

Harmonizing with the Scriptures

- I. **Mark 10:11** – “*Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.*”
- a. The claim has been made that this verse shows that adultery is committed “against” the first wife after an unlawful divorce. Is this true?
 - b. The terms used here show this to be false. The term here “against” is “*epi*” which is a primary preposition that represents “superimposing”. “Superimposing” means “*to impose, place, or set over, above, or upon something else*”. The term is often translated “on” or “upon”. By comparison, Paul says in **I Cor. 6:18**, “...*but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.*” Again, in **I Cor. 8:12**, Paul says, “*But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.*” The term in these passages is “*eis*” which is another primary preposition which indicates “*a point reached or entered*”. The point is this: the sin of adultery is being imposed upon another...who? It does not make sense that this would be the first wife as she is certainly not sharing in the sin of adultery. Therefore it represents the second wife or “her”, which leads us to...
 - c. The term “*her*” has caused many to think that the “her” is a reference to the first wife. Consider the following three pronouns in the Greek: *aner* = man; *gune* = woman; *autos* = generic pronoun (i.e. them, their, yours, etc.). The term “her” used here in **Mark 10:11** is *autos*.
 - d. Therefore, this passage should be understood in this manner: “*Whoever divorces his wife (gune) and marries another commits adultery (against, with) them.*” By this understanding, the man who has no right to be married (because he remains bound to the first woman by the Law of God) is imposing the sin of adultery upon the woman who entered into an unlawful marriage with him.
 - e. This harmonizes with **I Cor. 7:11** in showing that the woman who unlawfully divorces her husband is “unmarried”. Thus if she were to remarry, the sin of adultery would not be “against” the man whom she divorced, but rather “against” the one whom she marries unlawfully. (See Matt. 5:32)

Harmonizing with the Scriptures

- II. Rom. 7:2-3** – *“For the woman who has a husband is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law to her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she marries another man.”*
- a. We know that Paul is not referencing the Old Law or the Roman Law, as he says the same thing regarding the binding of law in **I Cor. 7:39**. We also know he is not referencing the authority of the man over a woman as he is emphasizing a marital relationship and the binding of law concerning a husband and wife.
 - b. It is obvious that Paul is using this illustration to show how that all Christians (especially Jewish Christians) can be legitimately and lawfully married to the Law of Christ because the Old Law has been done away with and we have become dead to it through Christ. Therefore we are free to be “married” to Christ.
 - c. Therefore, we find two distinct relationships being mentioned. There is the binding of the Law of Christ upon those who are married, and then the marriage relationship itself. The woman unlawfully “married” another man, yet was still bound to the first man by the Law of Christ. As a result, her new marriage is adulterous. This harmonizes with **I Cor. 7:11** which shows that it is possible to be “unmarried” yet still be bound.

Harmonizing with the Scriptures

III. Matt. 19:3-9

- a. The question being asked of Jesus is, *“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?”* His answer is found in **v.6**, *“So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”* In other words, “no”. He then describes the only situation by which one can divorce another and not be committing sin – sexual immorality by the other spouse. (This is within the marriage relationship, not after a marriage has been dissolved.)
- b. There are those who claim that when Jesus says *“...let not man separate”* He actually means “man cannot separate”. Thus, no matter what the divorce is for, if it’s not for sexual immorality the marriage continues to be in existence. This is not true. The term “let not” (*me*) is the same as found in **John 3:16**, *“...that whoever believes in Him **should not** perish but have everlasting life.”* Would it be appropriate to read that whoever believes in God **cannot** perish? Not so, as we know that “many” who believe in Christ will still be lost (**Matt. 7:21-23**).
- c. **V.9** – *“Whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery”*. In what situation is this correct? Some claim that this only applies to women who are divorced unlawfully. Yet, where does Jesus say this? He says divorced! So when Jesus says “divorced”, is He telling the truth? Or is He equivocating by saying “divorced” but actually means “divorced in man’s eyes”?
- d. The facts are that any divorce leaves a person “unmarried” (**I Cor. 7:11**), but only a divorce for the cause of sexual immorality is lawful and takes away the binding of God’s law for that person. The spouse who has been put away continues to be bound by the Law of God, and thus if they marry they become guilty of adultery.

