

# THE GARDEN OF EDEN NO-DIVORCE & NO-REMARriage LAW

OR

## MARRIAGE IS AN UNBREAKABLE COVENANT FOR LIFE

This paper is addressed to those who truly seek to worship God in spirit and in truth, who therefore do not blindly follow a man and who are wondering about the ongoing schisms in the Church of God. This paper may be freely reproduced and distributed, provided this is done in its entirety, without alterations of any kind and solely for the purpose of edifying the true Church of God.

**Issue 1.0, August 28, 2008,** This replaces the predecessor paper, *The Garden of Eden Marriage Law*. The principal changes being, the change of title, an extensive revision of Section 4.0, the addition of Section 9.0 and the referring throughout to the marriage law as the *(Garden of Eden) No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law (No-D & No-R)* instead of the former “*Garden of Eden Marriage*” Law (G.E.M.).

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## God’s Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper replaces its predecessor paper, *The Garden of Eden Marriage Law* which was last published as Issue 1.4 of September 21, 2005. The principal difference between the papers is the change of name for God’s marriage law, from the unfamiliar “*Garden of Eden Marriage*” (G.E.M.) Law to the more recognizable “*God’s Garden of Eden ‘No-Divorce & No-Remarriage’ Law*” or more simply the “*No-Divorce & No-Remarriage*” Law and even simply the “*No-D & No-R*” Law. I wanted to retain a reference to the Garden of Eden in the title because there God introduced his marriage law (Gen 2:24) and it was to this our Lord referred when answering the Pharisees in Matthew 19:4-6 with: “<sup>4</sup> ... *Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,* <sup>5</sup> *And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?* <sup>6</sup> *Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*”

The biblical marriage is a covenant for life entered into by a biblically eligible man and woman. Until the 1960s the concept of a biblical marriage was still widely accepted but today it is being devalued by the growing practice of divorce and remarriage, by extending the legal status of marriage to unmarried heterosexual couples and even to same-sex couples and by removing the social stigma once associated with pre-marital sex (fornication) and adultery during marriage. These devaluations of marriage are not restricted to the secular world but are increasingly entering the churches of Christendom and even some of the much splintered churches of God.

This paper examines the biblical *lawful* marriage in terms of God’s *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law or simply the *No-D & No-R* Law. Under God’s *No-D & No-R* Law only an eligible man and an eligible woman may lawfully marry. To be eligible both spouses must either be single or if previously *lawfully* married must now be widowed. This paper shows that a consummated *lawful* biblical marriage is a covenant for life and may not be terminated by divorce but only by the death of one of the spouses. In this life the operating rule is simply: *Once married, always married!*

Much of Christendom has retained at least in token form God’s *No-D & No-R* Law but a notable exception is the 1974 rejection of this law by the former Worldwide Church of God (WCG) under its then pastor general the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong. This paper examines this 1974 rejection in the light of the former WCG’s otherwise uniquely fundamentalist doctrinal position. In the companion paper *Laodicea’s Lamp!* (Section 10.0 *References*) a connection is made between this 1974 rejection and Mr Armstrong having led from 1934 God’s seventh church era of Laodicea rather than Philadelphia, which he claimed to have led. Because this paper examines in some detail certain consequences of Mr Armstrong’s 1974 rejection of God’s *No-D & No-R* Law, many members of the former WCG may feel aggrieved over this. My purpose is not to discredit Mr Armstrong but to point to our need to repent of that 1974 sin and return to God’s foundational *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law.

This paper shows the need for recognizing that marriage is central to God's Plan for mankind and that the Bible is the account of three special marriage covenants: first mankind's marriage as instituted by God in the Garden of Eden, second God the Father's (sic) marriage with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, and third the yet future marriage of His Son Jesus with the Bride of Christ or the true Church of God. When reading this paper it is important to understand that marriage is *central* to God the Father's plan for man. Just as man was made in God's image, so mankind's marriage was also made in the image of God's Marriage at Mt Sinai to the nation of Israel.

NOTE: The reader may be wondering why it is claimed that God the Father married the nation of Israel at Mt Sinai seeing Mr Armstrong taught that Jesus was the Creator, God of Exodus and Husband of Israel. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. Christendom began departing from apostolic 'Godhead' teaching by first adopting *Unitarian Monotheism*, which denied Jesus's divinity and second reactions to this which allowed Jesus a shared divinity such as the eventual *Trinitarian Monotheism*. It became then fashionable to see Jesus as the Creator, the God of Eden, the God of Exodus, the Husband of the nation of Israel and the Word of God to O.T. patriarchs and to the O.T. prophets. Several Greek NT manuscripts were altered to support this. Yet Hebrews 1:1-2 plainly state that God the Father was His own Word to the O.T. patriarchs and to the O.T. prophets; and that Jesus became the Word of God *only* in N.T. times! A similar message is contained in Romans 1:1-3. Also Acts 4:24b with 27a infers that God the Father was the Creator and the Greek of John 1:3 does not state that Jesus is the Creator! My paper *God the Father is the Creator and Husband of Israel!* (Section 10.0 *References*) shows that virtually every page of the Bible shows that God the Father was the Creator, God of Eden, God of Exodus, Husband of Israel and was His own Word to the O.T. patriarchs and to the O.T. prophets. Further it is essential that we see that God the Father is not a single Father but is married to His own Wife Israel and through whom He begot His Son Jesus. Also that God the Father is creating His very own Family through mankind; and that man's marriage and family are in the image of God the Father's Marriage and Family and that for this God the Father's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law is pivotal. In case the reader is wondering about Monotheism and the divinity of Jesus, he may like to read my paper, *The Bible Shows Jesus Was a Self-Existent God*.

