

J's Third Letter With My Responses

I will respond to J----- in bold black after each Red section.

J----- is the original black, then I answer in blue, then he answers in red, then I answer in bold black.

J-----'s Rebuttal Comments in Red, followed with closing statement.

I am posting this on the Web and leaving J---'s name off so as to not embarrass him. I have nothing personal against the man; but hate his false teaching. All the sharpness is against the ideas and in hopes the man will repent when he sees how corrupt the ideas are.

J-----'s view of the controversy comes from the books he has read and listed below; but my book and my case are based on the Word of God alone and the proper interpretation thereof. I do not endorse and will not be put in any man-made box under the name of Erasmian, Patristic, etc. I've never read Erasmus' views or how he arrived there; but I doubt he arrived in the same manner I do, even if we arrived at similar conclusions. He was a Roman Catholic, and I am not. My position is stated clearly in my books, and any alleged weakness in the Erasmian View doesn't necessitate a weakness in my case. I will answer from the standpoint of my view and my case based on the clear and proper exegesis of the Scripture. This debate was supposed to be with me, not Erasmus. My responses will be inserted in blue.

I did not make up these terms, Mark; "Erasmian" and "Patristic" are the common designations. Just like "Espousal" or "Betrothal" are the common designation for that view. You and I are not putting forth any new twists to this debate, but simply are arguing what many others before us have argued. Your view is in fact synonymous with what is called the "Erasmian View." This point is really not controversial, especially in light of how much disagreement you had with my position.

Why did you not listen to the last thing I told you? Just because men have come up with these terms, it does not mean that our positions are the same. I am challenging you to deal with the Scripture and stop acting like a theologian hiding behind man's terms. PROVE that Erasmus arrived at his conclusion the same way I did. Quote his position and his points. If you cannot, then drop this point.

There are issues in the Word that cannot be nailed down with certainty, such as the interpretation of prophecies and such; but when it comes to the doctrine and practice of the Christian Church, we can nail down our doctrine and practice with confidence, even to a fair amount of detail if we closely scrutinize the Word in its original intent and historic setting. Every view of Divorce and Remarriage that I have debated has missed essential foundation stones for Bible interpretation; and J-----'s case is no different. Just because people are unlearned in proper exegesis, doesn't mean the rules are invalid or don't apply. My case is simple and Scriptural

Your case is based on an interpretation that is possible from the Biblical evidence. I acknowledged that. I also argued, however, that my case is not only possible, but more probable, precisely because of the original setting of the Sermon on the Mount and the debate in Matthew 19, both of which point to a no divorce and remarriage stance. Your hermeneutical approach demands that Jesus' words must be interpreted in light of Deuteronomy 24, instead of letting Deuteronomy 24 being interpreted in light of the Matthew passages on divorce and remarriage.

#1 Your position is not possible in light of the Scripture. You say my hermeneutical approach demands that Jesus' words must be interpreted in light of his previous words in Deut. 24 – of course, it could be no other way! Jesus cannot correct Jesus. PLEASE tell our audience how Deut can be interpreted in the light of Matthew – PLEASE TELL US.

#2 IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR TWO POSITIONS TO BOTH BE “POSSIBLE” from properly interpreting the Scripture when they are opposite. Your interpretation of Jesus’ words is the opposite of what He actually said. Malachi tells us that he is speaking consistent with God’s Law and bringing the people back to it. You have not touched that point.

#1. Moses wrote by the inspiration of God and gave God’s judgment call to solve issues man now faces since the fall. What God said through Moses was the wisest and most appropriate thing to do under the circumstances. God’s moral laws are God’s judgment and moral opinion on those issues and God will never change that opinion or moral judgment, because God cannot improve on God.

True, God cannot improve on God, but God can interpret his own word, and with the New Testament, we see that God through Jesus Christ gives us the whole picture of what he thinks on divorce and remarriage. In your book, you cited a hypothetical case where a married Jewish couple was not in adultery but one minute later, after Jesus’s pronouncement, then all of a sudden, they are. Well, the sword cuts both ways. I could just as easily argue that a hypothetical couple divorced for reasons other than fornication, in accordance with Mosaic Law, and now, Jesus pronounces that only fornication is grounds for divorce. So, one minute later, they are in adultery. I argued for two possibilities: that God allowed a temporary concession or that the spirit of the Law always was against divorce and remarriage. Neither one means that God is unjust, but only that God sovereignly has the right to call us to a stricter standard.

#1 We are not dealing with God interpreting his own words because we cannot understand them – We can read His own words and know that He allowed divorce and remarriage in certain circumstances and then called His law perfect and pure and righteous, etc. You still show that you don’t agree with God’s Word, but are still trying to force your ideas on it. Your sword cutting both ways is nonsense. Jesus didn’t change His original intent for the Law or pronounce some new standard contrary to the Scriptures.

#2 THE FACT THAT GOD NEVER LABELED A SECOND MARRIAGE CONTINUOUS ADULTERY THAT MUST BE REPENTED OF IN TERMS OF SEPARATION PROVE THAT THIS “SECOND MARRIAGE = CONTINUOUS ADULTERY” IS A MAN MADE MYTH. IF THEY ABUSED GOD’S LAW AND GOT INTO A SECOND MARRIAGE SINFULLY; BUT THEN WERE REBUKED BY JESUS --- HE WOULD ONLY WANT THEM TO REPENT AND STOP THEIR ABUSE OF HIS LAW; BUT THEY MUST CONTINUE IN THE COVENANT THEY ARE IN. Your sword only proves that your logic fails in the light of how God dealt with the issues.

#3 JESUS AND THE APOSTLES NEVER SEPARATED ANYONE! This means they COULD NOT believe like you; but believed like me! Face it, J----- and stop running.

#2. Malachi plainly says that the Messiah, when he comes, will preach against the abuses of Moses’ Law and bring the people back to God’s law. He specifically says Messiah will preach against adulterers who were abusing Moses’ Law concerning divorce and remarriage. Malachi makes it clear that the adultery Messiah will preach against is the abuse of Moses’ Law and not the proper use of Moses’ Law.

Glad you cited Malachi, since Malachi calls the Jewish husbands to return to the wives of their youth, even after they had remarried foreign wives. Yes, you are right that Jesus will bring the people back to God’s Law in accordance with Malachi’s prophecy. Jesus taught explicitly about divorce and remarriage and calls it adultery. You, on the other hand, reduce Jesus’s definition of adultery by an innocent wife to be merely a “technical adultery” that officially ends the first marriage. Jesus never softened the act of adultery, but rather his point was that an innocent woman that remarries commits adultery as well as the “innocent” man who marries her.

You have got to be kidding! MALACHI DID NOT CALL MEN TO RETURN TO THEIR FIRST WIFE CONTRARY TO GOD’S LAW! Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah all were very careful to do things according to the Law of Moses – READ IT Ezra 10:3. Be ashamed for making these false statements. They were marrying unconverted heathens and, in Ezra’s day, they put them away. Where do you get that they took back wives who had remarried and been divorced again? If a man was allowed two wives, then he could take back a wife who

had not remarried, even if he kept the second one. This was not the issue. They ALL saw Moses' Law as God's Word. God had commanded them to not marry the heathen round about them as part of his covenant with Israel.

HOW CAN JESUS BRING PEOPLE BACK TO GOD'S LAW IN ACCORDANCE WITH MALACHI'S PROPHECY AND THEN BELIEVE LIKE YOU? YOU ARE CONTRADICTING YOURSELF. YOU ARE IN DENIAL, J-----. YOU ARE DENYING WHAT GOD'S LAW SAYS. YOU ARE DENYING WHAT MALACHI SAYS. YOU ARE DENYING WHAT JESUS SAYS. THEY ALL AGREE, J-----. YOU KNOW THIS IS THE FATAL FLAW IN YOUR BELIEF, BUT YOU WON'T FACE IT.

JESUS' POINT IS THAT THE GUILTY MAN CAUSED THE ADULTERY OF THE INNOCENT; WHICH MEANS THAT THE INNOCENT WHO ARE OBEYING GOD'S LAW ARE VICTIMS AND THE GUILTY IS MORE GUILTY THAN BEFORE!! ANY SENSIBLE PERSON CAN SEE THIS.

- **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT JESUS IS DOING ANYTHING OTHER THAN REBUKING THE ABUSE OF GOD'S LAW.**

#3. Jesus is the Word made flesh. Moses' Law is Jesus' Words; and Jesus makes it clear that He is not coming to correct or destroy God's Law through Moses; but to establish it. Jesus came for the purpose of clearing God's Law from misconceptions, making the required atonement, and then sending the Holy Spirit to write God's laws in our hearts. The foundation of the New Covenant is God's Laws written in the hearts of the believers. Believers who walk in the Spirit fulfill the righteousness of the Law (Rom 8:3-13). Jesus gave the two greatest commandments in God's Law and said that ALL the law and the prophets taught this very truth. Jesus did not teach anything contrary to the Scriptures – How could He, they were His own infallible, immutable judgments on the subjects at hand. If He had spoken contrary to His own inspired Word, the Jews were commanded by the very Scriptures to kill Him as a false prophet – Jesus commanded them through Moses to kill any prophet who led them away from God's Holy Word and tried to change it.

#4. Moses' Law was the church standard for the first twelve years after Pentecost for everyone. Then beginning with Cornelius the Gentiles were relieved from the ceremonial laws; but the moral laws were still in force for everyone, as the New Covenant was God writing these laws in our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the Ministry of the Christian Church. When Paul said in 2Ti 3:16 *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* he was primarily speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures.

#5. Everything said in the New Testament Scriptures concerning divorce and remarriage is based on the Law of God, and is only defending God's Law against abuse. Jesus cannot be properly interpreted to be speaking contrary to God's Law – the very Scriptures; as this would be heretical blasphemy and a denial of Him being the immutable Son of God and Messiah. Jesus must only be interpreted as speaking against the abuse of God's Law – THIS IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE CONCLUSION that aligns with the Scriptures.

Good words, Mark. I agree that Jesus would not contradict his own words. Yet he most certainly can give his infallible interpretation and expanded teaching to his audience and call them to his righteous standard. He at the very least calls divorce and remarriage in general "adultery." You should at least concede this, yet the very heart of your argument runs counter to this, since you clearly believe that all guilty and all innocent parties are free to remarry, which leaves us to conclude that Jesus really means, "Whosoever putteth away his wife, regardless of the reason, and marries another, is validly married before God to this new partner."

- **YOU MAKE HIM CONTRADICT HIS OWN WORDS!**
- **THE LAW IS HIS RIGHTEOUS STANDARD! HE ONLY HAS ONE! HIS LAW WAS PERFECT!**

- **WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT JESUS IS NOT CALLING ALL DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE ADULTERY – **YOU ARE!** Jesus is calling the abuse of His Law Adultery!**
- **JESUS DOES BELIEVE THAT A DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE WHICH WAS DUE TO THE ABUSE OF GOD'S LAW IS STILL A VALID MARRIAGE COVENANT; BUT THAT DOESN'T CLEAR THEM FROM SIN IN THE TRANSACTION – The charge of adultery is in the transaction --- JESUS AND THE APOSTLES NEVER EVER SEPARATED REMARRIED PEOPLE!!! THIS PROVES MY CASE!!!**
- **God can hold someone guilty of adultery against their wife and still hold them to the covenant they have made. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES.**
- **I think there is something deep rooted that you are missing: ALL DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IS DUE TO SIN – Because without sin there would never be such at all. THIS POINT IS CLEAR AND WE HATE SIN AS MUCH AS YOU; BUT GOD'S LAW TELLING US WHAT TO DO WHEN SIN HAPPENS IS GOD'S HOLY WORD AND WE DARE NOT FOLLOW OUR OWN PRESCRIPTION AGAINST HIS.**

THESE POINTS ARE INVINCIBLE AND ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND THIS, THE DEBATE IS OVER.

I will walk through and show the inconsistencies of J-----'s case and how it militates against the inspiration of the Scriptures and the immutability of God for the sake of J----- and all who read this.

Opening Statement: Remarriage after Divorce is Continuous Adultery

By J.S. 11-10-2015

- Notice that this statement says that God's law endorsed continuous adultery, when God allowed divorce and remarriage as the solution to a problem. What was given as a righteous remedy under God's Law was actually continuous adultery in God's eyes as revealed by Jesus??! So God gave a solution to a problem that was actually producing sin? This is heretical blasphemy, and any true student of the Bible cannot accept such error.

Not so, Mark. You assume what you want to prove. The sword cuts both ways in this debate. You stated in your email response to me that an innocent party is free to "remarry" and thus this "adultery" breaks off the original marriage. So now adultery is really a permissible thing? **(Where is the logic? Sin is still sin – David was still married to Bathsheba; but He suffered for his SIN)** The remedy you call "righteous" Jesus calls "adultery". **THE REMEDY THAT I CALL RIGHTEOUS IS GOD'S LAW THAT HE CALLS PERFECT, AND JESUS DID NOT CALL THAT ADULTERY!!** God's law never commands a husband or wife to remarry after a divorce, only that the husband is not to return to his original wife. **DUH! THIS ONLY PROVES THE LAW ALLOWED THE REMARRIAGE OR THEY WOULD BE STONED FOR ADULTERY due to the remarriage!!** You are basing this text on the flawed KJV rendering, where Deuteronomy 24 is most likely an example of case law. Rather, the original Hebrew simply states that the wife goes and marries another. God's solution is further explained to us in later revelation in Jeremiah, where a righteous husband may indeed seek to win back his divorce and remarried wife. You act as if Deuteronomy 24 is the exhaustive text on divorce and remarriage, when we need to look at all the relevant texts.

HOW AMAZING! You wish the law to be read so that it ONLY FORBIDS THE REUNITING OF THE FIRST MARRIAGE – DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS MEANS? This means that God's Law which forbade adultery on pain of death did not call the second marriage adultery; but rather acknowledged it as a valid marriage, which permanently broke the first marriage!!!! This does not help you!

Now we see the root, though! You reject and tamper with God's Word thinking to force your belief. **NO**, the Hebrew does not state what you say – only some "scholars" say it should be that way; but others disagree, which is why the most eminent scholars behind the KJV, and even the ASV wrote it as they did. Is there a way to know? **YES** – the Bible interprets itself. Listen to Jesus and the Jews of His day who **KNEW** the HEBREW better than any today! Did they believe that Moses was acknowledging the happening; but only writing to stop the reuniting of the first marriage? Or did they believe that Moses actually taught them to give a bill of divorce which allowed remarriage?

- In Matthew and Mark we have this interaction:

Mark 10:3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

*5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart **he wrote you this precept.***

- The law never calls the second marriage adultery; but denies the reuniting of the first after the second; which proves the second marriage permanently broke the first.
- Jesus did not deny that Moses allowed what the Jews said He allowed – If Moses only acknowledged the happening without it being a remedy for a problem with allowance for remarriage, then Moses was allowing SIN - He was allowing adultery! But God's Law would then be contradicting itself to forbid adultery on pain of death, and then allow it. **GOD IS NOT THE ONE MAKING THE MESS, YOU ARE!**

■ **JESUS NEVER SAID THAT ALL REMARRIAGE IS ADULTERY. He never said any remarriage was continuous adultery that had to be remedied by going back to the first. If that was the teaching, then they would be splitting up marriages and the ruling Jews would have had a fit!!!**

- **PAUL CONFIRMS THIS IN I COR. 7:27** Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.

■ **Jeremiah is not saying a man can take back a wife who was married again and divorced again – NO TRUE BIBLE SCHOLAR BELIEVES THIS. GOD IS NOT CONTRADICTING HIS OWN WORD. A HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH THAT MAKES GOD CONTRADICT HIS OWN WORD IS FOOLISHNESS.**

My name is J---S---. I am part of E---- C--- Fellowship in Missouri. I would like to thank Mark Bullen for letting me present my stance on divorce and remarriage. Since we disagree on this topic, a healthy debate can benefit both sides. It can sharpen our study of what the Bible teaches and challenge us to examine our current beliefs in light of the Scripture. How we interpret the relevant passages on divorce and remarriage will have huge ramifications for our marriages and future marriages. Nonetheless, Scripture lovers have chosen opposite sides. Both cannot be right. Both sides will consider the other one to be unjust in their dealings with divorced and remarried people. Such is the reality of this controversy. My position is that remarriage after divorce is continuous adultery, regardless of who the innocent parties are and regardless of whether the cause was for fornication. This view is called the *Patristic View*, named after the Early Church Fathers. This view stands in contrast to the *Erasmian View*, named after Erasmus of the 16th century, and one which many Protestant Reformers and some Anabaptists held to: divorce following a remarriage is adultery unless fornication was the grounds for divorce, thereby ending the marriage. Many Erasmians also believe that desertion is a just grounds for divorce and remarriage as well. I will label my view of continuous adultery as the Minority View, and I will label the view of adultery as a one time act as the Majority View. So I will be arguing for the Patristic View and the Minority View that adultery is continuous, so long as the couple is still in a remarriage.

- Here we see J----- thinks there are only two positions, when actually there are many, which he admits later. He was supposed to be refuting my book, not just discussing these two views. Notice that nothing is said about the **SCRIPTURAL VIEW**. Do we have to follow "early church fathers" or Erasmus? **NO**, we don't.

Actually, you are wrong. There are only two options of interpretations for this particular passage. You seem to miss the obvious point that I am making. I am arguing for what I think is the best of the two possible interpretations. There are not three or more possibilities simply because the nature of the sentence does not allow for numerous interpretations. You confuse an interpretation with a position derived from an interpretation. Unlike you, I do not call my opposing view as heretical blasphemy. I believe that Christians who take the other approach are wrong, but not heretical. I could use your dogmatic assertions to state that my view is Scriptural, and thus, if you disagree with me, you disagree with God. However, in the context of a debate, this attitude is not helpful at all, but rather suggests that you believe yourself to be an infallible interpreter of God's Word.

"This particular passage"??? Read the paragraph, J---- and tell me what "particular passage" we are dealing with. We are dealing with the divorce and remarriage issue in general. I am not wrong, J----- – there are more than two options, which you admit. I have read many different views of these passages. There are three or four positions just among the Mennonites. Just because

there are just a few conclusions as to the state of a remarriage – there are many ways to arrive there. Why argue this point!? Anyone who has read a few books on the subject knows I am right.

- **I “confuse an interpretation with a position derived from an interpretation”??? If there are only two interpretations and each interpretation has two positions, then we have 4 positions. There are more than two interpretations of these passages. Keep studying.**
- **What I call you down for in the terms of heresy and blasphemy are not minor or uncertain differences, J---; but are matters of extreme importance. Look again.**

The two main passages I want to consider are Matthew 5:32 and Matt. 19:9, both of which contain exception clauses. Matthew 5: 31-32 reads: "It hath been said unto you, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." There are two options of how to interpret this statement:

1. "Saving for the cause of fornication" means that the husband is NOT causing her to commit adultery because there is now a just grounds that has ended the original marriage.
 2. "Saving for the cause of fornication" means that the husband is NOT causing her to commit adultery because she is already committing fornication and thus he is not guilty if she remarries another man.
- **These are not the only two possible interpretations, because they are both flawed: Number one should be stated, "Saving for the cause of fornication" means that in the case of fornication the husband is NOT causing her to commit adultery because there is now a just grounds FOR ENDING the original marriage. The bill of divorce served under these circumstances ended the first marriage and allowed for the establishment of another making the first husband her "former" husband. Thus saith the LORD in Deut. 24.**

Again, you disagree, yet do not offer any evidence that there are more than two possible interpretations. Your slight rephrasing has you and I saying virtually the same thing. Mark, you should give me some credit that I can at least accurately present the other side's interpretation. By the way, your arguments are synonymous with all the "Erasmian" arguments I have heard. We are not reinventing the wheel, here.

Look, J---; I've read numerous books and studied the matter for years before I broke with the Mennonites. This isn't my first debate, J----.

- **There is the Betrothal/Espousal theory**
- **There is the theory that the exception only applies to the first half of the sentence**
- **There is the theory that Erasmus invented the exception clause**
- **There is the theory that the exception clause is only to the Jews**
- **There is the theory that Jesus is only speaking hyperbolically, as you stated.**
- **There is the position that Jesus is tightening Moses Law to only allow divorce for immorality**
- **And then there is the position that Jesus is speaking perfectly consistent with His own inspired Word and only declaring the sin of abusing God's Law.**

And amongst all of these there are myriads of ideas and assertions that conflict and make many other sub-positions.

- **We are not saying the same thing, J-----. The wife's sin gave grounds for divorce, but did not demand divorce, nor did it automatically end the original marriage. Here sin may have been one act or continuous practice. YOU DID NOT PRESENT MY SIDE ACCURATELY.**
- **Which "Erasmian", other than myself gave you the following arguments:**
 - **Malachi tells us that Jesus will preach against adultery while calling men back to God's Law, so He must be speaking consistent with God's Law**

- **For the first twelve years after Pentecost, God's Law and the whole OT was the church standard for everyone – and they were in the new covenant – and God was writing His Laws in their hearts.**
- **29 years after Pentecost in Acts 21 – thousands of Jews believed and were zealous of the Law and Paul and James are still keeping the law with all the Jews.**
- **If Jesus spoke contrary to God's Word, then He was a false prophet and His own word commanded the Jews to stone Him.**
 - **I would like the name of the books listed below that teach these arguments.**
 - **Which books below walk you through the sermon on the mount and prove Christ is speaking consistent with God's Law?**

Matthew 19:9 reads: "And I say unto you, 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." William Heth and Gordon Wenham in *Jesus and Divorce* explain that Matthew often condenses a previous saying of Jesus when it is repeated later in the narrative. The exception clause is worded slightly different, but otherwise the same thought is repeated from Matthew five's Sermon on the Mount text. The part that is left out in 19 is the "causeth her to commit adultery." However, some ancient manuscripts include that phrase, and thus the variant reading would then be, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Such textual variation, as well as Matthew's condensation of a repeated saying, suggest to us that what Jesus meant by *fornication* (Greek: *porneia*) being the exception in Matthew 5 is also being repeated here as an exception in Matthew 19. Also, the grammar of this passage contains two verbs in the protasis (a subordinational clause) and an exception. There is no other Greek passage in the New Testament arranged like that (Gordon Heth in *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views*. Editor H. Wayne House, p. 104). The grammar allows for the exception clause either to modify the Greek verbs *put away* and *remarry*, or to modify the one Greek verb *put away*.

#1 This is erroneous mumbo jumbo: Jesus is in a completely different context in Matt 19 as in Matt 5, and is answering a question, which He is not in Matt 5. The context is different and the answer is different; but both are teaching against the same abuse of God's Law. Which is it? --- Did Matthew condense Jesus' Words or did the Scribes leave it out? Obviously it was an insertion due to scribal error in repeating the phrase in a manuscript or two, not because God did a poor job of preserving His Word or because Matthew condensed Jesus' words – Matthew was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and recording a real conversation with Jesus' real answer to a real question. Let God be true, but every man a liar. Show us an example of Matthew condensing Jesus' words when repeated. WHY MUST YOU TAMPER WITH GOD'S WORD TO ESTABLISH YOUR CASE? I don't have to.