Harmonizing with the Scriptures

- IV. **I Cor. 7:10-11** – *“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from the husband. But (“or, and, also, moreover”) if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to the husband (“man”). And a husband is not to divorce the wife.”*
- a. The term “depart” is “*chorizo*”, the same as the term “tear asunder” from **Matt. 19:6**. It is clear that this is divorce.
 - b. This divorce, which is not lawful (as no allowance is given for her to remarry) has left this woman in an “unmarried” state. The term “unmarried” is “*agamos*” which means “un-wed, not married”.
 1. Note that Paul does not say, “...let her remain alone...”, or “...let her not remarry...”. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he uses the same term as found in **I Cor. 7:8** when he is specifically speaking to unmarried people.
 - c. The term “reconcile” (*katallasso*) is always used to describe a hostile, guilty party reconciling themselves to an innocent party. As such, the woman sinned by divorcing the man, thus requiring her to reconcile to him.
 - d. “Why does it say ‘her husband’?” There is no “her” in the Greek. And the term “aner” is simply “man”, as there is no specific term for “husband” or “wife”. But she is still bound by the Law of God to the man she divorced, and therefore he is still “her man”.
 - e. “Why doesn’t Paul tell the woman to “be remarried” to the man, as opposed to “be reconciled”?” Because Paul is ascribing guilt in the situation. If she is the guilty one, she must reconcile. If she reconciles, she acknowledges her guilt and repents. If she repents she will seek to make right what she has done. If she makes it right, she will remarry the man to whom she’s bound. Therefore, Paul does imply that she must remarry the man, but he chooses to use “reconcile” that shows clearly that there is a guilty party...her, for divorcing her husband unlawfully.

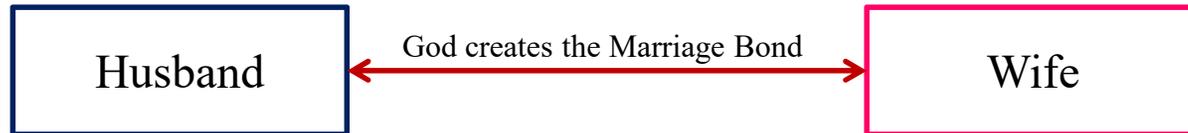
Harmonizing with the Scriptures

- IV. **I Cor. 7:10-11** – *“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from the husband. But (“or, and, also, moreover”) if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to the husband (“man”). And a husband is not to divorce the wife.”* Continued
- f. There have been claims that there is a difference between “putting away” and “divorcing”, and many claims go back to the Old Testament and some come to **I Cor. 7:11** to suggest a difference between “depart” and “divorce”.
 - g. First, there is never any difference shown between “putting away” and “divorce” in the Old Testament. All claims of such do not have Scripture to back them up, only man’s speculations. However, even if there were, Jesus establishes a new law for marriage, as seen in **Matt. 19:9** *“And I say unto you...”* As such, the burden of proof now rests on them to show that there is a difference between “putting away” and “divorcing” in the New Testament.
 - h. In the New Testament, there are three terms used to denote “divorce”. In **Matt. 19:6**, Jesus uses the term *“chorizo”*, which means “to tear apart, make separate”. This is the same term as found of the woman “departing” in **I Cor. 7:11**. The next term is *“apoluo”* which means “to loose, put away, let go”, is translated “divorce” in places like **Matt. 5:32** and **Matt. 19:9**. The third term is *“aphiemi”* which means “to send away”, found in **I Cor. 7:11** of the man “divorcing” his wife. Why are two different terms, *“chorizo”* and *“aphiemi”*, used in **I Cor. 7:11**? There were only two scenarios: either the woman divorces and leaves, or the man divorces and sends her away. The end result is the same: divorce. The difference is in who is doing what; is the woman divorcing and leaving, or is the man divorcing and sending away?

