked Esther to try to intervene on behalf of her people, and though the queen of an empire, she continued to obey her foster father, Mordecai.

We hear Esther issue her famous statement, "I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish," Est. 4:16. Then we hold our breath with her as she enters unsummoned into the king's presence, the penalty of which is death, unless the king raises the golden scepter. "When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, ... she obtained favor in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter," Est. 5:2. And we already saw that the Song of Solomon is about polygamists. So all the books in the Old Testament about women are about polygamist women.

Another romantic love story in the Bible is that of Jacob and Rachel. "Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. ... And ... Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, ... Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. ... And Jacob loved Rachel; and said [to her father], I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter. ... And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a



few days, for the love he had to her,” Gen. 29:1-20. Most women would love to be loved like that. And Jacob continued to love Rachel like that, though he also had three other wives.

## **Most of the Bible Was Written By and About Polygamists**

Moses, the law giver, was a polygamist. He married both Zipporah, who was the daughter of Jethro the Kenite/Midianite (Ex. 2:21; Ex. 3:1; Ex. 18:6; Jdg. 4:11); and he also married an Ethiopian woman (Num. 12:1). Moses wrote the Torah, the Law of God, the first five books of the Bible, and the very beginning of scriptural revelation.

The following nine books of the Bible were written by known polygamists: Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. David wrote Psalms. Solomon wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

1st and 2nd Samuel were written by a man from a polygamist family. “Elkanah ... had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, ... [who] bare a son, and called his name Samuel,” 1 Sam. 1:1-20. And as we saw earlier Jeremiah and Ezekiel both portray God as a polygamist. We saw that Ruth and Esther are about polygamists, and most of 1st and 2nd Kings and 1st and 2nd Chronicles are about polygamist kings.



Thus almost two-thirds of the pages of the Bible, including the New Testament, were written by or about polygamists. Was God really so short of monogamists that he had to use polygamists to write most of the Bible if monogamy is the only godly form of marriage?

We don't really know how many men in the Bible were polygamists, because the Bible doesn't usually include the names of men's wives in genealogies. Therefore, it's impossible to prove that men we might assume were monogamists had only one wife. Polygamy must have been very widespread beyond those specifically named because of all the women taken in war, for example.

In Genesis, "the sons of Jacob ... spoiled the city, ... and their wives took they captive," Gen. 34:27-29. The Law of Moses says, "when you go forth to war against your enemies, ... and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and have a desire unto her, that you would have her to your wife, then you shall bring her home to your house," Deut. 21:10-11. When Israel defeated the Midianites, "the booty ... which the men of war had caught, was ... thirty and two thousand ... women that had not known man by lying with him," Num. 31:32-35. The prophetess Deborah sang, "have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two," Jdg. 5:30. In the tribe of Issachar, "the sons of Uzzi, ... five, all of them chief men. And with them, by their generations, ... six and thirty thousand men: for they had many wives and sons," 1 Chr. 7:3-4.

Some Bible teachers admit there were a few heroes of



faith that were polygamists, but that God overlooked their polygamy, and used them anyway. But that's not the way the Bible presents it. It was the greatest men of faith that were polygamists. Who are greater heroes of faith and obedience than Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David? Abraham was called, "the friend of God," James 2:23; Jacob's name was changed to "Israel" since all his descendants comprise the Jewish people, Gen. 32:28; Moses wrote the Law, the measure of righteousness; and David was called "a man after God's own heart," Acts 13:22. And other less known heroes, like Caleb and Gideon, were polygamists too.

All Jewish people are physical descendants of the polygamist Jacob; and all Gentile believers are spiritual descendants of the polygamist Abraham. "It is of faith, ... to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, ... which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all," Rm. 4:16. "If you are Messiah's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. 3:29.

We know these men of God did not commit fornication or adultery by marrying more than one wife, because Paul says, "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals ... will inherit the kingdom," 1 Cor. 6:9. Yet we know the polygamist David will be in the kingdom. "They shall serve ... David their king, whom I will raise up [resurrect] unto them," Jer. 30:9. Jesus will be "King of Kings," Rev. 19:16, and under him will be kings of individual



countries, like David over Israel. We know the polygamists Abraham and Jacob will be in the kingdom, because Jesus said, "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom," Mt. 8:11. None of these polygamists lived adulterous lives, or they couldn't inherit the kingdom. "[No] adulterers ... will inherit the kingdom," 1 Cor. 6:9.

There were polygamists in the early church. The entire church was comprised only of believing Jews and Jewish proselytes until Acts 15; and even after that time Paul always preached, "to the Jew first," Rm. 1:16. In 393 AD, the Roman emperor Theodosius prohibited Jewish men from practicing polygamy; but it wasn't until about 1000 AD that a rabbi (Gershom) prohibited it.

In Timothy and Titus, Paul says "A pastor then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, ... one that rules well his own house," 1 Tim. 3:2-6. And "For this cause left I you in Crete, that you should ... ordain elders in every city. ... If any is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children," Titus. 1:6. The phrase, "husband of one wife" was probably meant to exclude polygamists in the churches from being pastors, because though polygamy was permitted, it was not ideal, and a man with more than one wife had enough to do already. In contrast, only widows "having been the wife of one husband," 1 Tim. 5:9, meaning they had been married only once, were financially supported by the churches.

I don't think the phrase "husband of one wife" can mean



“a one-woman man” as many modern teachers interpret it, because that sounds like a modern phrase, and the context is about ruling one’s family well. It’s about ‘husbands’ and ‘wives’, not ‘men’ and ‘women.’

The tragedy is, that not only would great men of God like Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David not be allowed to be pastors in churches today; their families wouldn’t even be allowed to attend, because modern churches would excommunicate them as adulterers, in opposition to the Bible and God’s love of his precious children.

God will never let us put polygamy out of our minds. Today, every Jewish person is descended from one of Jacob’s four wives; and via genetic testing or future revelation, they will eventually know which of his four wives they are descended from. In the future, when you visit Israel during the Messianic Kingdom, you’ll be reminded that the polygamist David will be head of Israel’s government during that time.

Also, every time you enter or leave the future world capital of Jerusalem during the Messianic Kingdom, you will be reminded of Jacob’s four wives, because the names of gates will be arranged in order of the moms of the twelve tribes. “The gates of the city shall be named after the tribes of Israel, the three gates northward [for Leah’s sons]: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; on the east side ... three gates [for Rachel and Bilhah’s sons]: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; on the south side ...



three gates [for Leah's sons]: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; on the west side ... three gates [for Zilpah and Bilhah's sons]: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. ... And the name of the city from that day shall be The Lord is There," Ez. 48:30-35.

And for eternity, their names will also be on the gates of the New Jerusalem that will descend out of heaven from God. "He ... showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, ... and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel," Rev. 21:10-12.

## **God Never Forbade Polygamy & Sometimes Commanded It**

Nowhere in the Bible is polygamy explicitly forbidden or condemned. Don't you think there's been enough confusion about polygamy in the world throughout the ages for God to have explicitly forbidden it at least once if it was immoral? Wasn't there enough space in the Bible? In the 78 verses of Numbers 7:10-88, God repeats twelve times that each prince offered, "one silver charger, ... one silver bowl, ... one spoon," etc. Couldn't he have replaced just one of those verses with "You shall not commit polygamy," or "You shall not have more than one wife at a time?"



God explicitly said adultery is wrong many times, like in the seventh of the ten commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," Ex. 20:14. And, "The man who commits adultery with another man's wife ... shall surely be put to death," Lev. 20:10. And, "You shall not commit adultery," Deut. 5:18.

God explicitly said homosexuality is wrong many times, like in, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination," Lev. 18:22. And, "Their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful," Rm. 1:26-27.

And God couldn't bother to say polygamy is wrong even once? Why couldn't he just add two words about polygamy to the list of sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, [why not, 'nor polygamists'] ... will inherit the kingdom of God."

By the way, the reason you won't find the word 'polygamy' anywhere in the Bible is because the Bible simply calls it 'marriage,' regardless of the number of wives. We know the Bible doesn't call it 'adultery,' as we saw from the definition of adultery in the Bible.

Instead of being explicitly prohibited, polygamy is sometimes explicitly commanded by God. We saw that a man who seduced or raped an unmarried and unengaged woman was required to offer to marry her,





even if he was already married. And we saw that God commanded Jewish men to offer to marry their brother's wife, if their brother died without children, even if they themselves were already married.

Instead of prohibiting polygamy in the Bible, God regulates it, along with other regulations about marriage. He says if a married man "take him another wife; her [the first wife's] food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage [physical love], shall he not diminish," Ex. 21:10. [I'm sure Solomon failed at that last item.] Also, "if a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, ... he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn, but he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he has," Deut. 21:15-17. These verses teach that a man must continue to be a good husband to his first wife, even if he marries a second.

So if it's a sin to fail to continue to be a good husband to a first wife after taking a second, then it's a far greater sin to divorce, and not be a husband at all to a first wife, and then take a second. But that's exactly what the laws of our ungodly, secular society require men to do. Our modern laws allow a man to live with as many women as he wants, simultaneously or sequentially, just so long as he doesn't commit by marriage to caring and providing for them, because as soon as he does that, it's considered bigamy. Modern law promotes 'serial polygamy,' where a man divorces and remarries one woman after another; but God's law promotes the



chastity of women, and an unending commitment to protect and provide for them.

## *Polygamy in the New Testament*

### **The Definition of Adultery Can't Change from Age to Age**

There are three kinds of things in the world: moral, immoral, and amoral. Things that are inherently moral or immoral, are eternal and can't change from age to age or place to place. Only things that are amoral, not inherently right or wrong in themselves, can change. These amoral things become moral when God commands them, because it's always moral to do what God commands; and they become immoral when God forbids them, because it's always immoral to do what God forbids.

Dietary laws are an example of amoral things, that became moral or immoral, depending on God's commands for any particular people at any particular time. Adam was only allowed to eat plants, "I have given every green herb for meat," Gen. 1:30. Noah was allowed to eat anything that moved, "every moving thing that lives shall be meat for you," Gen. 9:3. Moses was not allowed to eat pork, "the swine, though he divides the hoof, and is cloven-footed, yet he chews not the cud; he is unclean to you," Lev. 11:7. And the church



is not allowed to eat blood, “write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood,” Acts 15:20.

Dietary laws can change from age to age, because food is not inherently moral or immoral. Jesus said, “Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. ... Whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated, but those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man,” Mt. 15:11-20. “Adultery” is not an amoral thing, but an immoral thing, and so its definition can’t change from age to age.

## **The NT Continues the OT Definition of Adultery**

The Old Testament says a woman can only be married to one man at a time, because a woman’s husband has to divorce her or die, for her to be able to marry another man. “Let him write her a bill of divorcement, and ... she may go and be another man’s wife. And if the latter husband ... write her a bill of divorcement, ... or if the latter husband die ... ,” Deut. 24:1-4.

But the Bible never says the reciprocal, that a man can only be married to one woman at a time, because a man’s wife has to divorce him or die, for him to be able to marry another woman. It never says anything like the



reciprocal of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, “let him write her a bill of divorcement, and ... he may take another wife. And if he ... write his latter wife a bill of divorcement, ... or if the latter wife die ... .”

The Old Testament also says remarriage defiles a divorced woman in regards to a previous husband. “If the latter husband die, ... her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled,” Deut. 24:1-4. But the Bible never says the reciprocal, that remarriage defiles a divorced man, like “if the latter wife die, ... his former wife, which he sent away, may not become his wife again, after that he is defiled,” because men can’t be defiled by having more than one wife, either at the same time or sequentially. A divorced man can marry any number of wives, and he’s still able to remarry a former wife; so long as she herself hasn’t remarried, which would defile her to him.

The New Testament continues to uphold the difference between men and women in regards to chastity. Romans 7:2-3 says, “The woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives, ... so then if, while her husband lives, she is married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.” But the New Testament never says the reciprocal, like “the man which has a wife is bound by the law to his wife so long as she lives, ... so then if, while his wife lives, he is married to another woman, he shall be called an adulterer.” The New Testament requires a wife to be one



flesh with only one husband as long as he lives, but it doesn't require a husband to be one flesh with only one wife as long as she lives.

1 Corinthians 7:39 says the same thing. "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." The New Testament never says the reciprocal, like "the husband is bound by the law as long as his wife lives; but if his wife is dead, he is at liberty to be married to whom he will; only in the Lord." A husband is already "at liberty to be married to whom he will" even while still married to his current wife, even in New Testament times.

In the passages on divorce in the gospels, Jesus said a man who marries a divorced woman always commits adultery, because by marrying her he breaks her one-flesh union with her x-husband (or with some other man if there was another in between). But Jesus never said a woman who marries a divorced man commits adultery.

Mt. 5:32, "Whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery," but never, "whoever shall marry him that is divorced commits adultery."

Mt. 19:9, "Whoever marries her which is put away commits adultery," but never "whoever marries him who put her away commits adultery."

Lu. 16:18, "Whoever marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery," but never, "whoever



marries him that put away his wife from him commits adultery.”

Jesus also mentions an exception clause “saving for the cause of fornication,” Mt. 5:32, and “except it be for fornication,” Mt. 19:9, for when a husband divorces a wife; but never for when a wife divorces her husband. “If a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery [no exception clause for her husband having committed fornication],” Mk. 10:12. Remarriage is always a violation of the one-flesh union for women, regardless of the circumstances (though the x-husband usually bears the guilt of her remarriage if he divorced her.)

There’s no need for an exception clause to determine which party is guilty of adultery when a wife divorces her husband, because a wife can’t “cause” her husband to commit adultery by divorcing him, because men are permitted to be one flesh with more than one woman at a time, so long as the women themselves aren’t married to someone else.

A husband who divorces an innocent wife “causes her to commit adultery,” Mt. 5:32, but the Bible never says the reciprocal that a wife who divorces an innocent husband “causes him to commit adultery.” A husband can only commit adultery by sinning against the chastity of his own wife, by divorcing her; or by sinning against the chastity of another man’s wife, by having physical relations with her. His own marital status is irrelevant.