When inquiring into God's Word, we must diligently practice *exegesis* (reading God's message from the Bible – Greek ek- = ex- = out) and we must avoid *eisegesis* (reading our thoughts into the Bible – Greek eis- = into). We may not impose our thoughts, desires and church traditions *upon* God's holy Word! This means we must not blindly accept the teaching of a minister regardless of how much Truth he may have taught in the past. Paul commended the more noble Bereans for daily checking his teaching against the Scriptures, which in those days comprised only the O.T. (Acts 17:10-12). Only exegesis can lead to true doctrine, but eisegesis will inevitably lead to false doctrine. Before we embrace any doctrine we must verify this for consistency and harmony by diligently reading from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21; and checking for key verses the O.T. Hebrew and N.T. Greek texts.

The reader needs to recognize that the following are fundamental truths pertaining to God's marriage law:

1. God the Father instituted marriage as an unbreakable covenant for life in Eden (Gen 2:24),
2. God by introducing the marriage covenant to Adam and Eve, applied this from Eden to all mankind,
3. Jesus confirmed God the Father's marriage covenant in Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10:3-9,
4. Paul's teachings (e.g. on marriage) must not be interpreted contrary to the teachings of God and Jesus.

Comments:

- When the italicized qualifiers *lawful* and *unlawful* are applied in this paper to marriage and divorce, they refer solely to their biblical legal status and not their secular one. Divorce from a lawful marriage and subsequent remarriage may be lawful in the secular world but they remain *unlawful* in God's sight.
- Unless stated to the contrary, all scripture references and quotes are taken from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

## 2.0 GOD'S NO-DIVORCE & NO-REMARriage LAW

Matthew chapter 19:3-12 and Mark chapter 10:2-12 give an overview of what Jesus explained to the Pharisees and in private to His disciples on marriage. Let us examine how Mark's gospel puts it in chapter 10.

- Mk 10.2     And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him.  
.3     And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?  
.4     And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

We will soon see that indeed Moses and not God gave Israel this liberal divorce ruling.

NOTE: The passage Mark 10:1-12 reveals that even so faithful a servant as Moses, acted at times contrary to God's wishes. Although the Bible is God's Word, not every word in the Bible reflects God's will! In places the Bible reports the words spoken by thieves, murderers, pagan kings, Roman officials and false prophets. Even when God's servants speak, they often do not speak in God's name. We must verify all teachings whether these are indeed God-breathed.

Returning to Moses decision to permit Israel to divorce and remarry; it seems that Moses allowed this to prevent the people rebelling. Moses was aware that God might then destroy them, as God had previously indicated to Moses (Exod 32:7-10). As Jesus explained this decree was not from God but had been given by Moses:

Mk 10.5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he (Moses) wrote you this precept.

To emphasis that this decree was from Moses and not from God, Jesus next reminded the Pharisees that from the beginning of creation (Garden of Eden) God had not wanted divorce and remarriage.

Mk 10.6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.  
.7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;  
.8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

So Moses had given Israel Divorce and Remarriage (*D & R*) for the hardness of their hearts. But Jesus reminded the Pharisees that from the beginning this had never been intended by God. Which beginning? The very beginning of mankind, namely the *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* covenant; for Jesus in Mark 10:7-8 quotes from Genesis 2:24.

Gen 2.24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

And Jesus added that no man may undo what God hath joined together.

Mk 10.9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

That is the foundational point of God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law. It has been that way since mankind's beginning in Eden. That is long before there was either a nation of Israel or a NT church. So God's *No-D & No-R* Law applies to all descendants of Adam and Eve. It applies to the entire world and regardless of race, belief or unbelief. This law is most certainly not restricted to the Church of God; but applies to all men and women. All *lawful* marriages are therefore entered into before God and are covenants for life. It can not be too strongly emphasized because God owns the institution of marriage and because He created men and women for this purpose; that any marriage between a biblically eligible man and a biblically eligible woman is *lawful* before God and once consummated, may not be annulled (put asunder)!

The next verses show that the disciples were most concerned about this aspect of Jesus' teaching because it was so different from Moses' teaching. Let us remember that Peter was married for he had a mother-in-law (Mat 8:14). The disciples asked Jesus in private afterwards:

Mk 10.10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*.

Then Jesus answered and left them in no doubt that Divorce and Remarriage leads to adultery.

.11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.  
.12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Jesus said that if we put away (divorce) our spouse, and marry another, then we commit adultery *against* our spouse. Now we can only commit adultery *against* our spouse, if in God's view we remain married to that spouse. That means in God's view we remain married even after a secular divorce! In other words there is no *lawful* way of ending biblically *lawful* marriages for these are covenants for life.

Note that in verse 11 Jesus' used the word 'Whosoever', which shows there is no restriction to God's *No-D & No-R* Law. Starting with Adam and Eve it applies to all men and women who are *lawfully* married. No one may put asunder a consummated *lawful* marriage covenant.

By marrying a man and a woman become one flesh and no one may put that asunder.

