

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

MARRIAGE

J. Noel Merideth

Marriage is the highest and happiest of human relationships. It is the preserver of true love, the foundation of the home, and the bulwark of society. Marriage began in the bowers of Eden under the direction of Almighty God. Moses gave legal regulations on matters connected with marriage for the old dispensation. Christ endorsed marriage as it existed in the beginning for the Christian age and performed His first miracle at the wedding feast in Cana. Paul likens the relationship between Christ and His church to that of husband and wife.

There are three divine institutions in our world: (1) The home, (2) civil government, and (3) the church. The institution of marriage keeps the moral world in being and secures civilization. Without it, natural affection and amiableness would not exist, domestic education would become extinct, industry and economy would collapse, learning and refinement would expire, government sink into the gulf of anarchy, and man would be left to the precarious existence of the savage.

Two persons, a man and a woman, who have chosen each other out of all others, with the design to be each other's mutual comfort and care, have, in that action bound themselves to be loving, affable, discreet, forgiving, patient, and joyful, with respect to each other's frailties and imperfections, to the end of their lives. Marriage is to

have and to hold, for better or for worse, for rich or for poor, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, until death do them part. It is a solemn vow taken in the name of God.

1. *Marriage is divine in origin.* When one compares Genesis 2:24 with Matthew 19:4-5, he finds that it was God **“who made them male and female”** and it was God who said, **“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.”** Marriage is honorable in all. (Heb. 13:4). Eunuchs by birth, surgery, or choice would not marry for obvious reasons (Mat. 19:11-12). Also, under certain conditions of great distress one might not wish to marry (1 Cor. 7:1, 26). But it is better to marry than to burn in passion (1 Cor. 7:9). God saw in Adam that **“It is not good that the man should be alone”** (Gen. 2:18).

2. *Monogamic in form.* This means married to one person or having only one scriptural mate at a time. (Mat. 19:5-6, 9; 1 Cor. 7:3). In the Christian age, polygamy or many wives, and polyandry, having many husbands are both wrong. Commune marriages practiced among some hippie groups are also condemned by Jesus.

3. *Companionate and procreative in design.* **“Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband”** (1 Cor. 7:3; cf. 7:4-5). God told the first couple to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 2:28).

4. *Mutual in obligation.* The husband is to love the wife (Eph. 5:25) and the wife is to love her husband (Tit.

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**Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917–October 10, 2001**

2:4). Man and woman are complements of each other and dependent upon each other.

5. *The husband is the head of the wife.* This is the way God set up marriage (Eph. 5:22-24). We sometimes hear people joke that the husband is the head but his wife is surely the neck that turns the head the way she wants! But the Bible is quite serious about the wife being in subjection unto her husband. To tamper with God's order can bring serious consequences.

6. *United by God.* What God hath joined together let not man put asunder (Mat. 19:6). In God's sight the marriage contract is final until broken by death or infidelity (Mat. 19:9; Rom. 7:1-3). There is no marriage in heaven, says Jesus (Luke 20:27-40). This voids the Mormon doctrine of celestial marriage.

7. *God wants Christian homes.* This is where parents are obedient to God's laws (2 Pet. 3:9; Mat. 7:21), and having been baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27), are bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4; Prov 22:6; Psa. 78:4; Gen. 18:19).

The sordid moral record of the world in general and America in particular is sad. Twenty-five percent of American marriages wind up in the divorce courts. About one in twenty has some venereal disease. One out of six brides is an expectant mother before she gets to the marriage altar according to one journal. [Statistics of 1971; obviously higher now—Editor]. The obvious immodest dress of many women shows that while some dress to be *chaste* others may dress to be *chased!* There is a vast difference between the two words. While parents shout for someone to do something to help the young people, the truth of the matter is that the *responsibility* is theirs and they need to face it. Parents need to provide opportunities for their children to be with other Christian young people so they will marry a Christian mate. Young people should date clean, pure, and compatible partners. Before marriage, ask yourself seriously if you are really ready for marriage, if you are mature enough, and is it love or infatuation?

The following titled "A Recipe for Home" by an unknown author is fine.

First, get out the cooking utensils. You will need one husband, one wife, and children to suit yourself. Next, cream one cup of love until it is fluffy and mellow. Add one-half cup of tears and hardships and stir gently. Whip in a cup of joy; when smooth, add one teaspoon each of thoughtfulness, heartfelt tenderness and sympathy. Add one cup of ambition with two cups of Christianity. Bake in moderate

oven, top with kindness, and serve repeatedly.

Christ should be the Lord of our home and He is our ever present silent guest. To put marriage and the home on the right path, Christ should be the center: Christ at the marriage altar; Christ on the bridal journey; Christ when

the new home is set up; Christ when the baby comes; Christ when the baby dies; Christ in the pinching times; Christ in the days of plenty; Christ for time; Christ for eternity, this is the secret of home.

