

## May Any “Put Away” Person Remarry?

by J. T. Smith

In order to answer the above question, we will need to consider the third, fourth and fifth questions listed in last month’s TORCH. They were, “What of the person who has been put away— may he/she remarry?” “How does the ‘exception’ of which Jesus spoke fit into all this?” And, “Is the ‘exception’ still applicable today?” We will endeavor to answer all these in this article though perhaps not in this particular order.

### Is The “Exception” Applicable Today?

The answer to the above question is YES! The reason for my answer will follow in the arguments and Scriptures set forth.

It could not have been applicable during the Law of Moses. Deuteronomy 24:1 says that the man whose bride did not find favor in his eyes because of some uncleanness gave her a bill of divorcement and sent her out of his house (put her away). But Deuteronomy 24:2 says when she is sent out (put away), she *may be another man’s wife*. However, this is not what Jesus said at all. He said, “whosoever marrieth her which is put away committeth adultery” (Matthew 19:9b). Also under Moses’ Law, according to Deuteronomy 24:3, Moses tells us that if the second husband hates her, *he may give her a writing of divorcement* and send her out of his house. Thus we see that Jesus’ teaching is in no way parallel to Moses’ Law.

Second, saying that Jesus was trying to correct the Jews regarding the Law of Moses and telling them the only reason to put away under the Law of Moses was for fornication, cannot be substantiated. In fact, this would mean that the Law of Moses only allowed divorce “for fornication,” and the one who was “put away” could not remarry (Matthew 19:9b). However, when we read the instructions in Deuteronomy 24, we find just the opposite.

But notice why, according to Deuteronomy 22:22, Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 5:32; 19:9 could not be discussing the Law of Moses. In Deuteronomy 22:22, Moses’ Law said that both of the persons caught in the act of adultery were to be *stoned to death*. Jesus could hardly have been giving regulations for remarriage regarding either of these, now could He? And, if He were, then He was changing the Law of Moses, which He denied doing (cf. Matthew 5:17)

So, since Christ’s teaching in Matthew 5:32; 19:9 could not have been applicable *then*, for it would have destroyed Moses’ Law, and if it is not applicable *now*, when was it applicable?

Does The “Exception” Free The Innocent To Remarry?

This question is answered on the following chart.

As you can see, in this chart we are comparing two passages (Luke 13:3; Matthew 19:9) where a rule is given and then God makes an exception to that rule.

### **Does God Loose Both The Innocent And The Guilty?**

The question of whether God looses the innocent person who has “put away” his/her spouse for fornication, was discussed in our last lesson. Christ was very explicit in showing that the “exception” given in Matthew 5:32; 19:9 looses the innocent party, so

## **THE EXCEPTION**

### **Matthew 19:9a**

**“Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery...”***

### **Luke 13:3**

**“I tell you, Nay: but, *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*”**

### **Luke 13:3 (Clarification)**

**Ye shall perish - *EXCEPT ye repent***

### **Matthew 19:9 (Clarification)**

**You commit adultery - *EXCEPT you put away your wife/husband for fornication.***

that he is free to remarry. But what about the guilty party? Many brethren believe that the “guilty party” may remarry without sin. (Below is a proposition that I have debated with brethren on four different occasions.)

One of the pitfalls that I want to warn about again in this lesson is that of confusing terms. Many make the mistake of equating:

#### **Married-Bound**

#### **Divorced-Loosed**

Neither of the above are equal.

Let’s define these terms again. The original word for “bound” is *deo* and is defined by Thayer, when referring to the relationship that can exist between people as in Romans 7, “To bind, i.e. put under obligation sc. of law, duty, etc... to be bound to one... of a wife” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon, page 131, # 2b) Others want to use another definition given by Thayer as used in Mark 15:7; “to bind, to fasten with chains, to throw into chains” (Ibid, page 131). The reason for wanting to use this definition will become obvious.