God's *No-D & No-R* Law can be one of the most difficult laws to live by. Once a marriage begins to break down and spouses begin to dislike and even hate one another then huge problems arise, not only for them, but also for their children, their parents and other relatives and even family friends. Once divorce strikes a family, it is a social disaster of enormous proportions and one can understand why secular society has sought to remove the social stigma and obstacles formerly associated with divorce. Although it may be necessary to depart – at least for a while - from an erring spouse; we are not free to remarry as long as the erring spouse lives. We will see that Paul taught that separated spouses must seek reconciliation.

In the parallel passage of Matthew 19:1-12 we read that the disciples then remarked that it would be better not to marry. Jesus did not deny this but added that for the Kingdom's sake (God's Family) it may be necessary to live as a eunuch – that is to remain single after separation. Here is the relevant passage.

- Mat 19.9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.
- .10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.
- .11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.
- .12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

The language in which Jesus spoke is clear; and indeed almost all of Christendom recognized Jesus' explanation of God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law. Although this did not always stop the rich and powerful from divorcing and remarrying; it did result in God's *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law being imposed upon the general population and especially in Christendom's churches. A stigma was often attached to divorced persons, especially the guilty party in cases of adultery, and these often became social outcasts. I believe this was far to be preferred to the quick-fix secular *D & R* (Divorce and Remarriage) Rule because in the end this did not fix anything. Yet in 1974 the former WCG rejected God's *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R* Law and replaced this with the secular (Satan's!) *D & R* Rule, which is the direct opposite of God's *No-D & No-R* Law.

In 1974 the former WCG sought ways around God's *No-D & No-R* Law through appealing to alleged exception clauses given by Jesus and by Paul. Such appeals will be examined next and shown to be false.

### 3.0 OUR LORD JESUS DID NOT GIVE AN EXCEPTION!

Let us begin with the apparent exception to God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law given by Jesus through Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, where the underlined phrases mark the apparent exception:

- Mat 5.32 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.
- 19.9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Jesus in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 mentions *fornication* as an exception and places this in contradistinction to *adultery*, which word He uses twice in both verses. The Greek for 'fornication' is 'porneia' and has the Strong NT reference #4202: and denotes any *unlawful* sexual activity, including prostitution, unchastity. Although 'porneia' may cover adultery it refers more generally to any unlawful sexual activity. The Greek rendered twice in both verses 'adultery' is 'moichao' (Strong #3429) and this literally means adultery. It should be noted that Jesus twice uses 'adultery' (moichao) to describe the consequence of marrying a divorced (put away) person. Note that the exception justifying divorce was not for adultery committed when married but for having committed fornication and, which, as we will see, was committed before marriage!

It must be understood that these verses do not give the green light for breaking the *No-D & No-R* Law, for in Mark 10:11 Jesus taught His disciples that 'Whoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her' and likewise in verse 12 for women who put away their husband and marry another. Let there

be no doubt that remarriage after divorce from a *lawful* marriage results in the committing of adultery *against* the former spouse and so remarriage is *unlawful* by God's and our Lord Jesus' judgment.

Some claim that the committing of adultery justifies divorce and remarriage for the wronged spouse. This is not correct for Jesus did not say in Matthew 5:32, "...saving for the cause of adultery" but "...saving for the cause of fornication". It is the word fornication (Greek 'porneia') that is the key to what this exception is about. We need to understand what Jesus had in mind; and for this let us begin with Paul's reference to 'fornication' (Greek 'porneia') in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 2.

1 Cor 7.2      Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. (Note, "fornication" is again Greek 'porneia', Strong #4202)

In Corinthians chapter 7 Paul urges unmarried converts to stay single so that they may devote themselves to God and not be distracted by the complications of marriage. But in verse 2 he adds that if this is too difficult to bear, that they should marry rather than risk 'fornication'. It is clear that with 'fornication' Paul refers to lapsing into a premarital physical relationship, which is unlawful and so sinful.

It is precisely to this aspect of 'fornication', namely premarital sex, to which Jesus referred with: "except it be for fornication" (Matt 19:9). With this Jesus referred to Deuteronomy 22:13-21, which states that if the bridegroom discovers on the wedding night that his bride is not a maid (virgin), then the bridegroom may refuse to consummate the marriage and charge the bride with fornication. When the authorities (priests) find his charge proved, then the marriage covenant is annulled; and the bride is stoned to death. The bride should have declared her premarital fornication to the bridegroom before entering into the marriage covenant. A covenant for life must not be based on deception; and so the bridegroom can not be bound against his will to a fraudulent marriage covenant.

*That is the one exception to which Jesus referred!*

But this exception is only a *momentary* option to the bridegroom, for should he overlook his bride's fraud and decide to consummate the marriage, then the marriage covenant stands and may not be *lawfully* annulled under God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law for as long as they both live.

This option being momentarily does not apply to an established and so consummated marriage. This means there is in effect no exception to God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law for consummated *lawful* marriages. Therefore there can be no *lawful* divorce from a *lawful* consummated marriage and no subsequent *lawful* remarriage for as long as one's original spouse lives.

NOTE: In this promiscuous age the provisions of Deuteronomy 22:13-21 may seem harsh and unfairly biased against women. But if all our daughters are chaperoned at all times, then a nation's daughters can not commit fornication with a nation's sons and the reputation of daughters as well as that of sons will remain intact. Reliable genealogy can only be ensured in societies that live by God's laws. Many are now born to single mothers who will know neither their biological father; nor their half-siblings he fathered to other single mothers.