In 1 Corinthians 7:2, Paul was very careful to use an entirely different Greek word for “own” when he said, “To avoid fornication, let every man have his own [‘heautou’] wife, and let every woman have her own [‘idios’] husband.” When Paul said “his own wife,” he used ‘heautou,’ which means ‘one’s own reflexively and exclusively,’ as in: “his own [heautou] life,” Lu. 14:26; “his own [heautou] body,” Rm. 4:19; “their own [heautou] dead,” Gal. 6:4. A person’s life and body are his exclusively, a family’s dead relatives are theirs exclusively, and every wife a man has is his exclusively.

But when Paul said “her own husband,” he used the Greek word ‘idios’ which means ‘the one that pertains to you but can pertain to others also,’ as in: “his own [idios] generation,” Acts 13:36; “his own [idios] country,” Jn. 4:44; “his own [idios] language,” Acts 2:6, “his own [idios] master,” Rm. 14:4. Only one generation, homeland, native language, and master pertains to each person; but it’s appropriate for that generation, homeland, native language, and master to pertain to others also, as one husband can pertain to more than one wife.

For example, Sarah had her “own” husband, who was also Hagar’s own husband. “After this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own [idios] husbands; even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord,” 1 Pet. 3:5-6, as Hagar did also.

In 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul said to wives, “Let not the



wife depart from her husband,” and then he added, “but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.” Of husbands, Paul said “and let not the husband put away his wife,” but he didn’t add, like he did for the wife, “but and if he put away his wife, let him remain unmarried or be reconciled to his wife.” For one thing, a husband might not be unmarried after divorce. He may already be married to more than one wife at the time of the divorce, even in the New Testament; whereas a wife will always be “unmarried” after divorce.

Hebrews 13:4 says, “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” Whoremongers are men [married or unmarried] who commit fornication with unmarried women; and adulterers are men [married or unmarried] who commit adultery with married women. The marital statuses of the men aren’t mentioned, because they aren’t relevant for determining adultery in the NT as well as in the OT.

The definition of adultery permitted polygamy in the Old Testament, and these verses show that the New Testament continues the Old Testament definition of adultery, and so also continues to permit polygamy.





## *Jesus' Teaching on Divorce and Remarriage*

### **One Flesh**

Becoming one flesh doesn't mean becoming 'one soul,' or 'one spirit,' because it says 'one flesh.' The concerns of marriage are the concerns of this physical world, which is why a single person has less distraction to serve the Lord (1 Cor. 7:35), and why there is no marriage for resurrected and glorified people (Mt. 22:30).

Becoming one flesh doesn't refer to how a child inherits DNA from both parents, because not all marriages result in children. It doesn't refer to an exchange of fluids during lovemaking, because a couple becomes one flesh even if they use condoms. It's interesting that male DNA has been found in female brains, perhaps from the men they've made love to. (I've never seen an article that says female DNA has been found in men's brains; if that could happen, men would be smarter.)

Being one flesh is a mystical union. A man and a woman become one flesh by a single act of physical lovemaking. Whether in marriage by cleaving to a 'wife', "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave [hold] to his wife: and they shall be one flesh," Gen. 2:22-24. Or outside of marriage by committing fornication, "know you not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? For two, said he, will be one flesh," 1 Cor. 6:16. Becoming one flesh produces emotional



effects and moral obligations. According to the Bible, there's no such thing as 'casual sex.'

Not only can a man and woman become one flesh, they can stop being one flesh. When Jesus said, "They are no more two, but one flesh. What God has joined together, let not man put asunder," Mt. 19:6, he was referring to the mystical one-flesh union, that should be protected via marriage.

God created women differently from men. A woman is one flesh with only the last man she made love to, whereas a man is one flesh with every woman he was the last man they made love to. This mystery is inherent in the biblical definition of adultery. "If a man [married or unmarried] entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to become his wife," Ex. 22:16. God wouldn't command a man to offer to marry a woman if marriage with her would sunder his one-flesh union with his existing wife.

So the first time Jacob made love to Rachel, he became one flesh with Rachel. And the first time he made love to Leah, he didn't stop being one flesh with Rachel, but also became one flesh with Leah. If this were not the case, every time Jacob made love to Leah, Rachel would stop being one flesh with him even though married to him, and every time he made love to Rachel, Leah would stop being one flesh with him even though married to him, which would be utter confusion. But when Jacob's wife Bilhah made love with Reuben, she stopped being one flesh with Jacob, and became one



flesh with Reuben. When Jacob made love to Bilhah again, she became one flesh with Jacob again.

A woman can only be one flesh with one man at a time, but a man can be one flesh with more than one woman at a time. There is nothing a man can do to stop being one flesh with a woman he made love to. Making love to another woman won't end his union with any previous woman. But if a woman who is one flesh with a man, makes love to another man, her becoming one flesh with him, ends her one-flesh union with the previous man.

Based on the foregoing, although marriage is the only proper place for the one-flesh union, there are periods when the two things exist separately from each other. For example, Adam and Eve were one flesh before they were married, since Eve was made from a piece taken out of Adam. Usually, men and women become one flesh after becoming married via a wedding ceremony. Also, unless the one-flesh union was already broken via adultery, divorced couples continue to be one flesh after divorce, until the x-wife commits fornication or marries someone else.

The following scenarios help us think about the one-flesh union separately from the marriage relationship.

#### Unmarried Woman One Flesh with No Man

Virgins, and widows who have not had physical relations with any man after their deceased husbands, are not one flesh with any man, and should stay that



way unless and until they marry. 2 Cor. 11:2, “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Messiah.”

### Married, Including Remarried, Woman One Flesh with Her Husband

Married, including remarried, women should remain one flesh with their husbands. Rom. 7:3, “If, while her husband lives, she is married to another man [becoming one flesh with him and thus ending her previous one-flesh union], she shall be called an adulteress.”

### Married, Including Remarried, Woman One Flesh with a Man Other than Her Husband

It’s possible for a woman to be married to one man, but one flesh with another via adultery. Adultery breaks the one-flesh union by establishing a new one-flesh union, but it doesn’t break the marriage; only divorce can do that. Whenever the obligations of marriage and the one-flesh union conflict, the obligations of marriage take precedence, since the one-flesh union is only appropriate within marriage. Married women who are one flesh with another man, should stop having physical relations with him, and reestablish the one-flesh union with their husbands. The “marriage ... bed is undefiled,” Heb. 13:4.

### Unmarried Woman One Flesh with a Married Man

Biblically, it’s irrelevant whether a man is already married; but practically today, a married man who becomes one flesh with an unmarried woman through fornication will normally have to send her away, like



Sarah insisted Abraham do to Hagar (Gen. 21:9-14), for everyone's legal safety and welfare. And his sin of not offering to add her in marriage per Exodus 22:16, will mostly be laid on today's Bible teachers, that interpret the Bible according to our modern culture.

### Unmarried Woman One Flesh with an Unmarried Man

Every instance of physical lovemaking to an unmarried woman is fornication, even if the man and woman are one flesh through previous lovemaking, because physical intimacy is appropriate only within marriage. The man and woman in this situation should realize that if they don't marry, an even more serious violation of the woman's chastity will occur when she becomes one flesh by marrying another man later. "If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife," Ex. 22:16.

But entering marriage is too life-changing a decision to be decided on the basis of the one-flesh union alone. If an unmarried woman were to wake up one morning, and find she had made love to an abusive stranger because she got drunk the night before, she shouldn't marry him. Men and women should consider the harm has already done through fornication, rather than let one bad decision lead to another by marrying into a bad match. And no woman should marry or remarry a man who would fail to provide safety, food, clothing, and lovemaking, because failure to provide those things gives a wife the right to divorce anyway (Ex. 21:10-11).

Paul said, "The body is not for fornication, but for the



Lord. ... Don't you know that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? For two, said he, shall be one flesh," 1 Cor. 6:13, 16. But Paul didn't then go on to say whoever commits fornication with a harlot should marry her.

### **Mt 5:28. Adultery by Lusting After a Woman**

In Matthew chapters 5-7, known as the "sermon on the mount," Jesus didn't contradict the Law, but gave it the full and proper interpretation it should always have had. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets," Mt. 5:17.

He corrected the Pharisee's focus on the external technicalities of the Law. "I say to you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Mt. 5:20. The Law requires inward, not just external, righteousness. All sins are ultimately sins of the heart, because that's where they originate. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," Mt. 5:19-20.

Every sin can be classified under one of the ten commandments, and the ten commandments can be classified under two commandments. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart [the first four commandments]; ... and ... you shall love your neighbor as yourself [the last six]. On these two commandments



hang all the law and the prophets," Mt. 22:37-40.

*Mt. 5:27-28. You have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'You shall not commit adultery;' but I say to you, that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Regarding the seventh commandment, Jesus wasn't saying that even looking at your own wife with lust is adultery, because the tenth commandment says, "You shall not lust after your neighbor's wife," Ex. 20:17. As for their own wives, husbands are obligated to look with desire on them. Someone has said "man desires woman, and woman desires the desire of a man." In God's lovemaking manual in the Bible, Solomon's wife rejoices that "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me," Song 7:10. So the "woman" referred to in Matthew 5:28 excludes one's own wife.

And the woman lusted after doesn't have to be married or engaged for it to be adultery rather than fornication. All sins relating to immorality, whether internal or external, lust of action or of thought, fornication or adultery, can be grouped under the seventh commandment. Jesus was teaching that the seventh commandment is broken by more than just the technical commission of the act of adultery according to the 'letter of the law.' All sins of immorality are the same kind of sin as adultery, though they're not all of the same degree or manifestation. So lusting after a woman other than your wife violates the seventh commandment. It's not sin to have the thought cross your mind, but it is sin to



nurture it rather than turning from it to better thoughts.

## **Mt 5:31-32a; Deut 24:1-4. Adultery by Divorcing a Wife**

*Mt. 5:31. It has been said, "Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement."*

Matthew 5:31-32 are Jesus' commentary on Deuteronomy 24, the main passage in the Law about a husband divorcing a wife. It said if a husband divorced a wife, he had to give her a written document of divorce, so she would have legal proof she was free to remarry. The ability to remarry is important for a woman, not only to avoid fornication, but also for her protection, provision, and bearing children to care for her in her old age.

"When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has 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. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and gives it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; 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 you shall not cause the land to sin, which the Lord





your God gives you for an inheritance," Deut. 24:1-4.

The Hebrew phrase for "uncleanness" here is "ervat dabar," meaning a "nakedness thing." The rabbis debated over whether this phrase referred to a sexual sin, or to pretty much anything. "House of Shammai says, 'A man may not divorce his wife unless he finds out about her having engaged in a matter of forbidden sexual intercourse [devar erva], i.e., she committed adultery or is suspected of doing so.' ... And House of Hillel says, 'He may divorce her even due to a minor issue, e.g., because she burned or over-salted his dish, as it is stated, 'Because he has found some unseemly matter in her,' meaning that he found any type of shortcoming in her.' Rabbi Akiva says, 'He may divorce her even if he found another woman who is better looking than her and wishes to marry her, as it is stated in that verse, 'And it comes to pass, if she finds no favor in his eyes,'"" Talmud, Gittan 90a.

But burning toast is not 'a nakedness thing.' "Uncleanness" in Deuteronomy 24:1, refers to any kind of sexual immorality, or "fornication," as Yeshua said in Matthew 5:32a. A husband has the right to expect his wife won't have physical relations with any other man. There is no other biblical reason for a man to divorce his wife, and biblically there would be no need for a man to divorce for anything less, because he would always be free to add another wife, but in societies like ours that prohibit polygyny, additional practical reasons, like for abandonment, become valid.



Notice that although a divorced woman is permitted to remarry another, she is still “defiled,” Deut. 24:4, by doing so. It’s not possible for a woman to be married and one flesh with one man, and later become married and one flesh with another man, thus breaking her one-flesh union with her x-husband while he still lives, without her chastity being violated.

Notice also, a divorced woman is never permitted to remarry any former husband except her last one. Once she remarries another, she can’t return to a previous husband even if “the latter husband die,” Deut. 24:3. The world and many pastors might think it’s a beautiful thing for a woman to return to a previous husband after marrying another, but God sees it as “abomination,” Deut. 24:4. A sin like: “If a man lie with his daughter in law, ... they have wrought confusion. ... If a man also lie with mankind, ... both of them have committed an abomination. ... If a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness,” Lev. 20:12-14.

On the other hand, notice there’s no prohibition against marrying a new subsequent husband if her husband divorces her or dies. She is defiled in regards to her former husband by her marriage to another, but her latter marriage is as “honorable and undefiled,” Heb. 13:4, as her former marriage was, so we see divorce frees her to remarry anyone except any husband previous to the one that last divorced her.

Finally, notice there wasn’t any need for Moses to mention that the husband who divorced his wife could



remarry. Men are already allowed to have more than one wife without violating chastity, and the husband might already have more than one wife. Only the marital status of the woman is relevant as to whether a man and woman can marry.

***Mt. 5:32a. But I say to you that, whoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery.***

Jesus' point is that even when a husband provides the legal divorce papers required by Deuteronomy 24:2, it doesn't mean no one is harmed, and no sin is committed. As in the other parts of Matthew 5, Jesus corrected the misinterpretations of the Law that resulted from focusing on the external technicalities instead of on the underlying morality. The Jewish rabbis focused on providing a 'writ,' but Jesus said every time a husband divorces a wife, either the husband or the wife is guilty of adultery.

The exception clause, "saving for the cause of fornication," isn't there to provide a valid reason for divorce. It's there to determine who is guilty of adultery. A wife who didn't commit adultery is still one flesh with the husband who divorced her, so he will bear the guilt of endangering her chastity at divorce, and its future violation at her remarriage. A wife who did commit adultery, is already guilty of severing the one-flesh union with her husband, so in that case, she will bear her own guilt. The 'exception clause,' uses the word 'fornication,' instead of 'adultery,' to include lesser



sexual sins besides the actual act of adultery.