Mark, to argue that a statement is condensed is not to say that one is thus tampering with God's Word. Your criticism is quite unwarranted and misleading to the reader. I was presenting an argument which assumed that Matthew is the inspired author. Of course, Matthew recorded what God wanted him to, but the original autographs are what are inspired, not the KJV or NIV. I simply argued, in addition to the condensing, the textual variants lead us further to recognize that this saying is meant to be understood as being repeated by Jesus in Matthew 19. Here are just seven other examples, among others, which can be found on the website catholic-resources.org, all found in Matthew's Gospel:

- 1. Cutting off one's hand or eye-- Matt. 5:29-30 and Matt. 18:8-9**
- 2. Good vs. bad fruit--Matt. 7:15-20 and Matt. 12:33-35**
- 3. Being hated and betrayed for Jesus's sake--Matt. 10:21-22 and 24:9-10**
- 4. Sign of Jonah--Matt. 12:38-39 and Matt. 24:9-10**
- 5. Binding and Loosing--Matt. 16:19 and Matt.18:18**

6. Moving mountains--Matt. 17:20 and Matt. 21:21

7. The Greatest are the Servants--Matt. 20:26 and 23:11

OK, lets see what J--- found on the Catholic website.

1. **Matt 5:29** And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Matt 18:8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. 9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

J---- the second one is not condensed, but is longer! It was given in a completely different setting! Jesus preached continuously from town to town for over 3 years and no doubt repeated many things; but this helps you not in your failing debate.

2. **Matt 7:15** Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Matt 12: 33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. 34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

J---- these are two totally different audiences and sermons – it is not a condensed version of the first.

THEY ARE ALL THIS WAY! STOP FOLLOWING THE CATHOLICS.

#2 To say that the exception clause can modify the whole sentence or just part is deceptive foolishness. They end up interpreting Jesus' Words to mean the exact opposite of what He said – What type of exegesis is this? Let me show you:

- Jesus said: Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:
- Their interpretation: Whosoever shall put away his wife, even if it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:

THEIR BRILLIANT EXEGESIS LEAVES JESUS SAYING THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF WHAT HE SAID. Can any honest scholar tolerate such error? Would a school teacher please step up and tell them they lost the cheese out of their sandwich.

The oldest translation of the Greek NT is the Peshitta – the Syriac Bible. As you know Antioch, where the believers were first called Christians, was in Syria. It makes sense that the first translation would be into this local common language. Scholars believe the translation was second century, which predates Erasmus, Early church fathers who dealt with the subject, and this "ancient manuscript" mentioned by J-----. Here are three translations of the Peshitta into English by three different men:

Matthew 19:9 - And I say to you that whosoever shall forsake his wife who is not adulterous, and take another, committeth adultery; and whosoever taketh the deserted one, committeth adultery.

Matthew 19:9 - And I say to you, That whoever leaveth his wife not being an adulteress, and taketh another, committeth adultery. And whoever taketh her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

Matthew 19:9 - But I say to you, Whoever leaves his wife without a charge of adultery and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries a woman thus separated commits adultery.

JESUS IS THUS PREACHING AGAINST THE ABUSE OF HIS OWN LAW – NOT CHANGING IT.

Mark, you cite scholar's opinions. Sound like you do in fact depend on some scholar's opinions, just like I do. Maybe you should retract your statement about how you derived your view solely from personal study of the Bible. At any rate, these translations allow for my interpretation and do not negate it.

Sorry, J---, but your point is very anemic and against you. I don't let Catholic scholars interpret the Bible for me or pre-catholic patristic "fathers"; but do recognize men who study DATES of Manuscripts. The Peshitta is the Bible – J-----! If you knew English and Grammar, you would see that the Peshitta says the exact same thing the KJV does; but only phrases it differently.

- THE PESHITTA PROVES THAT THE EXCEPTION CLAUSE MODIFIES THE WHOLE SENTENCE!! DID YOU MISS THAT?? SHOW AN ENGLISH TEACHER, AND SHE WILL TELL YOU.
- THE PESHITTA ALSO PROVES MY POINT THAT THE MARRIAGE OF THE INNOCENT MAN WITH THE DIVORCED WIFE IS SPEAKING OF THE SITUATION IN THE GIVEN CONTEXT AND NOT ANY MAN MARRYING ANY DIVORCED WOMAN UNDER ANY CONDITION.
- THIS COMPLETELY DESTROYS YOUR CASE!

Some Christians argue that *fornication* is synonymous with *adultery*, while others argue that *fornication* is something instead of *adultery*. A third view, which I hold to, is that *fornication* is a broader term for sexual sins which include *adultery*, sodomy, incest, whoredom, etc. I do agree with the conclusions of those who hold the Betrothal View, that all remarriage after divorce is adultery.

- Can you see how they fight over words, but ignore God's Law? What does the Scripture say? We don't care about your opinions.

You care enough to write a rebuttal to me.

NO, I care about correcting your error for your sake and the sake of onlookers; but I place no weight on your personal opinion.

However, I do not agree that *porneia* refers just to premarital relations during the betrothal stage, because Jesus seems to use the term to apply to any wife. Of course, the Betrothal proponent could ask, "Why are *porneia* and *moicheia* (translated as *adultery*) both used instead of one or the other?" It is a valid question for either Erasmian or Patristic Views to address. Since Jesus uses two terms together in the same sentence, it seems like *fornication* has some distinction from *adultery*. Perhaps Jesus distinguished the two terms to emphasize that a husband is not just divorcing his wife for a one time act, but for her living in fornication with another lover. Whatever *fornication* means in Matthew five and nineteen, both passages make this exception refer to the same thing.

- Since Jesus is answering questions and defending His own inspired Word through Moses, we can know that whatever reasons Jesus allowed divorce were the same as the proper use of Moses' law. In our

book we answer J----'s question as to why Jesus used two terms. It is very simply – "Whoever puts away his wife, except it be for immorality, and marryeth another, actually commits adultery behind the smokescreen of their abuse of the law." This clearly reveals the appropriateness of the two different words. Tertullian who lived in the same area of the world in the 3rd century understood the exception clause to refer to adultery and "unchastity" –moral uncleanness, which is what it meant.

In support of my opening statement, I shall present six reasons for why the Patristic Interpretation of Jesus's exception referring to divorce *only* has a greater probability of being true than does the Erasmian Interpretation of Jesus' exception referring to divorce *and* remarriage:

- Here we simply need a school teacher to tell these guys how the exception clause **MUST** modify the entire sentence, and how they have already flunked their grammar test.

Mark, I am writing on my own accord. There is not a group of us writing to you. Just me. So, you should have defined who "these guys" are, since you are supposed to be debating my position. If you mean those who hold to my view, then just simply say so. I don't have a quarrel with your interpretation of pornei as sexual immorality, only that you assume it is synonymous with the "nakedness of a matter" mentioned in Dt. 24.

OK, J---, then you were the only one who flunked the grammar test 😊 -- I am speaking of you and those you are referencing and those who agree with you. You agreed that pornea could refer to many different matters. You admitted that this word was even used by Jewish Rabbi's to define Moses' term. I'm not saying that Moses gave the Hebrew equivalent of the Word Pornea; but that Moses' "matter of nakedness" could not be "every cause" but only matters of immoral conduct as Jesus said. Did you read my book or not?

1. The Sermon on the Mount context shows Christ giving a *new* perspective on the heart issue of divorce, which creates a difficult dilemma for Erasmian interpreters.
- **HOW? Jesus doesn't give any new perspective, but simply preaches the original intent of God's Word – that perspective may have been new to the Jews standing around; but not to Moses and the prophets or those Jews who knew the Law properly.**
1. The Shammaite Pharisees tempted Jesus with a divorce question, whose answer would likely have differed greatly from theirs.
- **HOW PRESUMPTUOUS – These might have been Hillel Pharisees, and when Jesus sided with Shammai, they were upset. The Bible doesn't tell us who they were; but it is far more likely that they were Hillel Pharisees. Why must we think that Jesus had to disagree with every group of Jews in His day? The Bible says of Zacharias and Elizabeth, "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Some Jews understood and obeyed God's Law, and these would agree with Jesus' preaching. If Jesus preached contrary to this Law, then they would have to reject Him.**

Mark, your view **DEMANDS** that these Pharisees be Hillel, because you yourself understand that if the Shammai Pharisees, the dominant majority, asked this question of Jesus, then Jesus was going to disagree with them. If they were Hillel, it does not undermine my argument. But, if they were Shammai, your argument is undermined. That is a big difference.

O help us! J--- this is petty foolishness. You place way too much weight on these men you follow. If they were Shammaite, then Jesus pleased their socks off with His answer, as He stated basically what they believed. HOW DOES THIS UNDERMINE MY POSITION?????? Whether they were Hillel or not, Jesus' answer was the same, and your position falls flat based on that – not based on who these Pharisees were.

1. Jesus' two sayings, "Let not man put asunder" and "In the beginning it was not so," are unqualified prohibitions that refer to *something*, either divorce *alone* or divorce and remarriage *alone*, thus making the Patristic Interpretation closer to the truth than the Erasmian.
 - This is very poor logic being put forth. When you are following God's Law, it is not man putting asunder; but God. Genesis was part of Moses' Law, and every precept was to be interpreted and obeyed based on the whole counsel, not just by itself. "Let not man put asunder" is the same as saying "let not man follow his own laws contrary to God's". "In the beginning it was not so" is simply revealing that all God's laws must be used in the light of God's original intentions. The Law was given after man fell to show us what to do now that sin was a reality. This is what Jesus referred to when He mentioned man's hard hearts – they were fallen hearts – all men had one – and all the laws were written due to the change the fall made.
1. The Patristic Interpretation harmonizes Deuteronomy 24 with Matthew 5; 19 and Luke 16 better than does the Erasmian Interpretation.
 - Wow! That is a stretch! The so called patristic view of Matthew and Luke takes the counsel of Deut. 24 and says it produces continuous adultery. How is this "harmonizing" the two???
1. In his just ruling, Jesus is most likely *not* granting a remarriage privilege to the fornicating wife that he would not also be granting to an innocent wife; thus if a man marries either type of woman, he is committing adultery.
 - Confusion Confusion! Isa 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word (OT), it is because there is no light in them. God has already answered all these issues in His inspired Word – why not just follow it? Why would you say that Jesus NOT granting a remarriage privilege to the sinner would also keep the innocent from remarriage? What logic or justice is this? What Jesus is saying is that when there is a divorce contrary to God's Word, then the parties are really not free to remarry, but are bound to reconcile – they do not have a legitimate reason to break the covenant. Sin is always the cause of the broken marriage covenant and the question Jesus answers is – "Whose sin is it?"
1. In contrast to the Erasmian Interpretation which makes an arbitrary distinction of who divorces who first, The Patristic Interpretation better harmonizes Matthew's accounts with Mark's additional statement from Jesus: "And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:12).
 - God's Law perfectly harmonizes with Jesus' words in every Gospel account, because in every Gospel account they are talking about God's Law! Mark has a built in exception clause if you read the whole sentence and don't just quote the last half.
 - Mark 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery [*against him*].
 - When you understand that the adultery is a trespass against your mate; then it is clear that to divorce your mate "for fornication" and then remarry cannot be said to commit adultery against them as they have already been unfaithful and given grounds for lawful divorce. Polygamy was NEVER called adultery, so you must understand that adultery was the unlawful breaking of the covenant with your mate – which polygamy alone did not do. When you properly understand God's Law, then you can understand properly what Jesus said; because HE WAS SIMPLY CLARIFYING HIS OWN WORDS THROUGH MOSES.

After discussing these above reasons, I then should like to defend the idea of remarriage as a continuous adulterous relationship against the *Majority View*—from most Erasmians, Patristics, Betrothal and Incestuous Marriage Exceptors—that argue that Jesus meant that the remarriage act was a one time adulterous event. I give four reasons for the superiority of the *Minority View*:

1. If the Majority View is correct that remarital adultery is a one time event only, then Jesus would be contradicting his own stance that at least some divorces do not dissolve marriages.
 - **WRONG:** The adultery was the unlawful breaking of the marriage covenant as the basis of the remarriage. Jesus' stance that unlawful divorce led to unlawful remarriage, which was an act of adultery against the first mate is clear as a bell and is in harmony with God's Law. Just because they went through the legal paper work, Jesus says that it was still sin in God's eyes; BUT, WHEN IN THE REMARRIAGE COVENANT WITH THE OLD MARRIAGE COVENANT BROKEN BY SIN – IF THEY REPENT, THEY CANNOT GO BACK TO THE FIRST, BUT MUST MAINTAIN THE COVENANT THEY ARE IN. The adultery is not within the covenant, but in the unlawful breaking of the old and sinful making of the new. Just as when two teenagers rebel against their parents and run off and get married – the covenant was established in sin and rebellion; BUT THEY ARE STILL MARRIED AND MUST CONTINUE THE COVENANT WHEN THEY REPENT AND COME BACK TO GOD. THIS IS WHY WE NEVER SEE JESUS OR THE APOSTLES DEMANDING DIVORCE BEFORE BAPTISM! WE NEVER SEE IN THE BIBLE OR CHURCH HISTORY (BEFORE MODERN TIMES) THE POLICY OF DEMANDING DIVORCE OF REMARRIED COUPLES BEFORE BAPTISM!! NEVER! THIS CLEARLY ANSWERS WHETHER THE UNLAWFUL REMARRIAGE IS CONTINUOUS OR NOT – THE FACT THAT WHEN THEY REPENT AND COME TO TRUTH, THEY CONTINUE IN THE PRESENT COVENANT IS THE PROOF OF THE ISSUE.

So, you are saying that adultery is an act that dissolves a marriage. (Where?) This is inconsistent, because every act of adultery is therefore an act of marriage, which you clearly don't believe. Otherwise, there is no point in having a divorce if adultery has already ended the marriage. You can't have it both ways, to say that adultery ends the first marriage, yet adultery pre-divorce does not end the marriage, but simply gives grounds.

J----, Read it again! The adultery was the unlawful breaking of the marriage covenant as the basis of the remarriage. To cheat on taxes is to steal, but that doesn't mean that all stealing is cheating on taxes. To sinfully break a marriage for the purpose of making another is an act of adultery against one's mate; but every act of adultery is not unlawful divorce and remarriage. Why can't you hear plain words without distorting them?

1. In fact, God did not consider his own marriage with Israel dissolved, even though she was in fornication, was given a bill of divorcement, was put away, and was allowed to become wife to another "husband," Baal.
 - This is a false and stretched interpretation – Israel was a nation, and Baal did not exist. Israel was never married to Baal. God put away Israel and then accepted back a remnant who repented or were never in the idolatry, but only in the nation -- Eze 9:4 *And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.* Thus God spared his remnant. Israel was called back from her "lovers", not her second husband. THE FACT THAT GOD FORBIDS MEN TAKING BACK A WIFE THAT WAS DIVORCED AND REMARRIED PROVES THE FIRST MARRIAGE WAS NOT ONLY DISSOLVED, BUT DISSOLVED FOREVER! THIS WAS GOD'S WORD TO MAN!

God's marriage is real, whereas our earthly marriages are types of his marriage. Otherwise, what is even the point of having Hosea go through the issue with Gomer, who left and remarried, and then returned to her husband?

It doesn't say anywhere that Gomer remarried, divorced, and came back to Hosea—you are building on sand again. God's marriage was not a one man and one woman marriage; but God used the type of marriage to illustrate their trespass against himself as their God. Our earthly marriages are not types of His marriage to Israel – the nation, which we are dealing with here. Your sand is sinking badly. God's typical marriage to Israel and Judah was seen as a marriage with two sisters – should our earthly marriages be types of this???

1. The disciples' saying, "It is better not to marry," fits better with Jesus calling all divorce and remarriage as *continuous adultery* instead of a *one-time adultery*.

- What a poor foundation for exegesis this is. This is mere opinion. In fact, the disciples who were accustomed to the Hillel majority view were surprised at this strict interpretation of Moses' law that you could only put away a wife who was immoral. THE "CONTINUOUS" OR "ONE TIME" ARGUMENT WAS NOT THE ISSUE AT ALL.

Mark, you assume they were accustomed to only one view, when clearly they were accustomed to both Shammai and Hillel. Continuous adultery of course is the issue, because the disciples would have understood Jesus to be rigorously denying a way out of a bad marriage, for them to make such a statement. That way out is left intact by your interpretation, thereby minimizing the reason for the disciples' utterance.

If you consider God's holy law as simply man's way out of his righteous responsibility – which your view demands, then I hold to my point that you are a cloaked unbeliever. How could I assume they were accustomed to only one view when I used the words, "Majority view"? This demands a minority view. Jesus spoke consistent with Moses' Law that a second marriage whether sinful or not permanently broke the first covenant. The second covenant being a binding covenant does not allow anyone to "get by" with sin. Sin is not punished in this life only, but primarily in the next – at least that is what us believers hold to.

1. The "Adultery as a one- time event" View makes the exception clause a meaningless statement, since ALL divorces and ALL remarriages become validated by the inherent act of an eventual remarriage by one or more parties.
- Poor logic. Adultery is the sinful breaking of the marriage covenant to gain another wife. William Tyndale could see this and translated it, "advoutry" or "breaketh wedlock". The question is not whether the second marriage is a binding covenant; but whether IT WAS SIN OR NOT to make the transaction. The Pharisees knew that God's law allowed remarriage after a lawful divorce. They knew the second marriage was a binding covenant like the first. The question was when it was lawful and when it was not. As said above, the fact that Christ, His apostles, and all early church history NEVER demanded divorce of second marriages when remarried people came to be baptized is proof that the sinfully contracted second marriage was still a binding marriage and must be continued when they repented.

There is the example of Jerome not willing to give communion to a woman who was divorced and remarried. She later repented of her actions and got restored. You conveniently restrict your example to baptized individuals.

WOULD YOUR CHURCH BAPTIZE A REMARRIED COUPLE, J-----? I DON'T BUILD ANY DOCTRINE ON JEROME! IS THAT THE BEST YOU COULD DO??

READ THAT PARAGRAPH AGAIN, J----- AND SEE IF YOU CAN GET MORE OUT OF IT?

First, let us consider Reason #1: The Sermon on the Mount context shows Christ giving a *new* perspective on the heart issue of divorce. Up to this point in Jesus' sermon, he has told his Jewish audience that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill; that he expects them to teach and do these commandments; and that their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. He then proceeds with a series of dramatic, contrasting thoughts. He contrasts what ancient scribes had to say with what he has now so say. He quotes from Scripture that the ancients would have used, and then says, "But I say to you. . . ." We see him do that with the topic of murder. It is well known that murder is wrong, and yet he says anger is a form of murder.

- Jesus DID NOT SAY ANGER WAS A FORM OF MURDER. Jesus himself was angry at times – MK 3:5. PLEASE stop abusing the Word! Jesus said that to be angry against your brother without a proper

cause would also leave you in danger of the judgment, not just if you murdered him. God's law commanded the people to love their neighbor, so breaking God's law at all was serious, not just what men think of as the big sins. James says the same thing about breaking God's laws in James 2:10. Why was James saying this in the New Testament? Because it was still valid!

You are correct. I should not have said it was a form of murder. But, you need to note the overall point of my argument. Jesus is forbidding people to get angry and to commit adultery. He is not saying that an innocent woman should go ahead and get remarried because it is only "technical adultery."

J---, the overall point of your argument is not correct. Jesus did not forbid people to get angry! Jesus himself got angry! God is angry much of the time! The Bible says, "be ye angry and sin not" – righteous anger is part of hating iniquity and loving righteousness. Jesus was never confronted with an innocent woman, J---; He is stating the problems caused by men abusing God's Law. If you would stop trying to set Jesus against His own inspired Law, which He is working to write on our hearts as the basis of the New Covenant, you wouldn't be so confused!!

He cites their using the seventh commandment of adultery. They knew coveting another man's wife and adultery with another man's wife were wrong, but in contrast, did they know that a lustful look upon any woman, single or married, was wrong?

- To covet another man's wife or maid was against God's Law, so Yes, Jesus is teaching in perfect harmony with God's Law. To "lust after" and to "covet" are the same. Stop trying to make Jesus speak contrary to the Scriptures – this is what the Scribes tried to do so the people would stone Him. It is the work of the devil to slander Jesus as teaching contrary to God's Word.

These ancients were right in a sense, because they were not taking these verses out of context; yet Jesus by dramatic contrast wants his audience to consider his higher standard for the law.

- Jesus didn't have a higher standard for the law; but simply presented the original intent of the Law in contrast to men's watered down view. They were indeed taking God's Law out of context, and that is why Jesus had to correct it! Any partial use of God's law which diminishes another part is "out of context" – See Malachi 2:9

Rather than an either/or option of saying Christ corrected Mosaic Law, or that he simply corrected misunderstandings of the Scribes, a third option is preferable: he is advancing the spirit of the Law to bear on heart issues not dealt with in the particular laws.

- You are talking in circles. If Jesus is preaching the Spirit of the Law, then He is applying it where it was intended to apply. All God's Laws dealt with heart issues, and it was the false interpretations of the Scribes that gave a false impression that outward form was enough. When is the last time you read the OT? God called them to circumcise their hearts! God's law and prophets always struck at the heart. *De 5:29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!* God always expected them to obey from the heart; and this is what Jesus is preaching. Listen to Jesus quote Isaiah: *Mr 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*
- If Jesus is only advancing the spirit of the Law, then everything that was legal is still legal, and everything that was illegal is still illegal – and Jesus has only shined a brighter light on His own inspired

law – which is what we have been saying all along! God's Law was always meant to be understood with the spirit undivorced from the letter.

All of God's laws do not have the same weight given to heart issues. You yourself should recognize this, unless you want to argue that Sabbath keeping, being done away with, somehow means that God is doing away with heart issues. You arbitrarily deny having to keep the Sabbath, but still insist that God's moral laws never change. If I allow the same possible change in a moral law, you accuse me of changing God's law. Your charge is inconsistent.

The Sabbath was part of the ceremonial law, and it is ceremonial in nature. The heart issue was pleasing God, and this is still intact. Circumcision was ceremonial also, but the heart of the matter is still intact, as we are supposed to be circumcised in our hearts. You need to listen and learn before you attack. I've been studying these things for 33 years, and I know what I am talking about. You just wish to argue; but you will learn little or nothing that way. Your big concern is to defend your Mennonite position; but my life is given to the accurate teaching of God's Holy Word.

So in one sense, he is not contradicting his law, but in another sense he is defining newer parameters of the law that had to have made the hearers pause and look at their heart conditions.

- These are not new parameters; but a revival of the old and original! How can Jesus not be contradicting His own law if He says (according to you) that Deut 24 produced continuous adultery??? You are going in circles.

Mark, you are arguing from silence. That law never explicitly commands, is at best is a permission, which need not be the case.