It can not be stressed too strongly that the exception Jesus referred to is only a momentary or fleeting one and therefore can *not* be applied to an established and so consummated marriage as many try to do. It most certainly is not an ongoing exception for annulling established marriages. God decreed in Genesis that marriage is a covenant for life; and so there can be no *lawful* remarriage after a secular divorce from a *lawful* marriage!

NOTE: Adultery is not a valid reason for divorce! In biblical times adultery could result in the execution (by stoning) of the guilty spouse and so ending the marriage covenant through death; but when the guilty spouse was not executed the marriage covenant continued. Even when the wronged spouse departs this does not end the marriage covenant. It is shown in Section 8.0 that as Husband of the nation of Israel, God the Father gave His Wife a bill of divorce (actually a bill of temporary separation) for her ongoing adultery with pagan gods (idols). It is there also shown that God the Father will take back His wife once she repents and returns to Him. Through this God the Father leads by example how to handle a difficult marriage. God the Father expects no less of us (Matthew 5:48 and 19:12).

#### 4.0 PAUL TOO DID NOT GIVE AN EXCEPTION!

Let us now examine the exception some claim Paul allows to God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law based on the following verses from 1 Corinthians 7.

- 1 Cor 7.15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.
- 7.27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.
- 7.28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

When we read Paul's epistles, we must be ever mindful of Peter's warning:

- 2 Pet 3.15 ...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;
- .16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

As Peter warns, although Paul's writings are at times hard to understand, we must not twist these out of their biblical context; for to do so will be to our destruction. *In particular we must not interpret Paul's writings to deny what we don't like in the teaching of Jesus.* Since Jesus taught that God the Father permits neither divorce from a *lawful* marriage nor subsequent remarriage, Paul's writings must not be interpreted contrariwise. Yet that is what often is done when men decide to look for an excuse to get around God's commandments.

First let us see what Paul says in Romans 7:1-3:

- Rom 7.1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?
- .2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.
- .3 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.

It is clear that Paul teaches here in harmony with Jesus teaching of Mark 10:11-12; save that Jesus applied this rule equally to wife and husband. As long as one's *lawful* spouse lives, one may not divorce and remarry!

The reader should now read through chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians and note that Paul's message is in essence that it is best for unmarried single converts to stay single; so that they may devote their life to God without needing to divide themselves between God and their spouse. Paul is at pains to explain that this is his and not God's instruction; and so Paul also allows converts to marry should they find his advice too hard to follow. But any marriage must be biblically *lawful* as is plain from verse 39.

- 1 Cor 7.39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

*Please note carefully that whatever Paul teaches in verses 1 to 38 this may not be interpreted contrary to verse 39 as some men have done: in particular note that a woman remains married for as long as her husband lives. Only upon the death of one's lawful spouse is one free to remarry. This agrees with Paul's teaching of Romans 7:1-3 and with Jesus' teaching of Mark 10:1-12.*

This may be further illustrated by dividing verse 39 into the three following sub-verses:

- 39(a) The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth ... ← No divorce as long as spouse lives
- 39(b) ...but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married ...; ← Remarriage only after spouse's death
- 39(c) ... to whom she will only in the Lord. ← Elect should marry only Elect

The tenor of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 is that marriage is good but that the elect called by God to the NT church of God should, if possible, remain unmarried when unmarried at conversion. Paul was unmarried and it is his advice not to complicate life after conversion with marriage; for that would place the converted person with his loyalty divided between God and spouse.

The first six verses are devoted to this theme. In verse 1 Paul begins by advising the newly converted men of the Church of God at Corinth not to become involved with women with a view towards marriage. From verse 34 (see below) it can be seen that Paul applies the same argument to women.

1 Cor 7.1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman.

Paul continues that if this is too difficult, then they should get married. Note that this is not a green light to marry after a divorce for that is made plain by the aforementioned verse 39.

1 Cor 7.2 Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Paul next explains that the spouses have mutual obligations; but may agree by mutual consent to devote time to God in fasting and prayer (meditation). These verses show that Paul does not differentiate between men and women for both have similar responsibilities in marriage.

1 Cor 7.3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.  
.4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.  
.5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Paul then declares to the unmarried and widowed that it is best to emulate him and remain unmarried. Note how Paul stresses that this is his private view, which he was permitted to put. He was not inspired by God to write here a commandment to stay single; but only expresses his view.

1 Cor 7.6 But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment.  
.7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.  
.8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

But if unmarried life is too hard to bear, then it is best to marry; *but* provided they were not previously divorced from a *lawful* marriage as Paul makes plain in verse 39.

1 Cor 7.9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

Next Paul speaks in God's name by asserting God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law; that a *lawful* marriage covenant must not be put asunder.

1 Cor 7.10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:  
.11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

Paul then addresses the marriage where only one of the spouses was called into the church of God.

1 Cor 7.12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.  
.13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.  
.14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

In verses 12, 13 and 14 Paul gives his own advice rather than a decree from God for a situation that is not explicitly covered elsewhere in the Bible. It concerns an unconverted spouse, who chooses to dwell with a converted spouse. It is likely to be a difficult marriage but the converted spouse must not seek to be freed from the unconverted one. This agrees with the *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* law, which predates the N.T. church and which says that no man may annul a *lawful* marriage covenant.