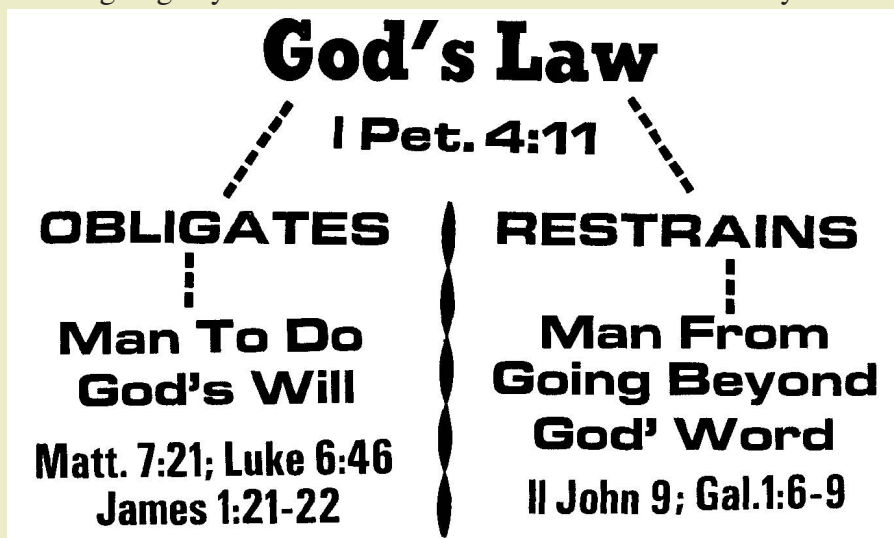
Some people reason that since “bound” means “fasten with chains,” that the “bond” is severed for *both the innocent and the guilty* when the adulterous mate has been put away. For, they reason, when the chain is broken, both are released. Thus the question arises, “Is it possible for one to be loosed and bound at the same time? However, as we have already observed from the above definitions, the word “bound,” when referring to people relationships, does not mean “to fasten with chains.” It means, “to put under obligation, namely to law.”

Now it should be obvious that one can be “married” and not “bound,” or “bound” and “not married.” For example in Matthew. 19:9, the innocent party (the one doing the

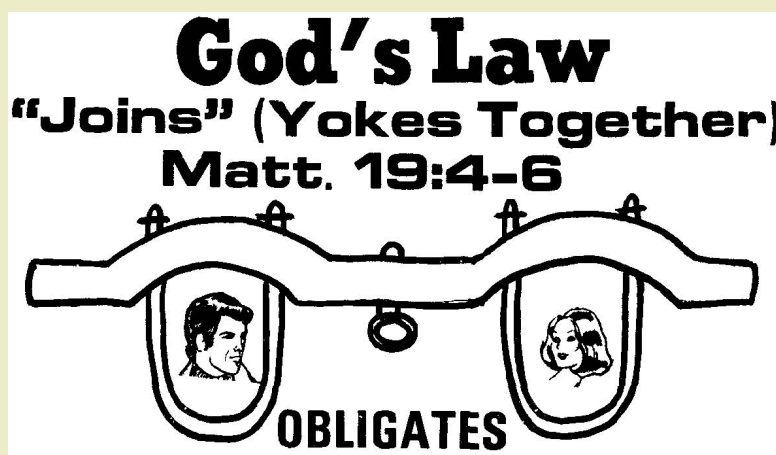
“putting away”) is loosed from any obligation to the guilty party, if he so desires. But it is also obvious that the guilty party is still under obligation (bound to the law of her husband, Romans 7:2-3; I Corinthians 7:39). The reason that this should be so obvious is because whosoever marries the guilty party is an adulterer.

In Mark 6:17-18, in the case of Herod and Herodias, they were “married,” for that is what the text says, but they were not “bound.” John the Baptist told Herod that it was an *unlawful* marriage, for she was still his brother Phillip’s wife. Thus the word “married” refers to *relationship*, and “bound” refers to *obligation*: and “marriage” does not equal “bond.” And if, as in the case of Herod and Herodias, one is married to a second man but is still bound to the first, it is *unlawful*.

God’s law has always imposed both *obligations* and *restraints* on those who are capable of doing His Will. Man is obligated to do all that God requires. He is also restrained from going beyond what God has authorized. This is clearly



shown from the passages listed on the above chart. These two requirements also apply to marriage. God “joins” (the word translated “joins” literally means “yoked together,” see Nestle’s Interlinear), a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6). They are obligated to leave father and mother and cleave unto one another. They are also restrained, by God’s Law, from sexual relations with another (cf. Romans 7:2-3).