Notice the husband in this verse causes his wife to commit adultery by divorcing her, “whoever shall put away his wife ... causes her to commit adultery,” Mt. 5:32a, even if she never remarries. He is guilty of abandoning his duty to protect his wife’s chastity. Attempted murder is just as bad as murder from the perspective of the person who commits it, though it’s not as bad for the intended victim. And reckless endangering is still a crime, even if the endangered person escapes injury.

When a husband divorces his wife he makes it so she must violate her chastity to be married. He puts her in a position where the only way she can perform her special ministry of chastity to give herself to only one man as long as he lives, would be to stay single until her x-husband dies. But she’s also required to remarry to avoid fornication, and to receive the provisions and affection she’s entitled to.

When a man marries, he becomes responsible to provide a safe place for his wife to maintain her chastity and purity. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Messiah also loved the church, and gave himself for it, so that he could sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, so that he could present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish,” Eph. 5:25-27.



A husband isn't permitted to share his wife. "Drink waters out of your own cistern, and running waters out of your own well. ... Let them be only your own, and not be for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of your youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe. Let her breasts satisfy you at all times, and be ravished always with her love," Prov. 5:15-19.

A husband is required to help his wife stay pure by providing lovemaking for her. "To avoid fornication, ... let the husband render to the wife due benevolence. ... The husband has not power of his own body, but the wife. Don't defraud one the other, ... so that Satan doesn't tempt you for your incontinency," 1 Cor. 7:2-5.

Matthew 5:32 says a husband who divorces his wife "causes her to commit adultery." It's the person who causes something who bears the guilt. A person can't be held responsible for something someone else caused. God lays the guilt of the adultery that will occur when she remarries, on the husband at the time he causes it by divorcing his wife, whether or not she ever remarries.

When she does remarry, her marriage is as holy and pure as every other marriage, even though her previous one-flesh union will be severed at the consummation of her remarriage. Like for David and Bathsheba, "marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled," Heb. 13:4. There are no "remarriages" in the Bible, only marriages.



## **Mt 5:32b. Adultery by Marrying a Divorced Woman**

*Mt. 5:32b. And whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery.*

The Bible consistently says that whoever marries a divorced woman, assuming she had not made love to another man after her husband, commits adultery, and there's never an 'exception clause,' for it. The new husband violates the divorced woman's chastity when he severs her previous one-flesh union by becoming one flesh with her, either at the consummation of her remarriage, or when he committed adultery with her before her remarriage.

If a divorced woman is still one flesh with her x-husband, and if there's still much chance for reconciliation, and if her x-husband would be a good husband, then a man should be very careful about coming between a divorced woman and her x-husband. If he marries her, he prevents her from ever returning to her previous husband per Deuteronomy 24:4. On the other hand, biblically, even her x-husband's remarriage doesn't prevent her from returning to him as an additional wife, though, practically, it usually does in our society today.

A man doesn't incur guilt by marrying a divorced woman even though he commits adultery with her by doing so. He does a kind and good thing to marry her, and it's God's will that "to avoid fornication, ... let every



woman [including divorced women] have her own husband," 1 Cor. 7:2. Either the woman's x-husband or the divorced woman herself (per Matthew 5:32a), will bear the guilt, as long as the new husband wasn't complicit in the pre-divorce fornication that led to her divorce.

## The 'Invalid Divorce' Misinterpretation

*Mt. 5:32. Whoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery.*

The 'invalid divorce' misinterpretation of Jesus' divorce and remarriage teaching has caused immense harm over the centuries. One version of the 'invalid divorce' misinterpretation says a divorce for any reason less than fornication is invalid, and thus the couple is still married, and any remarriages are invalid, and so physical relations with the new person who is not really a new spouse is actually continual adultery.

But marriage can't survive divorce. Only the one-flesh union can survive divorce. The adultery Jesus said occurs at remarriage doesn't occur because the divorced couple remains married after the divorce, but because they remain one flesh after the divorce.

"If, while [the man who was] her husband lives, she is married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if [the man who was] her husband is



dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she is married to another man," Rm. 7:3. Whether there's a divorce or not, a wife remains one flesh with her husband until he dies; or until, while he still lives, she becomes one flesh with another man, which is adultery. The death of the husband, or the wife's glorification at the return of the Lord, are the only ways to end the one-flesh union that aren't adultery.

If the 'invalid divorce' misinterpretation was true, Matthew 5:32 would read, "Whoever thinks he puts away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever thinks he marries her he thinks is divorced commits adultery," Mt. 5:32.

Jesus recognized divorces and remarriages even when the divorce wasn't for fornication. "I say to you, 'Whoever shall PUT AWAY his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall MARRY another, commits adultery; and whoever MARRIES her which is PUT AWAY, commits adultery,'" Mt. 19:9. He said they really "put away" and they really "marry," even when the divorce isn't based on fornication.

Jesus didn't tell the Samaritan woman at the well, "you have had one real husband, and the last four whom you've had were not really husbands, and he whom you now have is also not your husband." He said "you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband," Jn. 4:18, because she was living with the man without marrying him. And Jesus didn't tell her to go back to her 'first and only true' husband. He told her





to stop sinning, which she could do by marrying the man she was living with or stop living with him.

The purpose of the writ of divorce in Deuteronomy 24 was to protect the right of divorced wives to remarry. As long as a woman had a writ, no one could question if she was free to remarry. "Let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, ... and when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife," Deut. 24:1-2. If divorces for invalid reasons were not valid divorces, no one would know if a writ was valid, and writs would be worthless, and women would lose the protection they provided to remarry.

The Talmud has a whole tractate in the Book of Women about what constitutes a valid writ of divorce, but the rabbis rightly focus on the writ itself, not on what the reasons for the divorce might have been. Unfortunately, they also made the rules about the form and delivery of the writ too complicated. Biblically, the husband only had to write a writ of divorce, and put it in his wife's hand. Perhaps God wanted the husband to "give it in her hand," Deut. 24:1, because seeing her face while he gives it to her might make him have compassion and change his mind.

Perhaps God intentionally left the reasons for divorce in Deuteronomy 24 open to a wide range of interpretation, to avoid all discussion of whether a divorce was made for valid reasons, to better protect the right of women to remarry. Some possible reasons for divorce in the passage are, "it come to pass that she find no favor in his



eyes,” “he hath found some uncleanness in her,” or he “hate her,” Deut. 24:1-3.

Yeshua was referring to “some uncleanness” [ervat dabar, nakedness thing], Deut. 24:1, meaning sexual uncleanness, when he said “except it be for fornication,” Mt. 5:32; 19:9. But Yeshua didn’t say the writ isn’t valid if the divorce isn’t for fornication; he said the divorcing husband is the one guilty of adultery if the divorce isn’t for fornication. Once again, the ‘exception clause’ isn’t there to enumerate the valid reasons for divorce, but to determine who bears the guilt of the adultery caused by the divorce.

Those who believe a divorce for an invalid reason isn’t a valid divorce can’t even agree among themselves what the valid reason is. Is it any kind of sexual sin, or adultery only, or fornication during engagement only, or incest only, etc.? Don’t you think something so important would be stated more clearly if it could make the whole thing invalid?

A divorced woman has no more marriage connection to an x-husband than a widow does. “If a woman ... vow a vow to the Lord, ... but if her husband disallowed her, ... then he shall make her vow which she vowed ... of none effect. ... But every vow of a widow and of her that is divorced which with they have bound their souls shall stand against her,” Num. 30:3-9. What a mess if the reasons for every woman’s divorce would have to be evaluated to figure out if she has the authority to bind herself before making a business contract with her, for



example.

Men that teach divorces are invalid if they're made for invalid reasons, teach exactly the opposite of what the Bible says. The Bible says "Let him write her a bill of divorcement, ... and when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife," Deut. 24:1-2, but they say she can't go and be another man's wife. The Bible says "if the latter husband ... write her a bill of divorcement, ... her former husband ... may not take her again to be his wife," but they say remarried couples should leave their current spouses and return to their previous, 'real' spouses. The Bible says God "hates putting away," Mal. 2:16, but they say God wants remarried people to divorce each other.

The Bible says "to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband," but they say, most divorced people can never have a husband or wife again. The Bible says, "I say therefore to the unmarried, ... if they cannot contain, let them marry," but they say, don't let them marry. The Bible says "marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled," Heb. 13:4, but they say, marriage is not honorable and undefiled for people who remarry. The 'invalid divorce' teachers cause the same kind of harm as those that "depart from the faith, ... forbidding to marry," 1 Tim. 4:3, because they forbid the use of God's provision for avoiding fornication.

God didn't have the prophet Nathan command David to divorce Bathsheba, even though he committed



adultery with her, and had her husband murdered. Once they were married, regardless of the sordid, sinful path that led to that marriage, from that time forward, they were in an “honorable ... and undefiled,” Heb. 13:4, marriage; and Solomon and the kings of Judah and Yeshua were the descendants of that marriage.

The ‘invalid divorce’ teaching makes it better for people to have sinned, than not to have sinned. If your spouse did commit adultery and divorced you, the divorce counts, and you can get remarried; but if your spouse didn’t commit adultery and divorced you, the divorce doesn’t count, and you can’t get remarried. So, it’s better for you if your spouse committed adultery, which the Bible would never say.

Most ‘invalid divorce’ teachers deny remarriage to the guilty party even when they claim the divorce counts. Jesus didn’t say anything about this in the divorce and remarriage passages. The need to go beyond what the Bible says to try to make things fair is a clue the whole interpretation is wrong. Hopefully, few people actually follow this teaching, but unfortunately it does the most harm to the most conscientious. Common sense is better than false teaching.

A few Bible teachers deny remarriage to the guilty party, because the guilty party has the ‘unfinished moral business of repentance’ to do. This isn’t in the divorce teachings of Jesus, unless it’s hidden in middle voiced participles or something, which the average person has no chance of understanding. They use



passages like Jer. 3:1; Is. 50:1; Hos. 1-2, Mt. 1:19; 18:15ff to add this 'missing feature' to Jesus' teaching.

They call the divorce a 'disciplinary divorce;' a kind of 'tough love,' to bring the parties back together. But divorce is moving in the wrong direction. Even separation makes it less likely a couple will ever reconcile, especially combined with the common practice for women to proclaim 'no contact' in such situations; and divorce makes reconciliation far, far less likely.

For some reason, I can't find dependable data about what percentage of separated and divorced couples reconcile. Some web pages quote The Lost Love Chronicles by Dr. Nancy Kalish in 2006, but her study was about lost childhood romances, and the number of participants was small. I couldn't find statistics in her book of stories about reunited, long-lost lovers; but she is reported to have said 13% of separated couples reconcile, and 6% [of the 50% of divorced couples who remarry, i.e. 3%], remarry their x-spouses. Her website says, "This is still the only research book that has ever been published on actual reunited couples," and that's believable.

Some websites mention Michele Weiner-Davis who said in 2010 that as many as 10% of divorced couples remarry their x-spouses. However, she owns a "Divorce Busting" business, so she has reasons to present as high a reconciliation rate as possible.



One family law website, Wilkinson & Finkbeiner, said, “in 2011, only 29 out of every 1000 [3%] of divorced or widowed women remarried” at all, never mind to their x-spouses. And they reportedly “wait an average of three years after a divorce to remarry (if they remarry at all),” so maybe that means about 9% eventually remarry?

A Pew Research Center report dated 11/14/2014 said 20% of new marriages involve remarriages for both spouses. If only 13% of those remarriages are couples that remarry their X, that’s 2.6% of divorced couples who reconcile and remarry. If only 50% of divorced couples remarry at all, that’s about 1.3% of divorced couples who reconcile.

Whatever the exact statistics, separation and divorce lead in the opposite direction to reconciliation. God may divorced the northern kingdom of Israel; but only God can divorce knowing all will be restored in the end. And ‘disciplinary divorce’ is sometimes taught as being mandatory! If God treated us like that, would any of us endure unto eternal life?

### **Lu 16:18; Ex 21:10. Adultery by Neglecting a Wife**

*Lu. 16:17-18. It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. Whoever puts away his wife, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery.*



In Luke 17, Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their poor stewardship of the Law, and he gave one representative example; their misuse of the Law regarding divorce. The Pharisees thought all was well, so long as they followed the steps Moses prescribed in Deuteronomy 24, but Jesus said it's adultery for a man to divorce his wife and remarry.

Since the biblical definition of adultery permits a man to have more than one wife at one time, how could it be relevant whether a man marries another after divorcing his wife? Some teachers believe that by saying these three words, "and marries another," Jesus made remarriage a relevant consideration for men, and thereby changed the Old Testament definition of adultery, invalidated writs of divorce, and outlawed polygamy. But Yeshua wouldn't have made such drastic changes in such an indirect and unclear way. If Jesus had wanted to change the definition of adultery, invalidate writs of divorce, and prohibit polygamy, this would have been a very cryptic way to do so. Such major changes in people's lives would have merited a few explicit commands.

The ASV says Jesus rescinded the Mosaic dietary laws simply by saying "there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him. ... This he said, making all meats clean," ASV, Mk. 7:15, 19. But the disciples didn't start eating pork after that statement. God made it clear we're not under the law by giving us Acts 15, Romans 6-8a, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, etc.; not merely a hint in passing.



The phrase “and shall marry another,” doesn’t refer to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, because that passage doesn’t talk about men marrying. Rather it refers to Exodus 21:2-11, because that’s the passage about men remarrying. It’s the main passage in the Law about women’s marriage and divorce rights, with voluminous commentary about it in rabbinic writings.

“If a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out [after six years of service] as the menservants do. If she please not her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. ... If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three to her, then she shall go out free without money,” Ex. 21:2-11.