Paul also covers the case where the unbelieving spouse decides to 'end' the marriage:

1 Cor 7.15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

Verse 15 is the first where some claim Paul's exception begins; through the reference to the converted spouse no longer being under bondage after the unconverted spouse leaves. This is then taken as an *exception* allowing remarriage, albeit within the church, to a converted single spouse. That interpretation is not only contrary to Paul's teaching of verse 39 but is also contrary to Jesus' plain teaching.

The verse-15 phrase "A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases..." must not be taken to mean that the believing spouse is now free to remarry a believer for that would be against the spirit of verse 39. Rather it must be seen as referring to no longer being unequally yoked to an unconverted spouse. After the unbelieving spouse departs one is free to devote one's life to God's Way. Elsewhere Paul warns how problems can arise even when living with a converted spouse; and so we must expect worse problems when dwelling with an unconverted spouse.

1 Cor 7.16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife?

God decides whom He will call and whom He will not call in this age. That is not for us to decide. Whilst it may give us hope that our spouse too will be called whilst dwelling with us, this is far from certain. In other words Paul urges the believing spouse not to resist the departing spouse but to embrace instead the freedom of being able to devote one's life to God ... "A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace" (1 Cor 7:15). This verse must not be misinterpreted to mean we may remarry for that would twist Paul's teaching contrary to that of our Lord's in Mark 10:11-12 and indeed also Paul's teaching of 1 Corinthians 7:39.

Paul now enters into a rather involved passage, whose message is that whatever our situation is, we must accept this and not seek to escape it. For example, if we are a servant to someone, then accept that with our conversion to Christianity. In particular, if we are married, we must not seek to be loosed from marriage, which returns to Paul's former advice to the married.

1 Cor 7.26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say*, that *it is* good for a man so to be.

It is the next two verses which gave rise in the former WCG to the liberal reinterpretation of 1974

7.27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

Let us analyse verse 27 by splitting this into its two distinct parts:

Verse 27(a) Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. ← The *No-D* part of the *No-D & No-R* Law.

Verse 27(b) Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. ← The *No-R* part of the *No-D & No-R* Law.

From this we see that verse 27 is Paul's complete and self-contained statement of God's *No-D & No-R* Law and that therefore Paul teaches precisely what Jesus taught in Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 19:3-9. Note also that verse 27 is consistent with verse 39 (a) and (b), which is repeated next to show Paul's consistent *No-D & No-R* teaching in this chapter.

1 Cor 39(a) The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth ...	← No divorce as long as spouse lives
39(b) ...but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married ...;	← Remarriage only after spouse's death
39(c) ... to whom she will only in the Lord.	← Elect should marry only Elect

But what about the first (underlined) part of verse 28, which some claim modifies the meaning of verse 27?

1 Cor 7.28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

Note first that verse 28 changes the subject from that of verse 27 and returns us to Paul's recurring theme in this chapter that although it is no sin to marry lawfully, it is better to remain single and devote one's life to God. This is the point of verse 28(a), "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned ..." and it must not be taken as a negation of God's *No-D & No-R* Law through interpreting 28a as a continuation of verse 27 because that would render verse 27

contradictory to verse 39(a) and (b) and contradictory to our Lord Jesus' teaching of Matthew 19:3-12 and Mark 10:3-12.

Also by artificially connecting verse 28(a) with verse 27, we unhinge verse 28. The whole of verse 28 is concerned with it not being a sin to marry lawfully but Paul at the same time warns that this complicates the life of converted Christians. Again verse 28 is a complete statement on that and is quite separate from verse 27, which is a complete statement of God's *No-D & No-R* Law.

Paul's theme that it is better to remain single parallels the disciples reaction to Jesus after he had reacquainted them with God's *No-D & No-R* Law. In reply to his disciples' reaction, Jesus did not disagree with them but added that not everyone can live as a eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom. Here are the relevant verses:

Mat 19.10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.  
.11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.  
.12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men : and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Therefore Paul teaches precisely the same message as did our Lord Jesus.

When our lawful spouse departs we will have to live for as long as the departed spouse lives as eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom. It certainly does not behove us to show hardness of heart and reject God's *No-D & No-R* Law and replace this with man's uninspired secular *D & R* Rule.

When we look carefully at the passage 1 Corinthians 28-38 we see that verse 28 belongs to this passage rather than to verse 27 as promoters of *D & R* are want to claim. In this passage 28-38 Paul points to the difficulties marriage can present to the Elect and that therefore it is best to stay single. Here is that passage

1 Cor 7.28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.  
.29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;  
.30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;  
.31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.  
.32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:  
7.33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.  
7.34 There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.  
7.38 So then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better.

From this the reader should see that verse 28 is not an extension of verse 27 that modifies this verse but rather is the introductory verse of passage 28-38.

As a result Paul nowhere in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 gives the green light for breaking God's *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law by allowing divorce and remarriage after divorce. Let us seal this by again reading verse 39.

1 Cor 7.39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

In verse 40 Paul once again returns to the other theme of this chapter, namely that in his view it is best to remain single, even if free to marry under God's *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No Remarriage* Law.

1 Cor 7.40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

No where in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 gives Paul an exception to God's *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law. Verse 39 makes it plain that not even a converted church member may after divorce remarry

another converted member of the church of God as long as their “former” spouse lives. As shown this is precisely the self-contained message of verse 27.