Arguing from silence??? Did Deut 24 allow a second marriage? Was it called adultery? If so, then they would be stoned and the whole precept would be unnecessary! Moses would never be concerned with keeping a man from marrying a divorced, remarried, and re-divorced wife if the second marriage was adultery and they were stoned!! Think about it. The law clearly denies a priest the freedom to marry a divorced woman; but this only proves that others could – Lev 21:14.

As the perfect Evangelist, Jesus shows us how wicked our hearts really are in order to see our need for him. Another dramatic thought here in his discussion on adultery is the idea of cutting off ones right hand or right eye to avoid adultery.

- Actually to avoid all sin – That which "offends" or "stumbles" you.
- I'm glad you see that to abuse God's Law and change it is wicked; as this is what Jesus is indeed preaching.

We agree here.

You don't realize what you just stated – If Jesus did not change God's Law, then the debate is over???

The hearer would not miss the point of how deadly adultery is and how eternal punishment is not worth doing it. He is not literally saying to cut off body parts, but he is literally telling us something that is significantly sinful.

So, in the next section, notice how he transitions from adultery to divorce in verse 31: "It hath been said, Whosoever putteth away his wife let him give her a writing of divorcement." Here he cites the scribes'

application of Deuteronomy 24: 1-4. The Mosaic Law assumes, as did the ancient scribes, that the husband will give his wife a bill of divorcement, place it in her hand, and send her out of his house. The husband has not bypassed any lawful procedure, but has done in accordance with the Law.

- The Scribe's application is allowing this transaction for "every cause" and Jesus tells them that to abuse His law this way produces adultery. The man giving his wife a bill of divorce when undeserved is SIN, and THIS IS WHAT JESUS IS SAYING. YOU ACTUALLY THINK A MAN GIVING HIS WIFE AN UNDESERVED BILL OF DIVORCE JUST SO HE CAN GET ANOTHER WIFE IS "NOT BYPASSING ANY LAWFUL PROCEDURE"? JESUS IS NOT SAYING THE PROCESS IS WICKED; BUT THAT THE PROCESS WHEN NOT APPROPRIATE IS WICKED! CAN'T EVERYBODY SEE THIS? THIS IS WHY THERE IS AN EXCEPTION CLAUSE; BECAUSE THERE WAS A TIME WHEN IT WAS APPROPRIATE – FOR IMMORALITY!
- One thing missed by most people is that all these transactions were under the oversight of the elders and judges who were often Levites. It wasn't supposed to be just in the husband's hands, which is why the reason (SOME UNCLEANNES) is not specific nor meant to be exhaustive. God set up His system with proper accountability. THIS is why the religious rulers were arguing about when and what was lawful – as they had power and responsibility in the matter.

Thank you for proving my point that it was not up to the husband, but the elders. Also, it was not up to the husband whether to have his wife put to death or merely be divorced. If it were a capital crime of fornication, the husband is out of the picture.

O Please, J----! Where is this point made? READ AGAIN WHAT YOU JUST SAID ABOVE!! So you say Joseph had no say in the matter??? You must be desperate to find something to argue about, as you are trying to put words in my mouth to supposedly prove a point you never even made.

The Law gives the following reasons a man may put away his wife: if she does not please him and he does not to want to take care of her anymore (Ex. 21:8-10), if he no longer has delight in her (Dt. 21:14), if she has found no favor in his eyes because of the "nakedness of the matter" (Dt. 24:1), or if he hates her (Dt.24:3).

- This reveals either deception or ignorance: Read the verses mentioned and you will see that some refer to a foreign slave taken to be a wife; some refer to a polygamous marriage situation; etc. As said earlier all these transactions were God's judgment call and were instituted under the oversight of godly Levites as judges and elders of the land. To simply say that God allowed a man to put away a wife because he "hated" her, without explaining the context, is a slander on God's law. Maybe you should go read Psalms 19 again!

Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

SHAME ON ALL WHO CONTINUALLY TRY TO SLANDER GOD'S LAW SO THEY CAN ESTABLISH THEIR OWN LAW AND FORCE CHRIST TO ENDORSE IT CONTRARY TO HIS OWN INSPIRED WORD! If you don't agree 100% with Psalm 19:7-11, then you are an unbeliever.

Mark, my point remains. These foreign women were called wives. I'd call that a real marriage issue, in contrast to what you think, since it would contradict your stance.

J----, you haven't listened. Remember the elders?? Listen to God's Word, Deut 22:13 ¶ If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, **and hate her,** 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: 15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: 16 And the **damsel's father** shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; 17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 **And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him;** 19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; **he may not put her away all his days.**

You need to stop trying to make God's Law look foolish or loose – There is much in these laws that you obviously don't understand. What about Ps 19 J----? Deal with it!

"But I say unto you. . ." says Christ. What has he been doing in his preaching thus far? He is contrasting a lawful interpretation with a moral heart issue that runs deeper. What new heart issue is he addressing here? It is that the heart of the divorce matter is something far worse: the intention to remarry, which is a most adulterous act. This context fits well with the Patristic interpreter, but for the Erasmian a tough dilemma emerges, as seen in the following observations:

- You have just shot yourself in the foot! If Jesus is preaching against the divorce due to the express or intended reason of remarrying, then He is only preaching against the abuse of God's Law, and not the proper USE of God's Law. God's allowance of divorce was not just so a man could get another wife; but so that he could maintain godliness in his home and get rid of a bad wife. You have just agreed perfectly with my position, because you have just admitted the obvious purpose for Jesus calling these men adulterers. They were abusing God's Law to make their adultery look lawful. This completely surrenders your patristic view altogether! Tertullian admits the same thing in his quote against Marcion. Here are his own words quoted from my book.

Tertullian (160-230 AD), a Gentile Christian, who is faulted with being radically strict in the area of marriage, said this of the words of Christ when contending with Marcion (a heretic who taught the creator was an evil God, and not the Father of Jesus):

"But, observe, if this Christ be yours when he teaches contrary to Moses and the Creator, on the same principle must He be mine if I can show that His teaching is not contrary to them. I maintain, then, that there was a condition in the prohibition which he now made of divorce; the case supposed being, that a man put away his wife for the express purpose of marrying another. His words are: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, also committeth adultery," -- "put away," that is, for the reason wherefore a woman ought not to be dismissed, that another wife may be obtained. For he who marries a woman who is unlawfully put away is as much of an adulterer as the man who marries one who is undivorced. Permanent is the marriage which is not rightly dissolved; to marry, therefore, whilst matrimony is undissolved, is to commit adultery. Since, therefore, His prohibition of divorce was a conditional one, He did not prohibit absolutely; and what He did not absolutely forbid, that He permitted on some occasions, when there is an absence of the cause why He gave the prohibition. In very deed His teaching is not contrary to Moses, whose precept he partially defends, I will not say confirms. If, however, you deny that divorce is in any way

permitted by Christ, how is it that you on your side destroy marriage, not uniting man and woman, nor admitting to the sacrament of baptism and of the eucharist those who have been united in marriage anywhere else, unless they should agree together to repudiate the fruit of their marriage, and so the very Creator Himself? Well, then, what is a husband to do in your sect, if his wife commit adultery? Shall he keep her? But your own apostle, you know, does not permit "the members of Christ to be joined to a harlot." Divorce, therefore, when justly deserved, has even in Christ a defender. So that Moses for the future must be considered as being confirmed by Him, since he allows divorce in the same sense as Christ does, if any unchastity should occur in the wife. For in the Gospel of Matthew he says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery." ...The Creator, however, except on account of adultery, does not put asunder what He Himself joined together....He prohibits divorce when He will have the marriage inviolable; he permits divorce when the marriage is spotted with unfaithfulness."

Tertullian 3.404,405

When God's Law permitted divorce it was meant to be used to preserve godliness in the home, not as a means of getting another wife whom you lusted after.

You and Tertullian disagree with the clear statements in Deuteronomy, plus Exodus, where a man merely disliked his wife.

BLINDNESS IS BAD J----; BUT STUBBORNNESS IS WICKED. YOU'VE BEEN ANSWERED J----. REMEMBER THE ELDERS J----?? GOD'S PRECEPTS ARE PART OF A PACKAGE DEAL AND ARE NEVER TAKEN ALONE WITHOUT THE WHOLE.

- **So your official position is: God's law permitting divorce was NOT meant to be used to preserve godliness in the home; but WAS meant to be a means of getting another wife whom you lusted after.**
- **THIS IS WHAT YOU'VE JUST STATED FOR ALL THE READ, J----.**

A) Jesus either is saying something new about divorce in Deuteronomy 24, or he is saying nothing new about divorce in Deuteronomy 24.

B) If he is saying nothing new about divorce in Deuteronomy 24, then he is not presenting any new thought or heart application to the subject at hand, thus making for an odd exception to an otherwise consistent teaching pattern in the Sermon on the Mount. The ancient scribes, with whom Jesus disagrees, and the current Scribes and Pharisees, whose righteousness we are to exceed, and the common Jewish people, who learned from the Scribes, all shared certain assumptions about divorce that Jesus wanted to address. If all Jesus is doing is reminding them that fornication is the only just grounds for divorce, a view which many of them believed anyway, then he is not teaching them anything new that would surprise or challenge a Jewish listener. Given Deuteronomy 24's assumption of a wife's freedom to remarry after being hated and then put away, both liberal and conservative Jews would have conceded that, regardless of the man's reason being just or not, a divorce and remarriage DID dissolve a marriage. And, if the Majority and Erasmian View is correct, then Jesus is differing very little from his audience, for he too would believe that a divorce and remarriage does in fact dissolve any original marriage. Therefore, context and consistency favour the idea that Jesus is teaching something indeed new about divorce, not just a repetition of a forgotten Law, since it would not have surprised an otherwise knowledgeable audience concerning divorce laws.

- **Your assumptions are astounding. First, Jesus didn't have to disagree with every Jew on earth to be teaching the truth.**
- **Second, If Jesus were presenting something contrary to God's Law, then people would be righteous to stone him and unrighteous to listen to him.**
- **Third, every contrast in the Sermon on the Mount was this way in the sense that a well learned and sincere Jew could stand and shake his head yes with a heart testifying that this is indeed God's Word from God's man. If Jesus was speaking contrary to God's Word, this could not happen. HOW COULD GOD MAKE A**

NEW COVENANT BY WRITING HIS LAWS IN OUR HEARTS IF JESUS CAME AND CHANGED THEM? ACTUALLY JESUS HAD TO REVIVE THE PROPER VIEW OF GOD'S LAW BEFORE HE COULD WRITE THEM ON OUR HEARTS. THE main purpose given for the New Covenant was to write God's Laws in our hearts and minds.

All I've been arguing, Mark, is that his views challenged the Jewish hearers. You are the one tacking on additional assumptions that you feel I am making, which you then argue against.

YOU'RE A MESS!

C) If Jesus is saying something new about divorce in Deuteronomy 24, he is teaching one of two scenarios:

1. Firstly, restricting the "nakedness of a thing" in Deuteronomy 24 to a wife's fornication; secondly, denying the power of a mere legal divorce to dissolve a marriage; and thirdly, calling a remarriage to an unlawfully divorced woman as "adultery."
- This was not "something new" about Deut 24; but the original and sensible interpretation. WHO EVER THOUGHT THAT JUST GOING THROUGH THE PAPERWORK WAS A LAWFUL DIVORCE REGARDLESS OF THE REASONS? You have a wickedly low view of God's holy Law inspired by the very Logos who preached the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is giving Moses' original intent, which was Jesus' original intent. It is better to say "a matter of nakedness" than "nakedness of a thing" as the interpretation of "uncleanness", for we are not speaking about a "thing".
1. Firstly, blaming the man for divorcing his wife, unless she was guilty of fornication, and for making her commit adultery; secondly, denying the power of any lawful or legal divorce to dissolve a marriage; and thirdly, calling a remarriage to any kind of divorced woman as "adultery."
- This is a mixture of truth and error. Jesus DID blame the man for divorcing his wife without her being guilty of fornication, thus causing her to enter a new relationship unlawfully. But Jesus clearly only calls the marriage of a divorced woman IN THIS SCENARIO adulterous – because she was not lawfully put away – Tertullian could see that!
 - His 1 and 2 are not just two options for Jesus' sermon as they overlap and are a mixture of truth and error.

D) Erasmians must choose option #1; and if the goal is to deny any changes to Mosaic marriage laws, then they must explain how it is that Jesus only gives one exception in contrast to the Torah's broader reasons for men to divorce.

- God's Law (Torah) doesn't give broader reasons than Jesus! J-----, your interpretation of fornication was many matters of "nakedness" or immoral activity – remember? Jesus COULD ONLY be giving the proper interpretation of Deut 24, because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever! He is the WORD become flesh!! Jesus was answering a question about Deut. 24 and the bill of divorce. Jesus cannot change His own inspired Law, because He cannot improve on Himself!

The Torah's assumption is more in line with recognizing men's hard hearts, not with punishing an innocent wife who has been wrongly divorced.

- The Torah's assumption?? Do you even know what you are talking about?? All God's Laws were given to remedy that fact that mankind had fallen and needed answers for "what to do now" scenarios – This is what God's judgment calls were about. He was not compromising with sin or giving permission for adultery!!

For argument's sake, if Deuteronomy 24 is a prescriptive law, then it also permits a remarriage for a divorce couple based simply out of a man's dislike for his wife.

- **This is a perfect example of man's assumptions based on their own ignorance of the Word. Deut is indeed God's prescription for a bad situation – God gave it to be used by godly people who needed answers. It was meant to be used under the oversight of godly judges. It did indeed permit remarriage. It did not allow divorce simply out of dislike for the wife – Jesus cleared that up, if you would just listen to him. You continually laboring to make Jesus speak contrary to His own inspired Word is the best way to prove He was not the Son of God – which is the work of the Devil! You need to repent of this.**

The Erasmian who appeals to the binding nature of Deuteronomy 24 must argue that a divorced wife may remarry anyone—so long as it is not her original husband—even though she was put away merely because her current husband hated her.

- **Your assumptions are ridiculous: Notice it doesn't say why he hated her! Why do you assume Moses was a knot-head who just let men divorce their wife for dislike? Your problem is that you don't believe Moses was inspired by God – YOU DO NOT BELIEVE PSALMS 19 QUOTED ABOVE; but you continually try to make God's Law look bad and stupid. SHAME ON YOU. We are to assume the judges agreed with the second situation too. YOU SHOULD ASSUME THAT GOD GAVE THE LAW FOR GOOD AND HOLY REASONS TO BE USED BY GOOD AND SINCERE PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN A GODLY SOCIETY. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE THIS, THEN YOU ARE A CLOAKED UNBELIEVER.**

She was not in fornication, **(are you sure? You don't know why he hated her!)** Context, Mark, remember that. You have to assume that Moses is now making another penalty besides the death penalty for fornication, all in the space of two chapters. And, you want to know how I could think you were doing childish name calling? I guess it is obvious to only you, that if I disagree with you then I believe that Moses was not inspired by God. I guess you don't believe the fourth commandment was inspired by God, since you work on Saturday. Seek to be a little more gracious and less on an ad hominem approach, where you think it behooves you to call into question my character at numerous points in this discussion.

There is no context in Deut 24 J---- that demands what you say! Tell me the context J----! I don't have to assume anything because I know Joseph was called "a just man" BY THE LAW-GIVER for considering another penalty other than death for fornication!!!!

- **If you don't embrace Ps 19:7-11 then you are a cloaked unbeliever – This is not childish, J----**
- **The Sabbath is designated a ceremonial law in Col 2:16 ¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:**
- **MY BOOKS TEACH THIS CLEARLY, J----, PUT AWAY YOUR MENNONITE BIAS AND LEARN THE BIBLE.**

... but in contrast to Jesus' own teaching, she should have been forbidden the right of remarriage **(ERROR)**. Oddly, if Christ were teaching his audience *something new* on divorce grounds-- that any reason apart from fornication did not dissolve a marriage-- then Christ was nullifying the legality of Deuteronomy 24--not to mention nullifying the death penalty for a wife's adultery in Deuteronomy 22:22 and for her premarital fornication in Deuteronomy 22:21, whereas two chapters later, the "nakedness of a matter," not adultery nor fornication, was the actual grounds for divorcement.

- **You are horribly confused. Rule #1 – Jesus spoke in perfect harmony with His own inspired Law through Moses. If you don't believe this, then you don't believe the Bible, which declares that all Scripture is inspired by an unchanging God!! Do you believe Jesus is the WORD? What does that mean??**

- If Jesus gives the proper condition for using Deut 24 and says that all other reasons are unlawful HE IS NOT NULLIFYING THE LEGALITY OF DEUT 24 BUT ESTABLISHING IT IN THE PROPER CONTEXT.
- Deut 24 was a merciful alternative to a husband demanding the death penalty as can be seen with Joseph's contemplation with Mary. He knew he had two choices to deal with her supposed unfaithfulness.
- We are not saying that Christ taught ONLY fornication could dissolve a marriage – this was His interpretation of Moses' "uncleanness". Jesus also believed that death dissolved the marriage – death, which happened with any capital offense, apostasy, etc. when you lived under the entire Law. People today, like J-----, want to think of implementing Deut 24 without the whole Law being in affect. Jesus was speaking in the context of ALL the law being in operation. Deut. 24 ONLY APPLIED AS ONE COMPONENT OF THE LAW WHEN ALL WAS IN OPERATION! Don't forget this very important point!

Thus, Christ's own declaration about divorce and remarriage would flatly contradict Mosaic Law, for the Law envisions a woman's fornication or adultery as a capital offence, not dependent on whether the husband could revoke the charge and mercifully divorce her instead.

- **WRONG:** Joseph was called a "Just man" for considering the merciful alternative to capital punishment. You need to sit down and learn before assuming and judging God's Holy Law and Jesus' words. Beware of receiving the greater condemnation. Have you considered the reality of offending God??

"Uncleanness," (literal translation: "the nakedness of a matter") (Actually, "a matter of nakedness") is NOT fornication nor adultery, but rather some other offence that obviously is grounds enough for a divorce.

- **HOW DO YOU KNOW? WHO TOLD YOU? WHEN JESUS WAS ASKED WHAT GROUNDS A MAN COULD GIVE HIS WIFE A BILL OF DIVORCE, HE SAID FORNICATION – PORNEA – A MATTER OF NAKEDNESS! Do you know what Jesus included in this word? This is the word Shammai used to interpret Moses – He was a Jewish Scribe who knew the language perfectly – does that matter to you?**

Mark, Hillel also knew the language well, yet you don't camp on his side. I am arguing based on context of Old Testament Law.

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THE CONTEXT OF THE OT LAW, J-----. Joseph and the holy Ghost KNEW the context of the OT Law, J-----. Why would I camp on Hillel's side when Jesus did not???

Since a man's mere dislike of his wife was enough grounds for a divorce in Dt. 22: 10-14, and since a man who hated his wife for fornication in Deuteronomy 22:21 led to a wife's death, not her divorcement, the more natural reading of Deuteronomy 24 is that a hearted man is fed up with his wife over a matter displeasing to him.

- **...What would the judges say? This is your fatal flaw. You look at the Word of God apart from the whole program of God being in operation. God was not compromising for a "brat" to get his way! God was giving the wisest and most appropriate solution to a real problem. God's laws were to be used by sincere people to solve problems and maintain a godly society. God does not compromise with sinners and allow sin that is endorsed by Him!! What matter would be displeasing to a godly man in which the judges would agree that he should put her away? Ever think about that?**

- ALL FALLEN MEN HAVE HARD HEARTS, which is why laws are made to give us "what to do now" answers. Men have hard hearts today too! IF Jesus taught something new it doesn't automatically give every man a softened heart!! Think! YOU WON'T ALLOW LOST PEOPLE WHO COME TO CHRIST AFTER DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE TO STAY TOGETHER, SO YOU THINK LOST PEOPLE DON'T HAVE HARD HEARTS?? If you think God's law was as you say, then it is still the very thing to follow in dealing with lost people coming to Christ with remarriage in their past.
- JESUS WASN'T EVEN SPEAKING ABOUT LOST MEN, BUT COVENANT JEWS UNDER THE LAW. Jesus upbraided his own disciples for hardness of heart. Your irreverence concerning God's holy Law reveals hardness of heart in you for not believing God's testimony of His own Word. All this needs to be put in the proper order before we assume we can interpret God's Word.

Again I note your character attacks on me. Mark, your comments are not courteous nor appropriate in such a debate format. It seems like you think your remarks buttress your argument, when in fact, it reveals a seeming lack of confidence that compels you to deride the opposing position from the get go.

O, how appropriate to start complaining about my rebukes of your carelessness with God's Word when I've just destroyed your case and you cannot answer what I have said. I'm more concerned with your discourteous abuse of God's Holy Word than about me hurting your feelings while you do it. Was driving the men out of the temple courteous? I'm calling you to repent and stop holding to a faulty position.

Should that surprise us, given the kinds of men Moses is dealing with? Moses, under God's inspiration, is not highlighting the "nakedness of a matter" as THE only proper grounds for divorce, as if he is backtracking from his previous grounds two chapters earlier. Furthermore, this passage's close proximity to the death penalty laws for fornication and for adultery argue strongly for "nakedness of a matter" to be a much lesser offence.

- What kind of men is Moses dealing with? Those same kind live today and need God's answers to their questions. THE SAME ANSWERS APPLY AS GOD HAS NOT CHANGED
- God's Law was not a compromise with sin, but the most appropriate thing to do under the circumstances. God's Law is Spiritual. God's Law is Holy. God's Law is what He wants to write on our hearts! This is your foundational error – your low view of God's Law.

Same could be argued for why you have a low view of Saturday Sabbath. Let the sword cut both ways, which you clearly do not want.

Let God's Sword cut whatever it wants!!! God's Sword has annihilated your position. I've already answered the Sabbath issue, which you should already know if you read my books.

E)For Interpretation #1's second new thought--that Jesus is denying the power of a mere legal divorce to dissolve a marriage--Jesus would then be making a qualification for nothing the scribes have said thus far about divorcement. For example, "Whosoever putteth away his wife" needs no qualifying, nor does "let him give her a writing of divorcement." Just like the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," has no qualification, neither does this divorce law have any qualification. Jesus raises the spirit or parameter of these laws to new heights, in contrast to the scribes, who have not kept this higher standard. It is not that the scribes were wrong in forbidding adultery, but that they were wrong in thinking that lusting after a single woman is NOT adultery.

- Your assumptions are exhausting. How could the Scribes have kept "this higher standard" when according to you THEY DIDN'T EVEN HAVE IT! Who says that Jews did not think that coveting their

neighbor's wife OR MAID SERVANT was sin? You are wrong. READ the law. Every single woman belonged to a man – her father. *Ex 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

- God gave his laws and also gave priests, Levites, scribes, etc. to teach the people. Every law of God needs proper application and qualifying words to avoid misapplication and misinterpretation. Much of what Jesus and the apostles said is the same way. Jesus said, "take no thought for the morrow", etc... which all needs qualification.
- If Jesus simply raises the spirit of the law to new heights, then He is only teaching the true intent of the law – FOR THAT IS WHAT THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW IS! If Jesus is simply "raising the spirit of the law" in the minds of the people, then Moses' law is unchanged in His hands and divorce and remarriage is still legal in the sense Moses said under God's inspiration. You obviously don't understand the meaning of what you are saying.