Although these verses are about the rights of a maidservant who married her master, the rabbis rightly reasoned that if maidservants had these rights, then free women had them even more. “Included in this negative commandment are all daughters of Israel (as well), not to reduce from them anything from these [food, clothing, and lovemaking]. [This inclusion] is a fortiori. ... If [a man may] not reduce for [bondwomen], all the more so for free [women]. ... It is written [in Ex. 21:9], “like the statute of the daughters [freewomen] he shall do for her.” [This passage] came to learn [from the statutes of the daughters], but it ends up to teach, as the [law of the] daughters are learned from her [the bondwoman],” Sefer HaChinukh 46.





Exodus 21:2-11 is about a man marrying another wife, and then failing to provide for his earlier wife; whereas Luke 16:18 is about a man failing to provide for his earlier wife by divorcing her, and then marrying another. But God can see through the legal fictions we create. It's even worse for a husband to divorce and thereby provide no care for his earlier wife, than to marry another and then provide inadequate care for his earlier wife.

Exodus 21:10-11 says a woman is entitled to food, clothing (including things like shelter and safety), and physical love, including the possibility of children to care for her in her old age. If a husband doesn't provide those things, a wife had the right to petition the courts to force her husband to divorce her, so she could marry someone else who would. "If he is not willing to divorce the woman, ... flog him ... until he divorces her," Rashi on Lev. 21:8. Inconveniently, for those who oppose polygamy, this passage regulating polygamy, "if he take him another wife," Ex. 21:10, is the only passage in the Bible about the marriage and divorce rights of women for their protection.

The rabbis interpreted "food, clothing, and shelter," to be more than those things specifically. "How [is he obligated] for her clothing? He must give her clothes fit for the rainy months, and for the sunny months. ... Among the clothes that he must give her is included her household vessels: ... a bed with a spread, and a mat ... to sit on, and utensils for food such as a dish and a pot and a jug and a flask, a lamb, a cup, a bottle and other



such things. The residence that he rents for her, must be a house measuring [at least] six by six feet, with a courtyard outside of it, and a toilet room is not considered part of this measure. And we make him give her adornments like colorful clothing to put around her head and forehead, and eyeshadow, ... and rouge ... [for her] face, ... and other such things. To what does this refer? To a poor Jew. But a rich person must provide her with all of these things in accord with his wealth. If he was cheap in providing for her, even a poor Jew, we force him to divorce her. And the marriage contract amount will be a debt over his head until he grows wealthier," Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 73:1-5.

Per Deuteronomy 24, a husband is entitled to his wife's faithfulness, and he can divorce her for "[sexual] uncleanness," Deut. 24:1, but not for any failure to receive food, clothing, and lovemaking from her. On the other hand, per Exodus 21, a wife is entitled to food, clothing, and lovemaking from her husband, and she can force him to divorce her if he doesn't provide these for her, but not for "[sexual] uncleanness," Deut. 24:1, or for "fornication," Mt. 5:32; 19:9. A wife is not entitled to a husband's exclusivity in the Law, because husbands are permitted to have more than one wife.

However, in modern times, a wife may, by her influence or by contract, require her husband's exclusivity. After Rabbi Gershom outlawed polygamy within Sephardic Judaism about 1000 AD, the rabbis said, "in a place where they are accustomed to only marry one woman,



he is not permitted to marry another woman in addition to his wife without her permission, and certainly if he stipulated in her Ketuba (marriage contract) that he would not marry another woman in addition to her," Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 76:8.

The Pharisees thought if a man failed to provide for his wife per Exodus 21:10, but gave her a writ of divorce per Exodus 21:11, that made everything ok. "A man who rebels against his wife and says, 'I will feed and support her, but will not have sexual relations with her because I hate her,' we add the value of 36 barleycorns of silver to her ketuba (marriage contract) each week, and he remains without relations as long as she is willing to wait. Even though her ketuba amount continues to grow, he is still transgressing a negative commandment, as it says, 'he shall not withhold' (Ex. 21:10). If she so desires, [the] court can force him to divorce her immediately, and to give her the ketuba money. ... If he wants to divorce her immediately and give her ketuba, ... it seems to me that in such a case he also does not transgress the negative commandment of 'he shall not withhold,'" Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 77:1.

But even though a wife has the right to a divorce under Ex. 21:11, her chastity will still be violated when she severs her one-flesh union with her x-husband by becoming one flesh with another man at her remarriage. And apart from the exception clause of Mt. 5:32 and 19:9, God will put the guilt of the adultery from her remarriage on her x-husband's account, because he's the one who put her in the position of having to leave him



to have her needs provided for.

The ten commandments all have both negative and positive aspects. The seventh commandment 'prohibits' immorality, but it also 'requires' positive aspects of purity. "To avoid fornication, ... let the husband render to the wife due benevolence," 1 Cor. 7:2-3. Even if a husband doesn't divorce his wife, he commits adultery against her chastity if he doesn't provide her "duty of marriage," Ex. 21:10, because he forces her to have to divorce him to have her appropriate needs met.

The rabbis taught sex is a woman's right, and a man's obligation. "[Regarding] a man who forbade himself by vow from having intercourse with his wife, Beth Shammai says [he can abstain for] two weeks [sounds like 1 Cor. 7:5]; Beth Hillel says one week. ... The times for conjugal duty prescribed in the Torah are: for independent men, every day; for workers, twice a week; for donkey-drivers, once a week; for camel-drivers, once in thirty days; for sailors, once in six months [because their work keeps them away longer]," Talmud, Ketubot 61b.

Luke 16:18 and the other divorce and remarriage verses emphasize the actions of men, even though men are always free to marry regardless of their marital status. The two men mentioned in Luke 16:18, the divorcing x-husband and the remarrying new husband, both commit adultery, not because they violate their own chastity, but because of how they affect the chastity of the woman.



## **Mt 19:1-8; Mk 10:1-9. It's Never Right to Divorce a Wife**

*Mt. 19:1-3. Jesus ... came into the borders of Judaea beyond Jordan. ... The Pharisees also came to him, tempting him, and saying to him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"*

*Mk. 10:1-2. He ... came into the borders of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan. ... And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" tempting him.*

Matthew 19 and Mark 10 record parallel accounts of the same event. A little earlier, in Luke 16:18, Jesus had told the Pharisees that every husband who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. So now the Pharisees came asking, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" Mt. 19:3; Mk. 10:2, hoping Jesus would publicly contradict Moses by saying divorce is unlawful so they could condemn his ministry.

*Mk. 10:3-4. And he answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" And they said, "Moses permitted to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away."*

In Mark's account, Jesus asked what Moses commanded, and the Pharisees rightly replied that Moses didn't 'command' divorce, he only 'permitted' it in Deuteronomy 24. God permits men to divorce their wives to protect women from even worse cruel things men might do to them to be free of them. He didn't give Deuteronomy 24:1-4 to provide a list of valid reasons for



divorce, but to require writs of divorce, to protect divorced women, by enabling them to prove they were free and available for remarriage. He probably also permits divorce to avoid problems like they have in the Catholic-dominated Philippines, where because divorce is wrongly illegal, many married couples separate and live with other partners outside of wedlock, and the latter relationships are even less permanent than the former, because they can't marry.

*Mk. 10:5-9. And Jesus answered and said to them, "For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. So then they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."*

*Mt. 19:4-6. He answered and said to them, "Have you not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh?' Therefore they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."*

Jesus' answered it's never right for a husband to divorce his wife. Even if you give your wife a writ of divorce so she can remarry, you're still guilty of "hardness of heart" (Mk. 10:5). The important thing to notice is he gave his complete answer at this point and stopped talking. He didn't need to mention any 'exception clause' for fornication. If the Pharisees or the disciples



hadn't gone on to ask more questions, that would have been the end of the conversation.

Also notice Jesus didn't talk about breaking marriage contracts, marriage covenants, or marriage vows in his answer. Marriage is to protect the one-flesh union. Divorce puts the one-flesh union at risk of being "put asunder," Mk. 10:9; Mt. 19:6, and sundering the one-flesh union of a married woman is adultery.

*Mt. 19:7-8. They said to him, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it wasn't so."*

In Matthew's account, it's the Pharisees who asked why Moses 'commanded' divorce, and Jesus who pointed out Moses only 'permitted' it. God permits divorce for the protection of women because of the hardness of men's hearts. Even when a husband isn't guilty of causing his wife to commit adultery by divorcing her, because she already committed adultery; he's still guilty of "hardness of heart," Mt. 19:8; Mk. 10:5.

And hardness of heart falls under the sixth commandment (Mt. 5:21-22), "You shall not kill," Ex. 20:13. To divorce a wife is to "hate her," Deut. 24:3. Every man who divorces his wife is minimally guilty of hardness of heart, hatred, lack of love, unkindness, unforgiveness, cruelty, treachery, violence, and of doing what God hates (Mal. 2:14-16); even when he's not also guilty of endangering her chastity. "Peter ... said, 'Lord,



how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?" Jesus said to him, 'I don't say to you until seven times; but until seventy times seven,'" Mt. 18:21-22.

"The LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously. Yet she is your companion, and the wife of your covenant. And did not he make one [flesh, Gen. 2:24]? ... Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, says that he hates divorce, for one covers violence with his garment," Mal. 4:13-16.

*Mk. 10:10-12. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he said to them, "Whoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, commits adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery."*

*Mt. 19:9. And I say to you, "Whoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her which is put away commits adultery."*

According to Mark, these verses were spoken to the disciples "in the house," without the Pharisees present. Jesus had already given his complete statement to the Pharisees, that although Moses did provide laws to minimize the damage to women from divorce, it's never right for a man to divorce his wife.





We already dealt with the exception clause of Matthew 19:9a, “except it be for fornication,” in the section on Matthew 5:31-32a about “Adultery by Divorcing a Wife.”

And we already dealt with Mark 10:11, “Whoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, commits adultery;” and Matthew 19:9a, “Whoever shall put away his wife, ... and shall marry another, commits adultery;” in the section on Luke 16:18 about ‘Adultery by Neglecting a Wife.’”

And we will deal with Mark 10:12, “And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery,” in the following section about “Adultery by Divorcing a Husband and Remarrying.”

The only additional information to deal with here is the extra clause “against her” in Mark 10:11, “Whoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, commits adultery against her.” There is nothing a husband can do himself to end his one-flesh union with his wife. He can’t sunder it by marrying another wife. Men can only be chaste based on how they treat the chastity of women. By divorcing and remarrying, an x-husband commits adultery against his x-wife, by failing to continue to provide her food, clothing, and lovemaking when taking another wife per Exodus 21:10, which puts her in the position of needing to remarry to receive those things.

But for the wife who divorces her husband, Mark



simply says “she commits adultery,” Mk. 10:12; not, “she commits adultery against him,” because she herself severs their one-flesh union by becoming one flesh with another man by remarrying.

*Mt. 19:10-12. His disciples said to him, “If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” But he said to them, “All men can’t receive this saying, except them to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb, and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men, and there are eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”*

The interpretation of Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10:1-9, that says Jesus taught it’s never right for a man to divorce his wife, is confirmed by the reaction of the disciples, who said, if that’s the case, it’s better for a man not to marry. Jesus agreed the standard is high, and that marriage requires the grace of God, but he said celibacy also requires the grace of God.

This interpretation is also confirmed in 1 Corinthians 7, where Paul says, “Unto the married, ... the Lord [commanded], ... let not the husband put away his wife,” 1 Cor. 7:10-11. There’s no exception clause; it’s immoral for a man to divorce his wife.

In Ezra 10, Ezra made the people divorce their foreign wives, even those with children, but he was wrong to do so. Nowhere does the Bible say he was right to do so, and shortly after that event, the prophet Malachi



remonstrated, “the God of Israel says that he hates putting away,” Mal. 2:16. I think God recorded this event, without immediate comment, as an exercise for us to realize they erred.

Like when Jephthah killed his daughter so he wouldn’t be guilty of breaking a foolish vow (Jdg. 11:30-40). Or when Israel nearly wiped out the tribe of Benjamin (Jdg. 19-21). Or when the drunken King Ahasuerus divorced Queen Vashti (Est. 1). Or when the apostles went beyond their apostolic authority and chose Matthias as a replacement for Judas instead of waiting for Jesus to select Paul as he did later (Acts 1:26; Gal. 1:1).

God’s way is to never give up on his own. Even if God divorced the northern kingdom of Israel, he alone can divorce with the full assurance all will someday be restored. And he didn’t divorce the southern kingdom of Judah even though she became one flesh with other gods. “They say, if a man divorce his wife, and she go from him, and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, says the Lord, ... for I am married to you,” Jer. 3:1-14.

God told Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman who would have children from other men; and told him to love her unconditionally, and win her heart in the end as a picture of God’s unconditional, eternal acceptance of Israel and their eventual happy-ever-after marriage in the Messianic Kingdom.



“The Lord said to Hosea, ‘Go, take unto you a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms; for the land has committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord.’ So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. ... She conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, ‘Call his name Loammi [meaning ‘not my people,’ because he wasn’t Hosea’s child]; for you are not my people, and I will not be your God.’ ... Yet ... it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ‘You are not my people,’ there it shall be said unto them, ‘You are the sons of the living God.’ ... [Hosea said,] ‘Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; let her therefore put away her whoredoms.’ ... Their mother has played the harlot. ... I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her, ... and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. ... I will betroth you unto me forever,” Hos. 1:1-2:23.

Some people interpret “she is not my wife, neither am I her husband,” to mean Hosea divorced Gomer and remarried her later. I think Hosea was saying it was ‘like’ they weren’t married. Israel didn’t stop being God’s people when he said “you are not my people, and I will not be your God.” There has always been a believing remnant in every generation which is why Israel is preserved. “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, ‘Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it;’ so will I do for my servants’ sakes [the minority], that I may not destroy them all,” Is. 65:8.



No matter how much Israel sins, God will never forsake her, because his love and commitment to her is unconditional. If we want to be like him, we must never forsake our wives, no matter what they do. "Thus says the Lord, which gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divides the sea when the waves thereof roar. ... If those ordinances depart from before me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. ... If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the Lord," Jer. 31:35-37.