Harmonizing with the Scriptures

- IV. **I Cor. 7:10-11** – *“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from the husband. But (“or, and, also, moreover”) if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to the husband (“man”). And a husband is not to divorce the wife.”* Continued
- i. Questions have been raised regarding Paul’s choice of using the disjunctive “or” as opposed to a conjunctive “and” in **v.11**. There may be those who wonder if Paul is offering the woman a choice, and therefore the act of divorcing is not sinful.
 - j. First, please note the command being given in **v.10** and again at the end of **v.11**: The Lord commands that *“a wife is not to depart (tear asunder) from the husband...and a husband is not to divorce the wife.”* What happens when we break a command? We sin. Period.
 - k. It is also not appropriate to assume that Paul is allowing the woman the option of remaining unmarried as a matter of permission to divorce. We find that this disjunctive “or” is translated “and” in **Mark 6:11** *“Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment...”*. The point is that Paul’s use of a disjunctive is noting the only two possible scenarios that can exist. The woman must remain unmarried, for to marry another would add adultery to her sins (as well as cause the new husband to sin as well). If she is to repent, she must reconcile with the man to whom she is bound. What if the man will not take her back? Then she has no recourse but to remain unmarried.
 - l. Consider **Gal. 5:15**: *“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”*. Is Paul allowing that it is “ok” to “bite” and “devour” each other? Or is he offering the concept that we should be careful that, when we cause stumbling, it doesn’t lead to the destruction of that person? It is never permissible to cause stumbling in another. But don’t make matters even worse (and add to the sin) by “consuming” one another.

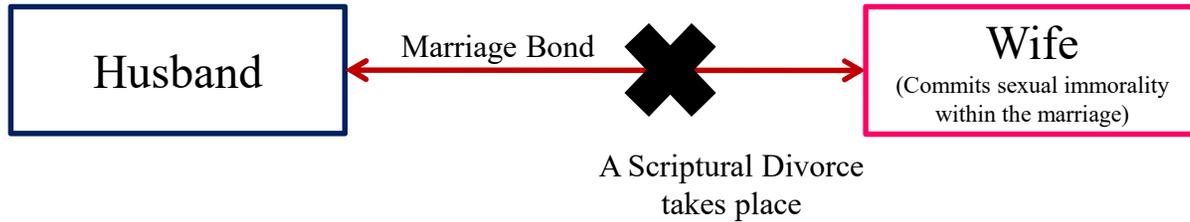
Mental Divorce View:
Scriptural Marriage



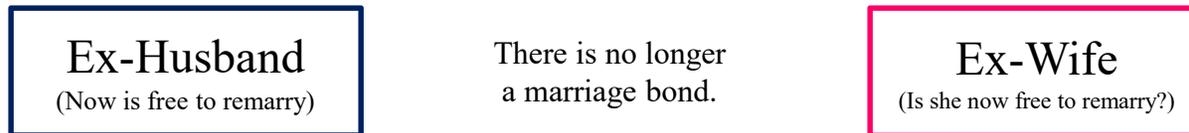
Under this view, there is only the marriage bond that binds the two together.
This bond either exists for both, or not at all.

Mental Divorce View:
Scriptural Divorce

1



2

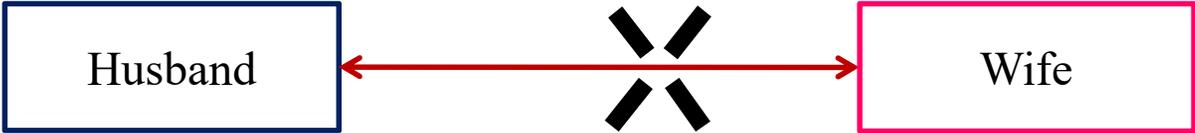


What prevents the woman from remarrying?
She is no longer bound. “She is the guilty party!”
Where is the Scripture that prevents the “guilty party” from remarrying? What sin does she commit if she enters in to another marriage relationship?

Under this view, when a Scriptural divorce takes place, it frees the innocent party. Most proponents of this view believe that the guilty party is also released, and if one is applying the principles being presented, one must come the same conclusion.

