

IT IS WRITTEN

When Jesus was tempted by Satan He answered each time with, "*It is written*" (Matthew 4:1-10). The people of God put their faith in Him and His word. Through the years we have demanded "book, chapter and verse" for all we teach and practice. We have (and rightfully so) insisted that religious division is not caused by people differing over what the Bible says but by people adding to or substituting for the word of God. Sometimes men will add to or take from that which is written. Others will substitute and put personal feelings, thoughts or emotions over the word of God.

The appeal has been made for men to just accept what is written and not go beyond the teaching of Christ (2 John 9). In doing this we will all be speaking the same thing and there will be no division (1 Corinthians 1:10).

I wish all my brethren would yield to this appeal when it comes to all the discussions going on concerning the subject of divorce and remarriage. Some ignore what the Bible teaches, others add to what the Bible teaches and some substitute their own feelings and emotions for what the Bible teaches. Due to the many different ideas advanced some have reached the conclusion that what the Bible teaches on this subject is confusing and difficult to understand. Jesus' statement in Matthew 19:9 is a very plain statement and easy to understand unless it is clouded by preconceived ideas and opinions or the emotions of men. Jesus said, "*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery*".

What part of this statement is so hard to understand? Some uphold divorce for any cause, thus ignoring Jesus' statement "*except for fornication.*" They add other acceptable causes for divorce, thus adding to "what is written." Others tell us that all "putting aways" are not really a putting away. Some say that if one puts away his or her mate for some cause other than fornication and the one put away opposes the putting away and the one putting him or her away later commits adultery then the one who opposed the first putting away can then "put away" the guilty party for the cause of fornication and be free to marry again. This is indeed going beyond "what is written." The passage doesn't say whether the put away one agreed to or opposed the putting away. They were put away for some cause other than fornication. When this takes place Jesus said that the one who did the putting away commits adultery when he marries another and the one who marries the one put away commits adultery. Emotional appeals may say it is not right for the one put away to suffer for the wrong of the one who did the putting away. However, for one to use such an appeal to justify the put away one marrying again is to go beyond "what is written."

We are told that God's law supersedes man's law. To this I readily agree. Man's law says one can put away their mate for any cause and marry again and such is acceptable. God says this is adultery. I do not believe we have to have pages written to help us understand when a putting away has taken place or to know when it is acceptable unto God. If a putting away has taken place for some cause other than fornication what happens AFTER that putting away cannot be made retroactive to the putting away and make it for the cause of fornication.

I have studied with individuals who had been baptized for some purpose other than the remission of sins. When they learn what the Bible teaches concerning baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) some will contend that since they have already been baptized they don't need to be baptized again. They try to make their present knowledge and understanding retroactive to their past

action. Such cannot be done. They must be baptized for the remission of their sins.

Most can see this when it involves something other than the question of divorce and remarriage. Let us be content to tell men and women "it is written." Men may ignore it, men may try to explain it away, men may make emotional appeals to the contrary, but Jesus said, *"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery"* (Matthew 19:9).

The passage doesn't say that since the putting away was not for the cause of fornication then God doesn't recognize it and no putting away has taken place. The passage doesn't say anything about a "second" putting away by the innocent party that is now acceptable to God. The passage doesn't tell us that we must first learn what constitutes a "putting away." What it does say is: *"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery"* Again, I ask, "What is so difficult to understand?"

✍ James Hahn