Also, "Thus says the Lord, if my covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant, ... for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them," Jer. 33:25-26. If we have the mind of the Holy Spirit within us, then we must love our wives like God loves Israel, with an unconditional, unending love. God didn't divorce Israel before becoming engaged to the church, the bride of Messiah. He didn't violate Ex. 21:10, "If he take him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish."

Likewise, Messiah will never divorce his espoused bride, no matter what the church does. "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able



to separate us from the love of God, which is in Messiah Jesus our Lord,” Rm. 8:38-39.

Marriage is so sacred to God that even when belief in Yeshua separates other family members, husband and wife should never be divided. “For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law, [but he doesn’t mention husband and wife]” Mt. 10:35. And even though God took everything from Job; his property, his children, and his health; he didn’t take his wife from him.

Yeshua said it’s always immoral and hardness of heart for a husband to divorce a wife. But that was during a time when society permitted polygamy, and a man could add a second wife without divorcing his first. Today, there are probably circumstances where a husband may need to divorce his wife, like for abandonment. And God will put the guilt of such divorces on the accounts of the Bible teachers who interpret the Bible according to modern culture, claim that polygyny is sin, and thus harm women’s chastity and welfare, and separate families.

### **Mk 10:12. Adultery by Divorcing a Husband & Remarrying**

*Mk. 10: 12. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery.*



A wife commits adultery when she sunders the one-flesh union with her x-husband by becoming one flesh with another man at her remarriage. If she divorced her x-husband because he failed to provide, “her food, clothing, and duty of marriage (Ex. 21:10-11), then the guilt of her adultery will fall on her x-husband. If not, then she’ll bear the guilt.

Notice there’s never an exception clause, “except it be for fornication,” for when a wife divorces her husband. You can’t flip gender-specific verses around. The Bible says, “Whoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery,” Mt. 19:9; but never, “Whoever shall put away her husband, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery.” A husband’s fornication doesn’t allow a wife to escape the guilt of her own adultery when she remarries.

Bible teachers today encourage precious, chaste wives to violate their own chastity, possibly for the first time in their lives, by telling them, that if a husband commits fornication, they can divorce him and marry another without being guilty of adultery. However, the guilt for the resulting destruction of families and the violation of the chastity of the divorcing wives, will be put on the account of the egalitarian Bible teachers, that flip gender-specific verses like Matthew 19:9 around.

A wife can’t cause her husband to commit adultery by divorcing him, like a husband can his wife. “Whoever shall put away his wife ... causes her to commit



adultery,” Mt. 5:32; but never, “whoever shall put away her husband causes him to commit adultery,” Mt. 5:32. Men can’t commit adultery in remarriage, unless they marry a divorced woman. The gospels say three times that whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery (Mt. 5:32, Mt. 19:9, Lu. 16:18), but never say whoever marries a divorced man commits adultery.

A woman who divorces her husband endangers her own chastity. Biblically, she’s free to return to her x-husband at any time, even if he remarries someone else, since the Bible permits polygyny, but not after she remarries someone else per Deut. 24:4. Practically though, because of today’s teachers, an x-husband’s remarriage prevents reconciliation.

Also, assuming the divorced woman had not made broken the one flesh union with her x-husband by making love to someone else before her new marriage partner, it’s always true that “whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery,” Mt. 5:32. But if she divorced her x-husband because he failed to provide for her needs, the guilt of the new husband’s adultery will fall on the x-husband; otherwise, the new husband’s guilt will fall on her. But the new husband does a good thing by marrying her, and is not responsible for her being in the position of needing to remarry, so long as he wasn’t complicit in how she got into that position.

Also, the Bible doesn’t say a wife who divorces her husband is guilty of hardness of heart, like husbands are. “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts





permitted you to put away your wives,” Mt. 19:8; and never “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts permitted you to put away your husbands.” Husbands have more power to influence the character of their marriages. A good husband can graciously help a wife of poor character improve, but even the best wife can’t change an uncommitted or abusive husband.

God puts the responsibility of holding the marriage together on the husband. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave [hold] unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh,” Gen. 2:24. It’s the man that does the cleaving, and holds the couple together. If he lets go, the wife can’t do his job for him to keep the marriage together, and her efforts will only be resented. But when a husband commits to holding the marriage together by loving his wife passionately, unselfishly, and unconditionally; when he’s willing to climb mountains and swim oceans for her; few women would want to leave that kind of marriage.

The best a woman can do for her marriage is to make it as pleasant as possible for her husband by quiet submission. “Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word [not by teaching, nagging, or trying to change him] be won by the behavior of the wives; while they behold your chaste behavior coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it ... be ... the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves,



being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord," 1 Pet. 1:1-3. But even for a perfect wife, if her husband lacks a conscientious character and commitment, he is likely to leave.



# Jesus' Teaching Grouped by Phrase

JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE. One person per row bears the GUILT of the adultery.							
Woman Mar- ries Divor- ced Husband	Husband Remarries Ex. 21:10	Husband Divorces Wife	Husband Commits Fornication	Wife Commits Fornication	Wife Divorces Husband	Wife Remarries Deut. 24:1-4	Man Marries Divorced Wife
Mt 5:32	usually irrelevant	Whoever shall put away	always irrelevant	GUILT OF ADULTERY except for the cause of fornication always relevant		always adultery	ADULTRY and whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery
		his wife GUILT OF ADULTERY				ADULTRY causes her to commit adultery	
Lu 16:18	GUILT OF ADULTERY and marries another commits adultery	Whoever puts away his wife	always irrelevant	always relevant		always adultery	ADULTRY and whoever marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery
Mt 19:9	and shall marry another commits adultery GUILT OF ADULTERY	Whoever shall put away his wife	always irrelevant	GUILT OF ADULTERY except it be for fornication always relevant		always adultery	ADULTRY and whoever marries her which is put away commits adultery
Mk 10:11	GUILT OF ADULTERY and marry another commits adultery against her	Whoever shall put away his wife	always irrelevant	always relevant		always adultery	always adultery
Mk 10:12	usually irrelevant		always irrelevant	always relevant	And if a woman shall put away her husband	GUILT OF ADULTERY and be married to another, she commits adultery	always adultery



**Mt. 5:32. Whoever shall put away his wife.**

**Lu. 16:18. Whoever puts away his wife.**

**Mt. 19:9. Whoever shall put away his wife.**

**Mk. 10:11. Whoever shall put away his wife.**

Four out of five cases Jesus presented about divorce are about a husband divorcing his wife, and only one out of five is about a wife divorcing her husband. The husband is the one responsible to hold the marriage together. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh," Gen. 2:24.

**Mt. 5:32. Except for the cause of fornication.**

**Mt. 19:9. Except it be for fornication.**

**Deut. 24:1. Because he found some uncleanness in her.**

If a husband divorces his wife because she committed fornication (which might be less than the actual act of adultery by becoming one flesh), then she bears the guilt of ending the one-flesh union with her x-husband when she becomes (or became) one flesh with another man.

**Mt. 5:32. Causes her to commit adultery.**

A husband who divorces a wife for any reason less than fornication, bears the guilt of causing her to have to commit adultery via remarriage to be married.



**Lu. 16:18. And marries another commits adultery.**

**Mt. 19:9. And shall marry another commits adultery.**

**Mk. 10:11. And marry another commits adultery against her.**

**Ex. 21:10. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish; and if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free.**

A husband who divorces his wife and thereby neglects her entirely and marries another, is even worse than a husband who adds an additional wife, and then neglects a preexisting wife. In both cases, he causes her to need to commit adultery at remarriage to receive her rightful food, clothing, and lovemaking to preserve her chastity per Exodus 21.

**Mt. 5:32. And whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery.**

**Mt. 19:9. And whoever marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery.**

**Mk. 10:11. And whoever marries her which is put away commits adultery.**

Jesus' scenarios assume an innocently divorced woman doesn't make love to anyone after her x-husband divorces her, until her second husband commits one act of adultery with her by breaking her one-flesh union with her x-husband by consummating her remarriage, even though the x-husband who wrongly divorced her will bear the guilt of their act of adultery. If a divorced woman does break her one-flesh union with her x-husband by making love to someone else before consummating her remarriage to her second husband,



the second husband doesn't commit adultery, though he does break her one-flesh union with whatever man was with her before him.

**Mk. 10:11. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery.**

A wife who divorces her husband and marries another, commits adultery by ending the one-flesh union with her x-husband when she becomes one flesh with her new husband at her remarriage. But, if she divorced him because he failed to provide food, clothing, and lovemaking, then her x-husband bears the guilt of that adultery.

## **Diagrams of Jesus' Teaching**

The following diagrams Jesus' teachings on divorce and remarriage. Diagonal shading represents the wife's one-flesh union with her first husband; vertical shading represents her one-flesh union with her second husband; and thick-bordered boxes represent marriages. All Jesus' scenarios assume there is only one other man involved besides the first husband. If a woman has multiple one-flesh relationships before her remarriage, then the details of when each one-flesh relationship is broken, and of each sin of fornication vs. adultery, can be adjusted based on the same principles presented in these teachings.



ADULTERY BY DIVORCING AN INNOCENT WIFE - Mt. 5:32			
Oth. Wom.			
Husband		GUILT OF CAUSED ADULTERY at Time of Divorce	Remarriage
Wife	OneFlesh1	OneFlesh1 Continues	OneFlesh2 at Remarr. Consumation
Oth. Man			Adultery (not guilt) at Time of Her Remarr.

***Mt. 5:32. Whoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery.***

A husband who divorces a wife that didn't commit adultery, ends their marriage, but not their one-flesh union even when he remarries. Therefore, in addition to being cruel and hard-hearted, he also bears the guilt of causing her to have to commit adultery by breaking their one-flesh union by becoming one flesh with another man, if she wants to be a married woman, whether she ever remarries or not. A man who marries a divorced woman who wasn't divorced because of fornication, commits adultery by breaking the one flesh union between the divorced woman and her x-husband, but the husband that divorced her bears the guilt.

ADULTERY BY COMMITTING FORNICATION & BEING DIVORCED - Mt. 5:32; 19:9			
Oth. Wom.			
Husband		Divorce & Cruelty	Remarriage
Wife	OneFlesh1	OneFlesh2 & GUILT OF ADULTERY at Time of Forn.	Remarriage
Oth. Man		GUILT OF ADULTERY at Time of Her Forn.	

A wife who commits fornication bears the guilt of



breaking the one-flesh union with her husband by becoming one flesh with another man before or after the divorce, but the husband that divorces her is still guilty of cruelty, hardness of heart, and unforgiveness.

ADULTERY BY NEGLECTING AN INNOCENT WIFE - Mt. 19:9; Lu. 16:18; Mk. 10:11			
Oth. Wom.			
Husband	Divorce & Cruelty	GUILT OF ADULTERY BY NEGLECT at Time of Remarr.	
Wife	OneFlesh1	OneFlesh1 Continues	OneFlesh2 at Time of Remarr. Consum.
Oth. Man			Adultery (not guilt) at Time of Her Remarr.

*Mt. 19:9. Whoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her which is put away commits adultery.*

*Lu. 16:18. Whoever puts away his wife, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery.*

*Mk. 10:11. Whoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, commits adultery against her.*

A husband who divorces a wife that didn't commit adultery, ends their marriage but not their one-flesh union, even when he remarries. But divorcing and neglecting her, and then adding another wife, is even worse than adding another wife and then neglecting to provide his earlier wife's food, clothing, and lovemaking to safeguard her chastity. Therefore, in addition to being cruel and hard-hearted, he also bears the guilt of her adultery when she ends their one-flesh union by becoming one with another man at her





remarriage or before. Yeshua wants us to know that a husband who divorces his wife for a lesser reason than fornication, violates Exodus 21, about protecting a wife’s chastity by providing for her, in addition to Deuteronomy 24, about protecting a wife’s chastity by not divorcing her.

ADULTERY BY DIVORCING A PROVIDING HUSBAND AND REMARRYING - Mk. 10:10-12			
Oth. Wom.			
Husband			Remarriage
Wife	OneFlesh1	Divorce OneFlesh1 Continues	OneFlesh2 & GUILT OF ADULTERY at Time of Remarriage Consummation
Oth. Man			Adultery (not guilt) at Time of Her Remarriage

*Mk. 10:10-12. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery.*

A wife who divorces her husband, remains one flesh with him, even after the divorce ends their marriage, and even after her x-husband remarries. When she marries another, she bears the guilt of her own adultery by breaking her one-flesh union with her x-husband by becoming one flesh with her new husband.

However, the principle taught in Matthew 5:32 and the other divorce verses, is that the guilt of adultery is often put to the account of the person who caused the adultery, rather than the one who actually engaged in physical relations, and the same diagram as for “Adultery by Neglecting an Innocent Wife” above



would apply, except the Divorce event would be moved to the wife's row. If the wife divorced her husband because he failed to provide food, clothing (including shelter, safety, etc.), and lovemaking, per Exodus 21:10, then her x-husband bears the guilt per Exodus 21:11. Also, a wife who divorces a husband is not guilty of the cruelty that a husband who divorces a wife is guilty of (see the next section on "Remarriage").

A husband who has physical relations with a woman other than his wife, commits fornication or adultery, depending on the marital status of the woman, and becomes one flesh with her, but he doesn't thereby break the one-flesh union with his wife or stop being one flesh with her. Though a husband who divorces his wife because of her sexual "uncleanness," Deut. 24:1, doesn't thereby become guilty of causing her to commit adultery; a wife who divorces her providing husband because of his sexual sin is still guilty of adultery when she ends their one-flesh union by becoming one with another by remarrying, because only neglect permits her to divorce her husband per Exodus 21.

In other words, the diagram for a wife that divorces her husband because of his sexual sin and then remarries, is the same as the diagram for a wife that divorces a husband for any other reason besides Exodus 21. A husband's sexual sin is still sin, and it's cruel to his wife, but it doesn't directly affect her chastity.