Mental Divorce View:
Un-Scriptural Divorce

1



An un-Scriptural divorce takes place. However, it is not lawful, therefore in “God’s eyes”, the two remain married.

Many years may pass before one or the other remarries. Let’s suppose that 20 years pass, and the wife remarries.

2



3



Husband now “mentally” or “spiritually” divorces the spouse for the cause of “adultery”, And is free to remarry. By application of the “marriage bond” principle, the wife is free as well.

Under this view, when an un-Scriptural divorce takes place, God does not see it. As such, the husband and wife remain married indefinitely until such time as one of them remarries, allowing the other spouse to “mentally” or “spiritually” divorce the guilty spouse.

Problems with “Mental Divorce”

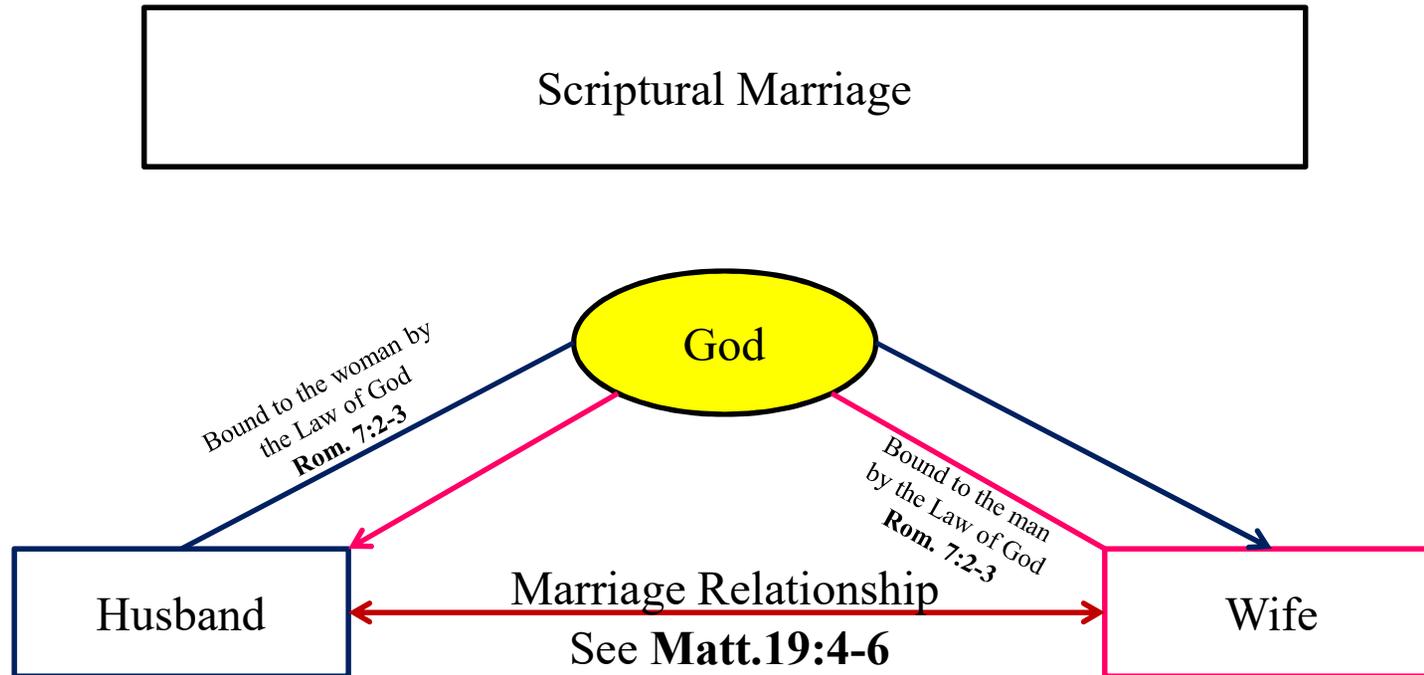
- I. It claims that Jesus says in **Matt. 19:6** “...man cannot separate (*chorizo* – “tear asunder”; divorce).”
 - a. Yet, the woman in **I Cor. 7:11** did “tear asunder” (*chorizo*)
- II. It claims that an un-Scriptural divorce is not seen by God. This must mean that sin is not imputed, since God did not see a sin occur. Therefore a divorce, regardless of the reason, is not sin.
 - a. Yet, in **I Cor. 7:11**, the woman who “tore asunder” was guilty of sin, as she is told to “reconcile” (*katallasso*). This term is always used to describe a hostile, guilty party reconciling themselves to an innocent party. Therefore the divorce, which was obviously not for the cause of sexual immorality, was sinful. This means that God did indeed see the divorce and recognized it as sin.
 - b. Again, in **I Cor. 7:11**, the woman “tore asunder” from her husband, and it left her in an “unmarried” state. This term, *agamos*, literally means “un-wed”, “not married to a man”. This definition is clearly seen in **I Cor. 7:8**.
- III. Some claim that a woman who is put away for Scriptural reasons cannot remarry. However, based upon the “marriage bond” principle established by those who hold to “mental divorce”, this woman should be free to remarry
 - a. “She is the guilty party! This prevents her from remarrying!” How? What passage shows this? Any guilty party can receive forgiveness from God. So what would prevent this woman from remarrying? What sin does she commit if she does remarry?
 - b. Jesus says in **Matt. 19:9**, “*He who marries her who is divorced commits adultery.*” It does not matter the reason for the putting away, whether she committed sexual immorality or not. She remains bound by the Law of God. Therefore, if she remarries, she commits adultery.

