

Romans 7:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Analysis

So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress—The future passive *chrēmatisō* (χρηματίζω) means "she will be publicly labeled/divinely warned." Adultery (*moichalis*, μοιχαλίσ) violates covenant fidelity, a repeated Old Testament metaphor for Israel's idolatry. Two simultaneous covenantal allegiances constitute spiritual adultery.

But if her husband be dead, she is free from that law—*Eleuthera* (ἐλευθέρα, "free") emphasizes liberation, a key Pauline theme (Galatians 5:1). Freedom comes through death's dissolution of the first covenant relationship, not through the law's relaxation. **So that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man**—The second marriage is morally legitimate because death terminated the first covenant. Similarly, believers' death with Christ allows union with the resurrected Christ without covenantal conflict.

Historical Context

Jewish law strictly prohibited adultery (Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 22:22), and Roman law similarly condemned it as damaging to social order. Both cultures recognized remarriage after a spouse's death as entirely proper. Paul's analogy

would resonate powerfully with his audience's understanding of covenantal faithfulness.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. In what ways might attempting to maintain allegiance to both law-righteousness and grace-righteousness constitute spiritual adultery?
2. How does the death-before-remarriage sequence in this analogy illuminate the necessary order of dying to self before living to Christ?
3. What would it look like to live in the freedom of your 'second marriage' to Christ without guilt from your former relationship to law-condemnation?

Interlinear Text

ἄρα	οὖν	ζῶντος	τοῦ	ἀνδρὶ	μοιχαλίδα	χρηματίσει
So then	G3767	liveth	G3588	her husband	adulteress	she shall be called
G686		G2198		G435	G3428	G5537

ἐὰν	γενομένην	ἀνδρὶ	ἐτέρῳ	ἐὰν	δὲ	ἀποθάνῃ	ὅ
if	she be married	her husband	to another	if	but	be dead	G3588
G1437	G1096	G435	G2087	G1437	G1161	G599	

ἀνδρὶ	ἐλευθέρα	ἐστὶν	ἀπὸ	τοῦ	νόμου	τοῦ	μὴ	εἶναι
her husband	free	she is	from	G3588	that law	G3588	no	is
G435	G1658	G2076	G575		G3551		G3361	G1511

αὐτὴν	μοιχαλίδα	γενομένην	ἀνδρὶ	ἐτέρῳ
so that she	adulteress	she be married	her husband	to another
G846	G3428	G1096	G435	G2087

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:14 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Matthew 5:32 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

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