Here too, it is not that the scribes were wrong in believing that divorcement entails a formal procedure, but they were wrong in thinking that such a procedure of divorce which led to remarriage was not in the end adultery.

- The Law of God did not call the remarriage adultery when the law was used properly, nor does Jesus. YOU ARE THE ONES MAKING JESUS CALL ALL REMARRIAGE ADULTERY, BECAUSE YOU INTERPRET HIS WORDS TO MEAN THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT HE SAID AS I DEMONSTRATED ABOVE.
- Jesus is preaching against the abuse of God's Law, which means using God's law for some OTHER PURPOSE He did not intend it for. God's purpose for his law was not to produce adultery – THIS IS THE ISSUE. Using God's law properly did not produce adultery.

Well, Mark, you say that an innocent woman may remarry, be in accordance with the law, and yet still commit "adultery."

Sorry, J---, but you said that. God's law when used properly did not produce adultery is what I just said. When God's law was abused, then the abuse is called adulterous and judged upon the person who did it. The innocent woman was a victim of a man's abuse, and the sin was put on the man's head, not on the woman.

Jesus' hardest attack is not on divorce, but the adultery caused by divorce. Whether Jesus is concerned with distinguishing between lawful and unlawful divorces or whether he is concerned with something larger will shape the rest of our understanding of Matthew 5, Matthew 19, Mark 10, Luke 16, and really our entire interpretative basis for the subject of divorce and remarriage.

- Oh my :{ Divorce doesn't cause adultery; but divorce with an adulterous intent causes adulterous divorce. So "No duh" Jesus is only concerned with divorce that causes adultery and not with divorce according to God's holy law which does not *cause* adultery.

Thus, we do not want to misread what the crucial contrast is here in this passage. First whatever contrast there is here, it is directly related to Jewish assumptions post divorce, not pre-divorce. Why do I say that? Well, for one reason, Jesus does not give any indication that he is challenging their assumption about having a just cause to put away their spouses. Rather, he appears more to address the consequence of putting her away, and what that entails.

- **JESUS ADDRESSES THE RESULTING SIN OF DIVORCING FOR UNLAWFUL REASONS – NOT LAWFUL ONES! PUTTING HER AWAY FOR LAWFUL REASONS IS NOT THE PROBLEM.**

Plus, we have Jesus' own words that hardness of hearts was the reason for divorces, not the nakedness of a thing (KJV: "uncleanness") nor adultery.

- **The hardness of men's hearts is why the reality of sin and divorce even existed – mankind was a fallen race. The reason for a lawful divorce was sin in the mate – but what kind and how big? Moses said if there was a "matter of nakedness" – immoral issue that marred the godliness of the home, then a bill of divorce could be given and remarriage would be lawful – JESUS AGREED THAT PORNEA WAS GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE AND THAT LAWFUL DIVORCE ALLOWED LAWFUL REMARRIAGE – because in His rebuke that certain divorce and remarriage created an adulterous situation, HE SAID "EXCEPT IT BE FOR FORNICATION" WHICH MEANT THAT CAUSE FOR DIVORCE DID NOT LEAD TO ADULTERY FOR THE MAN PUTTING AWAY HIS WIFE AND REMARRYING.**

Really, the nakedness of the thing is not that important in the judicial ruling of this law. Rather, the main point, as with so many of the Jewish laws, comes at the end: a prohibition for the divorcing man to get his first wife back. The three characters mentioned in this law are: husband, wife, and second husband who marries divorced wife. The reason cited for why the first husband may not take back his wife, who has now been divorced, is that she hath been defiled.

- ***She is defiled in respect to the first husband; but it doesn't automatically mean she is wicked or defiled to everyone.***
- **This could be true, good point.**

Now three questions arise, who is responsible for this defilement, what is the nature of this defilement, and why is this given as grounds to prohibit the return of the wife to her first husband? The second husband hates her and divorces her, or he does not divorce her but he dies. The first husband does not appear to be responsible for her defilement, for he put her away because she found no favour in his eyes and did the standard divorcement procedure. The wife does not seem to bear responsibility for it says "she hath been defiled," meaning it is something that has happened to her. The second husband seems like he could be the cause of her defilement, for she became defiled after the second marriage. She is forbidden to remarry only person, her first husband. Paradoxically, she and her husband have some kind of special relationship that warrants his exclusion from remarriage.

- **You are displaying that you really don't know much about Moses' Law.**
 - **If she was put away lawfully, then the first husband is not to blame; but the wife might be. She might be a victim of childhood molestation as a reason he put her away, which means she is not guilty; but still put away for a matter of nakedness.**
 - **She is only defiled in regards to the first husband – BECAUSE IF SHE WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH THE FIRST TIME, THEN SHE ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH NOW.**
 - **This regulation would make a husband "make sure" he really wanted to be without her for the rest of his life, rather than play games with God's rules.**
 - **The fact that the return of the first wife is absolutely forbidden EVEN TO HARD HEARTED MEN, proves God is not just compromising with sinners. This also proves that the lawful divorce and the lawful remarriage WERE NOT SIN or a compromise with sin. The return of the wife after remarriage would "cause the land to sin".**

- **YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM ACTUALLY TELLS THE WIFE TO RETURN TO HER FIRST HUSBAND AND DENIES THE REALITY OF THE SECOND HUSBAND – SO YOU ARE WORKING FOR THE DEVIL AND TRYING TO CAUSE PEOPLE TO COMMIT ABOMINATION BEFORE GOD.**

Well, I guess you have to take that charge up with Yahweh himself, who sought back his remarried adulterous wife, Israel. You as well are encouraging innocent women to remarry and thus commit an acceptable form of adultery.

YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN ANSWERED TWICE OR MORE ON THIS ISSUE.

Often people will say that Moses meant to prohibit men from frivolously divorcing their wives only to take them back when it was convenient. While this is possible, Moses nonetheless still forbids her to go back even after the second husband's death, an event over which the first husband had no control. Rather, the abomination in mind is the remarriage of a defiled woman and her first husband. The defilement is linked to her remarriage. Leviticus 18:20 forbids going to your neighbor's wife and defiling yourself with her. Ezekiel 33:26 talks about men who defile their neighbor's wives." "Defile" is the same Hebrew word used in Deuteronomy 24. I suggest that defilement is being linked here with adultery, but it is difficult to say with certainty, given the lack of further information.

- **People can be defiled in many ways – and Yes, it is the same word; but not the same defilement; so this is a lame point based on a low view of God's inspired Words.**

There is also much debate over why Moses makes this defilement as grounds for forbidding a remarriage to original husband. It is a difficult question to answer. For myself I can offer a tentative guess, but do not feel dogmatic on the point: The context seems to be that the first husband is being purposely punished for his desire to divorce AND remarry. If this is true, it *could* hint at what Jesus condemns overtly, namely that remarriage post divorce is wrong, and that all three parties bear blame. If Moses's purpose in the law was to restrict the man's freedoms, then Moses is disciplining the very man who divorced his wife for "uncleanness." He was properly divorcing his wife, yet he gets his freedom restricted.

- **This is nonsense again based on your finite mind passing judgment on God's inspired Word who always and only did the wisest and best thing. If God told them that "under this circumstance" write a bill of divorce and put her away; then it was the wisest and best thing to do under the circumstance, and the man is not being punished for doing it – duh! If a woman did something bad enough to be put away, then it would make foolish God's law to allow the man to take her back – any judicious mind can see this.**
- **The man divorcing AND remarrying had nothing to do with his inability to take back a wife that was put away and remarried. Who says the man remarried?? He still could not take back his first wife after she had remarried and been re-divorced and set free by death – whether he ever remarried or not!!!!**

Later Biblical history, in Jeremiah, shows Yahweh divorcing Israel for fornication, not for uncleanness.

- **Does not God understand His own Law??? – you are so presumptuous!**
- **So, you admit that God used Deut 24 for fornication and Jesus said it was allowed for fornication; BUT YOU ARE DETERMINED TO PROVE THEY ARE MISUSING THE LAW?????**

Mark, I am not forbidding divorce period, I am saying that God views divorce as to be only a form of legal separation.

BASED ON WHAT? You are not answering what I have said here.

At some point in time, changes in the marriage laws occurred between Moses and Jeremiah, or at the very least, between Moses and first century Judaism. The Shammaite Pharisees believed that fornication was grounds for divorcement but not for death.

- **Do you know what you are talking about?? The power of life and death was taken away from the Jews by the Romans.**

Really, so how could they have stoned Stephen, or even have stoned a false prophet?

The same way they were going to kill Paul until rescued by the Romans – Mob action before the Romans could stop it. HISTORIC FACTS.

This fact shows at least some of their inconsistency when later they tempted Christ with the woman caught in adultery. They acknowledged that Moses' Law said she should be stoned. Christ recognizes some change in the marital law, but assumes it rather than commenting on it in Matthew five.

- **You are incredible! What presumptuous statements based on error and foolishness!**

The two points I wish to make is, 1) at the very least, Jesus is addressing the same three characters of Deuteronomy 24: first husband, wife, and second husband; and 2) Jesus is assuming such a man has divorced for "the nakedness of the matter." Therefore, a good case can be made that Jesus is addressing the very man who had lawful grounds for a divorce in the first place. Moses has restricted the husband's and wife's freedom to remarry to some degree, but now Jesus is going to put "the clamps down" on both. Thus, Jesus is ascribing blame both to the man who lets his wife go lawfully and to the lawfully divorced woman who commits adultery. Jesus judges man and women as equals, and thus one is not given preferential treatment over the other, a point we want to remember for later.

- **What else can you come up with? This is rank heresy and charging Jesus with either changing his mind from the time He wrote the Law or deceiving the people in Moses' Day. THE LAW WAS NOT A COMPROMISE WITH SIN!! You are speaking blasphemy concerning God's Holy Laws that He wishes to write on our hearts! You do not believe Ps. 19 – and you need to repent of your irreverent speech!**
- **Jesus is NOT calling the man who lawfully put away his wife an adulterer – Malachi clearly tells us what Jesus was preaching against; but you are unwilling to believe God's Holy Word over your own prejudice!! How ungodly.**

Funny how you tell me that I am having irreverent speech, when you yourself would admit that you would never dream of being a polygamist, when you should be consistent and affirm that polygamy is not sin, and so why do you think you can improve on Moses Law? Yes, it would disqualify you from being an elder, but you don't shouldn't think polygamy is in any case sinful, for you to be consistent. But, you do think it would be sinful to gain another wife, and so do I, so yes, you yourself pick and choose out of Moses' Law what you want.

Sorry, J-----; but you are mistaken. Jas 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. Genesis was also part of Moses' Law, and when we see God's Law in the proper perspective,

we are accountable for the light we have. God's Law does not classify polygamy as holy or righteous; but rather shows that it was man's invention rather than God's plan; and though God's Law allowed and regulated it for productive reasons for the sake of building the nation of Israel; yet those purposes are not valid for the church now, so the church is set up to promote God's original plan. BUT, the apostles did not label polygamy sin, but only denied a bishop or deacon to be the husband of more than one wife. I didn't write the book, J---, I am just telling you what it says, rather than trying to make it say what I like – as you are doing. When Jesus referred back to Genesis, He was declaring the authority of Moses' Law as a basis for doctrine.

As centuries passed into Roman times, a woman's freedom to divorce her man became that much greater, whether in Judea or in any Roman province. Some laws even created a perverse incentive for an unfaithful wife, who could appeal to the law for her release based on infidelity. This reality of "women's liberation" is recognized by Jesus, and so he does qualify his statement that, unless the husband divorced his wife for fornication, he is indeed to be blamed for her subsequent adultery.

- You've been reading trash and filling your head with presumptuous error. Jesus is speaking about the Law of God – Not "women's liberation" or Roman law! Jesus was only speaking about the proper view of God's HOLY LAW.

Mark, Roman divorce rates were higher and initiated more by women than in Jewish society. Jesus is indeed speaking his law, but he recognizes a woman in his day being permitted the power to divorce her man, something the Torah was silent on.

WRONG -- Ex 21:11 reveals that a wife could divorce a husband for not properly taking care of her. This obviously had to be enforced by the judges or she would just be a slave with no rights. Jesus is in every case written in the Gospels talking to Jews about the Law of God, not about Roman law. Jesus is living in Judea where the Sanhedrin set the standards. All Jews in Jerusalem lived under Jewish Law, not Roman Law in these matters.

Ironically, we sometimes feel that Jesus is really hammering on the man more so than the woman in this passage, and thus tend to think women were treated almost as second class citizens. History shows the opposite: a divorce loving Roman culture with women's rights at a higher rate than in the lower divorce rates of Jewish culture. He holds the wife just as responsible as well, in a day when both men and women were equally heard hearted (In what day???? How about since the fall), in contrast to the more patriarchal authority structure in Moses' time, where women were not allowed to divorce (Wrong – READ THE LAW – EX 21:11 – this was enforced by the ruling elders), Well, all the more reason for me to say that couples would cite other reasons instead of fornication for why they should divorce. You can't eat your cake and have it, Mark. Ok, so she can divorce for a different reason, and that is acceptable to the elders. You just proved my point.

- Sorry J---, I have two cakes 😊. All I have been saying is this: JESUS IS PREACHING AGAINST THE ABUSE OF HIS LAW. HE STATES THAT TO USE THE BILL OF DIVORCE JUST TO GET ANOTHER WIFE IS ADULTEROUS AND THE MAN WHO DOES THIS IS GUILTY CONCERNING HIS REMARRIAGE AND THE INNOCENT WIFE'S AS WELL.
- Jesus, as Tertullian observed, was speaking of divorce and remarriage for the express reason of getting another mate --- THIS WAS THE COMMON ABUSE AND THIS IS WHAT JESUS WAS REBUKING.
- In my book I discuss that there are other reasons for divorce; and have never denied that point.
- WHAT POINT OF YOURS DID I PROVE?? You were trying to make God's law look carnal and reckless contrary to Jesus; and I've only told you that God's Law is perfect, wise, and the best thing to do under the circumstances and THAT JESUS FULLY UPHELD AND BELIEVED HIS OWN LAW.

...and where adulterous women were stoned instead of divorced. So, since Jesus is most likely addressing a man who divorces for "nakedness of a matter" and yet, he makes a qualification for the man's blame, an exception that did not even exist in Deuteronomy 24 in the first place. Thus, Jesus does not believe that "porneia" and "the nakedness of a matter" are the same thing at all. The exception is granted for the very same husband who is lawfully divorcing his wife, if the whole context with the same three characters is in mind. This context suggests a consistency with Matthew Five and Deuteronomy Twenty-Four's addressal of the three main players in this divorce and remarriage drama.

- **IF JESUS IS SPEAKING ABOUT THE ABUSE OF GOD'S LAW – WHICH HE IS – THEN HE IS STILL USING THE SAME THREE CHARACTERS; BUT REVEALING THE RESULT OF THE UNLAWFUL USE OF GOD'S LAW.**
- **YOUR SPECULATIONS BASED ON YOUR PREJUDICE ARE AN INSULT TO GOD.**

F)Sub-Conclusion: If Jesus did redefine divorce in some sense and rejected common assumptions about remarriage, then Erasmians cannot at the same time criticize the "No Divorce and Remarriage View" for redefining the nature of divorce even further, since a change already has been admitted (**NONSENSE!**). And, thus, at the very least, Jesus is arguing that merel legal divorces do not end the marriages, and thus subsequent remarriages would also not end the marriage either, hence his labelling the act as adulterous. Thus, a Jew must have thought it odd that only certain divorces were nothing more than a legal separation, while certain others were marriage dissolving.

- **The Jews understood perfectly that Jesus was clearing HIS HOLY LAW OF ABUSE.**

G)Sub-Conclusion: Jesus denies that remarriage, though adulterous, ends the original marriage, and therefore adultery will continue so long as the remarriage relationship continues.

- **CONCLUSION BASED ON WHAT??? Based on the literal meaning of words, like adultery, which indicates that a marriage is still existing. Not too hard to figure that one out.**

You are denying what God's Word actually says by your so called "literal meaning of words". God's law clearly declares that the second marriage completely and permanently broke the first marriage and never calls the second marriage continuous adultery. If Jesus and the apostles believed that second marriages were continuous adultery, then what was polygamy? Where are the second marriages they separated? Where are the rules for not allowing any second marriages in I Cor. 7?

The literal and original meaning of the Greek word used in the scriptures (moichao) simply means to corrupt as in adulterate – which is why Tyndale and Wycliffe translated it as "breaking wedlock" or "advoutry". It does not just refer to sexual relations, but the corruption and violation of a trust or covenant. SO the literal meaning of the word proves you wrong in that it does not mean the second covenant is continuous adultery.

H)Final Conclusion: Concerning Matthew 5:33, The Erasmian View faces a difficult tension to resolve; for if Jesus denies the power of a non-fornication divorce to dissolve a marriage, then he contradicts his own exception clause, because the remarriage act on the part of the spouse would be a form of fornication, thus only a brief postponing of the efficacy of divorce's marriage dissolution.

- **What you are saying is: "If Jesus denies the power of an unlawful divorce to dissolve a marriage, then He contradicts His own exception clause – which recognizes a legitimate reason for divorce – because remarriage after an unlawful divorce creates an adulterous situation that does indeed break the marriage covenant" Where on earth did you get this??? You must be on Mars! Jesus denies the legalities to LAWFULLY dissolve a marriage when those legalities had not the proper reason and motive behind it – thus it was an abuse of God's Law. Just because a second marriage covenant DOES indeed**

end the first marriage covenant – IT IS SIN TO DO SO! NOT JUST ANOTHER WAY TO DISSOLVE A MARRIAGE! JESUS IS TELLING US WHAT IS LAWFUL AND WHAT IS SIN – NOT JUST HOW TO DISSOLVE A MARRIAGE!!

Well, at this point, I am at least getting used to your caustic debate style. I used simple logic to point out that Jesus is telling us what kind of situation constitutes adultery. Like any other sin, you can choose to stop doing it. Remarriage is no different.

You can indeed chose to stop divorcing and remarrying contrary to God's Law; but you cannot leave the covenant you are in and go back to the first. The reason for my frustration, J-----, is because you were given a book that explains the clear and logical answer to all these issues and YOU chose to defend your Mennonite heresy and fight against clear Scriptural logic.

Here is how a true believer thinks:

#1 God's Word is all inspired by the same author – is consistent – is holy – is the smartest and wisest direction to take in any given situation.

#2 To interpret God's Word so as to set the author against himself – create contradiction and inconsistency when there is a clear explanation otherwise is the work of the Devil and not a true interpretation of God's Word.

This is what you are trying to do when I have given you a book which clearly defends the consistency of God's Word throughout – and have more books proving the same point.

For some people, a subsequent remarriage happens within weeks, others within years. The point, however, remains: a new grounds for the old divorce has now re-empowered it to dissolve the marriage. Technically, then, Jesus would only be saying that a nonfornication divorce is not valid and yet is valid the day of a remarriage.

- **JESUS IS TELLING YOU WHAT IS LAWFUL AND WHAT IS SIN!! NOT JUST HOW TO DISSOLVE A MARRIAGE! YOU ARE BLINDED BY YOUR PREJUDICE FOR YOUR UNBIBLICAL POSITION.**

Thus the marriage should be dissolved based on his exception, but Christ has just presented his new thought that at least some marriages are not dissolved by a divorce and remarriage, thus forming his whole basis for calling a remarriage adulterous in the first place! The old expression, "It is hard to eat your cake and have it at the same time" applies here. Something has to give, if we are to think Jesus has said anything new at all on the topic of divorcement.

- **Ever seen a termite in a yo-yo? Dizzy and confused.**
- **No, I have not. If you weren't so bombastic, you would have a funny sense of humor!**

Thank you.

The Erasmian is forced to argue that remarriage is a special kind of adultery that permanently grounds an otherwise improper divorce, and thus the first marriage is simultaneously dissolved by adultery.

- **The adultery is the unlawful breaking of the marriage covenant in order to establish another covenant. SHOW ME ONE PLACE IN THE BIBLE OR EARLY HISTORY THAT REMARRIED COUPLES ARE TOLD TO SEPARATE WHEN THEY COME TO THE TRUTH AND SAID TO BE LIVING IN CONTINUOUS ADULTERY! This is a modern invention. I already mentioned Jerome's counsel to a divorced and remarried woman. Plus, the burden of proof lies on you to show how it is that adultery dissolves a marriage, because if**

so, David and Bathsheba dissolved her marriage with Uriah, on that night that David slept with her. Yet, clearly God did not regard the marriage as dissolved; not until Uriah was dead did David marry Bathsheba.

JEROME WAS A CATHOLIC MONK AND THE “FATHER OF MONASTICISM” SO LETS SET HIM UP AS AN AUTHORITY? Many church leaders in his day believed that widowers who marry again were “cloaked adulterers”. He is not very early either – later 4th century. This woman was not a new convert coming to Christ; but a Catholic wanting to take communion without penance. Jerome gave his own opinion, not the “Official opinion of the church”. Jerome had to leave Rome because the church was against him.

I never said adultery dissolves a marriage, but gives **GROUND**S to dissolve the marriage by the bill of divorcement. If the bill of divorce is given due to the abuse of God’s Law, the second marriage terminates the first marriage permanently. – **SO SAYS DEUT 24.**

YOU ARE NOT LISTENING -- GO BACK AND READ WHAT HAS BEEN SAID

- God’s Law said that once remarriage is in place that it is an abomination to renew the original marriage – so how can Jesus now be saying that the second marriage is continuous adultery, which means the first marriage is still intact and the person in the second marriage must repent and go back to the first?

In other words, the cause for fornication gets postdated until the remarriage occurs. However, this approach puts us on shaky ground. Again, normal weddings are not adulterous and defiled for a first time couple. Not so is the case with a divorcee involved. His saying the wedding vow is an act of adultery, precisely because his original wife is still alive! If saying the marriage vows is committing adultery, how much more so on their wedding night of sexual union, if the first marriage is still intact. Thus, if his original wife is still his wife on his second wedding day, she still is his wife on the next day as well. To place a mystical break between wedding day and wedding night is purely arbitrary. Plus, Hebrews tells us that the marriage bed is undefiled. But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Jesus' words cut to the heart of divorce and remarriage: it is adultery, and that is why the woman is defiled.

- **IF Jesus is preaching what you say, then He was a false prophet and deserved to be killed by Jews who obeyed God’s Laws ---- PERIOD! Malachi told the Jews what Messiah would preach against and I must either believe that Moses, Malachi, and Jesus all agreed or that Jesus was an imposter or THAT YOU ARE HERETICAL IN YOUR CONFUSION.**

Therefore, we may not call this adulterous marriage that is defiled as the same one flesh marriage bed condoned by God. Otherwise, Jesus is not saying anything new, but simply pointing out the Jews' abuse of Deuteronomy 24.

