

## **Accusing the Lord of Making an Argument Based on a Faulty Premise**

A few days ago my wife and I were invited by a couple we have known for many years to join them at a local fast food restaurant. The visit was going well until the sister informed us that she had once instructed the preacher in their congregation not to preach that the innocent party in a divorce where the cause was fornication has the right to remarry. Her position was basically that the innocent party does not have the right to remarry, because there really is no innocent party in *any* divorce. If one spouse committed fornication, the other must certainly have done something to cause it, was her view. Based upon her reasoning, if the wife committed fornication, the husband must share the blame if he had ever failed to mow the yard, or the wife must have caused her husband to commit fornication, because she had at sometime in the past burnt the toast.

Although it never ceases to amaze us how people can blatantly ignore what the scriptures say, in this situation, there was something else equally as troubling. Our sister accused the Lord of making an argument on the basis of a faulty premise. Jesus, you just don't know what you are talking about. The truth is the sister failed to understand the premise of Matthew 19:9, and subsequently set out to legislate where God has not. In other words, she took an "anti" position.

Hear Matthew 19:9: "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." Please notice that Jesus does not use the word "innocent" in this verse. He simply says that if a man puts his wife away and marries another, unless his wife is guilty of fornication, he is guilty of adultery. The exception makes the verse mean if the man's wife does commit adultery and he puts her away and marries another, he is not guilty of adultery. As regards to the exception and the verse, then, the man who remarries after putting away a wife who is guilty of fornication, has not committed adultery nor any other sin when he remarries, thus he is free to do so. For anyone to say there is no innocent party in a marriage dissolved as a result of fornication misses the point, and argues against Jesus via a straw man. Asserting there is no innocent, that is, no non-contributing party, in any divorce misrepresents what the Lord said. One ought not misrepresent Jesus!

The sister did not want the preacher to tell her children they had the right to remarry if their spouses were guilty of fornication, which is easily interpreted to mean that she does not agree with what Jesus said. Jesus said the spouse who puts away the one guilty of fornication may remarry; our sister says, he may not. If it would make our sister any happier for us to use the word "free" rather than "innocent" we would do so, but it wouldn't make a difference, because her problem is not with the word but with the doctrine; she does not believe what Jesus said.

It is common for people to change from holding the truth on the divorce and remarriage question to embracing the wrong position when a family member is involved in an unscriptural remarriage. The things discussed above raise the an opposite question: If the spouse of one of the our sister's children became guilty of fornication, and her son or daughter put the spouse away and then remarried, would she change her view for convenience sake, or would she withdraw spiritual fellowship from her child who had every right to do what he or she did? Whichever choice she made, she would be wrong.

For anyone to hold any error is sinful, and because life is the way it is, has the potential to reap grave consequences. But even more than that, it is a very serious sin to judge that the Son of God is guilty of making an argument based upon a faulty premise, and arriving at a false position. And what sin is it? Blasphemy, my friends, blasphemy!

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