

Mark 10:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Analysis

Jesus continued: 'if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery' (ἐὰν γυνὴ ἀπολύσῃ τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς καὶ γαμηθῇ ἄλλῳ μοιχᾶται). This verse addresses women divorcing husbands—unusual in Jewish law but possible under Roman law. Mark, writing for Roman audience, includes this application. Jesus established complete marital symmetry—both spouses equally bound by covenant, both commit adultery if divorcing and remarrying unlawfully. This countered ancient patriarchal structures treating women as property. Christian marriage theology emphasizes mutual covenant faithfulness (1 Cor 7:3-4; Eph 5:21-33). The same standard applies to both—no double standard. This reflects gospel equality: in Christ 'there is neither male nor female' (Gal 3:28) regarding salvation and spiritual dignity.

Historical Context

Roman law permitted women to initiate divorce, unlike Jewish law. Wealthy Roman women sometimes divorced husbands to remarry for political or financial advantage. Herodias divorced Philip to marry Herod Antipas (Mark 6:17-18)—precisely the situation John the Baptist condemned. Jesus' inclusion of women divorcing husbands shows awareness of Greco-Roman context. Early church applied Jesus' teaching universally—neither spouse could divorce and remarry. This created tension with surrounding culture and raised pastoral challenges (what about Christian married to unbeliever who divorces? 1 Cor 7:12-16). The

principle remained clear: divorce and remarriage without biblical grounds constitutes adultery for both men and women.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' equal application of adultery standard to both men and women reflect gospel values of mutual covenant faithfulness?
2. What does Jesus' teaching on marital permanence challenge about contemporary 'no-fault' divorce culture?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐὰν	γυνή	ἀπολύσῃ	τὸν	ἄνδρα	αὐτῆς	καὶ
And	if	a woman	shall put away	G3588	husband	G846	And
G2532	G1437	G1135	G630		G435		G2532

γαμηθῇ	ἄλλῳ,	μοιχᾶται
be married	to another	she committeth adultery
G1060	G243	G3429

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 7:11 (Parallel theme): But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.