- **O, but that could not be – could it??**

But then, it would seem greatly out of context with the Sermon on the Mount (**WRONG**). This oddity is further confirmed by the fact that Jewish rates of divorce at the time were considerably low (**WRONG**), and that the Pharisees agreed with the ancient scribes' view of the validity of remarriage's power to dissolve an original marriage. So, if Jesus agrees with the Pharisees on the restrictive nature of divorce, agrees on remarriage's power to dissolve the first marriage as the ancient scribes did, there was very little point in his even addressing divorce in his Sermon, if his audience's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees!

- **Malachi was charging the Jews with abuse of God's Law in this area 400 YEARS prior to this and told them that Messiah would come and preach against their adultery.**

Here is a summary of the contradictory dilemma:

Only divorce with fornication is a lawful divorce in Jesus' eyes, and **HALF RIGHT**

All other divorces are merely legal, but not lawful in Jesus' eyes. **HALF RIGHT**

All non-fornication divorces therefore are merely legal and DO NOT dissolve a marriage.

NOT LAWFULLY

All lawful divorces DO dissolve a marriage. **RIGHT**

Since the remarriage from a mere legal divorce is adulterous, then the previous marriage is still not dissolved.

WRONG

Any adulterous act after a mere legal divorce is a form of fornication that inherently "lawfullizes" a mere legal divorce. **STUPID (No, Mark, it logically follows)**

NO, J----- IT DOES NOT LOGICALLY FOLLOW THAT IS WHY I CALLED IT STUPID.

Conclusions:

A mere legal divorce and remarriage DOES NOT dissolve the marriage, despite lawful grounds now existing.

WRONG

AND: A mere legal divorce and remarriage DOES dissolve the marriage, due to lawful grounds now existing.

SINFULLY DOES DISSOLVE THE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE - YES

Obviously, both statements cannot be true. However, the Erasmian interpretation must believe both to be true. Their own View, then, contains a glaring contradiction. Take away one or more of these statements, and the Erasmian View "dissolves" its main divorce exception (pardon the pun!). Keep both of these statements and you have an unresolvable contradiction. $2 + 2 = 4$ and $2+2 = \text{NOT } 4$ are contradictory statements. Fornication + Divorce = Dissolved Marriage and Divorce + (Remarriage AND Fornication) = NON Dissolved Marriage are also contradictory statements. The only way to resolve this dilemma is to argue that post divorce fornication cannot alter the status of a divorce. But, then we have to conclude that adulterous remarriage is a continuous state of adultery, a view which most Erasmians find unacceptable.

- **Ever see a termite in a yo-yo?**
- **If people abused God's Law and divorced and remarried unlawfully – IT WAS STILL AN ABOMINATION TO GO BACK TO THE FIRST. When they repent, they still must maintain the covenant they are in; but must confess the sin of abusing God's Law**

As it is, the Patristic View avoids such a dilemma by affirming that Christ is indeed saying *something radically new* about ALL divorces AND remarriages.

- **You "avoid your man-made dilemma" by creating a blasphemous heresy against the immutability of God, the holiness of God's Law, the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and the person of Jesus Christ as the Messiah and not a false prophet.**
- **Your view destroys the immutability of God in his moral judgments, the perfection of God's Law through Moses, the fact that Moses' words were Jesus' words, the fact that Malachi clearly tells us what Jesus was speaking about, and the fact that Jesus could only speak consistent with His own inspired Law – which He came to write on our hearts!**
- **The debate is over and your position is proven to be heresy.**

You are not the judge of who wins the debate, let the audience think for themselves, unless they already assume that you are the infallible Bible Interpreter and they should just refer to your book.

GOD IS THE JUDGE - HOPE YOU REPENT BEFORE THEN.

Jesus addresses the heart attitude of the divorcing man who thinks he is absolved of any further responsibility to his wife.

- **What??**

Jesus argues that lust drives adultery, divorce causes adultery, and remarriage *commits* adultery.

- **"except it be for fornication"**

The whole thing comes full circle.

- **The yo-yo?**

Jesus links adultery with lusting with eyes and hands. Now he links adultery with divorce and remarriage.

- **The abuse of God's Holy Law, not the proper use of it.**

The ancient scribes would not have assumed that calling someone a "fool" would put you in danger of hell fire;

- **Jesus and Paul called men fools – this was not the problem, but doing so without a proper cause – "angry without a cause" – an ungodly attitude.**

nor that lusting even after a single woman would be a form of adultery; nor that you should sever your arm and gouge your eye to avoid adultery; and nor that divorcing and remarrying is adultery. Jesus wants our righteousness to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees and their forerunners the ancient scribes.

- **Does Jesus want our righteousness to exceed His Holy Law??? Listen to Romans 8:4 and you will get your answer!!**

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

- **DOES JESUS WANT OUR RIGHTOUESNESS TO EXCEED GOD'S HOLY LAWS?**

Heb. 8: 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Thus we have to live at a higher standard and accept Jesus' definitions on murder and adultery and divorce as true. After all, we would expect Jesus's statements on divorce to be every bit as heart challenging as his other subjects: "But I say to you, whosoever putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery and whosoever marrieth her that is divorced commiteth adultery." If a man gave his bill of divorcement, the scribes believed he was freed from her and she from him.

- **DUH, WHERE DID THEY GET THAT? Maybe in Deut 24? YES, that is where they got it, but God only intended this to be used for the purpose it was given, and not to be abused.**

Jewish law code instructed the woman: "[You are] free at thy own disposal, to marry whomsoever thou pleasest, without hindrance from anyone, from this day for ever." (cited in John Coblentz. *What the Bible Says about Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*. p. 31) The current Pharisees and ancient scribes assumed that a legal divorce based on Torah Law was inherently lawful, AND they assumed no further remarriage was adulterous.

- **YES, that is what Jesus said through Moses**

What is the undergirding assumption, then, that Jews had that Jesus wants to address? Legal divorce is valid? Or, that any divorce dissolves a marriage? The second assumption is more congruent with the point Jesus makes about remarriage being adultery.

- **No! Jesus is saying that using God's Law for selfish and ungodly reasons leads to sin, and is not OK!! It is not that hard to understand!**

Rabbi Jesus has something new to teach his crowd: unmasking the heart condition of all three Deuteronomy parties—husband, wife, and second husband. According the best Rabbi ever, when men and women divorce and remarry, they commit adultery.

- **BUT RABBI JESUS IS THE ONE WHO TOLD THEM TO DO THIS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES!!**
- **RABBI JESUS IS NOT CONDEMNING HIS OWN DECISION OR THOSE WHO FOLLOW IT!!**
- **IS CHRIST THE MINISTER OF SIN?? GOD FORBID!!!**

Just like anger is the heart issue of murder (**WRONG**), so here adultery is said to be the heart issue (**RIGHT**). He raises the standard from a law involving the woman's prohibition to go back to her first husband to a law implicating all three individuals as adulterous or causing adultery. So why does Jesus give the exception here to the first husband? E. Lovestam writes:

"According to Jewish marital laws the wife could cause the breakup of a marriage by being unfaithful and the man had no say in the matter. If the wife was unfaithful, it was thus she and not the man who was responsible for the divorce. When the teachings in question are intended for people with this background, they relieve the man in this case of the responsibility for the divorce and its consequences. The wife bears it. That is what the exceptive clause means." (Cited in *Four Views*, p. 102).

- **ONLY HALF TRUE: THEY ARE IGNORING THE RIGHT TO REMARRY IN A LAWFUL DIVORCE AND AGAIN TRYING TO MAKE THE EXCEPTION ONLY REFER TO THE DIVORCE. "The divorce and its consequences"**

are they saying that if the man remarries it is still adultery? Is that the consequence? Is he not responsible for this adultery – if it be so?

- The exception clause recognizes that God's Law gave grounds for divorce and allowed remarriage, and JESUS WANTS US TO KNOW HE IS NOT PREACHING AGAINST THAT, SO HE GAVE AN EXCEPTION TO WHAT HE WAS SAYING – AS HE WAS ONLY PREACHING AGAINST THE ABUSE OF GOD'S LAW, AND THEREFORE EXCEPTED THE PROPER USE OF GOD'S LAW.

For example, Yahweh had put away Israel his wife and wrote her a bill of divorcement (Jer.3 and Isa. 51), but he did not cause Israel to commit adultery. She already was fornicating with her lovers (false gods). So, yes, Christ does give an exception to the man's guilt in a divorce, if the wife is fornicating. No doubt such a woman, like Israel, has departed treacherously against her husband (Jer. 3:20) as well. She is the sinner who has caused the divorce, not Yahweh, and she committed adultery in her remarriage to Baal.

- You are admitting the reason for the exception clause, which makes the innocent part free from guilty and vindicates God's Law as proper and holy under the given circumstances; but Israel did not marry Baal or God could not call her back to himself. God is properly using His own law; but this situation is in type and not real, because Baal did not exist, and Israel was a nation, not a woman.

Also, consider Joseph's intention to divorce Mary, his espoused wife. Matthew calls him a "just man." So, Joseph was not causing her to commit adultery, for she was already guilty of doing so, at least the evidence pointed that way.

- Now you are thinking. Joseph ALSO WOULD NOT BE COMMITTING ADULTERY TO REMARRY

The Erasmian could counter that this exception merely is tautological, i.e., pointing out what is obvious by definition, and thus would be strange for Jesus to have wasted words in saying that. That point would be valid, if in fact Jesus is not making any linkage to divorce as an adulterous act. However, he seems to be doing just that, and in light of Jesus' judicious treatment of men and women alike, he does not mean then that we should ALWAYS be blaming the divorcing husband, when the reality is that sometimes the wife indeed is at fault.

- You obviously didn't read my book or didn't understand it or you wouldn't be musing over all this that is clearly explained.

No, Mark, I read your book, and have sufficiently answered potential objections you would have raised. You originally asked me to give MY position on this topic, not to give a point by point rebuttal to your book.

Actually you were to present your case against mine since you already had mine; but you certainly have not answered my objections to your catholic patristic view.

Also, if as some commentators suggest, the Greek tense of the verb indicates a present action on the part of the wife, then Jesus is saying that she commits adultery upon being divorced, regardless of when she eventually remarries. This textual argument fits too with Jesus' other radical heart challenges in his Sermon. So, the idea would be that remarriage after divorce is adultery, and being divorced itself leads to immediate adultery.

- These common-tators are full of starch.
- Well, that is a funny remark. I must admit.

We might wonder why Jesus thinks this is so, but he knows our hearts better than anyone else. Furthermore, though my argument does not rely upon this point being true, it would lend further support for why Jesus includes the exception in Matthew Five: a woman's fornication has not changed her into an adulterous woman, so the man does not bear that responsibility in putting her away. In sum, if Jesus meant she committed adultery presently or if he meant that she committed adultery upon remarriage, he is therefore relieving the innocent husband of his guilt in this whole situation.

- How could she commit adultery by being divorced for fornication, except that the breaking of the marriage covenant is on her head and not his; but this is not what you are saying.
- How could she commit adultery by being divorced unlawfully??
- This is more confusion.

Mark, Jesus explicitly says the innocent woman commits adultery. This fact is irrefutable.

Jesus says the man who abused God's Law causes the wife to "break wedlock" when she remarries --- remember the original meaning of the words?

This means that the abuser of the Law is not only guilty of his own abuse of the law, but he is guilty of the accompanying problems it creates. ON JUDGMENT DAY A WOMAN WHO WAS REMARRIED ACCORDING TO GOD'S LAW IS NOT GOING TO BE CHARGED WITH COMMITTING ADULTERY IN THE SENSE YOU ARE SAYING. THAT IS NOT WHAT JESUS IS DOING. JESUS WAS NOT OVERTHROWING MOSES' LAW AND MAKING ALL WHO WERE REMARRIED BY IT CONTINUOUS ADULTERERS WHO MUST LIVE CELIBATE.

AGAIN! IF JESUS AND THE APOSTLES SAW THE SECOND MARRIAGE AS CONTINUOUS ADULTERY, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN PREACHING THAT AND SEPARATING REMARRIED COUPLES --- THEY DID NOT!!

In addition, I Corinthians 7:15, written before Matthew's Gospel, states, "But and if the unbelieving depart, let them depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such case: but God hath called us to peace." This factor leads me to conclude that Jesus and Paul are both making more than just tautological points regarding who is to blame for divorce. Paul is not holding the innocent Christian spouse responsible for the divorce. To be consistent, I believe that Paul still would have agreed that if a woman was divorced and she longed for a new lover, then she would be committing adultery, at least in her heart. But the possibility exists that a Christian may be divorced and yet not long to be with a new spouse.

- Did Paul know what Jesus said before Matthew was written? Yes, so what difference does that make if Corinthians was written before Matthew???? You are out of touch with first century Christianity.
- Why don't you listen to Paul? *I Cor. 7: 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.*
- We don't have to see it as a woman wishing for a new "lover", but we can see it as the natural God given need for companionship that Paul and Jesus both declare is a strong desire and only certain ones have the "gift" to remain single and content. Jesus said, "Not all men can receive this" – that is "singleness".

We can note, of course, that Jesus is addressing men in his Sermon. Assuming that Jesus even granted the right for a woman to divorce, we can reasonably conclude that Jesus and Paul are picturing cases where the parties are forced into a divorcement, and thus they are not held accountable for the divorces.

- This would explain God's wisdom is allowing them to remarry and have companionship into their old age. Men needed a wife often for the care of the house, etc.

It is a point which apparently both Jesus and Paul felt important enough to convey. Thus, Jesus and Paul certainly believed in the possibility of a just person being forced into divorce but not being forced to adultery. Furthermore, Paul gives two options for the divorced Christian: Remain single or be reconciled. Divorce is a real condition, but Jesus and Paul do not then concur that remarriage is therefore permissible.

- **WRONG: Jesus did acknowledge remarriage as a option in Deut. 24 and in His exception clause – and in His evaluation of the Woman of Samaria. Paul clearly acknowledged the idea of remarriage, but not for two believers who are separated and need to reconcile. READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE.**

Reason Number 2) The Pharisees were from the School of Shammai. In *Jesus the Pharisee*, Peter Falk writes convincingly that the School of Shammai dominated first century Judaism. In contrast, the School of Hillel consisted of a small minority.

- **WRONG: Gamaliel, the renowned president of the Sanhedrin and Paul's teacher growing up as a schooled Pharisee -- was the grandson of Rabbi Hille!! He is the one who presided over the counsel.**
- **Notice that the Bible never even makes the Hillel-Shammai distinction. The reason is that they were all basically in the same camp against the Sadducees, Herodians, etc. When Paul stood up in the counsel and said, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" He didn't have to make the distinction. People today are making a big deal out of it trying to force their heresy on the Word of God!**

Well, which is it, a group of mixed Pharisees approaching Jesus, or the Shammaites, who historically were dominant before the fall of the Temple? Again, my view is not undermined necessarily if the hillelites did ask the question, but your view is undermined if the Shammaites asked it.

PLEASE TELL ME NOW MY POSITION IS UNDERMINED. JESUS' ANSWER WAS THE SAME. I THINK ANY REASONABLE PERSON CAN TELL YOU THAT THE SHAMMAITES WOULD NOT HAVE ARGUED FOR THE HILLEL POSITION OR ASKED IF DIVORCE WAS LAWFUL FOR "ANY CAUSE"

Falk also notes that Jesus' harshest opponents would have been the Shammai Pharisees. The Shammaites argued that adultery was the only grounds for divorce, while the Hillelites argued that any cause a man had was grounds for divorce. So, If fornication in Matthew 19 qualifies both divorce and remarriage, (option 1) it is unlikely these Pharisees would tempt Christ with a question that Christ and they would have agreed upon in general.

- **YES, which again proves that Jesus' tempters were not Shammaites, but Hillelites. Do you think Jesus had to disagree with every known teaching on earth to be the Son of God? When Jesus comes again will he agree with anybody? In Rev. 2 & 3 there WERE a couple churches that didn't receive a rebuke. Your push to make Jesus say something completely different from all the Jews and the very Scriptures is foolish.**
- **no, Mark. It was simply to show that the Shammaites too did not agree with Jesus. If the questioners were from Shammai, you yourself recognize that Jesus would have disagreed with them. You seem to refuse even the possibility that this is the case.**

You are building on air – Jesus' answer was the same regardless of who asked it; and there is no basis for saying that Jesus had to disagree with the people asking. The reason it seems that Jesus was not in their

camp is because they seem to argue for “every cause”. Nobody should build their interpretation of Scripture on a flimsy foundation of “I think they were Shammaites” or “I think they were Hillelites” — this is silly. The foundation of the argument is built on solid rock:

- **Jesus did not come to correct His own inspired Word**
- **Malachi backs this up as plain as day**
- **Moses’ Law was upheld and obeyed by the apostles**
- **The new covenant was God’s Laws written in our hearts**
- **The believer who walks in the Spirit fulfills the righteousness of the Law of Moses**

SOLID ROCK!

Matthew 19 and Mark 10 both record the Pharisees tempting Jesus with a difficult question to incriminate him in some way. Often when Jesus' opponents asked him a trap question, he would challenge them with a clever response instead of a straight "yes" or "no." For example, when the Pharisees ask him, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or no" he responds with, "Show me a coin. Whose inscription is on it? . . . Give to Caesar's what is Caesar's and to God's what is God's." In Matthew 19, he gives neither a *yes* nor *no*, but a challenging answer his opponents failed to see. He knew their evil motives lied behind their trap question. So, what was the trap in this case? If he answered "yes," to their question of "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every cause?" he would be contradicting his own stance on the Sermon on the Mount. If he answered "no" then he would be contradicting the Law of Moses.

- **WHAT? COME ON! YOU THINK THE LAW OF MOSES ALLOWED MEN TO PUT AWAY A WIFE FOR "ANY CAUSE". YOU THINK GOD IS THAT CARELESS WITH PEOPLE’S LIVES? SHAME ON YOU!**

So, they are pitting Jesus against Moses himself. Some argue, though, that they were wanting him to side either with Shammai or Hillel. And thus, if he answered "yes", the Shammaites could argue he was limiting the woman's rights, but if he argued "no," then they could argue that he was limiting the man's rights. This is a possibility, given the phrase "for every cause," but it does not seem as likely of a trap question, because his choosing one option could have them all agreeing with Jesus. Notice how Christ takes them to the Word of God, just as he did with the Saducees' question on the resurrection. He told the Saducees they were ignorant of Scriptures and now he tells the Pharisees, "Have ye not read. . ." Not a flattering remark to make to respected Torah scholars! Here Jesus says,

"Have ye 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 twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." (Matt. 19:4-6)

Notice how he appeals to Genesis as more foundational than Deuteronomy.

- **Moses wrote both. They were both part of the Law of God. Genesis reveals God’s original intent; but Deut tells them what to do NOW THAT MAN HAD FALLEN AND SINFUL SITUATION NEEDED ANSWERS FOR "WHAT TO DO NOW" QUESTIONS.**

Why? It seems as though he wants to challenge not only their high view of divorce but also their low view of marriage. So, Genesis is his supporting argument refuting their original question on whether it is lawful to put away ones wife for every cause. Jesus first defines the Torah's definition of marriage as the following three actions: 1) to leave, 2) to cleave, and 3) Twain become one flesh. "One flesh" is something altogether different than "twain." One flesh is a man and woman relationship joined by God. Therefore, he concludes, "Let not man put asunder." Mark 10 ends Jesus' debate with the Pharisees with those words. The two accounts have

the order of conversation somewhat different, but it is interesting to note that Mark's Gospel ends with that statement. In Mark, he does not tell them directly "yes" or "no", but gives a most challenging command: "Let not man put asunder." The Shammai followers apparently did not have a high enough view of marriage. Jesus' conclusions on divorce and remarriage must not have set well in their heard hearts. Yet, if Jesus had agreed with their Rabbi Shammai, then they were not even challenged with anything, let alone pointlessly debating him in the first place. Furthermore, a better harmony in Mark and Matthew sees the Pharisees' question as essentially the same, whether it be "Is it lawful" or "Is it lawful for every cause." To make too much of "every cause" in Matthew makes Matthew's account way too modest of a question with which to trap Jesus compared to Mark's account. "For every cause," has more similarity with "Is it lawful," rather than a shortened phrase from Mark missing some critical information that we are suppose to assume the reader understood.

- Do you think Jesus was only asked this once in His life and Ministry? Don't you think Mark recorded the even he remembered and Matthew recorded the one he remembered and they could easily have been two different events with two different questions? No doubt. When they handed Mark's Gospel to people they were not assuming that these people would receive Matthew, Luke or John; but assumed this was all they needed.
- Possible but not likely, given the heavy similarities.

HA! THEY WERE ALL WRITING ABOUT THE SAME LIFE! HOW MANY CITIES IN JUDEA HAD PHARISEES? HOW MANY CITIES DID JESUS PREACH IN? HOW MANY TIMES DID THIS HAPPEN? HOW SIMILAR WOULD THESE TIMES WOULD ALL HAVE BEEN? THINK ABOUT IT.

Reason 3) Jesus' two sayings, "Let not man put asunder" and "In the beginning it was not so," are unqualified prohibitions that refer to *something*, either divorce *alone* or divorce and remarriage *alone*, thus making the Patristic Interpretation closer to the truth than the Erasmian. Christ's words, "Let not man put asunder," mean that *something* is being universally forbidden.

- **WRONG AGAIN; "Let not man put asunder" CAN ONLY MEAN "let not man put asunder contrary to God's Law" and "upon his own judgment contrary to God's judgment". It can ONLY MEAN this because Jesus NEVER spoke contrary to God's scriptures which Jesus inspired. When Jesus spoke against "doctrines of men" He wasn't saying that all doctrine or teaching by men was wrong; but that men teaching doctrines contrary to God's Word was wrong. He means the same here!**

The question is, in light of the exception clause, is Christ forbidding all divorces or all divorces and remarriages? This verse is challenging for both views.

- **IT IS NOT A CHALLENGE AT ALL WHEN YOU HARMONIZE CHRIST WITH HIS OWN LAW!! THE LAW MALACHI SAID HE WOULD BRING THE PEOPLE BACK TO. THEY LAW HE CAME TO WRITE ON OUR HEARTS. THE LAW WHICH WE WHO WALK IN THE SPIRIT FULFILL!!**

We must harmonize this radical statement with all that Christ says, including his exception for fornication.

- **YES, KEEP GOING...INCLUDING HIS WORDS IN DEUT AND MALACHI – ALL JESUS' WORDS FOR HE IS THE WORD!!!**
- **Well, amen to that. I agree with you there.**

***!* ?????**

Yet the natural reading suggests that Christ is saying that no man should do *something* period. Mark's Gospel gives us a hint as to what this *something* is:

"And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." (Mark 10: 11-12)

The disciples in a private setting asked Jesus again about his teaching on the *same matter*. They had already heard him tell the Pharisees that divorce and remarriage is adultery, according to Matthew's account. Apparently, though, they wanted to make sure they heard correctly. "Let not man put asunder" seems to be the most likely issue they would have wanted clarification on, since this commandment ended the debate in Mark 10. The reader of the Gospel could see a strong link with this prohibition and his further explanation that divorce and remarriage is adultery. "Let not man put asunder" refers at the very least to all divorce and remarriages.

