

## Why I believe that marriage is:

### *A man and a woman joined by God for life*

This is a difficult subject to discuss for various reasons, not the least of which are that marriage is so personal, and divorce hurts people badly. Having said this, it is also important to understand that God asks his followers to do some very difficult things and to take stands that may be very unpopular.

My beliefs, as presented in this paper, are the result of diligent study of God's word over an extended period of time during which I have prayed and fasted three times. In an earthly sense, I would rather not hold to these beliefs - they have made my life difficult, and have resulted in the loss of friendships that were dear to me.

The only reason that I hold to these beliefs is that I am convinced that this is what God teaches in his word.

----- All scripture is from the King James Version -----

#### ***PLEASE NOTE:***

**I do not believe that God requires a person to dwell with a spouse who is abusive, who creates a dangerous environment, or who is involved in illegal activity. I do not believe that any of these circumstances break a marriage covenant, but I do believe that God allows separation under circumstances such as these.  
(See I Corinthians 7:10-16.)**

**“But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.  
*(a man and a woman)***

**For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his  
wife; And they twain shall be one flesh:  
so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.  
*(joined)***

**What therefore God hath joined together,  
*(by God)***

**let not man put asunder.”  
*(for life)***

**Mark 10:6-9**

## ***When does God join two together as one?***

The Bible says that God, not man, created marriage; and that God, not man, joins two together as one in marriage. But when does God join to as one?

### **1. When there is purity:**

**Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled:  
but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.  
Hebrews 13:4**

We see in the passage above that sexual intercourse in itself does not constitute marriage. In fact, unlawful sexual relationships are contrasted with marriage and come under the judgement of God. God joins two when the resultant relationship is pure.

### **2. When there is a covenant:**

**And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears,  
with weeping, and with crying out,  
insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more,  
or receiveth it with good will at your hand.  
Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness  
between thee and the wife of thy youth,  
against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and  
the wife of thy covenant.  
Malachi 2:13-14**

In the passage above, God defines marriage as a covenant (a binding agreement).

### **3. When there is a wedding:**

**And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee;  
and the mother of Jesus was there:  
And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.  
John 2:1-2**

In the two verses above, the English word “marriage” is a translation of the Greek word “γάμος” and is referring to the marriage *event* (wedding) and not the marriage *institution*. This same Greek word is only translated “marriage” or “wedding”. In eight out of nine times, the word “marriage” refers to the marriage *event*. Therefore, I believe that a wedding is essential in marriage.

## ***Is marriage really for a lifetime?***

**“For the woman which hath an husband is  
bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth;  
but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.  
So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man,  
she shall be called an adulteress:  
but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law;  
so that she is no adulteress,  
though she be married to another man.”  
Romans 7:2,3**

**“The wife is  
bound by the law as long as her husband liveth;  
but if her husband be dead,  
she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”  
I Corinthians 7:39**

**“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**

**“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another,  
committeth adultery:  
and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband  
committeth adultery.”  
Luke 16:18**

Based upon the passages above, I believe that only death ends a marriage and that “remarriage” while the man and woman whom God joined together are alive is not marriage at all, but is adultery.

## ***But didn't Moses allow divorce and remarriage?***

***Yes, he did:***

**“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass  
that she find no favour in his eyes,  
because he hath found some uncleanness in her:  
then let him write her a bill of divorcement,  
and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.  
And when she is departed out of his house,  
she may go and be another man's wife.”  
Deuteronomy 24:1,2**

***I do not, however, believe that this allowance applies today:***

In Mark 10, the Pharisees asked Jesus the following question: “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?” and the next two words are “tempting him”. This was not an honest question – it was a question intended to trap Jesus. Please consider how Jesus responded:

**“And Jesus answered and said unto them,  
For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.  
But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.  
For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother,  
and cleave to his wife;  
And they twain shall be one flesh:  
so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.  
What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”  
Mark 10:5-9**

Jesus explained that Moses wrote this precept because of hardness of hearts, and that it was for a limited period of time (“for a reason and for a season” as one man has put it). Jesus said that it wasn't this way “from” the beginning. This word “from” conveys continuance from some moment forward rather than a static moment in time. In this passage, Jesus takes us back to the day that God instituted marriage so that we can understand the permanence of marriage. Going back to the original law (many centuries before Moses) is the way that Jesus settled this question. I believe that we should follow Christ's teaching and settle this question in this same way.

