

## I. A Husband Divorces His Wife Due to Displeasure and Indecency (24:1)

**"If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her "**

We drown in indecent things, which we *must* search out in the deep, dusty corners of our hearts, which we *must* confess, and from which we *must* repent.

**"and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house,"**

## II. The Woman Marries a Second Husband (24:2)

**<sup>2</sup>and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man,**

Jesus had a conversation with the Pharisees in which they invoked this passage (Matt 19).

## III. A Second Husband Divorces His Wife Due to Dislike, Or Dies (24:3)

**<sup>3</sup>and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies,**

## IV. The First Husband May Not Marry His Former Wife Again (24:4)

**<sup>4</sup>then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.**

## V. A Newly Married Man Gets a Year Off Duty to Make His Wife Happy (24:5)

**<sup>5</sup>If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.**

The Big Story: In the happy account of Genesis 2, God made a married couple naked and unashamed, but sin entered so that in Deut 24:1-4 a marriage involved nakedness and shame. Immediately, in Deut 24:5, we have the beginnings of a solution, so that any marriage under God's covenant can come back to Gen 2-style, Song of Solomon-style, Proverbs 31-style, John 2-style, Ephesians 5-style joy.

The Sermon-in-a-Sentence—Moses brings God's perspective on starting and stopping marriages and remarriages.

The Big Question—Will you pray and work, in the sight of God, to get rid of anything that is indecent, that God could dislike, or that is detestable, defiled, or displeasing in your relationship with your spouse and your God?

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J. G. McConville—There is no other law in the OT concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Divorce is presupposed. The husband had many rights. A general law regarding divorce is not found here.

Christopher Wright—"Most of the laws in Deut 24 put a harness on greed and exploitation so that the needy are protected. The eighth and tenth commandments (do not steal, do not covet) seem linked to this passage."

Eugene Merrill—"The discussion of divorce and remarriage in Deut 24:1-4 is 'much at home' in this context of respecting property and the rights of individuals."

J. G. McConville—"Something indecent"—excrement that must be hidden away from the holy presence of Yahweh; nakedness; shame; not adultery. Unspecified, unacceptable activity.

Daniel I. Block—menstrual irregularity (Mark 5:15-34) which brought about constant state of uncleanness, ruling out sexual activity (Lev 12:2-8), making her unable to have children. Possibly husband did not know of this condition until after he married her. He could have responded compassionately but divorced her instead.

Christopher Wright—literally, "a writing of cutting off." Certificate given to protect her. Vouched for her status as free and able to marry another man. Minus a certificate, she (and he) could be accused of adultery.

Eugene Merrill—Sending her from his house (from the family fellowship and all it entailed), she was "cut off and driven away from home and family, a punishment laden with indescribable shame and incalculable economic and social loss in that ancient Israelite world."

P. C. Craigie (quoting Reuven Yaron)—This "law protects the second marriage."

Carolyn Pressler (following R. Westbrook and Heth & Wenham)—The profit motive is compelling. This law aimed to protect the woman from being exploited by the first husband. He may have had false, greedy motives in wanting her back, especially if the woman received a sum of money when the second husband divorced her or died.

Duane Christensen— There are no laws as such in the Torah on divorce. Perhaps the laws were common knowledge, and the law in Deut 24:1-4 presupposes divorce proceedings as normative legal action. This is probably true, but the issue here is not so much divorce as it is the meaning of marriage, and the great evil present when divorce occurs. Divorce wreaks havoc everywhere it goes. The original intention of the Torah is that of an inviolable union in marriage. The man must bring his wife happiness (Deut 24:5), "but in some instances this may not be possible." The law stated in Deut 24:1-5 and expanded in Gen 20 reveals the consequences of divorce, compounded by its finality. Divorce is a kind of death, "the only difference being the simple fact that the corpses are still walking around!" Divorce is one of life's moments of ultimate decision. Divorce provides an ending, with no possible way to return to "what might have been."