

Matthew 5:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

Analysis

Jesus addresses the Law's provision for divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), which Moses allowed because of hard hearts. But divorce was never God's ideal. The 'writing of divorcement' was meant to protect women from being abandoned without legal status, but men abused this provision.

Historical Context

Jewish rabbis debated divorce grounds extensively. Rabbi Hillel's school allowed divorce for nearly any reason ('she burned dinner'), while Rabbi Shammai permitted it only for adultery. Men could divorce easily; women had no such right. Jesus will affirm Shammai's stricter view.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How has cultural acceptance of easy divorce affected our view of marriage's permanence?

2. What does God's original design for marriage teach about His covenant faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

Ἐρρέθη	δέ,	ὅτι	ὃς	ἂν	ἀπολύσῃ	τὴν	γυναῖκα
It hath been said	G1161	G3754	Whosoever	G302	shall put away	G3588	wife
G4483			G3739		G630		G1135
αὐτῇ	δότω	αὐτῇ	ἀποστάσιον				
her	let him give	her	a writing of divorcement				
G846	G1325	G846	G647				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 3:1 (Parallel theme): 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.

Matthew 19:7 (Parallel theme): They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

Matthew 19:3 (Parallel theme): 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?