Problems with “Mental Divorce”

- IV. It claims that adultery can only take place within a marriage. In **Matt.19:9** Jesus says, “*He that marries her who is divorced commits adultery.*” The claim is that this is only a woman who has been put away in man’s eyes, not God’s eyes. Therefore she is still married, and so when she marries another man (in man’s eyes) she commits adultery.
- a. Yet, the woman in **Rom. 7:2-3** “married” another man, and was still called an adulteress. She was therefore divorced, and remarried to another man, and was still guilty of adultery because she was “bound by the law” to her husband. This references God’s Law that binds the woman to the man, not marriage.
 - b. The pattern established by the NT, without fail, is the following two scenarios:
 - a. Marriage – Sexual Immorality – Divorce for the cause of sexual immorality – Lawful Remarriage.
 - b. And: Marriage – Divorce not for sexual immorality – Unlawful Remarriage – Adultery.
 - c. Not found in the New Testament: Marriage – Divorce (in man’s eyes) not for sexual immorality – sexual immorality – Divorce (in God’s eyes) – Lawful Remarriage
- V. It claims that an “innocent party” can “mentally” or “spiritually” divorce their spouse. This is possible because, after a divorce “in man’s eyes but not in God’s eyes”, the two remain married. Thus, when one or the other remarries, they commit adultery. This becomes the ground upon which the “innocent party” can “pray to God” or in some form or fashion divorce the remarried spouse.
- a. Where is this ever demonstrated in Scripture? Where do we ever find a second divorce that takes place? Surely this would have been mentioned or demonstrated when Jesus and Paul discuss un-Scriptural divorces.
 - b. This also suggests a very subjective definition for what a “divorce” is. Where one person may come before the elders or brethren to pronounce their “putting away” of a guilty spouse, another person may only say a prayer, or simply say to themselves, “I’m done with my spouse”.

Problems with “Mental Divorce”

