

Scripture by simply declaring, “a wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives” (1 *Cor.* 7:39).

The Current Compromise

In spite of the teaching of Christ, and the New Covenant to which all are now accountable, our culture has seen respect for the marriage covenant to collapse. More marriages end in divorce than in death. Husbands have multiple wives. Wives have multiple husbands. Children have parents, stepparents, and “multiple visitation rights.” While men like Warren Jeffs are rightly villainized — others like Brad Pitt, or Tom Cruise are celebrated as heroes! *What is the difference before God?*

If Jesus teaches that “two become one flesh”; if Jesus commands, “what God has joined together, let not man separate” (*Matt.* 19:6); if Christ declares that unscriptural divorce and remarriage is committing “adultery” — *How does that in any way differ from polygamy?* The only difference between the two is that our culture has chosen to oppose the one (polygamy) with righteous indignation, while the other (multiple marriages through easy divorce) it has chosen to allow in satisfying its own desires!



Happy Father's Day

The Brooks and Amy Henderson are out of town.

Myron Watson (Monday) * Ray & Margery Knisley (Monday)
Donna Watson (Wednesday)

Matt & Betty Cannon (Wednesday) * Jack Spann (Friday)

Jo Byrnes * Joyce Coones * Sleatha Gore * H.C. Henderson
Faye Kilpatrick * Darryl Cannon (Palmetto, FL)

VBS at Old Town — 7:00 to 8:30 PM through Friday.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Meeting at 211 NE 2nd Street in beautiful Chiefland, Florida
PO Box 2539, Chiefland, FL 32644

THINGS ABOVE

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”

— Colossians 3:1, 2 —

June 15, 2008  Vol. 4, No. 13

ELDERS

Buddy Johnson 493-2948
Devoise Lord 463-2226

DEACONS

Tony Beach 493-2332
H.C. Henderson Jr. 493-4568
Jerry Smith 493-4381

PREACHER Jamey Hinds — preachinginchiefland@yahoo.com
Home (352) 493-1744 Office 493-1242 Cell 949-5789

www.chieflandchurchofchrist.com

Culturally-Sanctioned Polygamy

Kyle Pope • Amarillo, Texas

Since the arrest of the notorious polygamist leader Warren Jeffs, until the more recent seizure of children from the polygamist compound in Eldorado, Texas, the news has been filled with commentary, analysis, and scorn for the behavior of this radical religious group. If charges of incest, sexual abuse, and relationships between adults and minors are true, anyone who respects Jesus Christ as Lord must view such behavior as deplorable, inexcusable, and ungodly.



While no Christian can look on such behavior with anything other than scorn, in watching our culture's response to these events one cannot help but see some *cultural schizophrenia* at work. That is, while our culture feels moral outrage over *these* men taking more than one wife, at the same time the same kind of behavior has been sanctioned, tolerated, and treated as *normal* in others. How this is the case?

Polygamy Under the Law

The Bible teaches that God created the relationship of marriage as a bond by which, "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (*Gen. 2:24*). This bond was created as a covenant made between a man and woman, in which God Himself acted as "witness" (*Mal. 2:14*). In human imagination, man refused to be content with things as God designed them, and chose to take for himself more than one wife. Scripture tells us about, Lamech, who, "took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah" (*Gen. 4:19*). From what Scripture reveals, God appears to have tolerated this innovation during the days of the Patriarchs, and under the Law. Men like Jacob had two wives, and two "concubines" *i.e.*, wives of secondary legal status (*35:22, 23*). David, who was subject to the Law of Moses, had many wives and concubines (*2 Sam. 5:13*). While the Law of Moses did set some marriage restrictions (*Lev. 18:6–18; Deut. 24:4; Exod. 34*) it clearly allowed Israelites to have more than one wife. Under the law if a man died with no children, his brother was allowed and expected to take his wife for himself in order to provide children for his brother's house. To refuse this duty was viewed with shame (*Deut. 25:5–10*).

The Clear Teaching of Jesus

When Jesus came, however, He revealed a number of things about the original desire of Deity on this matter. When questioned about divorce, he refers to the Mosaic provision that granted divorce and

tells the Jewish leaders who questioned Him, that it was permitted "because of the hardness of your hearts" (*Matt. 19:8a*). He then goes on to say, "but from the beginning it was not so" (*v. 8b*). Jesus reveals that the plan of God from the beginning was for the bond between a man and woman to be enduring. God was never pleased with the hard heart that would so easily cast off his or her mate.

But how does this relate to polygamy? Before this, Jesus appealed to the very text we referred to above, which defines marriage: *Genesis 2:24*. However, He used slightly different wording. Whereas, the wording of the Hebrew text of *2:24* read, "and they shall become one flesh"—Jesus quoted it to say "*and the two shall become one flesh*" (*Matt. 19:5*). This was not original, with Jesus. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, made long before Jesus came to earth, used the same wording. This reveals that others besides Jesus understood the words of the Hebrew text to express the idea of the *two* becoming one. Regardless, Jesus as God in the flesh, in using such words revealed that the very intention of Deity from the beginning was one man — one wife — for life!

Yet, Jesus did not simply offer commentary on the Law of Moses. Instead He laid down for us the New Law (*Gal. 6:2*). As such, in His discussion with the Jewish leaders He goes even further, to lay down the New Law on matters of marriage. He declares, "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (*Matt. 19:9*). In this, Jesus gives the monumental principle that marriage in all circumstances other than the stated exception is binding to such a degree that those who marry ones who have been divorced commit "adultery." In describing this as "adultery" Jesus makes it clear that unscriptural divorce does not annul the covenant which He has witnessed — instead those who make additional covenants actually "commit adultery." The significance of this doctrine is summarized in later New Testament