## 1 Cor 7. Remarriage

### 1-9. Most Unmarried People Are Required to Marry

*1 Cor. 7:1-2. Now concerning the things whereof you wrote to me, it's good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*

The Corinthians had asked Paul if widows should remarry. Paul expanded his answer to address all celibacy and marriage. He said celibacy is good, but most people are required to marry to avoid fornication. "Every man" and "every woman" includes divorced men and women. They have just as much obligation to marry to avoid fornication as everyone else. "Remarriage" is just called "marriage" in the Bible.

Also, as detailed earlier, when Paul says "let every man have his own [heautou] wife," it refers to "his own" reflexively and exclusively; whereas when he says "let every woman have her own [idios] husband," it refers to "her own" that pertains to her, but may pertain to others also, because of polygyny.

The Bible refers to divorced women several times. For the high priest, "a widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot, these he shall not take," Lev. 21:14. Divorced women are also mentioned in Lev. 21:7, 22:13, Num. 30:9, Ez. 44:22, Mt. 5:32, Mt. 19:9, and Lu. 16:18. But the Bible never refers to a "divorced man." It would be senseless and irrelevant. Only the marital statuses of women are relevant. Also, when a man is divorced, he



might still be married to other wives, whereas a woman is always unmarried when she's divorced. So it's not a useful term for men.

*1 Cor. 7:3-5. Let the husband render to the wife due benevolence, and likewise also the wife to the husband. The wife doesn't have power of her own body, but the husband, and likewise also the husband doesn't have power of his own body, but the wife. Don't defraud one the other, except it be with consent for a time, so that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, so that Satan doesn't tempt you for your incontinency.*

Physical relations outside of marriage are sin; but abstention within marriage is sin.

*1 Cor. 7:6-7a. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But every man has his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.*

Paul permits "for a man not to touch a woman," vs. 1, by remaining single "even as I myself," vs. 7a. But he commands marriage for those who need to marry to avoid fornication. Though Paul had been a rabbi, his permission of celibacy is in contradiction to Rabbinic Judaism that requires all men to marry.

"Every man is obligated to marry a woman in order to be fruitful, and to multiply and anyone who doesn't engage in being fruitful and multiplying is as if he spills blood, ... and causes the divine presence to depart from Israel. ... He who does not marry is not allowed to make



a blessing or to engage in Torah etc. and he is not called a man. ... It is incumbent on every man that they should marry a woman at the age of 18 and the diligent get married at 13, ... and he who lets 20 years pass, or he who does not want to marry, the courts can force him to marry in order to fulfill the mitzvah of being fruitful," Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer, 1:3 (also Talmud, Yevamot 63b). The rabbis based their requirement to marry on God's command to Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply," Gen. 1:28, but their interpretation is incorrect, because the command would have been repeated in the Law if it applied to every man individually during Moses' time.

*1 Cor. 7:8-9. I say therefore to the unmarried [masculine, i.e. both men and women] and widows [feminine], it is good for them [masculine, both men and women] if they remain even as I. But if they can't contain, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn [with lust].*

Paul sums up this section by saying it's preferable for unmarried people, including the widows they specifically asked about, to stay unmarried, but only if they're strong enough to avoid fornication without marriage. Some interpret the word "unmarried" here to mean "widowers," because the noun is masculine in Greek, and to make it parallel the word "widows." But the concept of a 'widower', is never found in the Bible, because only the marital statuses of women are ever relevant.

"Unmarried" is masculine because it includes all unmarried men, as well as divorced and virgin women,



and a group with any males uses a masculine noun. Widows are broken out separately because the original question to Paul had been, "Should widows remarry?" Divorced women are called "unmarried," in verse 10, "Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried." And virgin women are called "unmarried" in verse 34, "There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord." Virgin women are also dealt with separately in a later section because of their unique situation, including the woman's father being included in the decision making. Virgin status has no relevance for men.

Verses 8-9 require all unmarried persons who "cannot contain," to marry. Unlike the concerns of pastors today because of their gender-equal, culturally-determined misinterpretations of scripture, there's no qualifying clauses for divorced persons, or concerns about who divorced whom, or the reasons for the divorce, or the innocent or guilty party, or the validity of the divorce, since all divorces are valid. If Paul wanted to forbid remarriage to divorced people, or to some subset of divorced people, this would've been the place to say so. Since Paul doesn't say otherwise, we should assume all "unmarried," 1 Cor. 7:8, including divorced people, have the responsibility to marry to avoid fornication.

#### 10-24. Married People Are Required to Stay Married

*1 Cor. 7:10-11. And to the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, "Let not the wife depart from her husband." But and if she depart, let her remain*



*unmarried or be reconciled to her husband, and let not the husband put away his wife.*

Paul says, "I command, yet not I but the Lord," because Yeshua had already given commands regarding married persons in the gospels. Jesus said divorce is never right, and Paul's advice harmonizes with that. "Let not the wife depart from her husband, ... and let not the husband put away his wife," 1 Cor. 7:10-11. No exception clauses are needed.

Paul said a wife who divorces her husband should "remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband." Why didn't he also say a husband who divorces his wife should "remain unmarried or be reconciled to his wife?" First, if a husband had more than one wife at the time of the divorce, he won't be "unmarried" after a divorce, whereas a wife will always be unmarried after a divorce. Secondly, when a wife divorces her husband, biblically even her x-husband's remarriage doesn't prohibit her from returning to him, though practically today it does because of wrong teaching in society, whereas even biblically a wife's remarriage would prevent a husband from being able to remarry her.

Thirdly, there's more chance of an x-wife's x-husband accepting her back if she divorced him, than if he divorced her. But if reconciliation is unlikely, the unmarried still need to remarry to avoid fornication. Paul advised younger widows to remarry to avoid fornication, so he would probably advise younger divorced women to do the same. "Let not a widow be



taken into the number under threescore years old, ... but the younger widows refuse, for when they have begun to wax wanton against Messiah they will marry. ... I will therefore that the younger women [virgins, divorced, and widows] marry [and] bear children," 1 Tim. 5:9-15.

Fourthly, if the x-husband won't provide food, clothing, safety, and lovemaking to his x-wife, she shouldn't return to him, even if he wants her to, and the guilt of her adultery at remarriage will be laid to his account. A godly woman may fight hard to keep her marriage before divorce, but afterwards it's sometimes wisest for her to look at the divorce as freedom from an oppressive marriage, rather than be too quick to reconcile.

Once a woman's chastity is violated by her becoming one flesh with a second husband at remarriage, subsequent lovemaking with him no longer violates her chastity. From that time on, the second husband is the one to whom Romans 7:1-4 now applies, and now someone will be guilty of adultery if she has physical relations with anyone but him as long as he lives.

To divorce her second husband and go back to her first husband would be adultery, "her former husband ... may not take her again," Deut. 24:1-4. Once a person remarries, it's just as wrong to end that marriage as for a previous marriage. Some believers, in deference to their teachers, build their lives around avoiding remarriage, and instead live lives of lust and recurring fornication instead. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers





God will judge," Heb. 13:4.

Some relationships require a man and woman to cease physical relations rather than to marry. The Corinthian church condoned "fornication such as is not so much as named among Gentiles, that one should have his his stepmother," 1 Cor. 5:1. The Law forbids that relationship. "The nakedness of your father's wife shall you not uncover; it is your father's nakedness," Lev. 18:8. Paul commanded the Corinthian church to disassociate themselves from that man. "I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, ... not even to eat with such a person. ... Put away from yourselves the evil person," 1 Cor. 5:11-12.

The Corinthian Church followed Paul's advice and the man repented, so Paul urged them to welcome him back. "This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him," 2 Cor. 2:6-7. Polygamy and remarriage were certainly more frequent in the early church, than incest with a stepmother, but you never hear Paul telling the church to disassociate themselves from any polygamous or remarried people, which he would have commanded, if it was adultery for them to remain married.

*1 Cor. 7:12-16. But to the rest I speak, not the Lord. If any brother has a wife that doesn't believe, and she is pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which has a husband that doesn't believe, and if he is pleased to dwell with her, let her not*



*leave him. ... But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. For what do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O man, whether you will save your wife?*

Yeshua hadn't covered the case of a believer being married to an unbeliever, but the advice is the same. Don't divorce your spouse, but you can't prevent your spouse from divorcing you. An unbelieving husband who divorces his believing wife will bear the guilt of her adultery when she remarries; and an unbelieving wife who divorces her believing husband will bear the guilt of her own adultery when she remarries. There is no adultery when a husband remarries, but he will thereby become guilty for his x-wife's having to remarry if he divorced her, as discussed before. Biblically, a believing husband would never divorce his wife, believer or not, though today he may sometimes have to since our society doesn't accept polygyny. A believing wife may sometimes have to divorce a husband, not for being an unbeliever, but for not providing for her per Exodus 21:10.

*1 Cor. 7:17-24. But as God has distributed to every man, as the Lord has called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. ... Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Are you called being a servant? Care not for it. But if you may be made free, use it rather.*

If the unbelieving spouse is willing to stay married, then



don't divorce them because they're unbelievers, though all the other passages about divorce, like Exodus 21, still apply.

### 25-38. Virgin Women Are Free to Choose

*1 Cor. 7:25. Now concerning virgins [feminine] I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment, as one that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*

Yeshua gave no explicit commandment about virgin women in the gospels.

*1 Cor. 7:26-32a. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man to be so [single]. Are you bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Are you freed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But and if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she has not sinned. Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh; but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remains, that both they that have wives will be as though they had none, ... for the fashion of this world passes away. But I would have you without being full of care [by being married].*

Married people have to stay married, but single people have a choice. They aren't wrong to choose marriage, though marriage results in more hardship. If they want to stay single, but worry about missing out on experiencing the joys of marriage, they can remember life is like "a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away," Jam. 4:14, and then, "they that have wives will be as though they had none," vs. 29, and there's no marriage after resurrection and glorification.



*1 Cor. 7:32b-35. He that is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare on you, but for that which is comely, and that you may attend on the Lord without distraction.*

Paul says a person can accomplish more for the Lord as a single person. But he doesn't want to "cast a snare," vs. 35, to make a single person feel pressured to stay single so they can do more for the Lord, because most people need to marry to avoid fornication, and for their natural needs for companionship and help, etc. A person who should marry, but stayed single, would end up doing less for the Lord than if he married, because searching for substitutes for companionship would distract him, and fornication might destroy him.

*1 Cor. 7:36-38. But if any man think that he behaves himself uncomely toward his virgin [daughter], if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sins not, let them marry. Nevertheless he that stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin [daughter], does well. So then he that gives her in marriage does well; but he that doesn't give her in marriage does better.*



Who would have a young woman's best interests in mind more than her own father, assuming he's a good father? Her father is less likely to be deceived by suiters who act loving to get what they're after, but are actually selfish. A good father wouldn't make any choices about his daughter's future without involving her in the decisions. He would want to help her achieve what is best for her. Biblically, engagement is as binding as marriage; but in our days, people don't intend it to be as binding as marriage when they get engaged, so it's not; and therefore, people today shouldn't go through with a marriage just because they're engaged.

***1 Cor. 7:39-40. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives, but if her husband is dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment; and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.***

Paul finishes up by repeating his answer to the original question the Corinthians had asked, "should widows remarry?" He said widows are "at liberty," vs. 39, to remarry, but would probably be happier if they don't, if they don't need to to avoid fornication.

Like Romans 7:1-2, this verse shows the New Testament continues the Old Testament definition of adultery. Both the Old and New Testaments define chastity as a woman having physical relations with only one man as long as he lives, but not symmetrically as a man having physical relations with only one woman as long as she lives. The New Testament never says anything like the inverse of 1 Corinthians 7:39, "the husband is bound by



the law as long as his wife lives; but if his wife is dead, he is at liberty to be married to whom he will.”

It’s relevant whether a wife’s husband is still living, “as long as her husband lives,” vs. 39, as to whether she can marry another. But it’s irrelevant whether a husband’s wife is still living as to whether he can marry another. And Paul dealt with the issue about widows remarrying, but not about ‘widowers’ remarrying, because that term is irrelevant in itself.

Culturally-dominated Bible teachers assume gender-specific verses like this can be freely reversed because they’ve allowed our modern culture to influence their interpretation of scripture, and because they don’t understand the goodness of inequality in authority structures.

## *Additional Considerations about Polygamy*

### **Eph 5:21-6:9. Why Only Men Can Have Multiple Spouses**

Ephesians 5:21-6:9. “[ALL:] Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God [but in different ways appropriate to your office]. [HUSBAND/WIFE RELATIONSHIP:] Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ... Husbands, love your wives, even as Messiah also loved the church, and gave



himself for it. ... [PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP:] Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ... And, you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. [MASTER/ SERVANT RELATIONSHIP:] Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh. ... And, you masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven."

There are three parallel superior/inferior relationships listed in this passage; not superior/inferior in value, but in position and role: The Husband/Wife Relationship, the Parent/Child Relationship, and the Master/Servant Relationship. These same three relationships are repeated in the same order in Colossians 3:14-4:1.

"[ALL] Above all these things put on charity [but in different ways appropriate to your office]. ... [HUSBAND/WIFE RELATIONSHIP:] Wives, submit to your own husbands. ... Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. [PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP:] Children, obey your parents in all things. ... Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. [MASTER/SERVANT RELATIONSHIP:] Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh. ... Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair."

In all three relationships, the inferior position is mentioned first, and the superior position is mentioned second. In all three relationships, there can only be one



person in the superior role, but there can be multiple persons in the inferior role. A father can have more than one child, but each child can have only one father; a master can have more than one servant, but each servant can have only one master; and a husband can have more than one wife, but each wife can have only one husband.