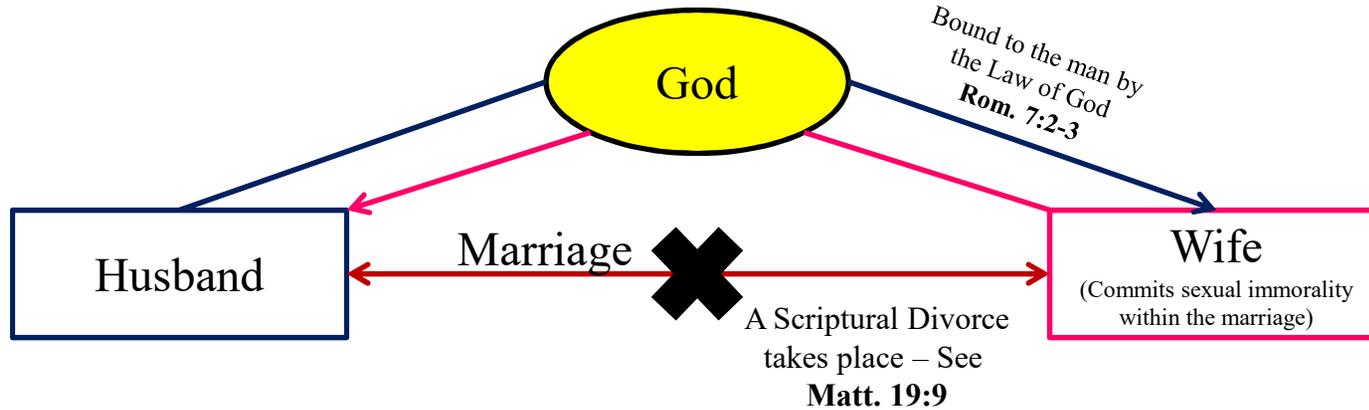
- VI. It claims that there is a difference between “man’s eyes” and “God’s eyes”. As a result, an “unlawful divorce” is never seen by God, and the marriage persists.
- a. However, sin is committed when I do anything that is “unlawful” (**I John 3:4**). So how can this un-Scriptural divorce be sinful upon the spouse who is doing the divorcing, yet God does not see it? What sin is being committed by the spouse who is divorcing, when God does not actually dissolve the marriage? One must conclude, based upon these principles, that a divorce is perfectly legitimate and lawful for any reason, as long as neither remarries. However, this is exactly opposite to what Jesus says in **Matt. 19:3-6**.
 - b. In **John 4:17-18**, Jesus recognized that the Samaritan woman had been married five times, and made a distinction that the man she was currently with was not her husband, as the woman admitted. It is clear that, regardless of the reasons for the divorces, she had indeed been married five times, and that just “living together” did not mean she was married to the current man.
- VII. It claims that it would be “unfair” of God to keep someone bound and unable to marry for the sins and mistakes of another.
- a. Yet, in **I Cor. 7:11**, the man who had been divorced by his wife cannot remarry. Assuming the woman never remarries, the man would be forced to remain unmarried. Suppose this man is in his 20’s. Is this fair? Are we saying that we would rejoice if the woman did remarry (and thus sin) because this young man can now be freed? How could this poor young man not hope that his ex-wife sins and remarries so that he could then be remarried?
- VIII. Suppose the shoe is on the other foot in the above example. Consider the following: The woman of **I Cor. 7:11** “departed” from her husband but did not remarry. They are, supposedly, still married in God’s eyes (even though Paul specifically calls her “unmarried”). What if the man has a sexual relationship with another woman under this arrangement? Can the woman who “departed” perform a second (mental or spiritual) divorce since God never saw the first (legal in man’s eyes) divorce?