—Deceased

THE ALIEN AND MARRIAGE

Roy H. Lanier, Sr.

In recent years, a number of brethren have come to believe that “the alien sinner is not under a marriage law.” This position is held by several preachers among us and they are of no mean ability. They reason first that no one but an Israelite, a Jew, is under the law of Moses, the old covenant. In like manner, no one but a Christian, a baptized believer, is under the law given through Christ, the new covenant. If the alien is not in the covenant, he is not bound by the laws, rules of life, set forth in the covenant. **“What things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law”** (Rom. 3:19). While this is obviously true, it is no proof that the alien sinner is not under a marriage law.

First, let us think about the alien **“from the commonwealth of Israel,”** the Gentile during the Jewish age, between Sinai and Pentecost. He was a stranger from the covenant, so was not bound by the rules of life stated in the covenant made at Sinai. But does this mean that he was under no marriage law? and that God did not join “in holy matrimony” him and the woman he loved? We must understand that Moses did not invent the institution of marriage. He did not found, establish, the marriage relationship. No one between Sinai and Pentecost, not even the Jews who lived under the law given through Moses, looked to Moses for authority to get married and rear children. The institution of marriage, the family, was a going concern long before Moses was born. And the law governing the institution of marriage was given when the institution was established in Eden. It is obvious, too, that the law of the institution is binding upon all who enter the institution. The institution was given to all humanity, so the law governs all humanity who enter the institution. It is true that Moses was authorized by the Lord to relax the original law a little on account of the hardness of the hearts of the Jews (Mat. 19:8), but this does not mean that Moses established and regulated the institution. It is also true that the relaxation authorized by Moses was a Jewish covenant regulation, and that it was not binding upon Gentiles; but this does not mean that Moses established

and regulated the institution.

Do we have proof that Gentiles, all not under the Sinaitic covenant, were under law to God? Balaam was a prophet of God, but not a Jew, not bound by the Sinaitic covenant. The people of Nineveh were not under the Sinaitic covenant, but they sinned against God so that they were threatened with destruction if they would not repent. The king ordered all his people to **“cry mightily unto God”** and **“turn every one from his evil way,”** for who **“knoweth whether God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?”** Where there is no law, there is no sin. There was sin, evil, in the Ninevites; their sin was against God; therefore, God had a law binding on them. This was the same law that was binding on all humanity before Moses gave his law to the Jews at Sinai. Moses did not abrogate the Patriarchal law for Gentiles, and certainly he did not abrogate the marriage law given to humanity in Eden.

Next, Jesus did not found or establish the marriage institution. There is nothing in the new covenant given through Jesus Christ to indicate that He intended His statements on marriage to be taken as the establishment of the marriage institution, the family unit. God established and authorized marriage in Eden. Jesus, in His teaching, appealed to the law which God gave in Eden to regulate that institution. In His teaching in Matthew 19:1-10, He did not abrogate the original law given in Eden; He only abrogated the relaxation Moses was authorized to enact in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. When this was done the marriage institution was back on its original basis for all men. Jesus said the enactment of Moses was not from the beginning (Mat. 19:8), not a part of the original law governing marriage. This teaches us two things: 1. Marriage is governed by a law given from the beginning in Eden. 2. Jesus expects His disciples to accept and live by the law as it was given in the beginning.

As Moses made some regulations concerning marriage (Exo. 21:10; Deu. 21:10-14), which were not binding upon Gentiles not under the law given by Moses, so Jesus,

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through the apostles, has made some regulations concerning marriage which are binding upon Christians, but are not binding upon aliens. For instance, the Christian widow is told that if she wishes to marry, she is to marry **“only in the Lord”** (1 Cor. 7:39). The alien widow is not under this regulation, but this does not mean that she is not under a marriage law, or that aliens are not joined in marriage by the Lord. Do we have proof that aliens are under a moral law, including marriage, during the Christian age, from Pentecost to the end of time, as Gentiles were under a moral law during the Jewish age? Paul said some of the Christians at Corinth were fornicators, adulterers, covetous, and drunkards, but they were washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). So they were guilty of these sins before they became Christians; these are the sins from which they were washed and justified. It was for the remission of these sins that they were baptized. Where there is no law, there is no sin. They were guilty of these sins, so must have been

under a law forbidding these deeds. This idea that no law is binding upon aliens except the demand to accept Christ and become Christians, is as false as can be.

Jesus interpreted the original law of marriage in Matthew 19:9, saying, **“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.”** This is in harmony with the law given in Eden, that which was from the beginning. This is the law by which God joins a man and a woman in marriage so that they become one flesh, and which man must not put asunder (Mat. 19:4-6). Aliens who violate this original universal law of marriage to form adulterous unions are in sin. They must repent of their sins in order to enter the church and be under the new covenant. Repenting of sins means quitting those sins. I know of no other way to get forgiveness.

—Deceased