

Why Jesus didn't say "except for ADULTERY"

By WmTipton

Assertions/conclusions of this article

We assert here that Jesus was giving exception for any sexual immorality when He says 'except for fornication' and not only for pre-marital sex.

Supporting Evidence

Some argue that because Jesus didn't say "except for adultery"...but instead used fornication (harlotry) (rendered from Hebrew as "porneia" and into English in the KJV Bible as "fornication")...that Jesus wasn't permitting a husband to put away / divorce his wife AFTER they had come together.

In the later section on "porneia...aka "fornication", I will show overwhelming evidence that the word porneia used in the exception clause is all inclusive of every sexual sin committed by anyone, single, betrothed or consummated...the word "porneia" covers it all.

If Jesus had used "adultery" instead of "harlotry" in the exception clause, He would have actually been DISallowing the right of a man to put away a woman who had had sex BEFORE marriage and wasn't a virgin.

The crime of ADULTERY is unique to the marriage covenant, a woman having had sex BEFORE marrying would not be covered under this crime...only illicit sex POST marital vows would it apply.

If Jesus had said "except for adultery" then ONLY unlawful sex by a spouse committed AFTER marriage (consummated or not) would have been grounds for divorce.

The definition of "porneia" is basically "harlotry" or "whoredom" or "illicit sex". (see G4202 in your Strongs)
The crime of adultery is committed when a married individual is involved in "harlotry".

Given the REAL definition of the word "porneia", Jesus covered sexual immorality committed before marriage (Deut 22:20-21), during the betrothal period (Deut 22:23) or a consummated wife (Deut 22:22).

Even though many try to pull the stunt, there is not a single reason to believe that Jesus MEANT for PREmarital sex alone in His exception clause.

It makes perfect sense that Jesus would use a word that would cover ALL sexual sin, both before and AFTER marriage in His exception.

IN Deuteronomy 22 there are three scenarios listed that are all punishable by death. a woman found to not be a virgin when her husband takes her to his bed. willful illicit sex of a betrothed wife. willful illicit sex of a consummated wife.

IF Jesus had said "except for adultery", then #1 above would not have been included IF this woman had had sex BEFORE the marriage covenant was in place. Adultery is a marriage specific crime.

What He did say however, "except for harlotry" (from Hebrew most likely, rendered as "porneia" in Greek) DOES cover the woman who has had sex BEFORE marrying and is found to not be a virgin.

Jesus chose His words well, as He always did.

He chose a word, that when rendered into the Greek "porneia", would keep God's holy covenant of marriage intact... a whoring spouse would be sentenced.

A whoring spouse was sentenced to death under Mosaic law.

Over time, and due to Roman law at the time, that penalty for the above scenarios evolved into divorce instead of death/stoning.

When asked by the pharisees " can we put away a wife for ANY cause", Jesus has shown that it was never Gods will that divorce happen, and surely trivial reasons would no longer be tolerated.....she MUST breach the marriage covenant or putting her away and remarrying is adultery for you and it will cause her to commit adultery as a woman most likely would have to remarry at that time to survive.

Jesus said "except for sexual immorality" you cannot divorce and remarry without committing adultery and causing the wife who is put away to commit it as well.

Since the death penalty was already pretty much not being carried out, Jesus continuing the permission for divorce for sexual sins, previously punished by death, is right in line with scripture as a whole.

It is frivolous, "for any cause" divorce that Jesus is clearly condemning... Hence His words "except".

Jesus words prove conclusively that marriage is still a conditional covenant.

When Jesus said this He has shown Himself in perfect agreement with Deut 22 as a whole, and that He has now disallowed the instructions Moses had given in Deut 24:1-4 that said a man could divorce simply if "she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her".

Jesus exception clause is rooted in scripture all the way back to Exodus...."YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY"....and keeps right in stride with sexual sin having been a breach of Gods holy marriage covenant right from the beginning.....punishable by death under the law....permission for divorce and remarriage by His own exception.