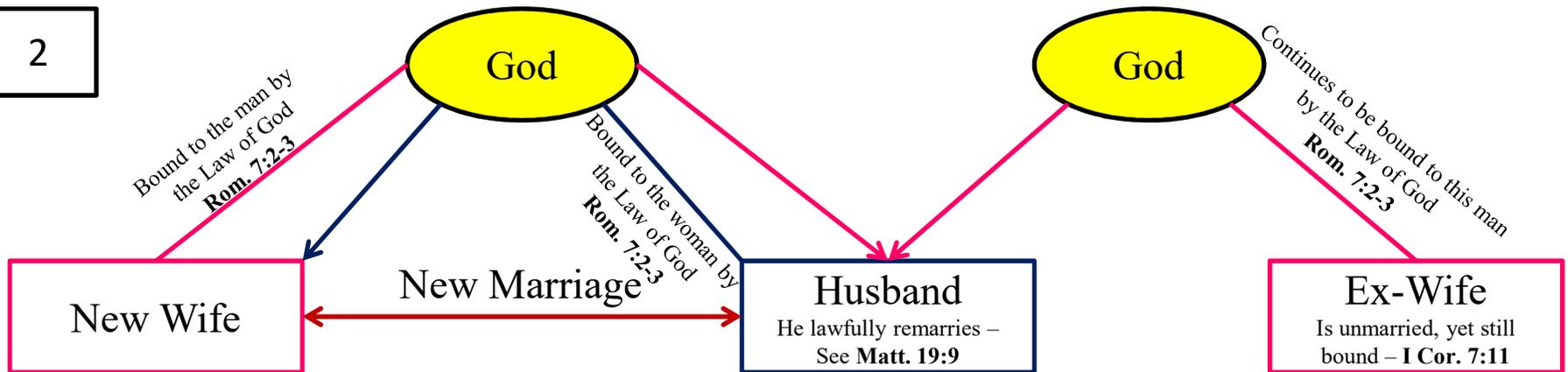
This is the Scriptural example of marriage. A man and a woman who are unbound have the right to a holy marriage, by which God binds them to His Law unto each other. The marriage relationship, while being governed by God's Law, is separate from the binding of God's Law, as seen in **Rom. 7:2-3**. Another way to understand this is to see the marriage relationship as the physical and emotional joining of man and woman, and the binding of God's Law as the spiritual joining.

Scriptural Divorce

1



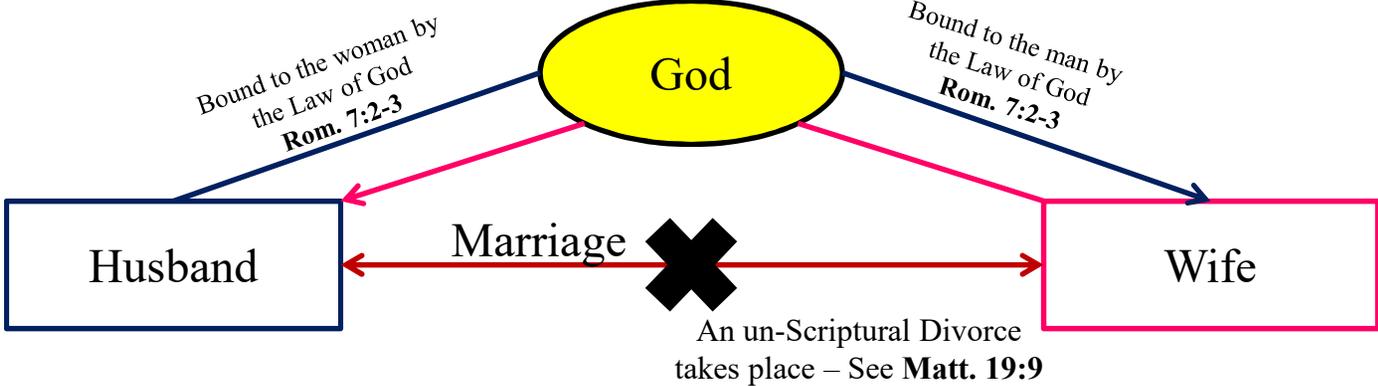
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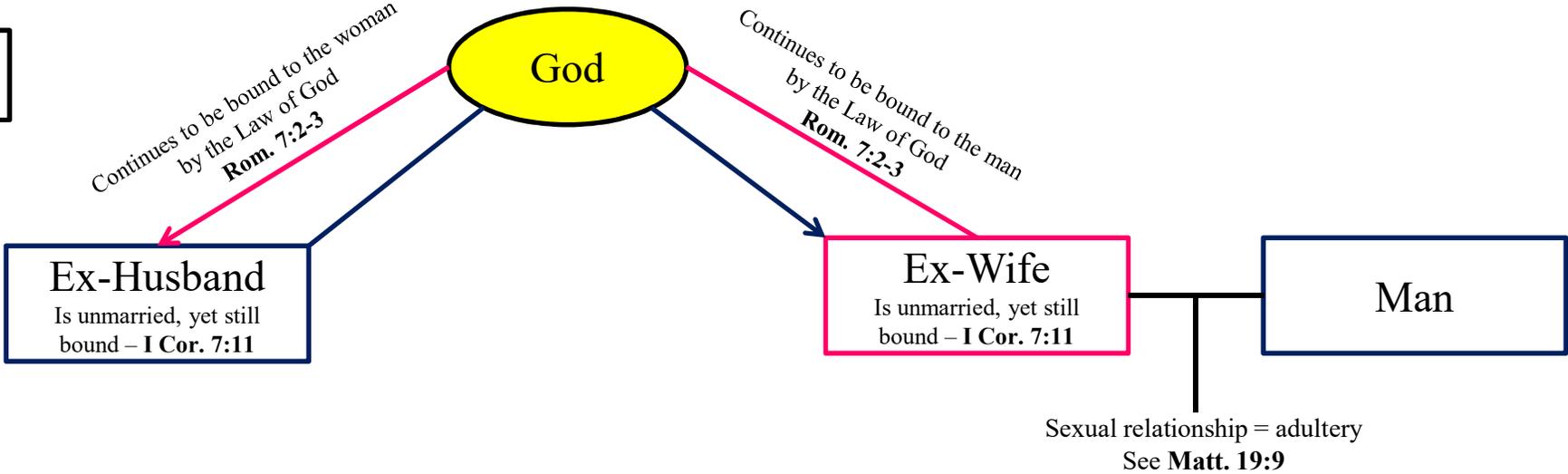
In this situation, the wife commits sexual immorality.
Her husband divorces her and marries another.

