

“The Jews understood that Jesus meant only during the betrothal period”

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Assertions/Conclusions of this article

That Matthew (to Jews) containing the exception clauses, while Mark (to gentiles) not having them has nothing to do with betrothal. There were gentile nations who used betrothal, including the Roman Empire, and so stating that Matthew contains the exceptions because Jews used betrothal is a moot/irrelevant point and argument entirely.

Supporting Evidence

Some say that Jesus' exception only appears in Matthew because it was intended for Jews who used betrothal and who would understand it. But this is a moot point because even Gentile nations used betrothal well before the time of Jesus' ministry who would have understood what betrothal was just as easily as any Hebrew would have.

In our studies we found that even the Romans used and understood betrothal of some sort. I'll add some items here for your inspection, and when you are finished reading, check out my facts and see if any, most or all can be shown as fact. Even a single Roman or gentile betrothal will show conclusively that there was no need whatsoever for allowance to be given to the Hebrews/Jews for betrothal while not giving the same to gentiles who also use arranged marriages and betrothal.

Here we see a Roman betrothal more than a century before Christ was born of Mary (making it impossible to claim that they only used betrothal AFTER Christ's ministry).

-In about 186 BC Tiberius was betrothed to a woman who died before the marriage could take place.

Also do a google search for “Matrimonium - Roman Marriage”.

The pages you will find will show conclusively that betrothal of whatever form WAS practiced and understood by the Romans, and also by many other gentile cultures, and so there was no need for Matthew to restrict divorce solely to Jews seeking to end a marriage during betrothal.

This was found in my research of Roman betrothal...

“The Betrothal, Dowry, and Engagement Rings - Engagements and engagement parties were optional, but if an engagement were made and then backed out of, breach of contract would have had financial consequences. The bride's family would give the engagement party and formal betrothal (sponsalia) between the groom and the bride-to-be (who was now sponsa). Dowry, to be paid after the marriage, was decided on. The groom might give his fiancée an iron ring (anulus pronubis) or some money (arra).

One thing easily concluded is that the largest group of gentiles in or around Israel at the time of Christ would FULLY have comprehended what His intent would have been *IF* He were actually referring to betrothal in His exceptions. Thus it is quite illogical to conclude that He gave His exception to the Jews alone because they used betrothal.

IF fornication were actually about premarital sex, or illicit betrothal (ie “covenanted in marriage”) sex, then there was no need whatsoever for Mark or Luke to have left it out of their writings because Gentiles would have understood the concept entirely.

The facts are that the word Jesus used is not restricted to premarital sex. Neither does the context of His exceptions show that He is restricting the definition of ‘fornication’ to such.

In Matt 5 Jesus is laying out HIS teachings for His followers.

Heres a clip....

"You have heard that it was said to the ancients, "You shall not kill" --and, "Whoever shall kill shall be liable to the judgment." But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be liable to the judgment. (Mat 5:21)

And again...

"You have heard that it was said to the ancients, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Mat 5:27-28)

In both of those Jesus shows what has been taught in Gods law, and He corrects their misinterpretation of the Law.

They had made the law concerning the writ into a permission TO divorce rather than understanding the INTENT....that it was given to REGULATE and RESTRICT, not PERMIT this frivolous putting away.

When we get to His words on marriage, divorce and remarriage, it is quite the same...

"It was also said, Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce. But I say to you that whoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever shall marry her who is put away commits adultery. (Mat 5:31-32)

He does not say that this was only about Jewish betrothal.

Romans occupying Israel at that time would have completely understood Jesus' words about betrothal, *IF* it were the case that His exception were only applying to betrothal and as such there was NO cause to leave out the exceptions for the writings to the gentiles.

If anything this shows that they SHOULD have been shown that they also were being disallowed any permission to put away a wife during betrothal as well *IF* that were the case seeing that they practiced betrothal as well.

What these false doctrines are asking you to believe here is that the writers of the gospels would have told the Jews to stop putting away their wives during the betrothal year, while leaving the gentiles who DID practice betrothal completely oblivious to this new instruction.

Does that sound like our Lords way to you?

Another logical issue exists here as well with some of these false teachings that claim that Jewish betrothal is basically only an "engagement".

IF what some claim WERE true then the writer INTENTIONALLY DECEIVED the gentile nations, such as the Romans, who USED BETROTHAL. Surely we dont expect any intelligent person to believe that nonsense

IF Jewish betrothal was ONLY the equivalent of "engagements" then it literally BURIES the case of these false doctrines entirely because the ONLY foundation they COULD possibly present is in showing that Jewish betrothal WAS a binding marriage while Roman betrothal was only an engagement and that is supposedly why it is only Matthew (to the Jews) who talks about the exception while Mark (to the gentiles, Romans, etc) does not.

IF Roman betrothals were EQUALLY binding as Jewish ones then there is NO reason for the exceptions NOT to be presented in the other gospels and thus this nonsense argument about why the exceptions are only in Matthew is made utterly void and complete nonsense. *IF* they WERE equally binding, then these folks are actually saying that the gentiles were DENIED critical information that might actually lead to their committing adultery.

IF Jewish betrothal IS a binding marriage, then Joseph put away his lawful WIFE, didnt he...and this 'engagement divorce' nonsense is just that...void of all meaning...since they would have been BOUND under a marriage COVENANT for a full year before hometaking and consummation.

The last option is for all betrothal PROMISES to be binding in which case these views are again buried seeing that the doctrine only SEEMS to work IF Roman (gentile) betrothal is LESS binding than Jewish betrothal and that would supposedly be the reason why the exceptions were present in Matthew and not in Mark and Luke.