

# Deuteronomy 24:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

## Analysis

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**Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.** The prohibition against the first husband remarrying her prevents treating marriage as temporary arrangement. Marriage should be permanent commitment, not revolving door relationship.

The word defiled is controversial - not that the woman sinned by remarrying (which was permitted) but that returning to the first husband after marrying another creates improper sexual combination. The intervening marriage makes reunion with the first husband inappropriate.

Calling this abomination before the LORD uses strong language indicating serious covenant violation. Though individual divorce may be permitted, manipulating marriages through divorce-remarriage cycles defiles the land and violates God's design for marriage permanence.

The phrase cause the land to sin emphasizes corporate consequences. Individual

sexual sins defile not just persons but the land itself, affecting the whole community. Sexual ethics have public, communal dimensions.

## Historical Context

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This law prevented manipulation where men divorced wives temporarily, allowing them to marry others, then remarried them. Such treatment of marriage as fluid arrangement contradicted God's design for permanent covenants.

The language of land defilement recalls laws about sexual immorality (Leviticus 18:25-28) - sexual sin pollutes the land and brings judgment on the nation.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does prohibition against remarrying the first husband teach about marriage permanence?
2. How does this law prevent manipulation and protect women from being treated as commodities?
3. Why does remarrying the first husband after intervening marriage constitute defilement?
4. What does the language of land defilement teach about corporate consequences of sexual sin?
5. How should the strong language ('abomination') shape our view of the seriousness of sexual ethics?

3