## 5.0 CAN THE SECULAR MARRIAGE CONFUSION BE UNSCRAMBLED?

This paper is not intended as a guide for determining whether to marry or not, or to divorce or not from an *unlawful* marriage: but has the primary aim of explaining the constraints imposed by the *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law*. These constraints have been largely forgotten by this world and even in the churches of God. Each person must decide whether to abide by this law but should remember that one day we will be asked to give account before God.

Before 1974 the Worldwide Church of God and its predecessor the Radio Church of God, strictly applied the rule that candidates for baptism and church membership first had to end any biblical *unlawful* marriage. This rule made baptism and church membership conditional to being either unmarried or biblically *lawfully* married. This could give rise to much distress, not only to the spouses but their children, their parents and other relatives and friends.

Considerable difficulties can be encountered when investigating whether a marriage is biblically *lawful* or *unlawful*. When the groom is a bachelor and the bride a spinster, then their marriage should be biblically *lawful*. But should, for example, only the bride have been previously married then already the investigation can become involved. The bride’s marital history must be traced all the way back to her spinsterhood; along with the marital history of all prior husbands to their bachelorhood, along with the marital history of their brides to their spinsterhood. The investigation resembles a tree whose trunk depicts the marriage under investigation, the branches depict prior marriages and the end twigs depict all initial spinsterhoods and bachelorhoods. For the bride to have been eligible and so the marriage under investigation to be *lawful* all the bride’s prior marriages must have been either *unlawful* or if *lawful*, the husband must have died. Such investigations can become very involved, especially where both spouses need to be investigated, when inquiries extend across state and national borders and where hostile reactions are encountered from former spouses. Such investigations would have caused at times great anxiety and trauma prior to 1974 in the former Worldwide Church of God.

Was Mr Armstrong’s pre-1974 rule requiring such investigations biblically correct? *What is to be done when man’s secular system has produced a marriage confusion prior to conversion which can not be unscrambled?* For example, if an *unlawful* but functional marriage is terminated, what should happen to children born to that marriage or who came to that marriage from prior marriages? Besides it is unlikely that the two *unlawfully* married spouses can resume their prior lawful marriages.

I suspect that Mr Armstrong’s pre-1974 rule was too harsh and clearly his post-1974 rejection of the *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R Law* and replacing this with a *D & R* rule was too liberal. This paper is concerned with Mr Armstrong’s 1974 rejection of God’s *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R Law*, which has had some bad consequences and needs to be reversed and repented of. Sections of the Bible which may shed further light on these issues include Jesus’ meeting with the oft-married woman at Jacob’s well (John chapter 4).

After we are called by God to His church and we respond through being baptized, we must wholeheartedly and gladly embrace God’s Way. *Therefore after our conversion we must no longer wilfully break God’s Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law.* The churches of God have broken this law since 1974.

Without judging Mr Armstrong’s pre-1974 rule it seems that after considering: (1) that the secular marriage confusion can not be unscrambled, (2) God’s *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R Law* must be obeyed after conversion and (3) Paul’s advice to remain single makes good sense for priests in training for service in God’s Kingdom, the following marriage rules for converted members of the church of God should be adopted as a minimum requirement:

- Single members should be urged to stay single and devote themselves to God’s Way.
- Members may only marry if they have no biblical *lawful* spouse and provided they do not marry a spouse divorced from a biblical *lawful* marriage and whose spouse is still alive.
- Members who were divorced from a *lawful* marriage before conversion must not remarry for as long as their former spouse lives.
- Members whose (unbelieving) spouse departs must remain single for as long as the departed spouse lives.

- Members who were biblically *unlawfully* married before they understood God's *No-D & No-R* Law should probably stay married because more problems are created by their divorce than are solved. However, should they be divorced, then they may not remarry because they now understand God's *No-D & No-R* Law.

Since 1974 these rules have not been practised in the former Worldwide Church of God or in its many post-1974 daughter churches. The result has been some shocking but little-recognized consequences some of which will be examined next.

NOTE: If the requirement to live as a virtual eunuch proves difficult, then the question needs to be asked: Was the person truly called or was conversion deep enough? Remember our purpose must be to devote ourselves unconditionally to further God the Father's Plan to have His very own Family! Once it is understood that under God's Plan man has the potential to be born again at our resurrection as literal children of God in His Family; then surely all else is but a price that we must be prepared to pay and gladly pay in this life.

## 6.0 SHOCKING CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1974 REJECTION OF GOD'S NO-D & NO-R LAW

We need to be aware of some shocking consequences that resulted from Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's 1974 rejection of God's *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law to remind us of the necessity of this law.

Let us begin with an example of a man who was raised since childhood in the former Worldwide Church of God. I will refer to him as *A*, which happens to be the initial of his Christian name. *A*'s parents were one of the first people to enter the former Worldwide Church of God in Australia and they raised *A* and his brother in this church. *A* was baptized as a young adult in the WCG and he later married in the WCG a young woman also raised and baptized in this church.

Since this was for both their first marriage and since they were married in the Church of God, there can be no question that *A*'s marriage was *lawful* 'before God'. The label '*before God*' is important because post-1974 much store was placed by the former WCG and its daughter churches in church marriages being '*before God*'. Marriages '*before God*' are those entered into by members of the church of God and which were seen as different from marriages entered into elsewhere; including other churches of Christendom.