- **It refers to all unlawful ones; but Jesus doesn't prohibit men from obeying God's Word!**

The text does not say, "Whosoever divorces commits adultery, but whosoever divorces and remarries." The Patristic View may not fully resolve the tension, but the Erasmian View fares worse for it has a much harder dilemma to resolve. (?????????????) It must answer how it is that Jesus can forbid men to put asunder something that he also clearly would not forbid every man to put asunder, given the right exceptions. Christ's words may be stricter on divorce than what the Patristic View says. That possibility can be granted. Much harder to grant, though, is the possibility that Christ's words are less strict on remarriage than what the Patristic View says. Otherwise, Christ is just stating a general prohibition of *let not man put asunder* unless it be for the cause of fornication. (Duh!) Yet oddly, neither Mark nor Matthew bothered to include that exception to Christ's statement. (Nothing odd about it) Matthew 19 gives us a different, yet complementary, chronology of when Jesus pronounces, "Let not man put asunder." Here it is followed by the Pharisees' follow-up question: "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away?" To the Pharisees' credit, they ask a legitimate rebuttal question. Jesus had quoted Moses, and so they quote Moses back at him. The Pharisees understand Jesus to be prohibiting something that they did not believe should be forbidden. Like the ancient scribes, they believed Deuteronomy to be the deciding factor. Of course, God inspired Moses to write all five books of the Torah (i.e., Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). In his infinite wisdom, Jesus redirects the issue not to himself against Moses but to what passage in Moses' Law is more relevant to divorce. Verse 8 has Jesus' answer: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so." Jesus challenges them with a righteous application of the Law more than just a nice history lesson on Genesis and marriage in order to remind them of what marriage was like in the Fall. (Before the fall you mean) Jesus explains, "From the beginning it was not so," both to support a positive case for Genesis marriage and to argue a negative case against adulterous marriage: "And I say unto you, whosoever puts away his wife, except it be fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her, which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matt. 19:9) Jesus cites Genesis as more relevant than Deuteronomy.

- **WRONG! How can two passages inspired by the same God through the same man for the same purpose be more or less relevant???? Genesis shows the original intent and Deut shows what to do after the fall of man when sin needed answers – "what to do now in this situation?" They were both relevant; but the Pharisees were looking at one without the other ---- JUST LIKE YOU ARE TRYING TO DO IN THE REVERSE!**
- **no, I am arguing that Jesus is citing Genesis as a strong point of rebuke to the Pharisees for something, most likely the right of remarriage. Genesis's original intent is a key argument for Jesus's case.**

Jesus is not setting Genesis against Deut. Jesus is revealing Genesis in Moses' Law to balance the use of Deut in Moses' Law – this is the proper way to use God's Law ---- REALIZING THAT MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE; BUT BY E V E R Y WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD. THIS MEANS WE NEED GENESIS, DEUT, AND MATTHEW AND THE REST OF IT TO OBEY GOD – WE CAN'T SET ONE AGAINST THE OTHER!

If the Pharisees thought Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was bad, then Jesus words here are even worse for them! **(They are the same)** Not only is the divorced woman and the man she remarries in adultery, but now the first husband commits adultery if HE remarries! Jesus defines *adultery* to include any divorcing husband who remarries another woman. **(WRONG)** However, the typical view of the day was that adultery was not something a man could do against his wife. Rather, it was something that could be done against him. No, Mark's Gospel does not have "for every cause" included in the Pharisees' question, but in both Gospels, Jesus' argument is essentially the same, as he quotes from Genesis. Christ here also holds the man accountable for the adultery of his wife, unless she is in fornication. This exception is the same given earlier on the Sermon on the Mount. "Let not man put asunder" is linked to "in the beginning it was not so," which is linked to divorce and remarriage, which is linked to adultery. Thus, both Matthew and Mark hint strongly that "Let not man put asunder" and "In the beginning it was not so" prohibit divorce and remarriage, at the very least, if not all divorces. But what about Jesus correcting Moses? And are not people still heard-hearted today, and thus some divorce and remarriage is necessary? This brings me to my next point.

Reason number 4) The Patristic Interpretation harmonizes Deuteronomy 24 with Matthew 5; 19 and Luke 16 better than does the Erasmian Interpretation. First, both views should concede that marriage laws in the Old Testament, while including moral aspects, also had civil and ceremonial aspects. Like many of the Torah's commands, we do not have neatly packaged law codes that spell out either "moral," or "civil," or "ceremonial." Scholars have recognized the problems of oversimplifying the Torah into two or three rigid categories, when the context suggests that the laws formed an organic whole. With this in mind, I suggest at least two possibilities for how to harmonize Moses with Jesus. First, we could argue that marriage law codes underwent a change even within the history of Genesis to Deuteronomy. For example, while incest is always a form of fornication, incestuous marriage has not always been condemned by God. We know that Cain and Abel and their brothers married their sisters, at least for the first generation. Also, Noah's grandchildren would have married cousins. Abram married Sarai his half-sister. Jacob married his first cousins. Amram, Moses' father, married Jochebed, his aunt. Presumably, they would have died before Mosaic Law forbade such incestuous marriages.

- **Since when is marrying cousins condemned by God's laws in the OT? You don't know what you are talking about; but again you are trying to slander God's Word**
- **Try the law that forbids a man to approach someone next of kin. You are welcome to disagree with my understanding to include first cousins in this case.**

Read Lev 18 for your answer.

God has the sovereignty to amend some marital laws, which may have been acceptable previously but were now forbidden. If he did it in the case of incest, polygamy, and concubinage, then it is possible he did it in the case of divorce and remarriage. Possibly Jesus is meaning that the Mosaic concession for divorce was a temporary phase due to the hardness of men's hearts.

- **PRAY TELL ME WHEN THIS TEMPORARY PHASE OF MEN HAVING HARD HEARTS WAS OVER :}**

I leave that an open question, but you have to admit that incestuous marriage is no longer acceptable to God, do you not? If so, then God could also theoretically restrict his own marriage laws in accordance with his justice and sovereignty.

Where there is no law, there is no transgression – once the law came into affect, then marrying sisters or half sisters was over. God's Law is God's judgment call for fallen man.

ARE YOU SAYING THAT GODS' LAW TAUGHT INCESTUOUS MARRIAGE?

Maybe hard hearts are what polygamists are. Admittedly, divorce and remarriage scenarios get complicated when polygamy is already allowed. Nevertheless, the Old Testament Law tolerated polygamy. Both views should agree that at least some changes have occurred between Torah and Christ's words.

- **NOPE! ALL JESUS AND PAUL SAID THEY BASED ON THE TORAH FOR AUTHORITY – GO FIGURE.**

Abraham, though he was before the Law, was a God fearing man, who was told to put away his wife Hagar. Neither she nor Abraham were in fornication. Later after Sarah's death, Abraham's married Keturah. Did God consider Abraham an adulterer since Hagar was probably still alive when he remarried? Or, take an example of David. His father-in-law Saul took David's wife from him and gave her to another man. So now Michal was remarried to Paltiel. David then married two more women, Abinoam and Abigail. Saul did not have just grounds for forcing his daughter to divorce, and so David was an innocent party. Yet he "remarried" several other women. Did he commit adultery against Michal? Also, we have the account of King Ahasuerus putting away his wife Vashtai, but not for fornication. The King re- married his new wife in Queen Esther. Did Yahweh consider Esther to have committed adultery? All of the scenarios were both technically polygamous and technically divorce and remarriage with no fornication involved. Some time later, perhaps as polygamy was phased out near the Old Testament, or perhaps at Jesus' own pronouncement, polygamy was forbidden and so too was divorce and remarriage, which is serial polygamy. If this is true, then hard heartedness was a temporary concession, which God, in his sovereignty, tolerated.

- **This is crazy. Polygamy was still a reality in the days of the apostles and hardness of heart is still the going thing today and will be till heaven and earth pass away.**

You didn't address whether you thought Esther was in adultery, but I guess it doesn't matter since any marriage is legitimate to you once the "I dos" are said.

Of course Esther was not living in adultery – she was married.

Second , another way to reconcile Moses with Jesus is to argue that Jesus is saying that the hardness of men's hearts still requires a bill of divorcement, but the Genesis Law is also still binding on the man and woman, thus severely limiting the parameters of divorcement. And thus, we could say that Genesis interprets Deuteronomy, especially given that some of these divorce laws are more descriptive rather than prescriptive. Thus, the spirit of the Law has always been a high view of marriage and a low view of divorce and remarriage.

- **NOW YOU ARE THINKING! Deut was only to be interpreted in light of Genesis – of course! All the Word of God is to be interpreted in the light of the rest of the Word of God – THAT IS WHAT I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU!!!!**

The Erasmian view can also reconcile Moses with Jesus, but it does so at a cost to the context of both Matthew five and especially Matthew 19. **(WRONG – YOU JUST CONTRADICTED YOURSELF)** If the permission for divorce was to prevent heard hearted husbands from doing greater evil to their wives, then one can see why Mosaic Law assumes a husband's dislike for his wife as a valid reason for divorce, if nothing else to protect the innocent wife from an abusive marriage. Ironically, though, the argument that a woman should only be divorced for fornication rewards the guilty wife and punishes the innocent wife, if a heard hearted husband is making life miserable for her. **(NONSENSE)** We have already seen that Mosaic law gives broader parameters than fornication for a husband's reasons to put away his wife. **(I GUESS YOU KNOW THE LAW BETTER THAN JESUS AND SHAMMAI?) Did I say that? You like to straw man with ridiculous assertions.**

Again, a heard hearted man is in mind. He is obstinate and unbelieving. He hates his wife. He wants to get rid of her or do something worse perhaps.

-SO GOD MADE THE LAW SO THIS BRAT GOT HIS WAY???? Ok, think – God's laws are holy and perfect and a man caught picking up sticks on the Sabbath is put to death for despising the Law of God; but a obstinate, unbelieving, wife hater who wants to commit adultery is given concession!!!????
- God must be highly offended at your low view and Him and His laws

If Moses allowed divorces only for fornication, then this would restrict the husband's freedom to divorce a wife he already hates.

- God's law was not made to cater to ungodly hatred. The hatred spoken on had to be based on some legitimate reason which the judges would accept, or the man was brought under the condemnation of the law himself.
- Consider Deut 22:13 ¶ If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: 15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: 16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; 17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; 19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.
- NOW, SEE HOW WRONG YOU CAN BE!! WHY DID THE MAN "HATE" HIS WIFE?

Notice, Mark, what the Law says, "She is to be stoned! You apparently have a problem with that literal interpretation and so argue for a second option of what to do when you hate your wife. Yes, God's law was not to cater, but neither was it to make adultery seem okay as long as you are an innocent party and you can remarry

I don't have a problem with anything God's Word says, I am the one defending the consistency of God's Word – THE HOLY GHOST TEACHES THAT GOD AND JOSEPH WERE RIGHTEOUS IN PUTTING AWAY RATHER THAN STONING FOR FORNICATION! THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN RIGHTEOUS TO DO EITHER; BUT THERE WAS AN OPTION.

In this scenario Jesus acknowledges heartfeltness, but he does not acknowledge any freedom to remarry due to that fact (**WRONG**). Either route one chooses, they will find that the Patristic View better harmonizes Moses with Jesus than does the Erasmian View. Does Genesis override Deuteronomy? Yes, and that is fine.

- **WHAT NONSENSE!! LISTEN TO GOD SPEAKING TO MEN LIKE YOURSELF:**
 - **Mal 2:9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.**

But for the Erasmian View it is more difficult to explain Jesus' strategy of refuting the Pharisees with Genesis (???). Thomas Edgar claims that Jesus quotes Genesis only as the starting point for marriage, not the final word on it. Likewise, he says that if we argue for a pre-Fall view of marriage, with no divorce, then we do not even acknowledge the reality of sin, nor by implication, the need for a saviour (*Four Views* 138-39). Edgar, however, still offers no sound reason why Jesus quotes Genesis for a starting point. A starting point for what? To give a contrasting thought between pre-fall marriage and post-fall marriage? To get the Pharisees to see the reality of divorce as a post-fall condition?

- **OF COURSE!! So they will understand Deut in its proper light!! Duh, why would Jesus quote the starting point as a starting point??? God is showing you to be a fool because you are trying to make Him look like a fool with your low and partial view of His laws.**

Thank you for admitting my whole point to shed Deut. in its proper light. Yes, you are still calling me names in a debate, like the word "fool".

YOU SAID THAT GENESIS OVERRIDES DEUTERONOMY! THIS IS FOOLISH. Jesus and Paul called men fools who were not willing to just accept God's Word for what it said.

At the very least, Jesus wants to make Genesis a supporting argument for some kind of conclusion about divorce. Erasmian Interpretors want Deuteronomy to interpret Genesis; thus, Deuteronomy has the final word.

- **FOOLISHNESS! THEY ARE FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES – GEN WAS NOT TO DEAL WITH SIN AND REASONS FOR DIVORCE; BUT DEUT WAS – IT WAS THE SAME GOD WHO SAID BOTH!!**

The Erasmian answer is quite banal, for Jesus is doing nothing more than giving a historical argument for a condition that he no longer recognizes as normative. However, by such reasoning, we could also wonder too how it is that a pre-Fall marriage is monogamous, yet post-fall Deuteronomic Law assumes some polygamous marriage as valid. Therefore, using the Erasmian strategy, Deuteronomy gets the final word: polygamy is still valid! Indeed if the goal is to make Jesus harmonize with Moses, (**MAKE JESUS HARMONIZE WITH JESUS – YUP, THAT IS THE GOAL**) the Erasmian View will not succeed, for at least some factors—like fornication no longer bringing the death penalty, the reduction of reasons men may divorce their wives, and the Dt. 24 wife who is eligible to remarry after she was hated but now would be in adultery—argue that change has indeed occurred. For further proof that Jesus's stance against divorce and remarriage is lawful, consider as well Luke 16:17-18: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband commiteth adultery."

- **Think further!! Jesus told the rich man in hell (LUKE 16) that his brothers needed to repent and listen to what?? MOSES AND THE PROPHETS! OF COURSE JESUS IS SPEAKING CONSISTENT WITH HIS OWN LAW – HIS FATHER’S WORD – THE WORD OF GOD – GET IT!**

Wow, thanks for mentioning repentance, a term you believe does not apply to a divorced and remarried couple. I believe they still can repent, you do not in any real meaningful sense.

WOW, that was brilliant.

While it is possible that Luke is assuming the reader knew of an important exception to this lawful ruling, it is not very probable for several reasons. First, Luke's Gospel records Jesus' words against divorce and remarriage in light of his condemnation of the Pharisees' covetous hearts. The context suggests a continuous thread of thought here. They esteem money highly and they also esteem divorce and remarriage highly. Second, since Christ just declared the permanence of the Law, for him to omit a key exception to an otherwise definitive passage on the law is unlikely. The natural reading suggests no such exception in view. Yes, exceptions to a general rule do occur. Mark contains no exception to Jesus saying, "A wicked and adulterous generation seek for a sign, but no sign will be given thee," whereas Matthew adds, "except for the sign of Jonah." But, here, the exception and the general rule both fit, for the Pharisees were seeking a miraculous sign right now in front of their eyes and Jesus would not give it to them. However, in a statement such as Luke 16:18, Christ is making a strong case that divorce and remarriage being adultery are a part of the very Law that will not pass away. Luke captures the gist of what Christ has to say on this matter. It is far more likely that in this passage, there was no need to mention an exception to divorce alone, but to address divorce and remarriage as a whole.

- **I WISH YOU COULD JUST LISTEN TO GOD’S WORD – Here you contradict what you said earlier about all the Pharisees be Shammaites. You think that Jesus is speaking contrary to God’s Word but consistent with some other Law?? Jesus is doing exactly what Tertulian understood from the Bible in his day – Jesus is saying that to divorce for the express purpose of marrying again is adultery and an abuse of God’s Law through Moses --- HMMM – this is exactly what Malachi said Jesus would preach – COULD WE JUST ACCEPT IT?? NO! YOU CANNOT BECAUSE YOU LOVE YOUR OPINION TOO MUCH AND HAVE TO SOMEHOW PROVE JESUS IS NOT SPEAKING CONSISTENT WITH HIS OWN LAW AND ALLOWING DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE FOR CERTAIN REASONS. REPENT!**

Ah, and we are supposed to believe that you do not also love your opinion? I alone have insidious motives, and Mark supposedly does not. Looks like he is not playing a fair game in this debate. Again, his ad hominem remarks keep rolling in.

And the yo-yo keeps rolling up the termite.

To sum up thus far, we see Jesus is taking a heard stance against divorce, but he is taking a harder stance yet against remarriage. He seems to use this trap question from the Pharisees as an opportunity to teach two things: the positive case for marriage, and the negative case for adulterous marriage. Genesis is the positive case that foils the power of divorce, and Christ's declaration about adultery form his negative case against such remarriage. Divorce is simply the move from one flesh marriage to an adulterous marriage. Jesus is confronting hardened, adulterous hearts. In a way, both Shammai and Hillel had some truth, yet Jesus does not camp on either position, but states his own case. Shammai was right in perceiving the blame of the wife in her fornication, and Hillel was right in recognizing the power of the husband to divorce a wife he hated. But neither were prepared to come to the conclusion that the privilege of remarriage is actually adultery instead.

"Let no man put asunder." Said Christ. Think of how much divorce would be avoided if men and women knew that divorce and remarriage were adulterous. How many people actually think of just divorcing and living single the rest of their lives? Not too many. As Matthew Henry eloquently states, "The law of Moses considered the hardness of men's hearts, but the gospel of Christ cures it. By the law was the knowledge of sin, but by the gospel was the conquest of it." (*Commentary* p. 1300) Jesus gives men a high standard of marriage and the power of the gospel to fulfill it. Praise God!

- **SO SHORTSIGHTED! YES, Jesus cures hard hearts; BUT THIS ONLY PROVES THAT ALL WHO ARE NOT FOLLOWING JESUS STILL HAVE ONE!! THIS PROVES THAT THOSE WHO STRAY FROM JESUS REGAIN ONE! THIS PROVES THAT GOD'S LAW FOR HARD HEARTED SITUATIONS STILL APPLIES AND JESUS WASN'T DENYING THAT!!**
- **YOU AND YOUR CAMP DEMAND SEPARATION OF NEW CONVERTS TO COME TO GOD WITH DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IN THEIR PAST – THIS IS NOT GOD'S WILL!! GOD GAVE US HIS WILL IN HIS WORD CONSISTENT FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION.**

So if Christ is against remarriage, then what does he think about divorce alone? The answer depends on how we define "divorce." If we take it to mean the dissolution of a marriage, as the Pharisees thought, then "no," Christ is not allowing any such divorce. In that sense, Christ's words, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," is without qualification. But, if by "divorce" we mean a legal separation, with a state of singleness or reconciliation, then we might be justified in allowing them due to the hardness of men's hearts. However, if a man puts away his wife, and she does disobediently remarries, then the first husband shares the guilt for the adultery. For example, an unrepentant wife beater is endangering the very life of his wife and family. Is the wife justified in seeking a legal separation? I would say "yes." In keeping with the spirit of the law's intent to protect the wife, the husband could "divorce" her, and she be free from the danger. Christ came to fulfill the Torah, and until his teaching during his time on earth, men could wonder what freedoms divorce all entailed. Now, Christ, the Living Torah, has given us explicit instructions where the written Torah was not explicit. A woman and man divorced therefor are not free to remarry. At most, divorce is only allowable as a form of legal separation. Erasmians like to argue that legal separation was not a concept the Jews would have had. True, but neither was adulterous remarriage a concept the Jews would have had either. The sword cuts both ways in this debate. Mr. Edgar himself concedes that the results of divorce are what have changed between a lawful and a legal divorce, not the mode of divorce itself. I can agree with that claim while still maintaining that results of a divorce have changed in some ways from the traditional understanding of Mosaic Law that the Jews held.

- **EVER SEE A TERMITE.....? OH, I ALREADY SAID THAT. I've never seen so many dogmatic statements that are flat wrong in one dissertation before.**

Yeah, try a more scholarly approach instead of attacking the writer and his motivation. Your assertions are just as dogmatic Mark. You seem to have difficulty separating the objective arguments from an emotional tirade against me and those who hold such views. Perhaps your scornful approach is your normal method, but it doesn't look very professional nor courteous.

We will let Jesus be the judge of that.

Reason 5) Jesus would be more likely to treat the fornicating wife who is divorced in the same manner as he treats the innocent wife who is divorced: both of them are in adultery if they remarry.

- **What a statement! WHY would Christ be more likely to treat the fornicating wife in the same manner as He treats the innocent wife?? On what basis? Jesus is explaining the problems that abusing His own**

law causes, but not making it illegal for a divorced wife to marry. Jesus is not charging any crime upon the innocent wife!

Oh, but he is, which is the very conclusion you wish to avoid. You can't say the guilty wife shouldn't remarry, but you also can't say the innocent wife shouldn't remarry either, which is certainly a problem that needs to be overcome in your position.

NO, not when you see that Jesus is speaking consistent with His own inspired Word --- then all the problems disappear. I explain this in my book.

Otherwise, the guilty party has more privileges than the innocent party. If the Erasmian View is correct, then the exception clause permits remarriage only for the fornicating wife.

- You make it sound like she can just go down to "Husbands R Us" and get one. This is so shortsighted.
- Well, Jesus assumes she gets remarried, so some man obviously is willing to take her in.

Jesus is talking about laws, not case histories; and He is speaking consistent with His own Word.

If remarriage is seen as a consoling freedom for the divorced person, then we may wonder, "Why is the guilty woman freed up, but the innocent woman is not?" Intuitively, it seems arbitrary if not unjust that Christ forbids only the innocently divorced woman from remarrying. Historically, Christian churches have tended to argue for the innocent, and NOT the guilty party's freedom to remarry. Also, Jewish laws later penalized the fornicating woman in some way, saying she may not marry her adulterous lover, or some stricter rulings forbade her to remarry at all.

- Big stones have a way of stopping such transactions

While we see the justness in arguing this case, the Erasmian view turns this consensus on its head. Rather than being a penalty, fornication becomes a perverse incentive! (Oh my!) The Patristic View argues for a more consistent dealing with the guilty party: she may not remarry either. "She should be allowed to remarry," say Erasmians, "because the first marriage is dissolved." Yet, we also see this near universal trend on Erasmian's parts to grant remarriage privileges to an innocent party." If the Patristic View is correct, Jesus is not saying in Matthews Five and Nineteen that ONLY an innocent woman may not remarry. However, the Erasmian View, if true, IS saying that ONLY an innocent woman may not remarry. Jesus, ever the perfect judge, would not give more of a reward for wrongdoing than for right doing. Rather, a universal prohibition for women who fornicate and women who do not seem to be more plausible of a stance, especially in light of Mark Ten, where any divorcing woman also may not remarry.

- I'm glad you are not my pastor and the one I have to depend on to lead me to Christ – Oh my.
- So am I!