“No more twain” simply means what it says (never again two).

## ***But didn't God divorce the nation of Israel?***

***Yes, he did:***

**“And I saw, when for all the causes  
whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery  
I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce;  
yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not,  
but went and played the harlot also.**

**And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom,  
that she defiled the land, and committed adultery  
with stones and with stocks.**

**And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah  
hath not turned unto me with her whole heart,  
but feignedly, saith the LORD.**

**And the LORD said unto me,**

**The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.**

**Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say,**

**Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD;**

**and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you:**

**for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.**

**Only acknowledge thine iniquity,**

**that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God,  
and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree,  
and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.**

**Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD;**

**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:”**

**Jeremiah 3:8-14**

***But he plainly said that he was still married to her.***

Forgiveness and reconciliation is the pattern that God has given us to follow.

## ***But didn't Jesus make an exception?***

**“...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.”  
Matthew 5:32**

**“...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.”  
Matthew 19:9**

My best understanding is that the meaning of “fornication” is not necessarily the same in all instances. It sometimes seems to mean sexual sin in general, while sometimes it is more specific (sexual sin prior to marriage for example). It is my opinion that the word “fornication” in the verses above means sexual sin prior to marriage. The book of Matthew (the only book that includes this “exception clause”) has a Jewish emphasis. During the Jewish betrothal period, couples were referred to as “husband” and “wife” before marriage (please see Leviticus 19:20, Deuteronomy 20:7, Deuteronomy 22:23-24, and Matthew 1:18-20). I believe that the fornication spoken of in the two verses at the top of this page applies only to the Jewish betrothal period. Even if my understanding is incorrect regarding this “exception clause”, I still must accept God’s plain statements by simple faith and trust that those statements which are less clear do not change the meaning of the plain statements.

It is unwise to change the plain and simple meaning of a majority of scripture passages to conform to an interpretation of a minority of passages that are less clear. Of the six New Testament passages that deal specifically with the subject of divorce and remarriage (included in full in Appendix A), and which are contained within five New Testament books, this exception for fornication occurs in two passages and in one book (a clear minority in both cases).

God uses the marriage relationship as an example of the relationship between Christ and his church (please see Ephesians chapter 5). If God allows the human marriage bond to be broken due to unfaithfulness, then I believe that God allows the bond between Christ and his own to be broken for unfaithfulness. This would contradict many of God’s promises and therefore I cannot believe that it is true.

Please also consider the following statement made by Jesus:

**“Whosoever putteth away his wife,  
and marrieth another, committeth adultery:  
and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband  
committeth adultery”.**

**Luke 16:18**

If “whosoever” in this passage does not mean “whosoever”, then how can we be sure that “whosoever” means “whosoever” in the following passage?

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,  
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,  
but have everlasting life.”**

**John 3:16**



## ***But isn't God's grace great enough to forgive this sin?***

Any born again believer knows firsthand how great God's grace is. Of course God will forgive remarriage after divorce! Praise God for this! Forgiveness cleanses from sin, but forgiveness does not change the nature of the sin itself, nor does it sanction its continuance. To the woman taken in adultery, Jesus Christ said "...Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). As surely as God will forgive the sin of adultery, he will not condone it. I do not believe that God will honor a relationship that he plainly calls adulterous.