A few years after Mr Armstrong's 1986 death, *A* became aware of the first signs of departures from Mr Armstrong's teaching by the new pastor general, the late Mr Joseph W. Tkach. As a result *A* left the WCG and joined another church of God. The now divided church affiliations of *A* and his wife contributed to their estrangement and later *A* was divorced by his wife through today's easy secular divorce option that have existed in Australia since 1974.

Under God's original *No-D & No-R* Law, it is not possible to remarry after divorce from a *lawful* marriage. But apparently *A* saw this differently. He was only in his forties and did not want to stay single. So he made use of the post-1974 teaching that his divorce was a case of an 'unbelieving' spouse having departed and he was no longer under bondage – 'unbelieving' through being in another church of God with different beliefs! In other words he believed to be free to remarry. Indeed later *A* remarried in yet another church of God. There can be no question that in remarrying *A* broke God's *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law and now lives in a state of adultery for as long as his first wife lives.

This is just one consequence of Mr Armstrong's 1974 rejection of God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law and I suspect there are many similar cases. *A* should have stayed in the state he found himself rather than remarrying. Not easy but he ought to have known that remarriage was not biblically *lawful*. This too should have been understood by his minister; who should have refused to marry *A* to his second wife.

Another shocking consequence of Mr Armstrong's 1974 rejection of God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law was his 1977 marriage when aged 84 years, to the divorced Mrs Ramona Martin aged 39 years. This was a quite unsuitable match for a church leader. First Mrs Martin's husband was still alive and this marks the marriage as biblically *unlawful*. Second Mrs Martin was young enough to be Mr Armstrong's granddaughter. Third the marriage ended in 1984 after only seven years in divorce. Since the divorced Mrs Martin's husband was still alive Mr Armstrong ought to have known that he could not have married Mrs Martin (1 Cor 7:39); and especially seeing he had taught this until 1974. It will be explained in the next section that as pastor general of the former Worldwide Church of God and so as its chief priest, Mr Armstrong could not *lawfully* marry a divorced woman by God's ruling for priests.

## 7.0 PRIESTS MAY NOT MARRY DIVORCEES!

Mr Armstrong correctly taught that the elect were called by God to enter into the Kingdom as part of the royal priesthood of the firstborn under our Lord Jesus, who will be their High Priest of the order of Melchizedek. In other words God's elect are priests in training during this life.

We saw from Mark chapter 10 that Moses took it upon himself to allow Israel divorce and remarriage but that this was contrary to God's wishes. Although God did not countermand Moses's decree, God stopped this spreading to the priesthood as the passage Leviticus 21:1-14 shows. Note in particular verses 7 and 14 which specifically state that priests may not marry a "woman put away from her husband" or a "divorced woman".

- Lev 21.1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:
- .6 They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy.
- .7 They (the priests) shall not take a wife *that is* a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he *is* holy unto his God.
- .10 And he *that is* the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;
- .14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, *or* an harlot, these shall he (the high priest) not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.

For the N.T. church the priesthood was changed from the Levitical priesthood to that of the firstborn or Melchizedek, of which our Lord Jesus is the high priest (Heb 6:20). God's N.T. Elect are called with the potential to be *royal priests* under Jesus in God's Kingdom (e.g. Rev 20:4). In God's Kingdom under Jesus they will minister over mankind and teach God's Way. As royal priests they will teach mankind God's Way and that includes the *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law.

Will God allow today's Elect to teach in His Kingdom the *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law, after they refused to live by this law today? Surely the churches of God can not continue as we have since 1974. Surely it would be hypocritical to demand others in the Kingdom to do what we refused to do ourselves. Surely there can be no question that the Elect will have to live today by God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law. Surely there can be no question that Mr Armstrong's 1974 decision to reject God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law was wrong and that this apostasy must be rejected and repented of right now.

## 8.0 GOD THE FATHER LEADS BY EXAMPLE

God the Father married the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai. So God the Father has a Wife, Israel, through whom He begot His Son Jesus. This is explained in detail in the paper, *God the Father is the Creator and Husband of Israel!* (Section 10.0 *References*). Note how through His prophets God the Father declares that He is Israel's Husband and is married to her.

- Isa 54.5 For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
- Jer 3.14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:
- Jer 31.32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

But instead of being faithful to her marriage covenant with God, Israel regularly committed adultery with the pagan gods of her neighbours.

- Jer 3.8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.
- .9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.

The stones and stocks of verse 9 refer to idols carved from stone and wood and to which Israel bowed.

Jeremiah 3:8 reveals that God gave Israel a ‘bill of divorce’ but that is not a divorce as mankind views divorce. Rather it is a ‘bill of separation’ issued when the erring spouse destroys the marital relationship and which remains in force until the erring spouse repents. Israel’s repentance is prophesied to happen although it may be only a small surviving remnant of Israel which returns to her Husband.

- Hos 2.7     And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them; then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now.
- Hos 2.16     And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi (= my Man, my Husband); and shalt call me no more Baali (my Master).

Although God the Father gave His Wife Israel a bill of separation (bill of divorce) for her ongoing adultery with pagan gods; He did not then begin looking for another wife among the nations (families of the earth) but remained true to His marriage covenant with Israel! Of all the families (nations) of Earth, God the Father has truly known only Israel.