Reason 6) The Patristic View better harmonizes Matthew's account with Mark's additional statement from Jesus: "And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

- This is all nonsense that I have already answered too many times, so I am not going to deal with it all piece by piece – If you can't see the truth by now in my rebuttal and the error in this thesis, then I cannot help you.

This statement is mentioned in Mark, but not in Matthew. Yet we know Christ made this pronouncement in the house with his disciples, after the Pharisees had questioned him. Most likely, Jesus spoke twice on the issue, once in front of the Pharisees and disciples and another in front of the disciples privately. Notice how in the second meeting, he mentions no exception for *any woman* who divorces her husband. Perhaps Jesus meant this statement only as a general rule, just like he did for the men. Under Mosaic Law, nothing is mentioned of a woman's right to put away her husband. Obviously, Jesus recognizes that women in his time were indeed divorcing their husbands. Would he be unfair then, to exclude any divorcing woman's right to remarry another man? One could argue either way. However, suppose that Jesus did not mean to give women an exception to remarry. That Jesus would grant remarriage privileges to divorcing men but not to divorcing women seems odd and out of character with Jesus' just treatment of women. While we could say he upholds the Torah law for no wives being able to divorce, we can at least envision scenarios where a wife appeals to her husband to divorce her. Not so with remarriage. No amount of a wife's appeals are going to change the fact, that as a woman she may not remarry, after divorcing her husband. Now suppose, instead, that Jesus did mean to give women the same exception privilege that he grants for men. We have already seen the Erasmian View inverse the normal guilty punished and innocent rewarded thought, and if, there is no exception for women in Mark, we have noted the unfair advantage a divorcing man would have over a woman. These scenarios are at best arbitrary, and at worse, unjust. Now, watch what happens when women have the exception privilege, as shown in these four possible categories a divorced woman would fall into:

- 1. All wives that are rightfully divorced (i.e. they fornicate) by their husbands.**
- 2. All wives that are wrongfully divorced (i.e. they did not fornicate) by their husbands.**
- 3. All wives that wrongfully divorce their husbands (i.e., they did not fornicate).**
- 4. All wives that rightfully divorce their husbands (i.e, they fornicate).**

A divorced woman will fall into only one of these four groups. Under the Erasmian View, if she falls into group one, she is free to remarry, since the marriage is dissolved. If she falls into group four she is free to remarry based on a supposed exception clause for women. However, if that is true, then that means that, at the very least, wives in groups two and three are forbidden to remarry, for there was not a valid divorce involved. Now suppose that a group four woman rightfully divorces her fornicating husband. The husband is now the guilty party, for if Matthew's exception applies for the man, then he, as well as his wife, are now free to remarry. However, what were to happen if the wife is slow in initiating the divorce, and the man takes quick action, hires a lawyer, and proceeds to "beat her to the finish line," so to speak? Now, option no. 4 has taken a dramatic reversal! The wife is now the innocent party who is being put away, which makes her ineligible to marry, which puts her in a different grouping altogether: group two. Or consider the wife under group two. We have already noted the oddity of her being rewarded the freedom to remarry, which Jewish and Christian rulings testify against. But another oddity emerges. If she fornicates and decides to "beat her husband" to the divorce courts, then she now becomes disqualified from remarriage. But, if the husband takes the action first, then she is free to marry. Would it make a difference if the fornicating wife urged her husband to divorce her? What then? Is she free because she was officially divorced by him, or is she not free because she urged him to divorce her? If the Erasmian view is true, these scenarios are purely arbitrary. We can give no plausible reasons why wife no. 2) should be penalized for being too "quick" to initiate the divorce, while wife no. 3) is penalized for being too "slow" to initiate the divorce. All of this confusion comes because Jesus supposedly is saying that only fornicating women who do not initiate a divorce, but the man does, may remarry. Possibly a woman who rightfully divorces first may also remarry, but this is an assumption on our part. We would do better to interpret Jesus' exception clause as one that holds true regardless of who divorces first. But, the Erasmian view cannot get past this interpretive hurdle, without insisting that it DOES matter who divorces first. So not only are Erasmian distinctions arbitrary and unfair, they are also confusing. What in case a wife

decides to put away her fornicating husband, but before doing so, they separate, and in the meantime, she has sex with another man? Now both husband and wife are both in fornication. If she continues with the divorce, is she free to remarry because of his fornication, or is she not free to remarry because of her fornication? To avoid such dilemmas, the easiest route would be to grant all guilty/guilty parties, and all guilty/innocent parties alike freedom to remarry, just so we can be fair minded. That leaves us with the hapless innocent/innocent parties in which neither one, due to their integrity, may remarry ever, unless, death occurs. We wish not to be crass, but only to note that even then, arbitrariness seems to be the order of the day—for though the guilty/innocent distinction is now less confusing, it still leaves us wondering why two innocent parties are thus prohibited, but everyone else is rewarded. The Patristic View, then, although strict on all parties, at least treats them all judiciously the same; and, such a harmony of Matthew with Mark resonates better with the exception applying only to a divorce and not to remarriage.

Reason 7) If Matthew 19:9 makes an exception for divorce and remarriage, then Jesus would be contradicting his own stance that at least some divorces do not actually end marriages. I have already alluded to this interpretive problem for Matthew five. The same holds true for Matthew nineteen, if the Erasmian conclusion is correct that divorce for fornication does dissolve a marriage. However, for the Erasmian, any remarriage after *any* divorce, frivolous or not, creates a new valid marriage and dissolves the previous marriage. Thus, Jesus both would be affirming and denying his own statements on divorce: that not all divorces are valid, but all divorces are valid—once remarriage has occurred! The Erasmian wants to deny the power of an morally unlawful divorce to dissolve a marriage. Yet, they also want to grant the power of a remarriage to dissolve the previous marriage. Simply put, the only difference between a lawful divorce and an unlawful one is that the latter contains a brief interim of illegitimacy from the signing of the papers until one of the spouses soon remarries. Perhaps the dissolution begins even sooner, the moment the divorcees start looking on-line for a new spouse. Most Christians would consider such kind of internet browsing a blatant act of fornication, if it happened *before* a divorce. Surely, the same holds true *after* an invalid divorce. If an adulterous marriage is only a one time act, then the Erasmian View has to grant this odd state of affairs: when a divorcee commits adultery when he remarries, he or she obtains three intrinsic benefits from this act: 1) his new marriage becomes binding, 2) his wrongful divorce now becomes ratified, and his previous marriage becomes dissolved. It is hard to think of a better consolation prize to give an adulterer, when just seconds before the vows are exchanged, the parties were in an adulterous love affair. In fact, it is all the better now that they are married, so that the adultery will stop. We hear statements such as, "A divorced couple should try to reconcile unless the window of opportunity has been closed." It is a nice way of saying that if one or both of the parties remarry, then someone has fornicated and thus any divorce now has lawful grounds. If remarriage constitutes a "point of no return" for an individual, then Christ has given the very loophole he supposedly was condemning. In fact "the window of opportunity" might close just days after an invalid divorce, for the husband or wife could fornicate in their quest for a new spouse. Thus, many Christian pastors can frown upon a remarriage situation in their church, but their own doctrine demands that the marriage be sanctioned once they say the "I dos," if not earlier. If the Erasmian interpretation is true, then Jesus is affirming the very thing he is trying to deny, all in the space of two sentences! This exception doesn't even lift off the ground before it "dissolves" into a non-issue. We must respectfully challenge the Erasmian to explain how he can mount a response to the fact that he has made Jesus saying the following absurd form of argument:

*Jesus believes that an unlawful divorce does not dissolve a marriage.

*Jesus believes , therefore, that a remarriage after any unlawful divorce is adultery, since the original marriage has not been dissolved.

*Jesus believes that this adultery does dissolve a marriage that was moments earlier non-dissolved by an unlawful marriage.

Conclusion: Jesus believes an unlawful divorce does not dissolve a marriage AND a that an unlawful divorce does dissolve a marriage with the ensuement of a remarriage, perhaps even sooner.

Thomas Edgar, an Erasmian Interpretor, anticipates this dilemma, when, commenting on Matthew 19:9, he says the following:

If the exception clause were placed after the verb *marries*, as some claim it should be if the verse were to allow remarriage, then it would read, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another except for fornication commits adultery." This makes the exception the reason for the remarriage, rather than the divorce. This is absurd. With this view, anyone can divorce for any reason and not commit adultery so long as they marry another for the purpose of fornication. The only divorced person restricted from remarriage would be one who does not marry due to sexual lust. (*Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views*, p. 101)

- YOU ALL NEED TO GO BACK TO FIRST GRADE! YOU CAN PUT THE EXCEPTION CLAUSE ANYWHERE IN THE SENTENCE AND IT STILL MODIFIES THE WHOLE SENTENCE!
- YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE REFUTING MY BOOK, NOT ALL THESE OTHER GUYS WHOM YOU SET UP AS REPRESENTING ME.
- THIS IS WASTING MY TIME. I WROTE A BOOK TO DEAL WITH ALL THIS, AND YOU ARE BOUNCING AROUND IN LEFT FIELD.

well, Mark, again, you say "You all." Remember, it is just me that you are debating. I am arguing that grammatically the exception clause could refer to both divorce and remarriage or just to divorce. The issue is, what is the more probable interpretation. D.A. Carson, one of the best Erasmian scholars, would even acknowledge this, so the issue is what scenario best fits the context of Jesus's words along with the other divorce and remarriage saying along with the disciple's responses.

If you allow the Bible to interpret the Bible, rather than build on man's speculations, you wouldn't have these problems. Malachi tells you exactly what Jesus is doing!!

Edgar's point, however, does not overcome the simple fact that the improper/invalid/unlawful/unfustified (whatever we wish to call it) divorce is inherently validated once a remarriage has occurred. He ignores the obvious: if adultery is the same as fornication, therefore remarriage is fornication, which is an inherently lawful grounds for divorce. If Edgar and other hope to overcome such a contradiction in terms, then they must argue that an invalid divorce remains *forever invalid*, and that the resulting remarriage remains *forever adulterous and not valid*. Something tells me that Edgar, along with countless pastors, will stop well short of making such a radical declaration. We might as well wait for pigs to fly before waiting on pastors to encourage adulterous married couples to repent and forsake. Not going to happen, folks. Why? It is the dual combination of Erasmian and One-time Adultery doctrines that gives such a shaky rationale for anyone willing to confront a small minority of innocent couples wishing to remarry. Given the multitudes of adultery and desertion as just grounds for divorce, imagine the oddity of a pastor confronting such a rare couple:

Pastor (in his office facing newly married couple): Jim and Susie, I believe that your marriage here is adulterous, based on God's word. You need to repent and separate.

Jim: But Pastor, I divorced my first wife and she later remarried. Why can't I?

Pastor: Yes, but neither you nor your first wife were involved in fornication when you got the divorce.

Jim: So, are you saying I am still married to my first wife, who has already remarried someone else?

Pastor: Whoa, Jim! Don't confuse the issue of adultery with whether your first marriage is dissolved. There is no logical connection.

Jim: There is for me!

Susie: Me too! I am now married to my husband, and you have the gall to tell us to divorce our marriage that God has joined together!

Pastor: Jim, you and your first wife divorced because of financial conflict, not because of marital unfaithfulness. Your divorce was legal, but not lawful in Gods' eyes. That is all that matters.

Jim (Scribbles down something on piece of paper): Well, here you go, Pastor.

Pastor (Reading the paper): "I, Jim Davis, hereby divorce my wife Mary Davis, for her act of fornication in remarrying another man and living with him."

Susie (smirking): Looks like all you need now, Jim, is for your first wife to sign the paper.

Two weeks later--

Jim: Pastor, my first wife and I have both signed this new divorce paper stating the cause is for fornication. Now, are you still convinced Susie and I should not be married?

Pastor: Jim, you are a Hypocrite. A scribble on a paper doesn't dissolve a marriage.

Jim (angrily): No, Pastor, you are the Hypocrite! You just told me a few weeks ago that the issue of adultery has nothing to do with whether the first marriage is dissolved. Which one is it?

Pastor (shrugging his shoulders): Well, I guess your being in adultery does mean that your first marriage is not dissolved.

Jim (angrily): Then you are the one going against God's Word in Matthew nineteen, because my divorce is valid now before God, and that is all that matters!

What can we say then, if all this is true?

- **I CAN SAY YOU ARE ALL STUPID FOR NOT JUST FOLLOWING GOD'S LAW THROUGH MOSES, WHICH JESUS DID NOT CHANGE.**
 - **Isa 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**

Well, I am starting to feel like I am back in first grade with these childish remarks! Jesus clarified and gave us teaching with which to follow.

What does "clarified" mean?? I think this would have come in 4th grade, though.

Well, In the end, the Pharisees' precious freedom of remarriage remained intact. Jesus' words seem more like figurative language and hyperbole. No need to think of Jesus expecting us to repent and sin no more when it comes to remarriage. No need to think of Jesus giving us any commandment here for us to live by, just some cryptic rhetoric by a Rabbi to miff his opponents. **(Fools)** In contrast, The Patristic Interpretation offers no consolation prize for any divorcee who remarries: he is in adultery unless he repents and forsakes the sin. This view does not have Jesus denying his own claims about improper divorces. The lynchpin of Jesus' answer to the Pharisees is based on the whole issue of whether a remarriage after divorce is adulterous. After all, the question is not whether a remarriage after death is adulterous. Jesus indeed is making a serious, authoritative claims that we should consistently apply to those in divorced and remarriage situations. We need earnestly to know when Jesus thinks a marriage is dissolved. Imagine, further, if we treated other sins the way we did divorce and remarriage. For example, consider legal theft versus lawful theft. A king gives a legal decree that confiscates all his citizens' gold. But, it is not morally lawful for him to do so. A prophet comes to the king and states: "Oh King! Whenever a king confiscates his people's gold, except for the cause of disobedience, and spendeth the people's gold on his own personal pleasure, he commits theft! And whoever enjoys the king's gold also committeth theft. And oh King, now that you have spent their gold on yourself, the people are in disobedience by objecting to your decreee. You have now become the valid owner of the gold. However, you should still should repent of such theft, and make sure you do not spend the rest of YOUR gold unwisely!"

- **Ever see a termite fall out of a yo-yo?**

- **No, never have.**

I love you J----- , Repent and we can be friends!

Ah, but wait! Since there is only one king in this scenario, the exception applies to both of his actions, the confiscating and the spending. So also, as Mr. Edgar argues, Matthew 19:9 has one subject doing the divorcing and the remarrying. So, logically, he could remarry and NOT be in adultery. And logically, the king could confiscate the people's gold and spend it on himself and not be guilty of theft. True, the sentence structure allows for this possibility. In response, however, Matthew nineteen has condensed Jesus's earlier words in chapter five, or possibly the other ancient texts do in fact have the correct rendering: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, except it be for fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and remarrieth another committeth adultery."

- **This is sooooo stupid. You cannot tamper with God's word --- NAME THESE ANCIENT TEXTS! You are a heretic, and you cannot do this without God's wrath upon you. I fear for your soul.**
- **YOU CANNOT ESTABLISH YOUR CASE WITHOUT CHANGING THE WORDS JESUS SPOKE!! FACE IT!!!**
- **Mark, I do not know which of the names these ancient texts fall under. You seem unwilling to regard the possibility of some Bible Translations making better choices of textual variation over another. I am willing to allow the KJV text to stand; it doesn't undermine my point, I was just arguing as a secondary point that possibly the other texts better capture the Matt. 19 phrase so that we get the rest of the phrase from Matt. 5. Even if that is not true, I am still justified in seeing the exception clause as referring to similar scenarios, as the Matthew Gospel often repeats a saying of Jesus in later contexts.**

Either way, the one subject who is doing the divorcing and remarrying is not, by definition, able to remarry in other cases, if Matthew's exception applies only to one half of this passage. Furthermore, if the Bible contains any examples where a lawful divorce and remarriage was still not considered valid, it would evidence greater support for the Patristic Interpretation.

Reason 8) God did not consider his marriage with Israel totally dissolved, even though she was in fornication, was given a bill of divorcement, was put away, and was allowed to become another "man's wife."

- **SHE DID NOT BECOME ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE**

The Old Testament is full of references to God having Israel as wife in covenant relationship with him. Ezekiel 16:8 says, "I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine." His wife, however, commits whoredom and adulteries with other lovers. "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith Yahweh" (Jer. 3:20). He is forced to give her a bill of divorcement and to put her away. He even acknowledges the Deuteronomy 24:1-4 law disallowing a divorced a wife to return to her first husband: "They say, If a man put away 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? (Jer. 3:1) She becomes the wife to Baal (cf. Hosea 2) If ever a marriage has ended, surely Yahweh's qualifies! His wife is remarried, his own law forbids him from taking her back even if she did return. The evidence seems all in favour of a dissolved marriage. Maybe Yahweh should just accept the facts, concede the Law, and look for a new wife to remarry. It is over! Or wait, what is Yahweh now saying? "Turn, O backsliding children, saith Yahweh; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (Jer.

3:14). Surely God cannot be serious! Does he really think Israel is still married to him? His lawful divorce is dissolved, she is NOT his! Or is she? How persistent, how obsessed, how jealous is this Great Husband! God's amazing love for his whorish bride defies any common sensibility. Now what about the Law? As the righteous Husband, Yahweh lawfully disregards any claim that Deuteronomy 24: 1-4 has on his wish for a reconciled marriage. Yes, she appears to have been put away by her lovers who are fed up with her. Yes, she now has Baal for a husband. Sorry, Baal, but your wife is going to reconsider her current marriage and say to herself, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now" (Hosea 2:7). Yahweh will win her back! He tells us his strategy:

"I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the day of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith Yahweh, that thou shall call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. . . And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. (Hosea 6:14-17,19-20)

- **FOOLS, FOOLS, FOOLS: God is using a human scenario to illustrate the insult to Him in their idolatry – God is not violating His own law. NOR is He alleviating any human being from obeying His law.**

We can cite Deuteronomy 24:1-4. We can argue that the divorce was valid. We can have law and logic on our side. Yet God has the final say. If he can receive his wife again and still be righteous, then Deuteronomy 24 does not apply to this faithful Husband. "Yes, but his marriage is an allegory," someone may say. True, but consider how God used Hosea's marriage to illustrate His own marriage. Hosea's wife left him for another husband. Yet Yahweh tells Hosea, "Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of Yahweh toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine" (Hosea 3:1). Hosea obeyed God. Incidentally, we should admire the obedience of Hosea and his faithfulness to his unfaithful wife. He did not seek another wife to remarry, even though he was the innocent party. Imagine if he lived today! A pastor would refer him to a good Christian counselor, who would set him straight on the "foolishness of reconciliation" once a marriage is dissolved. Filled with compassion, our counselor would advise, "Hosea, you deserve better than this. You can still move on with you life. Let God heal your hurts and loneliness, and let him give you a fresh new start. It will be better for your children and for you. Why don't you try looking on E Harmony for a compatible young lady?"

- **Hosea's situation was most likely a vision, as it would take too long to do it all – wife and children – in reality and the message would not be timely and productive.**
- **God is not contradicting what HE WANTS MEN TO DO according to Deut 24:1-4**
- **YOU ARE SIMPLY MOCKING GOD'S WORD TO TRY AND GET RID OF HIS BELOVED LAW IN DEUT 24 – YOU ARE AN UNBELIEVER.**

Sadly, Yahweh's and Hosea's scenarios seem ridiculous, according to the popular Majority View, in which remarriage dissolves all previous ties. Yahweh views his own marriage with Israel as binding. Jesus, who is the Son of God, betrothed himself a bride, which is really a fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy.

- **Jesus will not have an unfaithful bride; and neither will God – individuals within the nation of Israel who were faithful were saved while the others were cut off, and the same goes for the churches. The churches of revelation would have been cut off for unfaithfulness if they didn't repent.**
- **God and Hosea's actions DID NOT relieve any Jew from obeying Moses' Law, as they did not violate Moses' Law, which was given for men to obey, and had nothing to do with God and a nation for**

Hosea's vision. Hosea married a woman who later become a harlot, but then he calls her back to himself – She is not remarried, as there is no husband to fight with Hosea; but she is said to have "lovers" plural and this is all visionary as to represent Israel's idolatry.

God has always had one bride (**only the faithful**), and now Gentiles may be grafted in to the New Jerusalem Bride. As one pastor has noted, "The Bible begins and ends with a marriage." In the beginning, Adam's wife is Eve, and in the end, the Lamb's bride is none other than the New Jerusalem, symbolic of Israel and a grafted in Israel. Back in Ezekiel, this Jerusalem bride was not very attractive. We may wonder at God's choice. But God is a covenant keeping God:

"For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. (Ezekiel 16: 59-60).

- **He is speaking to a nation – but His bride is made up of individuals who make up a remnant in this nation – READ Romans!**

Yes, but certainly the fact that we are not yet eating at the marriage supper of the lamb could also point to the idea that a backsliding Christian is in danger of being cut off. But, Christ doesn't then replace this individual with another individual wife.

The church is the bride – not the individuals. If we are unfaithful, we will not be part of the bride.

Consider the fact that Western Culture has preserved the wedding vows still spoken in ceremonies today. Did this tradition come from over zealous Church Fathers who took the New Testament too far? Or rather, did this tradition come from the very idea of a Biblical covenant that God himself initiates? When you covenant with someone, you promise to fulfill your role to them. The question is, "Are most Biblical covenants conditioned upon the other party's actions?" Or, are they unconditional? God's steadfast love for faithless Israel – described so well in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea--provides great evidence to the view that marriage is a covenant of unconditional faithfulness.

- **WRONG: There is no unconditional love taught in the Bible or unconditional covenants, otherwise you don't believe anyone is going to hell and everyone is going to heaven. This is rank heresy**

The couples today vow, "For better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." This vow is a carry-over from something. That *something* happens to fit well with the Bible's stance. Given the majority Erasmian View of today, however, we ought to amend such a vow to say the following: "I vow to love you till death, so long as you are faithful in our relationship, so long as you do not desert me, and so long as neither of us gets divorced and remarries another." It doesn't sound as romantic, but it would better capture the church's mainstream doctrinal stance. We might as well scrap the outdated older vows and find one that better fits the Erasmian interpretation. Or. . . maybe couples do want to say these archaic vows.

- **Nonsense! "till death do us part" is the goal at marriage, but any thinking person knows that when one breaks the terms of a covenant, then it is broken, and the other party cannot change that.**
- **YOU ONLY SHOW THAT YOU HATE GOD'S LAWS AND WANT YOUR OWN TO BE ESTABLISHED. YOU WOULD DETHRONE GOD AND SET YOURSELF UP IF YOU COULD, BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE DOING IN THIS PAPER.**

Maybe they do want to have their spouse love them unconditionally. Maybe. . . but will our pastors hold them to it, when times get tough, when divorce and remarriage occur? Not likely. However, if the Patristic Interpretation is true, and that adulterous remarriage is continuous, then men and women indeed might think more soberly about going to the marriage altar. Perhaps they might think singleness would be a better road if marriage is a unconditional covenant for life. Can we think of any others who thought that way? Yes, as we shall see in the next reason.