The scripture teaches that grace never gives freedom to sin; but rather gives freedom from sin. Consider the following passages:

**"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were  
free from righteousness.  
What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?  
for the end of those things is death.  
But now being made  
free from sin,  
and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness,"  
Romans 6:22**

**"Let the wicked  
forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts:  
and let him return unto the LORD,  
and he will have mercy upon him;  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."  
Isaiah 55:7**

**"What shall we say then?  
Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.  
How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"  
Romans 6:1,2**

In Jude 1:4 God warns us about...  
**"turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" [lewdness]**

***Does the passage of time change the way  
that God views adultery?***

**“For the woman which hath an husband is bound  
by the law to her husband so long as he liveth;  
but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.  
So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man,  
she shall be called an adulteress:  
but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law;  
so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”**  
**Romans 7:2-3**

God says that marriage is binding for the woman “so long as he [her husband] liveth”. Likewise, the label of “adulteress” remains on the woman “while her husband liveth”. These are plain words. Death is what God says breaks the marriage bond. God’s statements above would, of course, apply equally to a man.

## ***Didn't the Apostle Paul give permission to divorce and remarry under some circumstances?***

Let's look at Paul's statements closely:

**“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord:  
If any brother hath a wife that believeth not,  
and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.  
And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not,  
and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.  
For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife,  
and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband:  
else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.  
But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart.  
A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases:  
but God hath called us to peace.  
For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?  
or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”  
I Corinthians 7:12-16**

**“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth;  
but if her husband be dead,  
she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”  
I Corinthians 7:39**

Sometimes a study of how the translators of our English Bible rendered a word from the original language into English is helpful in resolving what might appear (on the surface) to be a contradiction.

It is evident that the Greek word “δουλω” (rendered “bondage” in the first passage above) has to do with slavery or servitude. This is the manner in which it is used throughout the New Testament.

It is also evident that the Greek word “δεω” (rendered “bound” in the second passage above) speaks of a physical fastening, tying, joining or a binding obligation or commitment. These are the two ways that it is used throughout the New Testament.

Therefore, God is speaking of two different kinds of bondage in the two passages above – in the first, God is stating that a wife whose husband has left her is not obligated to continue to serve her husband or submit to his authority (but note that he is still called her husband). In the second passage above, God tells us that the marriage covenant itself is broken only by death.

***But divorce and remarriage is so common.  
Can't we just accept it and move on?***

Is the prevalence of sin a justification for it? Does God judge sin based upon how acceptable and common it is in this fallen world? God wants his people to be different from the world. God showed us the way to deal with an estranged spouse – forgiveness and reconciliation, or remaining single. This world needs to see Christians who love God enough to obey him in all things.

I believe that when churches disobey Jesus Christ in this area, the consequences are very serious:

- Reconciliation of those whom “God hath joined together” is hindered.
- Divorce and remarriage is accepted by further generations.
- Those not warned of their sin are deprived of God’s greatest blessings.
- God lifts his hand off churches and individuals.

***But shouldn't those who have committed themselves to a relationship be true to their vows?***

Although, in general, it is right to keep promises even when it is difficult to do so, I cannot believe that it is right to keep promises that require us to continue in sin. Please ask yourself the following question: "Would God require two men who have promised themselves to each other in a civil 'marriage' to continue in sodomy?". Does not the answer to this question expose the fallacy of the argument for keeping a sinful vow? It could be argued that sodomy is a greater sin than adultery, but God condemns both in the strongest of terms.

***But shouldn't a couple stay together  
for the children's sake?***

It is no accident that the story of Jesus blessing the little children follows immediately after his strong statement regarding the sin of divorce and remarriage. I don't believe that the one should be separated from the other.

**“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.**

**And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them:  
and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.**

**But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them,  
Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not:  
for of such is the kingdom of God.**

**Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God  
as a little child, he shall not enter therein.**

**And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them,  
and blessed them.”**

**Mark 10:10-16**

Obedience to God always brings blessing and we do not have the ability to foresee how God will bring this about. God calls his own to walk by faith, not by sight.