- Amos 3.1     Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,
- .2     You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

God did not permanently divorce His Wife Israel but remained ever mindful of His covenant with her. In this God leads by example and so shows us how to handle a difficult marriage. Once God’s Wife Israel repents, God will take her back. Then at last Israel will become God’s special people of priests to the world.

- Exo 19.5     Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:
- .6     And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Of course this did not happen at once when God married Israel at Mt Sinai because Israel soon strayed but one day it will happen as prophesied. Then the Gentile nations will come to Jerusalem and see how God’s Wife Israel keeps house for her Husband.

- Isa 2.2     And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
- .3     And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- .4     And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
- .5     O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

God the Father shows by example how we should conduct a difficult marriage. *The way is not to reject God’s No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law, as Mr Armstrong did in 1974 and as Moses did during the Exodus, but to live by this law!*

## **9.0 OLD TESTAMENT SINS DO NOT JUSTIFY REJECTING GOD’S NO-D & NO-R LAW**

Those determined to replace God’s *No-D & No-R* Law with Moses’ *D & R* Rule often cite cases of divorce and remarriage and of multiple marriages found in the OT. For example that King David had several wives and concubines and yet was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). Another favourite example being the putting away of “strange” wives in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 10:3; Neh 13:23-27).

We must not reject God’s *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law on the basis of a number of OT persons acting contrary to God’s wishes. Even the best of God’s servants were only fallible men and women, who often acted on impulse or by carnal desires. As a result the Bible records many false practices but without inferring these were approved. Especially when we find our Lord Jesus re-instituting in Matthew 19:3-6 and Mark 10:3-9 God’s *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage* Law of Genesis 2:24, then we ought to understand that OT transgressions of God’s *No-D & No-R* Law do not invalidate this law.

God the Father created for Adam one wife, Eve, and they were to become one flesh that no man may put asunder. One man and one woman are to leave their parents’ home and enter as one flesh into their marriage

covenant for life. When a man marries two wives, then he can not be one flesh with both. Although the OT book 1 Samuel reveals in chapter 1 that Samuel's father, Elkanah, had two wives, Samuel's mother, Hannah and another, named Peninnah; this does not mean God approved of that.

When a sin would interfere with God's Plan, then God will intervene. For example, God stopped the Pharaoh of Egypt taking Abraham's wife, Sarah (Gen 12:14-20). It was God's plan to establish a people through Abraham and Sarah. On the other hand when Sarah and Abraham conceived of a plan for a son of Abraham by Sarah's handmaiden Hagar, God did not intervene because this would not affect God's plan. We must be careful when God does not prevent a sinful act that this means God approves of that sin.

Another example where God did not insist that His instructions were obeyed was Moses failure to have all male children born in the desert physically circumcised as God had commanded in Leviticus 12:1-4. Nevertheless God then required Joshua to correct that omission at Gilgal (Josh 5:2-9). Judging from Exodus 4:24-26 Moses disliked circumcision and had left it to his wife, Zipporah, to circumcise their son.

From Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 the Bible's message is that God does not approve of divorce and remarriage and we need to recognize this. Therefore let us not search the Bible for excuses to disobey God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law*. That many of God's OT servants disobeyed this law does not mean the law no longer applies. Let us remember that our Lord Jesus explained in Matthew 19:3-6 and Mark 10:3-9 that Moses had erred in giving Israel *D & R* and had done so for the hardness of their heart but that from the beginning (Garden of Eden) God had intended marriage to be a covenant for life that no man may put asunder.

## 10.0 REFERENCES

Papers P1, P2 and P5 are referred to in this paper and may be downloaded from my Internet home page or requested by writing to my postal address (see below). Since paper P2 is a long and difficult study it is recommended that the shorter introductory papers Q6 and Q7 be read first.

- P1. *Laodicea's Lamp!*.....(See accompanying paper Q9)
- P2. *God the Father is the Creator and Husband of Israel!*.....(See introductory papers Q6, Q7 and P10)
- P5. *The Bible Shows Jesus Was A Self-Existent God*
- Q6. *Quick Guide To God the Father Being The God of Exodus* .....(2-page aid to P2)
- Q7. *Quick Guide To God the Father's O.T. Identity*.....(2-page aid to P2)
- Q9. *The Church Eras of Revelation*.....(3-page aid to P1)
- P10. *How God the Father Was Seen and Heard!*.....(5-page aid to P2)

## 11.0 IN CONCLUSION

It has been shown that God's *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law* forbids remarriage after divorce from a consummated biblical *lawful* marriage. God the Father's difficult marriage to His erring Wife Israel shows how we should conduct a difficult marriage. A biblical *lawful* consummated marriage can end only with the death of one of the spouses and for no other reason. Although we should not be surprised that this increasingly atheistic world rejected during the 1970s God's *No-D & No-R Law*: we should be astonished and distressed that in 1974 Mr Herbert W. Armstrong rejected this law in the Church of God. The *No-D & No-R Law* had come down to Mr Armstrong over the many centuries from the apostolic church. Mr Armstrong's 1974 rejection of God's *Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law* should be seen as one of the worst apostasy ever in the Church of God. Its consequences are far reaching but have not been recognized by the ministry and most members of the former Worldwide Church of God. The paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* shows that the root cause of the still ongoing splintering of the churches of God goes back to at least 1974 when Mr Armstrong rejected God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law* and 1977 when he married the divorced wife of man still living at that time.

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