Un-Scriptural Divorce

1

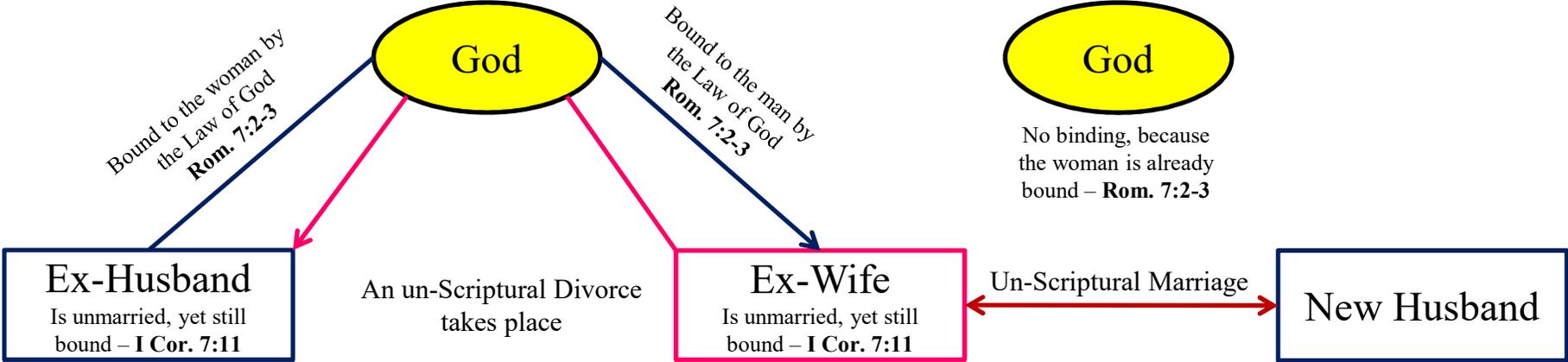


2



In this situation, a divorce takes place that is not for the cause of sexual immorality. The un-scriptural divorce ends the marriage, but the two remain bound by the Law of God. For both, a new sexual relationship results in adultery.

Un-Scriptural Marriage



Both the ex-husband and ex-wife are still bound by the Law of God. The binding of God’s Law can only be loosed by divorce for sexual immorality within the marriage, or by death. Thus the new marriage (sexual relationship) the ex-wife enters into is an adulterous relationship – See **Matt. 19:9, Rom. 7:2-3.**