## ***How serious is the sin of adultery?***

**Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?  
Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters,  
nor adulterers,  
nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves,  
nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners,  
shall inherit the kingdom of God.  
I Corinthians 6:9-10**

**But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding:  
he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.  
Proverbs 6:32**

***Should those living in an adulterous relationship  
be allowed to be members of a local church?***

Church discipline as taught in the New Testament does not permit adultery to be practiced within the Church.

I believe that those who are living in this sinful relationship should be lovingly, meekly, and persuasively shown the truth from God's word. Obedient Christians whose hearts are broken by this sin and who have allowed God to prepare them through study, prayer, and fasting are needed for this work. The timing and choice of words must be God's.



## ***What should a person do who is in an adulterous relationship?***

God's remedy is the same for all sin – repentance and faith in Christ's sacrifice on the cross for forgiveness. Saying that we are sorry and continuing on in that for which we claim to be sorry is an approach that is not found within God's word.

Ending the sinful relationship and taking responsibility for all rightful civil and moral obligations is, I believe, the only course that will please a holy God.

Obedience to God is often difficult, but God always honors and blesses it. God can work things out for good when this appears impossible to us. His wisdom is infinite, his love extends to all who are involved, and his grace is sufficient.

***If you are in this situation, my heart goes out to you.***

***I have prayed that God will give you understanding. (Don't just follow what anyone, including myself, says - study this out for yourself in God's word.) I have also prayed that God would give you grace to follow him as he leads. He knows your situation and is compassionate beyond our ability to comprehend.***

**“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;  
and lean not unto thine own understanding.  
In all thy ways acknowledge him,  
and he shall direct thy paths.”  
Proverbs 3:5-6**

## ***A summary of my beliefs***

Marriage is the joining of two by God  
in a pure relationship through a covenant and a wedding.

Marriage is for life.

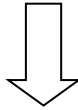
Remarriage during the lifetime of the spouse is adultery.

God will graciously forgive those who confess and forsake this sin.

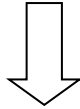
God's people need to speak these truths in love.

***Application of my beliefs  
illustrated in the sequence of events below:***

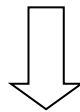
God joins a man and woman in purity, through a covenant a wedding.  
***I believe that this is marriage.***



Divorce occurs.  
One spouse “remarries” while the other spouse is living.  
***I believe that this is an adulterous relationship.***



A “divorce” from this “second marriage” occurs.  
***Since I believe that the “second marriage” was  
an adulterous relationship and not a marriage at all,  
I believe that the adulterous relationship ends when cohabitation ends.  
A “divorce” is the way that our culture handles the associated civil issues.***



One person in this “second marriage” had never been married before.  
Would God allow this person to “remarry”?  
***Since I believe that the scripture teaches that  
the “second marriage” was adulterous and not a marriage,  
I believe that this person is eligible to marry.  
I believe that a marriage under these circumstances is not always wise  
and should be entered into only with God’s clear guidance.***

## Appendix A

### *All of the New Testament passages that deal directly with divorce and remarriage*

**“It hath been said, 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.”**

**Matthew 5:31,32**

**“And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, 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.**

**They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 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. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.**

**But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”**

**Matthew 19:1-12**

**“And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.**

**And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 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 10:1-12**

**“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. 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 committeth adultery.”**

**Luke 16:16-18**

**“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”**

**Romans 7:1-4**

**“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.**

**The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.”**

**I Corinthians 7:10-40**

## Appendix B

### *Some Old Testament scriptures on marriage, divorce, and remarriage*

**“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”**

**Genesis 2:21-24**

**“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.”**

**Deuteronomy 24:1,2**

**“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? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest. The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD. And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return,**

**thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; 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:"**

**Jeremiah 3:1-14**

**"Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."**

**Malachi 2:11-16**