The reason there can be only one person in the superior role of each relationship is that, as Yeshua said, “no man can serve two masters,” Mt. 6:24. A loving leader will lead in a participatory rather than an authoritarian manner, since his goal is the welfare of those he leads, but to join the people together, only one person can have rightful authority. “Can two walk together except they are agreed?” Amos 3:3. If people walking together make their own decisions on which direction to go, they will end up walking alone.

A body can have more than one member, but it can have only one head. “He is the head of the body, the church,” Col. 1:18; “Now you are the body of Messiah, and members individually,” 1 Cor. 12:27. And a husband can have more than one wife, but a wife can only have one husband. “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Messiah is head of the church, and he is the savior of the body.”

If Messiah can be one flesh with more than one believer at the same time, then a husband can be one flesh with more than one wife at the same time. “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and





shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh," Eph. 5:23-30.

These verses in Ephesians quote Genesis, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh," Gen. 2:24. No one in the Old Testament thought the "one flesh" of Genesis 2:24 taught against polygamy. The verse was written by Moses, a polygamist, and he should understand what he meant by it better than modernists today.

A husband can be one flesh with more than one wife at the same time, just as God is one with more than one of us at a time. You are one with God because you are in him and he is in you, and I am one with God because I am in him and he is in me. My being one with God does not hinder your also being one with God. "That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me," Jn. 17:21. One wife being one flesh with a husband does not hinder another wife from being one flesh with the same husband.

Some people claim the Bible prohibits polygamy because God created only one wife for Adam. But how many wives should he have created for Adam if he wanted to show that polygamy is permitted, though not recommended? If he created two wives for Adam, men would think God requires men to marry exactly two wives, and that only one is not permitted. God created the perfect number of wives for Adam to show that



monogamy is preferred, but polygamy is permitted.

Also, God had other concerns in creating Eve than to illustrate the number of wives a man is permitted to have. It's important that we're all descended from one man and one woman, to demonstrate the brotherhood of men, and so all men can be saved through one second Adam, for example. Even scientifically, mitochondrial DNA, the Eve gene, shows we're all descended from one created human couple, not from various gradual evolutionary sources. It wasn't necessary for God to create two wives for Adam to show us he allows polygamy, because he told us so through the definition of adultery and the examples of the great men of God throughout the Bible.

Some people say the use of the definite article "the" and the singular noun "wife," as in "the husband is the head of the wife," Eph. 5:23, proves God's will is for monogamy only. But the previous verse, Eph. 5:22, says "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." Does that mean marriage must be polyamorous? Phrases like "the woman" and "the man" in passages like "for as the woman [Eve] is of the man [Adam], even so is the man [all men except Adam] also by the woman," 1 Cor. 11:12, mean all men are born of women, but says nothing about the number of male children each woman may have.

Matthew 10:24, "the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord," doesn't mean Jesus had only one disciple and masters only ever have one servant.



"The servant abides not in the house forever," Jn. 8:35, doesn't mean each household can have only one servant. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine," Jn. 15:4, doesn't mean vines can only have one branch. "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child," Mt. 10:21, doesn't mean brothers can have only one brother, or fathers can have only one child.

If God had said, "Let each husband love his wives," instead of "husbands, love your wives," Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19, men would wrongly interpret it to mean God requires, rather than permits, polygamy. He could have said, "Let each husband love his wife, or wives, if circumstances result in his having more than one wife," but that would under-emphasize each husband's one-on-one, unique relationship with each wife. The man who had a thousand wives said, "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her," Song 6:8-9.

## **Do Polygamous Families Have More Trouble?**

Some people say polygamous families in the Bible have so many problems it proves polygamy is against God's will. They say look at the rivalry between Sarah and Hagar, between Rachel and Leah, and between Hannah and Peninnah. Polygamy does create some unique



challenges. “Rachel said, ‘With great wrestling have I wrestled with my sister,’” Gen. 30:8. But most of the trouble in polygamous families comes from being families, not from being polygamous. Family life is usually messy.

It seems like polygamous families in the Bible have more trouble because, for the most part, they are the only ones we have much information about. It’s like how Bible teachers usually portray the church of Corinth as the worst of all the churches because of the problems mentioned in 1st and 2nd Corinthians, but the Corinthian church is the only one whose meetings we get to sit in on. It would have been inappropriate for Paul to have aired the dirty laundry of the church of Rome in his letter to them about systematic theology, or of the church in Ephesus in his letter to them about the mystery of Jews and Gentiles comprising one body in Messiah in heavenly places.

There’s one monogamous family we know a lot about, that of Isaac and Rebekah; and the Bible mentions more problems for them than for any other family. Isaac showed favoritism towards Esau, and not for good reasons. “Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob,” Gen. 25:28. Rebekah helped Jacob trick Isaac into blessing him instead of Esau, and when Esau found out, he decided to kill Jacob. Jacob fled to Haran, and probably never saw his mother again during this lifetime. When Jacob returned to Canaan about twenty years later, he split his family into



two groups, so “if Esau come to the one company and smite it then the other company which is left shall escape,” Gen. 32:8.

Some people say polygamy results in child brides and imprisoned women, and sometimes, especially in cults, it does. We’ve all heard of teenage girls who were forced to marry cult leaders and prevented from escaping to the outside world. But it’s the forced marriages and imprisonment that are wrong and should be litigated against, whether in monogamy or polygamy, and not polygamy itself. Both polygamy and monogamy are subject to abuse.

Is it really better for single mothers to be forced to raise their children alone because the law forbids them to marry a man who already has another wife? Under polygamy, all women who want to be married, can be married. And under polygamy, all women are free to marry the best of men, not the leftovers. Wars and a shorter life span for men always ensures there’s more women than men available.

But even more significantly, not all men are marriageable material. Women should have the option to skip over the crass, selfish, immature men, who are still children in men’s bodies, and be able to marry a man who will love and care for them. With polygamy (actually polygyny), women are free to pick any man, even if he’s already married; whereas men can only choose from among the single women.



Also, when women have access to men who will commit to and marry them via polygamy, the other men will also have to become willing to commit and marry in order to compete for the women. Godly polygamous marriage reduces the opportunities for men in society to enjoy women physically without getting married, and then move on to another woman whenever they feel like it.

It's tragic that women often blame themselves for suffering which other people put on them. They are like abused children that need to understand that not all parents are good, and in abusive situations, it's not the fault of the abused.

"I Need to Be in Love," by the Carpenters

The hardest thing I've ever done  
Is keep believing  
There's someone in this crazy world for me ...

I used to say, no promises  
Let's keep it simple  
But freedom only helps you say goodbye ...

I know I need to be in love  
I know I've wasted too much time  
I know I ask perfection of a quite imperfect world  
And fool enough to think that's what I'll find

So here I am with pockets full of good intentions  
But none of them will comfort me tonight  
I'm wide awake at four a.m.  
Without a friend in sight

No, Karen Carpenter, it's not your fault you're alone. It's



not because you're expecting "perfection of a quite imperfect world." Your expectations are not unrealistically high. The problem is that society has been teaching men to be selfish and uncommitted, and it won't allow women to become second wives to the ever-shrinking supply of unselfish and committed men.

On the other hand, for a wife, it's better to be her husband's only wife, and have all his attention. An additional wife is a rival, which is why sisters aren't to be put in that position. "You shall not take a wife to her sister, to be a rival to her, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her life-time," Lev. 18:18. Thus we see the competition between Leah and Rachel in Genesis 30, including "Rachel said, 'With mighty wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister'" (Gen. 30:8). So although polygyny isn't adultery, fornication, unchastity, or any kind of sin in itself, failing to love is sin, and it's usually unloving to an existing wife to add another, though sometimes circumstances warrant otherwise.

Jewish marriage contracts often included promises not to add a second wife in Sephardic communities where polygyny was not entirely forbidden by Ashkenazi rabbis around 1000 AD. "Istanbul custom dictated that the marriage contract must contain the husband's sworn promise ... not to take another woman as a second wife," *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul*; Minna Rozen; page 167. "In Africa, where Mohammedan influence was strongest, the custom was to include in the marriage contract the following paragraph: 'The said bridegroom ... hereby promises that he will not take a



second wife during the lifetime of said bride ... except with her consent," The Jewish Encyclopedia; Isadore Singer, Managing Editor; Volume X, page 121.

## **The Source of the Monogamy-Only Doctrine**

We've seen the Bible doesn't condemn polygamy, so where does society's "monogamy only" doctrine come from? The Western culture of the Greeks and Romans prohibited polygamy centuries before Christianity. Only after the Roman emperor Constantine put a Christian veneer on the pagan religion of Rome, and required everyone to follow the resulting Roman Catholic Church, did so-called 'Christianity' begin prohibiting polygamy.

Columnist Michael E. Price posted an article on the Psychology Today website on Sep 09, 2011, entitled "Why We Think Monogamy Is Normal." He said, "Monogamy's spread in the West had something to do with the influence of Christianity, but not as much as you might expect. ... Socially imposed monogamy was first established in ancient Greece and Rome, centuries before Christianity even existed."

One of the big moral deficiencies of the "monogamy only" doctrine (or SIM, "Socially Imposed Monogamy," as the literature calls it), is that it always becomes "serial monogamy" in practice in societies. Serial monogamy is like polygamy in that men marry more than one wife; but unlike polygamy, in that the men divorce and





remarry one wife after another, rather than continuing to provide and care for their earlier wives. There's an economic study called, "From Polygyny to Serial Monogamy," by David de la Croix and Fabio Mariani, 2015, in *Review of Economic Studies*, that shows there are even economic reasons for this progression in monogamous societies.

In "The History and Philosophy of Marriage," by James Campbell, 1869, he says, "The monogamy of the ancient Romans ... did not require their marriages to be permanent. Seduction, adultery, and whoredom were rather the rule than the exception among them; but marriage was for other and more important purposes than those of love. ... If a man could, at any time, form a new alliance which would give him more wealth or influence, he always felt himself at liberty to divorce his wife, and form that new alliance. ... Such were the frequency of their divorces, and the intricacy of their relationships caused by their numerous adoptions, that it has been almost impossible for the best historians and biographers to give us any intelligible account of their families." Campbell then went on to provide a sample of Roman monogamy via the six emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

#### 46 BC Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar married a succession of four wives. He upgraded from his wealthy first wife, Cossutia, to marry Pompeia as soon as he attained some political influence at age eighteen. He divorced Pompeia because Marc Antony's son, Clodius, snuck into his home dressed as



a woman to seduce her during a women's only religious event being held there. But as for Caesar himself, Suetonius says he committed adultery with many of the highest-ranking ladies in Rome, including Posthumia the wife of Servius Sulpitius, Lollia the wife of Aulus Gabinius, Tertullia the wife of Marcus Crassus, Mutia the wife of Pompey the Great, Eunoe the wife of Bogudes, Cleopatra Queen of Egypt, Servilia the mother of Marcus Brutus, and her daughter Tertia.

### 27 BC Augustus

Augustus was the son of Attia, the daughter of Julia, the sister of Julius Caesar. He became emperor by defeating Pompey and Marc Antony after the assassination of Julius Caesar. He married a succession of four women. He divorced his third wife, Scribonia, on the day she gave birth to his only legitimate child, Julia; and he obtained his fourth wife, Livia, by making her husband, Tiberius Claudius, divorce her, even though she had borne Claudius two sons, including the next emperor, Tiberius, and was pregnant with his third child.

Augustus made his general, Agrippa, divorce his wife and marry Augustus' niece Marcella. Then after Marcella's brother Marcellus died, who was married to Augustus' daughter Julia; Augustus made Agrippa divorce his niece Marcella and marry his daughter Julia. After Agrippa himself died, Augustus made his stepson Tiberius divorce Agrippa's daughter Vipsania and marry Julia. (Hey, at least there's no polygamy involved, right?)





time. Augustus constantly employed men to pimp both married and unmarried noble women for him. He reportedly once took the wife of a dinner guest from beside her husband, raped her, and returned her visibly shaken before the meal was over.

### 14 AD Tiberius

Tiberius was of the Claudian family mentioned earlier, and not related by blood to Augustus, but he was his stepson (via his mother Livia, Augustus' wife), his son-in-law (via his wife Julia, Augustus' daughter), and his adopted son. The first thing Tiberius did when he came to power was to murder his wife Julia's son, Agrippa Posthumus, because Agrippa Posthumus was also an adopted son of Augustus.

Tiberius spent the last ten years of his twenty-three-year reign on the pleasure island of Capri where he lived in all manner of indescribable sexual uncleanness. While he was living at Capri, the head of his Praetorian Guard, Sejanus, who was the lover of Livilla, the wife of Tiberias' son Drusus, managed to get Drusus and others relatives of Tiberius murdered. Later, Tiberias retaliated and had Sejanus, Livilla, and the remainder of Julia's children killed, including the famous Agrippina, and Julia the Younger, as well as many other nobility in a purge.

### 37 AD Caligula

Caligula, one of Julia's grandsons, was spared during Tiberias' purge, and spent the last six years of Tiberius' life living with him on Capri. He married a series of four



women. He also made his sister Drusilla's husband divorce her so he could live with her in incest. She died less than a year later, so he built a temple for her worship, and lived in incest with his other two sisters, Livilla and Agrippina, whom he also prostituted to his favorite male lovers.

Caligula obtained his second wife, Livia, by snatching her from her wedding he had been invited to. He divorced her three days later, but would not let her return to her fiancé. He obtained his third wife, Lollia, by ordering her husband, who was away with her in a foreign province, to divorce her and send her to him in Rome, because he had heard people extol the beauty of her grandmother. He divorced her a year later to marry his pregnant mistress, Caesonia, who already had three illegitimate children from others.

Caligula held feasts for high ranking men and their wives, and would pick one of them to be sent to his bedroom at the end of the meal. He also opened a brothel in the palace to supplement the royal income and forced high-ranking, married and single, noble women to serve in it as prostitutes. After only four years of rule, he and his family were assassinated.

