

Deut 24:3-4 - "After she is defiled" (ie "unclean")

by wmtipton

Assertions/Conclusions of this article

To briefly show that under this law that when a wife was cast out, once REmarried she was deemed as 'unclean' for this first husband and that there would literally be a punishment involved for his taking her back. Even if the man WANTED to take her back she was 'unclean' for him and thus she COULD not ever return to him as his wife.

Supporting evidence

Firstly, lets look at the laws about touching anything deemed as 'unclean';

Lev 7:21 Moreover **the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which pertain unto the LORD, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.**

The Hebrews were not permitted to touch anything that was 'unclean'.

*And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that **she is defiled**; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

(Deu 24:3-4 KJV)

"defiled"

H2930

חמט

ḥâmê'

taw-may'

A primitive root; to be foul, especially in a ceremonial or moral sense (contaminated): - defile (self), pollute (self), be (make, make self, pronounce) unclean, X utterly.

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חמט

ḥâmê'

Total KJV Occurrences: 159

unclean, 74

Lev_11:24-28 (6), Lev_11:31-36 (8), Lev_11:39-40 (3), Lev_11:43, Lev_12:2 (2), Lev_12:5, Lev_13:3, Lev_13:8, Lev_13:11, Lev_13:14-15 (2), Lev_13:20, Lev_13:22, Lev_13:25, Lev_13:27, Lev_13:30, Lev_13:44, Lev_13:59, Lev_14:36, Lev_14:46, Lev_15:4-11 (10), Lev_15:16-22 (8), Lev_15:24 (2), Lev_15:27 (2), Lev_17:15, Lev_20:25, Num_19:5-8 (5), Num_19:10-11 (2), Num_19:14, Num_19:16, Num_19:20-22 (4), Hag_2:13 (2)

defiled, 44

Gen_34:5, Gen_34:13, Gen_34:27, Lev_5:3, Lev_13:46, Lev_15:32, Lev_18:24-25 (2), Lev_18:27, Lev_19:31, Lev_21:1, Lev_21:3, Num_5:13-14 (3), Num_5:20, Num_5:27-29 (3), Num_6:9, Num_6:12, Num_19:20,

Deu_21:23, Deu_24:4, 2Ki_23:8, 2Ki_23:10, Psa_79:1, Psa_106:39, Jer_2:7, Eze_5:11, Eze_18:6, Eze_18:11, Eze_18:15, Eze_20:43, Eze_22:4, Eze_22:11, Eze_23:7, Eze_23:13, Eze_23:17, Eze_23:38, Eze_36:17, Eze_43:8, Hos_5:3, Hos_6:10

defile, 25

Lev_11:44, Lev_15:31, Lev_18:20, Lev_18:23-24 (2), Lev_18:28, Lev_18:30, Lev_21:3-4 (2), Lev_21:11, Lev_22:8, Num_5:3, Num_35:34, 2Ki_23:13, Isa_30:22, Jer_32:34, Eze_20:7 (2), Eze_20:18, Eze_22:3, Eze_33:26, Eze_37:23, Eze_43:7, Eze_44:25 (2)

polluted, 12

2Ki_23:16, 2Ch_36:14, Jer_2:23, Eze_4:14, Eze_14:11, Eze_20:26, Eze_20:30, Eze_23:17, Eze_23:30, Eze_36:18, Hos_9:4, Mic_2:10

pollute, 2

Eze_20:30-31 (2)

defileth, 1

Num_19:13

uncleanness, 1

Lev_22:5

(note that this word always seems to denote something as 'unclean')

When God says that she is 'defiled' for this first man, it not only takes away any 'permission' for him to remarry her, but makes it so she is 'unclean' to this first man entirely.

So it follows perfectly that it would be 'abomination' for this man to take her back as his wife. There isnt a single reason from the text to believe any other interpretation and thus why the scholars all agree about this scenario regardless of where they stand on remarriage.

If we study this matter out to comprehend it from the whole of scripture, we understand that it fits perfectly that God would deem this woman as "defiled" for this man to literally prevent him from remarrying her. No self respecting Hebrew would have had anything to do with anything 'unclean' as far as appearances go. Everyone else would have KNOWN that this law made her unclean for this one man who had put her away after she remarried...it is very unlikely that any hebrew male would have taken her back into his home KNOWING that she was 'defiled' (unclean). In calling her 'defiled' (unclean) the text itself PREVENTS this Hebrew from EVER taking her back into his home lest HE be ceremonially 'unclean' for coming into contact with her, let alone Levitical law prescribing an actual punishment for this crime.

The MOMENT this passage declared this woman as 'unclean' there was added a PUNISHMENT for this man to EVER take her back in Leviticus....**"even that soul shall be cut off from his people"**

Although it is made very clear from the rest of the passage that this man cannot take her again as his wife after she is remarried, the fact that she is deemed as 'unclean' cements this fact in stone as we can see by the punishment given for touching anything 'unclean' in Gods law.