Reason 9) The disciples' response in Matthew 19:10 fits better with Jesus making no exceptions for remarriage after divorce. They already knew the Shammai School of interpretation. Rabbi Shammai did not cause people to mutter to themselves, "Wow, if Shammai's argument is true, it is better not to marry, because I can only divorce for uncleanness, which is adultery."

- **How do you know what Hillelites said about Shammaite arguments??? You are so presumptuous.**

Yet, Rabbi Jesus' interpretaion does cause his disciples to make a surprising conclusios relationship that divorce does not dissolve and that divorce and remarriage are acts of adultery.

- **That is not what they said – Now you are a false witness.**

The odds are great that Shammai's view is not the one in question, for such an exception, coupled with desertion, does not severely restrict marriage.

- **Your goal is to severely restrict marriage, not Jesus'.**
- **The disciples were surprised that a man couldn't just get rid of an ornery wife; but had to forbear her.**

Now, did the disciples believe that Jesus meant adulterous remarriage to be a one time act? We all know that an adulterous act is a forbidden sexual act with someone who is not your spouse. A man and woman who marry rightly do not commit adultery when they say their wedding vows, nor when they have sex on their wedding night. But Jesus has just told his disciples that it is not so with an adulterous marriage. But if the Majority View is correct, the disciples believed Jesus was still sanctioning an adulterous remarriage once the initial act was committed.

- **Come on! The Lord Rebuke You.**

The disciples would not have missed the fact that remarriage has become a prized premium above any questionably grounded divorcement. They would likely not have said, "If such is the case, it is better for a man not to marry." Yes, the disciples were sometimes dense, but they would have seen the obvious implication of a remarriage-- it does the very thing an invalid divorce CANNOT do: end the first marriage. So, oddly, this remarriage act that Christ calls "Committing Adultery," is simultaneously being joined by God in one flesh, to the exclusion of all others. We either must admit that adultery is not a one time act, and therefore the remarriage is in a continual state of adultery, or admit that the remarriage is valid and therefore dissolves the original marriage.

- **YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS DENSE. Here you are calling the disciples dense – they know much more about the issue than you do, and they were the very one's Jesus chose to use – He didn't choose you. YOU ARE WICKEDLY ARROGANT. HOW DARE YOU CALL THE VERY APOSTLES DENSE. WHAT A FOOL YOU ARE.**

I said they were sometimes dense. I am concluding this based on the Gospel's accurate portrayal of a band of men who are also called heard hearted.

If Michael should not even bring a railing accusation against Satan, then we need to reverence the apostles, and not call them dense. You and I don't hold a candle to them! Jesus chose them and gave them great power – remember what happened to Miriam for speaking against Moses?

So, in the second option, all remarriages validate any and all divorces. So, what was Christ trying to argue for then? A position like Shammai's? Or perhaps a modest admission that remarriage is not nice but still valid? And did the disciples understand Christ's words to mean either or both of those positions? They heard him tell the Pharisees about adultery. Later, at the house, the disciples asked Christ to explain his position for the second time. These disciples had time to mull over Jesus' words. If they understood *adultery* to mean a one time act in a remarriage situation, why would they remark in 19:10 "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry"?

- **They understood adultery to be the violation of the marriage covenant – like Moses' Law said. They knew that lawful divorce allowed lawful remarriage – this was a given; but they were surprised that a man could not get rid of a sassy and ornery wife.**

They would have followed the logic through and seen that an unhappy marriage would be dissolved if divorce and remarriage occurred. This one-time sin reaps benefits to the disciples. If they understood Jesus to be agreeing with Shammai, a well known interpretation of the day, it would that mean that the disciples were all strict followers of Hillel, and were surprised that Jesus sided with the opposing view of Shammai.

- **It doesn't mean they were "strict followers of Hillel" but simply that they had understood Deut 24 as Hillel said.**

Given the Jews' low view of eunuchs and their stigma against unmarried men, it is highly unlikely they would have reached such a drastic conclusion from Jesus' Shammaite declaration. Either way, we must validly ask, Did the disciples sincerely think that a life of singleness, with no sexual relations, no children to beget, is better than a marriage that could be divorced unlawfully, and yet be ended simply by a subsequent remarriage? **(YOU ARE SO FOOLISH)** The disciples' statement do not fit the context, unless they simply misunderstood Jesus's words. If so, though, why did Christ not correct their conclusion? He should have said, "You do not understand my saying. I am not forbidding all remarriages. And I am not nullifying the validity of an adulterous remarriage." Rather, the reason Jesus does not correct them is the same reason he does not correct their other startling conclusion several verses later, in which they state, "Who then can be saved?" What the disciples learned in Jesus' debate with the Pharisees and with his conversation to the rich young ruler led them to make startling conclusions. No, we do not know how their tone of voices were when they said these statements, but they said it sincerely and Jesus does not correct them, but rather accepts the soundness of their conclusions. The disciples' response in Matthew 19 leads Jesus to his lecturing them about the value of singleness for service in God's Kingdom. The Patristic View maintains this logical and contextual connection between the divorce and remarriage comments leading to the disciples' remarks and Jesus's statements on eunuchs. The Majority View severs this logical connection. And, even if the disciples thought that a remarriage was forever adulterous, they still would have likely not been surprised at Jesus' Shammaite declaration.

- **CONFUSION, CONFUSION, ASSUMPTION, ASSUMPTION.**

We have looked at six reasons why the Patristic Interpretation better fits the Matthew 5 and 19 exception clauses than the Erasmian. The context of the Sermon on the Mount, the context of Jesus' debate with the Shammai Pharisees, the strong two phrases of "Let not man put asunder and "In the beginning it was not so,"

the harmonizing of Deuteronomy 24 with Jesus's words, the fairness of Jesus's treatment of the innocent party, and the and the additional remarks on divorcing women in Mark Ten, all give much strength to the "No Divorce and Remarriage Interpretation." Plus, in Reason 9), we saw how the context of the disciples' surprising remarks argue for ALL remarriages as adulterous. The Patristic Interpretation treats men and women, guilty and innocent, "slow divorcers and quick divorcers" as equally forbidden to remarry. In contrast, the Erasmian Interpretation arbitrarily and without proper justice rewards some guilty, other times not, rewards men over women, and sometimes rewards slow over quick divorcers and other times rewards quick over slow divorcers. We have also critiqued the Majority View—that adultery is a one time act—and concluded that it is inherently contradictory towards adultery, marriage, and Biblical case examples of God himself. Coupled with the Majority View assumption, the Erasmian View makes "fornication" the general rule of all divorces, and makes the quest for who is the guilty or innocent party eligible to remarry a meaningless exercise. The Erasmian View's coupled with the Majority View 's two foundational premises-- 1) an exception can be made for divorce and remarriage, and 2) the remarriage act dissolves the previous marriage-- has numerous textual difficulties, doctrinal inconsistencies, and arbitrary rulings that must be overcome, if such a view is to justify its prominent position in the Evangelical Christian world.

- **Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.**

In the popular Erasmian mindset, they must pause twice before seriously thinking that Jesus is generally saying that divorce and remarriage is adulterous. Why? Well, first, there is the Church's tendency to hold the guilty party more accountable than the innocent party. So if the guilty party can remarry, why not the innocent party? Second, we have granted the possibility of an exception clause applying to a wife divorcing her husband, which most Erasmians would lean towards. Third, whether or not a wife divorces too slowly or too quickly is purely arbitrary, so why not allow remarriage for either case? Fourth, there is a tendency to see *fornication* broader than just a physical act, so perhaps we should allow a just divorce on grounds of one's wife looking at pornography, acting flirtatiously, dressing immodestly, etc? Fifth, most--but not all Erasmians--believe that I Corinthians seven allows for desertion as a just grounds for divorcement, and the burden of proof would lie on proving that a given divorce is NOT a form of abandonment. In fact, a good case could be made that divorce itself is a form of desertion. Plus, exegetically, we would then have to say that desertion is an exception to the general exception to fornication, an odd scenario given that neither Jesus nor Paul included both in their discussions. Sixth, we could also cite the difficulty in denying a divorce in which at least one of the spouses had been forgiven of adultery, but now a divorce is occurring for a different reason. Seventh, there is the bald fact that if one of the spouses remarries, it frees the other up to remarry someone as well. Thus, if the Erasmian view is true, then we have precious few marriages in which Jesus's words actually apply. Any divorce must pass through these seven "filters" before we could confidently say that it is an "improper divorce." For such kinds of divorces to qualify, both parties must be innocent of fornication, innocent of desertion, and not be able to undergo any change of status. In other words, for an illegitimate divorce to remain illegitimate, it must not be affected by any subsequent fornicating or deserting act on the divorced couple, and no remarriages must affect its status either. If those criteria are met, then, yes, I will grant that a small number of divorces are invalid from the Erasmian Perspective.

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Martin Luther, John Calvin, Menno Simons, Michael Sattler, and many other Reformers and Anabaptists held to the "adultery exception" for remarriage. We can admire their stance against Roman Catholic abuses of marriage and its loopholes of annulment. However, though the Reformers wished to uplift marriage as the ideal, they nonetheless left a wide door open for allowing virtually every divorce and remarriage imaginable.

- **You speak what you do not know – So you know more about Scripture than all these men right?**

Their exception seemed modest enough: no divorce but for adultery. In a culture where divorce was a great stigma, the logical ramifications were not truly felt. In our own colonial history, the Puritans believed divorce was permissible for fornication and desertion. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries passed in our country with the divorce rates still low. A divorced person wanting to remarry found it difficult to find a preacher who would sanction it. But then came the Sexual Revolution in the 1960s. In their obsession with freedoms, Grown-ups shrugged off centuries' old sexual stigmas: fornication, adultery, divorce, and remarriage. Now divorce and remarriage in America was here to stay. Today's church pews are flooded with divorced and remarried folks. We mustn't blame the Reformers for the wreckage we are in. After all, divorce was still low for centuries where the Erasmian View dominated. Nonetheless, ideas have consequences. It logically follows then, that we have little doctrinal basis for discouraging our culture from divorcing and remarrying, especially when so few have actually not fornicated. Menno Simons, Erasmus, and Luther would have difficulty disagreeing with the end results of Ronald Reagan's no-fault divorce laws: new remarriages. Perhaps they would argue against the ease of getting a divorce without providing sufficient grounds. In a free market society, however, loopholes would always counteract any difficulty people would face. The culture was moving headlong into divorce and remarriage, and Reagan himself, though he later regretted allowing the precedent of no-fault divorcement, simply responded to this inevitable trend. Besides, odd were great that at least one or more of the spouses messed up with fornication, so how could churches really deny the right?

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- **Your fatal fault is that you want to control the results according to what you think is best; and not according to What God thinks is best. You are a philosopher and not a Christian. We Christians don't change our doctrine to fit society; but we uphold the whole counsel of God in the face of changing society. God's program is a package, and if ALL of it is followed, you get the best possible fruit and results. YOU HAVE NO FAITH IN GOD'S WORD, SO YOU CANNOT JUST SHUT UP AND FOLLOW, BUT HAVE TO ARGUE AND MOCK AGAINST GOD'S HOLY WORD. I AM VERY SAD FOR YOU.**

Mark, you are wrong. I am first a Christian and secondly a janitor and Handyman. I am not a professional philosopher. I do have faith in God's Word. Where I don't have faith in is in your capacity to disagree without character attacks on your opponent.

I hope I am wrong on how you appear; but you need to be more cautious on your use of God's Word – just because we don't understand God's Word in every detail, we cannot make up our own rules.

Today divorce and remarriage present a massive problem in our society. It is not just that immodesty and fornication are rampant. It is not just that we have a low view of marriage. For the church, it is something else: our low view of remarital adultery. With the near unanimous consensus—from both Erasmian and Patristic and all other positions—that remarriage dissolves the first marriage, the Church can only respond with a sigh and shrug, and hope to salvage a better marriage for this second go-around, until that one falls apart, with our usual admonitions, "Now be sure you make *this* marriage work out, for you know how God hates divorce!"

- **COME TO OUR CHURCH AND LEARN WHAT BIBLE CHRISTIANITY IS ALL ABOUT BEFORE YOU LUMP US TOGETHER WITH THE MESS AROUND THIS NATION.**

Sure, most everybody hates the *fact* of divorce. As one of my elders commented to me recently, "No one who gets married imagines in their mind that they want to divorce their spouse." But, as he and I would agree, these same heard-hearted folks and the well-intentioned pastors, counsellors, and Bible teachers love the *fact* of remarriage after a terrible divorce. This "fact" is a precious commodity for an otherwise lonely divorcee with little hope for marital bliss. While the children of these parents hope beyond hope for Dad and Mom to reconcile, Dad and Mom instead move swiftly to the next stage of "healing": a comforting remarriage. The child's hopes are crushed, but alas, children are resilient. They are supposedly stronger than even their own weak-willed parents. Dad gets a new wife, Mom gets a new husband, and the children get a shattered life, with a "family" every bit asundered, if not worse, than an orphan's. Plus, given their own parents' repudiation of the covenant of marriage, the children will grow up hating divorce but nonetheless more likely than ever to turn to that route when their own marriages get rough. The popular Church Consensus has little to offer by way of a countermeasure. It must logically preach to us, "You should not divorce your spouse and remarry another, UNLESS fornication was involved, as broadly defined by a husband's or wife's discretion; UNLESS your spouse has remarried already; UNLESS he deserted you—if not in actions, at least in his intent; and UNLESS you have already gone and remarried, PLEASE!, never divorce, even this new spouse that you now have."

Our Church culture is now deeply ingrained with the assumption that even if a remarriage is adulterous, who is to say, and really, who cares, since the old marriage is dissolved? I do not wish just to pick on the Erasmian View for this sad state of affairs, since many Patristic View advocates concede that adultery is a one time act. For example, Patristic scholars William Heth and Gordon Wenham in their older writings, passionately oppose all divorce and remarriage, only to turn around and say that once a divorced Christian has remarried, he should be forgiven and allowed to be in back in the Anglican church! This contradictory stance from these authors, as well as from popular speakers like John Piper, is indicative of most "No Divorce and Remarriage" pastors; they are reticent to call remarriage a continual state of adultery. "I will not perform your wedding ceremony," they claim, but then afterwards proclaim, "You two are now married, and you should honour your vows and not separate." Imagine the confusion if we treated incestuous marriages like that. "I won't support your getting married to your father's wife," but afterwards, "What you did was sin, but now you must not divorce your father's wife."

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- **YOU SO WANT TO BE GOD AND WRITE THE RULES; BUT YOU ARE MAN AND THE RULES HAVE ALREADY BEEN WRITTEN BY THE WISEST AND MOST APPROPRIATE LAWGIVER. JUST SHUT UP AND FOLLOW HIM.**
- **Don't blame God's law for the garbage going on in the world – If people followed ALL the law of God, things would be different. Don't think you need to change God's Law to straighten out the problems.**

These proponents like to argue that *committeth adultery* in the Greek verb tense could mean a present one-time act. However, they also recognize that the verb could entail continuation. Again, we are faced with two options in interpretation. The second option preserves the consistency in Jesus' words against remarriage, whereas the other legitimizes any remarriage and any divorce. Apparently, all that is required is to acknowledge that one was wrong in remarrying. And we call this "repentance"? Little wonder, then, that with such an ambiguous stance, Gordon Heth later rejected his own Patristic View in favor of the Erasmian View. He candidly admits that he struggled with the idea of telling an innocent divorcee they could not remarry. Heth says he was also bothered by the fact that his view was in the minority among popular Protestant scholars. Well, I can at least appreciate that he is now being consistent, for he would not forbid now any innocent party from remarrying. And, he probably would not forbid any guilty party from remarrying either. I simply would ask then, for all Erasmians, and for Gordon Heth "Is there any divorcee out there who may *not* remarry?" At every turn, we see every possible factor being overruled by an equally weighty factor. Were you innocent and divorced? "Justice" and "argument from desertion" factors weigh on your side, you may remarry. Were you guilty and divorced? "Matthew's exception" and a "dissolved marriage" factors weigh on your side, you may remarry. Were you not guilty and yet divorced an innocent party? "Your spouse's subsequent remarriage" factor weighs on your side, you may remarry. Well, we are left with a small minority who may not officially remarry unless their spouses remarry first! For these offenders who do remarry first, we simply slap them on the wrist when they get remarried, and then tell them their new marriage is valid before God. It should not come as a surprise, then, that Mr. Heth now believes that Jesus' denouncements against divorce and remarriage as adulterous were hyperboles, just to shake his audience up a bit, as Rabbis were prone to do from time to time. In other words, you should take Jesus' words about divorcement about as literally as you would a camel being able to go through the eye of a needle. Ideas do have consequences!

Bible loving Christians are sometimes faced with two opposing interpretations of a given Scripture passage. Take the one interpretation, and the other has to be denied. Reject the one interpretation, and you have to embrace the other. You the reader must weigh the Biblical evidence presented from either of these two views. The consistency, harmony, and clarity of Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage compels me personally to reject the Erasmian View in favor of the Patristic View. Though such a conclusion is not the popular one to hold in today's church culture, I would rather submit to Christ's teaching and accept the consequences of his authoritative commands on our lives. We can trust him to work all things together for good for those who love him. If the Patristic View is the true interpretation of the exception clause, then love for others compels me to warn those in divorce and remarriage to repent and forsake. After all, no sin is so unique as to justify its continuation. God expected the Jews in Malachi's day to forsake their foreign wives and return to the wives of their youth. God also expected Israel to leave Baal and come back to him. Paul's inspired teaching, earliest of the New Testament, provides only two options: reconciliation or singleness. Jesus, the great lawgiver, is our best interpreter of Genesis through Revelation.

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- NOTICE WE HAVE BEEN READING J-----'s DIGEST OF THESE MEN'S THOUGHTS; BUT WHERE IS THE TRUE EXEGESIS OF GOD'S WORD??? LET ME REITERATE FOR YOU THE BOTTOM LINE ON THIS WHOLE MESS:
- #1. Moses wrote by the inspiration of God and gave God's judgment call to solve issues man now faces since the fall. What God said through Moses was the wisest and most appropriate thing to do under the circumstances. God's moral laws are God's judgment and moral opinion on those issues and God will never change that opinion or moral judgment, because God cannot improve on God. "I AM THE LORD, I CHANGE NOT"
- #2. Malachi plainly says that the Messiah, when he comes, will preach against the abuses of Moses' Law and bring the people back to God's law. He specifically says Messiah will preach against adulterers who were abusing Moses' Law concerning divorce and remarriage. Malachi makes it clear that the adultery Messiah will preach against is the abuse of Moses' Law, and not the proper use of Moses' Law. UNLESS MALACHI WAS A FALSE PROPHET, JESUS WAS PREACHING CONSISTENT WITH GOD'S LAW AND BRINGING THE PEOPLE BACK TO A PROPER UNDERSTANDING – OF COURSE! THIS IS THE FIRST STEP BEFORE MAKING A COVENANT WHERE GOD'S LAW IS WRITTEN ON MAN'S HEART.
- #3. Jesus is the Word made flesh. Moses' Law is Jesus' Words; and Jesus makes it clear that He is not coming to correct or destroy God's Law through Moses; but to establish it. Jesus came for the purpose of clearing God's Law from misconceptions, making the required atonement, and then sending the Holy Spirit to write God's laws in our hearts. The foundation of the New Covenant is God's Laws written in the hearts of the believers. Believers who walk in the Spirit fulfill the righteousness of the Law (Rom 8:3-13). Jesus gave the two greatest commandments in God's Law and said that ALL the law and the prophets taught this very truth. Jesus did not teach anything contrary to the Scriptures – How could He, they were His own infallible, immutable judgments on the subjects at hand. If He had spoken contrary to His own inspired Word, the Jews were commanded by the very Scriptures to kill Him as a false prophet – Jesus commanded them through Moses to kill any prophet who led them away from God's Holy Word and tried to change it.
- #4. Moses' Law was the church standard for the first twelve years after Pentecost for everyone. Then beginning with Cornelius the Gentiles were relieved from the ceremonial laws; but the moral laws were still in force for everyone, as the New Covenant was God writing these laws in our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the Ministry of the Christian Church. When Paul said in 2Ti 3:16 *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* he was primarily speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures.
- #5. Everything said in the New Testament Scriptures concerning divorce and remarriage is based on the Law of God, and is only defending God's Law against abuse. Jesus cannot be properly interpreted to be speaking contrary to God's Law – the very Scriptures; as this would be heretical blasphemy and a denial of Him being the immutable Son of God and Messiah. Jesus must only be interpreted as speaking against the abuse of God's Law – THIS IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE CONCLUSION that aligns with the Scriptures.
- THESE POINTS ARE INVINCIBLE AND ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND THIS, THE DEBATE IS OVER.
- THE OPPOSING VIEW INTERPRETS JESUS' WORDS AS THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF WHAT HE SAID
 - Jesus said: Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:

- Their interpretation: Whosoever shall put away his wife, even if it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:

If I told my children – Whosoever goes out on the porch, except Mother gives permission, and plays with the toys, is going to be in trouble.

- The opposite of the exception clause would be, "Whosoever goes out on the porch, even if Mother gives permission, and plays with the toys, is going to be in trouble."
- The opposite of the exception is NO-EXCEPTION. It applies to the whole sentence.

Jesus is preaching against the abuse of His Father's Law – His own Word – inspired Moses – and not contradicting or correcting or condemning them – which any change must do.

THE DEBATE IS OVER, AND ANYONE WHO UNDERSTANDS SCRIPTURE AND DOCTRINE MUST SEE THIS!

Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

- Don't blame God's law for the garbage going on in the world – If people followed ALL the law of God, things would be different. Don't think you need to change God's Law to straighten out the problems.

My Closing Statement: Mark, you are right in boiling the issue down to how we should interpret the exception clause. However, your view reduces the statement to a mere technicality, for in the end, all divorce and remarriage is valid, contrary to what you say. All forms of divorce and remarriage are forms of fornication or divorce, in your view. I am arguing by contrast that Christ made an exception for divorce only, but that yes, any subsequent remarriage is adulterous. Mother's permission can apply only to the child who goes out on the porch, not on the playing of the toys. This is a critical distinction.

- I do appreciate your taking time from your schedule to debate with me.

Jesus' goal was not to invalidate the second marriage; but to show the sin of abusing His law. VALID is not the issue; but whether it is SINFUL or RIGHTEOUS.

Take my illustration to an English teacher and ask her if the "playing with the toys" was included in the permission – it was the purpose for going on the porch. The exception modifies the whole sentence no matter where it is in the sentence. YOU ARE RIGHT – THIS IS A CRITICAL DISTINCTION.

I pray you will see the appropriateness of my rebukes in time and repent. MEDITATE ON PS 19 AND PS 119.

Heb. 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,

GOD IS THE SPEAKER BOTH TIMES! It has to be consistent, not contradictory!

Jesus must be interpreted consistent with His own inspired Word, not in calling it adultery!

Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

BELIEVE!