

Deuteronomy 24:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;

Analysis

And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife. This verse continues the hypothetical scenario - the second marriage also ends, either through divorce or death. The same legal procedure applies to the second divorce as to the first.

The parallel between divorce and death in ending marriage demonstrates that both genuinely terminate the marriage covenant. Death's undisputed marriage-ending power is placed alongside divorce, indicating divorce also truly ends the union.

The repetition of the divorce procedure (write her a bill of divorcement) emphasizes legal consistency. Whether first or subsequent marriage, proper legal dissolution requires formal documentation, not informal abandonment.

This sets up verse 4's prohibition against the first husband remarrying her - the issue is not whether divorce is final (it is) but whether marriages should be treated as revolving doors.

Historical Context

Ancient societies recognized both death and divorce as marriage-ending events. This law's treatment of them comparably shows that divorce, though tragic result of sin, genuinely terminates the marriage covenant.

The requirement for consistent legal procedure in subsequent divorces prevented arbitrary treatment of women and maintained social order.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does the parallel between divorce and death teach about marriage termination?
2. How does requiring consistent legal procedure protect social order?
3. Why is it important that divorce genuinely ends marriage rather than creating permanent limbo?
4. What does this teach about the finality of legal divorce despite its tragic nature?
5. How should the comparison to death inform pastoral response to divorce?

Interlinear Text

סָפֶר לָהּ וְכָתַב הָאָחֵר וְהָיָה שִׂנְאָה
her a bill ^{H0} **her and write** ^{H3789} **And if the latter** ^{H314} **husband** ^{H376} **hate** ^{H8130}

אֲוֹ מִבֵּיתוֹ וְשָׁלְחָהּ בְּיָדָהּ וְנָתַן כְּרִיתָתָה
her out of his house ^{H1004} **and sendeth** ^{H7971} **it in her hand** ^{H3027} **and giveth** ^{H5414} **of divorcement** ^{H3748}

לָוּ לָקַחַהּ אֲשֶׁר הָאָחֵר וְהָיָה יָמוֹת כִּי
which took ^{H3947} ^{H834} **And if the latter** ^{H314} **husband** ^{H376} **die** ^{H4191} ^{H3588}

לְאִשָּׁה:
her to be his wife ^{H802}