

Mark 10:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

Analysis

Jesus concluded: 'the twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh' (ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν· ὥστε οὐκέτι εἰσὶν δύο ἀλλὰ μία σάρξ). The phrase 'one flesh' (mia sarx, μία σάρξ) describes profound unity—physical, emotional, spiritual. 'Flesh' (sarx) refers to whole person, not just physical body. Marriage creates ontological union where two individuals become single entity. This unity is God's creative act ('they are' is passive—God makes them one). The emphatic repetition—'no more twain, but one'—stresses indissoluble unity. This establishes marriage as covenant creating permanent bond, not contract dissolvable at will. Divorce doesn't merely violate agreement; it tears apart what God joined. Paul applies this to Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32)—marital one-flesh union images Christ's union with believers.

Historical Context

The concept of 'one flesh' was unique in ancient world. Greco-Roman marriage was primarily legal contract for property transfer and legitimate heirs. Jewish marriage, while covenantal, often permitted easy divorce (especially Hillel's school). Jesus elevated marriage above legal contract to mystical union—two becoming ontologically one. Early Christian theology developed rich marital theology: marriage as sacrament imaging Trinity's unity (Augustine), Christ-church relationship (Ephesians 5), and covenant permanence. Sexual union consummates but doesn't create one-flesh bond—the covenant vow creates it, sexual union

expresses it. This grounds Christian sexual ethics: extramarital sex violates covenant exclusivity; divorce tears asunder what God joined.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the 'one flesh' concept challenge contemporary view of marriage as revocable contract rather than permanent covenant?
2. What does marriage as ontological unity (not mere emotional connection) teach about why divorce is so devastating?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἔσονται	οἱ	δύο	εἰς	σάρξ	μίαν·	ῶστε	οὐκέτι
And	shall be	G3588	they twain	one	flesh	G1520	so then	no more
G2532	G2071		G1417	G1519	G4561		G5620	G3765
εἰσὶν	δύο	ἀλλὰ	μία	σάρξ				
they are	they twain	but	G1520	flesh				
G1526	G1417	G235		G4561				

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:28 (Parallel theme): So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

Genesis 2:24 (Parallel theme): Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

1 Corinthians 6:16 (Parallel theme): What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

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