With Another Romans 7:2-3

The situation depicted on our next chart shows that one may be loosed while the other is still “joined,” or “yoked.” Jesus said if one “puts away” his mate for fornication,

he is loosed, that is, he does not commit adultery when he remarries (Matthew 19:9). He has been released by God from both the marriage (relationship) and the bond (law). Having been released by God from both the obligations and restraints, and having complied with the laws of the land, he may therefore contract a new marriage with one who has the right according to God's Law to be married— thus bound by God to another woman.

**God's Law**  
**"Joins" (Yokes Together)**  
**Matt. 19:4-6**

**OBLIGATES**  
**Matt. 19:9 Leave & Cleave et. al.**

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**RESTRAINS**  
**From Sexual Relations**  
**With Another Rom.7:2-3**

Paul said in Romans 7:2-3 that when the husband dies, the wife is not only loosed from her husband, but "...she is loosed from the *law of her husband*" (Romans 7:2b). "bound." "No," someone says, "that is impossible." Well notice the next chart which illustrates this very point. which illustrates this very point.

<p><b>Law</b></p> <p><b>OBLIGATES &amp; RESTRAINS</b></p> <p><b>Officer    Thief</b></p>	<p><b>Judge</b></p> <p><b>Thief</b></p> <p><b>Law</b></p> <p><b>RESTRAINS</b></p>
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Now we have here a man who is a thief and has been arrested. Whether he is handcuffed or not, he is obligated by law to go where the officer goes, Also he is restrained from going anywhere the officer does not go. But, we see another scene as he appears before the judge. The officer is not in this scene. Is the thief free to go? No! Even though he may be released (loosed) from the officer he is still “bound by the law” to remain in the court room until the judge pronounces sentence. Thus, he is both loosed and bound. He is “loosed” from the officer, but is still “bound” by the law. And so it is with the person whom we have under consideration in Matthew 19:9.

### **If One Is Loosed, Both Must Be**

Now, let’s get back to the question, is it possible for a person to be “bound” and “loosed” at the same time? It is, if one is referring to the Bible word *deo*,

“But,” someone says, “it still seems to me that if one is loosed, then both should be loosed.” Well, all of us might wish it could be that way. However, if that were the case, then the one who committed sin would benefit from the sin he had committed as much as the one who was innocent. That has never been God’s way. Also, it would place the person who was “put away” because of sin (adultery) in a better position in God’s sight than the one who was “put away” for “burning the bread.” Let me illustrate.

Position 1: Tom “puts away” Mary for fornication. According to the above position, Mary could remarry because Tom has been “loosed” by God.

**Position 2:** Again, Henry puts Sue away for burning the bread. According to the above position, Sue *could not* remarry. Hence, a premium would be put on sin; if Position #1 is true, for the one who tore up his/her home by sin (Mary who was “put away” for fornication) would be free to remarry, while Sue (the one who was “put away” because she “burned the bread”) could not remarry. As I have shown on the following chart, this position is absurd.

**POSITION REDUCED TO AN ABSURDITY !**  
**If one is put away for some cause other than fornication, when that person remarries he commits adultery.**  
**Most Brethren Agree - I Agree !**  
**BUT**  
**If one is put away for fornication, when that person remarries he does not commit adultery.**  
**Some Brethren Agree - I Disagree !**  
**One Reason For Disagreeing !**  
**God said He would judge adulterers (Hebrews 13:4). But according to the above statements, God judges the "bread burner" guilty and the "fornicator" innocent. Thus God's consequences are more severe for the "bread burner" than for the "fornicator" !**

### **THIS IS ABSURD !**

“Yes,” one replies, “but they are both *divorced!* Why then do they not both have the right to be remarried?” Now you can see why I set forth the fact that “*divorce*” *does not equal “loosed.”* Even though, according to the laws of the land they have divorced and remarried, *marriage does not mean they are “bound.”* For as we have observed in this lesson, one may be “married” a second time and *not* be “bound” (still bound to her first mate) to him: Or she may be “bound” and *not* “married” (divorced).

### **Conclusion**

If the above line of reasoning is correct, **NO PUT AWAY PERSON MAY REMARRY.** For if he/she is “put away” for “burning the bread,” both are still “bound” and neither can remarry. If he/she has been “put away” for fornication, even though God allows the innocent person (the one *doing the putting away*) to be free to remarry, *the guilty party is still “bound.”* Thus any “put away person” who remarries is living in adultery. That is what Jesus said (Matthew 5:32b; 19:9b; Luke 16:18b). (Next Month— Is a “second putting away” possible?) ☞