#### 41 AD Claudius

Claudius was Caligula's uncle. He married six times. When he became emperor, he divorced his fourth wife to marry his pregnant mistress, Messalina, who has been called the Roman Jezebel for her lust and cruelty. She committed adultery with many chief officers, and



forced many respectable married women to prostitute themselves. Eventually, she plotted with one of her lovers to kill Claudius, and was discovered and executed.

Next Claudius forced the senate to legalize marriages between uncles and nieces so he could marry his niece Agrippina the Younger. Agrippina then made the fiancé of Claudius' daughter Octavia divorce her, so she could marry Octavia to her own son Nero, from a previous marriage, to Gnaeus. Agrippina also got Claudius to adopt Nero, and then poisoned Claudius, making her son Nero emperor.

#### 54 AD Nero

After Nero became emperor, he developed a passion for an Asian freed-woman named Acte. Agrippina thought this might weaken her motherly influence, so she threatened her son Nero, that if didn't stop seeing Acte, she would use her influence as daughter of the beloved general Germanicus, to have the army put Claudius' son Britannicus into power. Instead, Nero had Britannicus poisoned.

Next Nero became infatuated with Poppaea, whose husband was away as governor of Portugal. Agrippina complained so much about this new threat to her motherly influence that Nero decided to have his mother killed. First, he sent her to sea in a ship that was designed to fall apart, but she survived the shipwreck. Then he sent assassins to her apartment who killed her.



Nero then divorced Octavia and married Poppaea, but he feared the complaints of the people so much that he divorced Poppaea and married Octavia again. After obtaining false witnesses that Octavia had committed adultery, he divorced her again, and had her banished to the island of Pandateria, where he had her killed and her head sent to Poppaea. He married Poppaea again, who bore him his only child, a daughter, who lived only lived a few months.

The following year Nero, it is suspected, burned Rome, with great loss of life in the narrow streets and fast-spreading flames, and then blamed the fire on the Christians, and began a horrible persecution of them. Poppaea died when Nero kicked her in the stomach in a fit of rage while she was in a late stage of pregnancy. Nero then had the husband of Statilia Messilina killed so he could marry her. He soon divorced her, and successively married two men. He committed suicide after ruling for fourteen years, and the Julio-Claudian dynasty (thankfully) came to an end.

So which was godlier, the monogamy of the Roman Emperors, or the polygamy of the Israelite kings? Israel's law required a man to 'add' a second wife, if need be, rather than divorce a pre-existing wife. You might think the modern prohibition against polygamy comes from Jesus' teaching about divorce, but modern Bible teachers would not be so quick to interpret Jesus' words as prohibiting polygamy if they weren't already indoctrinated by two thousand years of Roman culture.



There are hundreds of references in the Shulchan Aruch about levirate marriage, inheritance, etc. for when a man has multiple wives. "A man can marry many women, even 100, whether all at once or one after another, and his wife cannot prevent [it], as long as he can give the appropriate [amount of] food, clothing and "time" (marital relations) to each one, and he can't force them to live in one courtyard, rather each one for herself. ... The rabbis commanded that a person shouldn't marry more than 4 wives, even if he has a lot of money, so that they get their "time" [at least] once a month," Shulchan Aruch, Ever HaEzer 76:7. However, around 1000 AD, Rabbi Gershom prohibited polygamy, and the Ashkenazi Jews follow his prohibition; while the Sephardic Jews don't. Why? Because the Ashkenazi Jews lived in European areas where polygamy was illegal and Sephardic Jews lived in Muslim areas where it wasn't illegal. So the rabbis, like the majority of Christian Bible teachers, let the dominant culture change their perspective of the Bible, instead of letting the Bible change our culture.

Single mother households are plentiful in the West because Western societies see nothing wrong with a man maintaining physical relations with an unlimited number of women so long as he doesn't commit to them and provide for them as if they're married. The world hates polygyny, because it hates patriarchy and authority. It's part of the "mystery of lawlessness," 2 Thess. 2:7 ASV, at work in preparation for the coming world-dictatorship of the anti-Messiah.





## **Practical Considerations About Polygamy**

Just because polygamy isn't immoral, doesn't mean it's practical. Sinful men like us can't adequately care for one even woman to the extent each deserves. There are significant challenges for anyone who thinks their situation might call for a polygamous solution. Godly Christians are available online to help new polygynous families.

Just because the Bible permits polygamy doesn't mean people can ignore the cultural and legal risks. "We ought to obey God rather than men," Acts 5:29; but we should also be "wise as serpents, harmless as doves," Mt. 10:16. If you marry a second wife to protect and provide for her and to maintain her chastity, as the Bible dictates, and you end up in jail because of it, then you end up harming even your first wife. If a couple in China breaks the law to try to save their child from a state-ordered abortion, the Bible supports their decision. But even Moses' parents only hid him so long before they entrusted him to a homemade boat on the Nile. Thankfully, God miraculously provided Pharaoh's daughter to find and adopt him, Ex. 2:1-10.

Polygamy is illegal in all Western countries. The problem with bigamy laws is they not only outlaw legally 'marrying' more than one wife, but also outlaw merely 'living as if married' to more than one wife. Also, even if polygyny ever became legal, most local churches would not allow polygynous families to attend, including Abraham's, Moses', and David's if they were



here.

Because Bible teachers have been interpreting the Bible according to Roman and Greek culture, instead of according to the text itself, in regards to this issue, for almost two thousand years, even a godly wife will usually think polygamy is sinful, and will not accept a second wife into the family. If you lose your first wife, because you tried to follow the heart of God to never abandon anyone, perhaps after a sin of fornication as referred to Exodus 22:16, then you'll have ended up doing worse than even just following our culture.

It broke Abraham's heart to send Hagar and Ishmael away at the insistence of Sarah; and he would have given them more than bread and a bottle of water if God hadn't assured him of their safety. "The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, 'Let it not be grievous in your sight because of the lad, and because of your bondwoman. ... Of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation.' ... And Abraham ... took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba," Gen. 21:11-14. Unfortunately, other women aren't guaranteed the miraculous preservation Hagar received, but many may have to be sent away like Hagar because of the heartless world we live in. Only the return of the Lord to establish the Messianic Kingdom can bring relief to all the vulnerable people of this



world.

In a perfect world, we wouldn't need polygamy. God's marriage with Israel and Judah occurred because the kingdom split in two after Solomon's reign (though things will still end with God married to both Israel and the church). Jacob's marriage with Leah and Rachel occurred when the wrong bride was slipped into the dark bedroom (which doesn't happen frequently). When fornication occurs, ideally the man would marry the woman even if he's already married, but more ideally, the fornication wouldn't have occurred in the first place.

As I mentioned earlier, I didn't write about polygamy to promote it, but because the cultural perspectives of modern Bible teachers have skewed their interpretations of scripture away from what would otherwise be obvious. Every misinterpretation of scripture causes significant harm to people, and so we need to reconsider this topic today regardless of the risks and difficulties. Teachers that don't understand the biblical definition of adultery allows polygamy can't rightly understand Jesus' teachings on divorce and remarriage, and untold suffering has been inflicted on conscientious believers because of misinterpretations about these issues.

"But speak the things which become sound doctrine: That ... the aged women ... be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. That they may teach the young



women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God is not blasphemed. ... For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Messiah; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus 2:1-14.

## **How to Receive Eternal Life**

“You shall seek me, and find me, when you search for me with all your heart,” Jeremiah 29:13.

Believing on the Son to receive eternal life is one of the most important themes of the New Testament. It’s the topic of the entire Gospel of John. “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life through his name,” John 20:31. The Greek word for ‘believe’ also means ‘trust’ or ‘faith’. All three English words are translated from the same Greek word in the New Testament. The word ‘believe’, or some form of it, is used about 100 times in John’s gospel.

Here’s some more verses from the Gospel of John that talk about believing:

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (on the cross): That whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God,” John 3:14-18.

“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he



that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him,” John 3:36.

“He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life,” John 5:24.

And lest we should think ‘believing’ on Jesus means something complicated, like trusting in church sacraments or something, John gives many examples of people who believed on him for eternal life, and people who didn’t.

The Apostle Peter: “Simon Peter answered, ... you have the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” John 6:68-69.

Many Jews: “If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins. ... When you have lifted up the Son of man [on the cross], then you shall know that I am he. As he spoke these words, many believed on him. Then Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him ... ,” John 9:24-31.

Mary, Martha, and Many of the Jews: “Jesus said unto [Martha], I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? She said unto him, Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, which



should come into the world. ... Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him, but some of them [who didn't believe on him] went their ways to the Pharisees," John 11:25-27, 45-46.

The people mentioned above, Peter, Martha, Mary, and many of the Jews believed directly on Jesus. There was no church of any kind in existence yet, but John says these people believed on the Messiah and thereby obtained eternal life.

In the Old Testament, salvation was also by trusting in God. "[Abraham] believed in the Lord; and [the Lord] counted it to him for righteousness," Genesis 15:6.

And by then telling God so in prayer, "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered," Joel 2:32. Paul quoted the same scripture in the New Testament. "For whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Romans 10:13-14.

I've heard the objection that Jesus said, "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not ... in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you that work iniquity," Matthew 7:21-23.



Certainly, just mouthing the words “Lord, Lord,” Matthew 7:21, is not the same as calling on him for salvation. And doing “many wonderful works” for salvation, is the opposite of trusting in him for your salvation. And the reason only “he that does the will of my Father” can be saved, is that the will of the Father is our faith in his Son. “This is the will of him that sent me [the Father], that every one which sees the Son, and believes on him, will have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ... Truly, truly, I say to you, He that believes on me has everlasting life,” John 6:40, 47.

We’ve all gone astray. No one is good enough to go to heaven. So thousands of years ago, Isaiah prophesied Jesus would die in our place, so we can be “justified” (counted as righteous). “Who has believed our report? ... He [the Messiah] is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, ... smitten of God and afflicted, ... wounded for our transgressions, ... bruised for our iniquities. ... All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ... He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opens not his mouth. ... He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he ... shall make his soul an offering for sin. ... [The Lord] shall see of the





travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. By knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. ... He has poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many," Isaiah 53:1-12.

In addition to Isaiah's literal prophesy, Jesus' death was also the fulfillment of all the symbolic prophesies of the Old Testament animal sacrifices. "John saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world,'" John 1:28. "The law [was] a shadow of good things to come. ... For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Therefore, when he [Messiah] comes into the world, he says, 'Sacrifice and offering you don't desire, but a body you have prepared me.' [Ps. 40:6-7] ... We are cleansed through the offering of the body of Jesus Messiah once for all. ... Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more [Jer. 30:34]," Hebrews 10:1-17.

Jesus took our sin, so we could have his righteousness by believing. Not our own righteousness, by doing good works. "For [God] has made him to be sin for us, [him] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Corinthians 5:21. Now we can "be found in him, not having [our] own righteousness, which is of the [good deeds of the] law, but that [righteousness] which is through the faith of Messiah, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Philippians 3:9. "For by grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not



of works, lest any man should boast," Ephesians 2:8-9.

"[Jesus] spoke this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a religious leader, and the other a tax collector. The religious leader stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other," Luke 18:9-14. You have a choice. You can trust in your own works and self-righteousness, and fall short of God's requirements; or you can trust in Messiah's death in your place, and receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

"To him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,'" Romans 4:5-8.

The purpose of the Law was to help us see we're sinners by demonstrating our inability to keep it, so we see our need to be justified by faith. "We know that whatever



things the law says, it says ... that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, ... even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Messiah unto all and upon all them that believe. ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Messiah Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a [sacrificial] propitiation through faith in his blood," Romans 3:19-25.

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Messiah our Lord," Romans 3:36. When you go to work, you earn wages; something you deserve. If your employer didn't give you your wages, he would be unjust. God, as the perfectly righteous judge of the universe, must give us the death we earned by our sinful works. If a judge in our court system let criminals go free, we would replace that judge. But Messiah was already judged for our sins in our place. Even our court system doesn't allow double jeopardy (to be tried for the same crime twice). So if you accept Messiah, who already went through judgment and death for you, as your substitute, you'll never have to go through that judgment yourself; but if you reject Messiah as your substitute, then you'll have to stand before God, the judge, yourself someday, and be condemned and sentenced.



God offers eternal life as a gift. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Messiah our Lord,” Romans 3:36. How much do you pay for a gift? Your only choice is to receive or reject a gift. If you pay even \$1, it isn’t a gift anymore. Eternal life is a gift that costs us nothing, because it cost Messiah his life. Simply receive “the gift of God,” Romans 6:23, now. Tell him in prayer that you accept his gift; that you believe on the Son.

When Jesus died on the cross for your sins, it really did satisfy the demands of God as judge of the universe, but it only applies to those who accept Jesus as their representative, and rely on his substitutionary sacrifice for their salvation. Not even God has the ability to force you to willingly and genuinely trust Jesus as your representative before God.

And we’re not saved by merely believing that “he that believes on the Son has eternal life,” John 3:36; but by actually doing it: and having faith in God’s word that you have eternal life by doing so. “[Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, ... and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness,” Romans 4:20-22.

God can’t lie. It’s not humility to think he won’t give you eternal life for believing on the Son; it’s to doubt his word and call him a liar. And it’s not presumption to think he will give you eternal life for believing; it’s to honor him by acknowledging that he keeps his word.



Believe on the Son now. You can pray the words the apostle Peter used when he called upon Jesus for salvation from drowning, "Lord, save me," Matthew 14:30. Tell him you're depending on his death in your place on the cross for your salvation and eternal life.

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let him that hears say, 'Come.' And let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Revelation 22:17.

**About the Back Cover**  
**Jacob and Rachel by William Dyce, 1853**

Gen. 29:1-29. Jacob ... came into the land of the people of the east. ... Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. ... When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, ... Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. ... Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter. ... And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. And Jacob said unto Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled." ... And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for a handmaid. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, "What's this you've done to me? Didn't I serve with you for Rachel?" ... And Laban said, "It mustn't be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfil her week, and we will give you this [Rachel] also for the service which you will serve with me yet seven other years." And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week; and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid.