

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

www.floralheightschurchofchrist.org

27 January 2008
VOLUME 8; ISSUE 04

**Floral Heights
Church of Christ
1814 Buchanan
Wichita Falls, Texas
76309
(940) 322 - 1650**

In This Issue:

**Review of “Debate on
Divorce” 1-2**
Local News 2
Sermon Outline 3
Clips from Psalms 4

Our Elders:

**Mike Chancellor
(322 – 6374)**

**Tom Witherspoon
(766 – 5368)**

Deacons:

Joe Cronin

Jim Hall

David Witherspoon

Preacher:

John C. Robertson

Review of “Debate on Divorce”

The Preceptor magazine recently published a debate over the “divorce issue” (August to October 2007; Vol. 56 no. 8, 9, and 10). The proposition of the debate was, “The scriptures teach that in the context of a lawful marriage there is only one lawful reason for divorce.” Affirming this position was David Watts and Denying was Maurice Barnett. Let us sum up both men’s arguments and make some final comments.

David Watts’ first affirmative: David’s arguments went first with the object to prove that “The scriptures teach that in the context of a lawful marriage there is only one lawful reason for divorce.” David first quotes from Matthew 5:32 where Jesus said, “*I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery.*” “Jesus expressly rules out any other reasons for divorce” (Watts, 1st Affirmative). Secondly, brother Watts turned to Matthew 19 and addressed the Pharisees question to Jesus. They ask, “*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?*” (Matt. 19:3). Jesus’ reply in Matthew 19:4-6 is clearly ‘No!’” Thirdly, Watts turned to I Corinthians 7:10-15 and noted that God commanded the married not to depart (i.e., divorce). Watts ends the first affirmative saying, “The man-made idea of a divorce for non-fornication reasons rests upon this great fallacy: that one person can prevent another person from faithfully serving God. But the scriptures repeatedly affirm that there is no such scenario.”

Maurice Barnett’s first Negative: Barnett denied the proposition and thereby had the responsibility to prove from the scriptures that there was more than one lawful reason for divorce. Barnett begins his argument by defining the three Greek words translated divorce (i.e., *choridzo*, *apoluo*, and *aphiemi*). David states that these words are used synonymously in the text on divorce and, “When referring to physical relationships, they identify putting space between two persons, a spatial separation.” Barnett states that Matthew 19:6 is a “general law/rule;” however, there is an exception to the rule and that is remarriage is allowed in the case of adultery. Barnett’s argument is that, “Matthew 19:9 is talking about putting away AND remarriage, not just putting away... Jesus knew the heart of the Jews and what they intended by their question, ‘Can a man put away his wife for every cause?’ They were not asking just about ‘putting away.’ They were interested in putting away so that they could marry someone else. Furthermore, brother Barnett states, “If brother Watts thinks a wife can leave the husband under extreme physical danger, but can’t ‘divorce,’ then we are looking at a new definition of ‘divorce.’” Furthermore, Barnett states, “As applied to our discussion, if a woman finds herself facing death, a prisoner of marriage, brother Watts’ argument is, to be faithful, she cannot escape... by implying a woman cannot leave a husband under any circumstance other than his fornication; she must stay with him and be beaten to death.”

Watts’ second affirmative: Brother Watts asks, “Is divorce accomplished **anytime** there is spatial separation? If a man serves overseas in war, does the spatial separation between he and his wife mean they are divorced? Or, does ‘spatial separation’ accomplish divorce only when accompanied by intent to end the marriage? Watts concludes that Barnett “disagrees with Jesus” on the matter of Matthew 5:32. “Brother Barnett goes beyond what is revealed in the text (of Matt. 19).” Once again, Watts states that the fallacy of Barnett’s

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing.

Pam Husak was scheduled to have a root canal procedure at the dentist, then turn around and have outpatient surgery this past Friday. At the time of writing this bulletin her condition is unknown.

Patricia Robertson was scheduled to have her gall bladder removed Friday; however, due to thin blood this has been put on hold. Pat remains at United Regional Hospital room 459.

Quincy Adams received three units of blood this past Wednesday. Thursday he had a colonoscopy. He remains at United Regional Hospital room 552. He will be there until the doctors can determine whether a procedure will be necessary to repair a section of damaged colon.

Please remember **Nina Gray** in your prayers as she continues with her health struggles. Nina has broken her toe and is having a hard time getting around.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

Bessie Murphy
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

stand is that “one person can stop another person from faithfully serving God.” Watts states, “Brother Barnett sadly has chosen to abandon established methods of determining Bible authority and has mostly relied on emotional appeals... which is an appeal to human judgment of right and wrong instead of Divine revelation of right and wrong.”

Barnett’s Second Negative: Barnett states, “What if a man puts away his wife without fornication but does not remarry, nor does the put-away woman? Neither one has committed adultery. Where, then, is the specified sin, in these verses? Everything in Matthew 5:32, 19:9 is conditioned on putting away AND remarriage, not just putting away. Our differences are not about a man who puts away his wife for just any reason. Our differences are about the woman who leaves a husband because of the danger to life and limb.” Barnett then returns to the I Cor. 7:11 (parenthetical statement that reads, “*but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband*”). Through much Greek language studies Barnett concludes that this parenthetical statement is proof that the “husband has caused the problem that prompted the woman to depart. He is the one who must now repent of his misconduct and seek reconciliation.”

Barnett next turns to many New Testament passages (see Mk. 10:28ff; Lk. 18:28-30) that illustrate “there are situations that require spatial separation in order to serve God as God wants us to serve Him... the leaving would be for the Kingdom’s sake.” “Jesus is talking about extreme conditions of division, hatred, opposition and even killings that come from inside one’s own family because of the Christian’s faith.”

Watts’ 3rd Affirmative: Watts states that Barnett’s claims regarding the I Cor. 7:11 parenthetical statement (i.e., proves that the husband was mistreating wife) are “Baseless claims.” Regarding Barnett’s comments on Lk. 18 Watts states, “Is Jesus authorizing divorce for non-fornication reasons, contrary to what He said in Matthew 5:32?... In both cases, it is clear that Jesus is teaching that He must take a position of priority over everything else in our lives.”

Barnett’s 3rd Negative: Barnett states, “the adultery (of Matt. 5:32) depends on her remarrying, her having sex with a man she has no right to. If she remains celibate, there is no adultery. How can the man make her an adulteress if there is no adultery?” Barnett reminds his readers that in the context of Matt. 10:21, 34-38; Lk. 14:25-26; 21:6 “The statements of loving God and the Gospel more than family relationships are all in that context of conflict where one may have to choose between the two” (i.e., family members).

Concluding Thoughts: The issue of marriage, divorce, and remarriage continues to divide brethren. The divisions occur because some choose to interpret scriptures apart from Gods’ authorized design (see II Pet. 1:20). To summarize Barnett’s position it may best be stated that divorce is lawful under the circumstances that the spouse is prevented from serving God and intent on not remarrying. Watts disagrees and would say that once one is married nothing is to separate that marriage aside from adultery. Regarding this particular issue of divorce, Matthew 19 ought to close the matter for us. Jesus was asked if man could **get a divorce for any cause** and He said no. Jesus laid down NT law as a whole at verse 9. Follow the progression. Jesus said, “No, man cannot get divorced for any reasons.” Next, the Lord elaborates by saying that the only cause for divorce and remarriage would be adultery. We cannot get out of this text that divorce is ok as long as there is no remarriage in a case where no adultery exists. Why is it that brethren see a license to divorce for causes other than adultery with no remarriage in Matt. 19:9? They see it because they are not following the line of thought. Jesus has answered the question of divorce and then adds further instructions. The man who divorces a spouse, for causes other than adultery and then marries another person, is **not only in sin for divorcing but is now an adulterer**. Furthermore, the context of Matthew 19:29 and Lk. 18:29 clearly indicate the value of putting God first in one’s life rather than throwing away a wife, children, property, or parents for the “*kingdom of God’s sake*.”

John C. Robertson

SATAN

Introduction:

Satan is that ancient foe that has been around as long as the earth itself. His objective is revealed in God's word to be the ruin of the human race. Let us study this enemy of all enemies that we may arm ourselves to defeat him.

I. The Origin of Satan:

- A. Satan is mentioned in four text of the Old testament giving us an idea of his origins (see Gen. 3:1-5 comp. to Rev. 12:9; I Chron. 21:1; Job 1:6-7; 2:1-6; Zech. 3:1ff). These texts indicate that Satan is some form of being that exists in the unseen spirit world.
- B. The NT reveals Satan to be one who has the power of transforming himself into an angel of light (see II Cor. 11:14).
- C. Many believe that since God has created all things (Col. 1:16) that Satan was a creation of God (he was not evil from the beginning; however, through time he (like many others) did not keep his proper habitation (see II Pet. 2:4 And Jude 6) (consider Deut. 29:29).
- D. Some believe that Satan was the first disobedient angel and thereby viewed as the "prince" over all demonic angels (the word prince [Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2] = "one over evil spirits, whose hierarchies resembled human political institutions. The devil" (AG 113)... Of the devil, the prince of evil spirits... the ruler of the irreligious mass of mankind" (Thayer 79). The Bible tells us that Satan is the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4).
- E. The word "*demon*" (*daimonion*) as used in James 2:19 = "a malignant demon, evil angel, Matt. 8:31; Mark 5:12; Lk. 8:29; Rev. 16:14; 18:2...to be possessed, afflicted, vexed, by a demon, or evil spirit, Matt. 4:24; 8:16, 28, 33... a heathen god, deity, Acts 17:18; I Cor. 10:20-21; Rev. 9:20; a demon, evil spirit, Matt. 7:22; 9:33, 34; 10:8, 12, 24... pertaining to or proceeding from demons; demoniacal, devilish, Jam. 3:15" (Moulton 84). "An inferior divine being, a demon... evil spirit" (LS 171). "Demon, evil spirit, of independent beings who occupy a position somewhere between the human and the divine" (AG 169). "Usually referring to the ministers of the devil (Lk. 4:35; 9:1, 42; Jn. 10:21 etc.); inferior spirit beings, Satan's angels who 'did not keep their own domain' (Jude 6; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7,9). Satan is said to be the ruler of demons (Matt. 9:34; 12:34; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:15)" (Unger's Bible Dictionary pp. 297).

II. Satan's Identity:

- A. The devil, adversary, tempter, Beelzebub, the enemy, Belial, and Father of lies.
- B. Satan is the deceiver, destroyer, dragon, and serpent.

III. Satan's Work:

- A. One who walks throughout the earth seeking to eternally ruin mankind (I Pet. 5:8).
- B. The real objects of Satan's work are the saints and the Church of Christ (Rev. 12:17).
- C. To perform his destructive work he uses devices:
 - 1. Temptation (I Jn. 2:16)
 - 2. Craftiness (II Cor. 11:3)
 - 3. False religion and teachers (II Cor. 11:26; I Tim. 4:1; etc)

Conclusion:

The Christian can be victorious over Satan (see I Jn. 4:4ff). The reign of Satan's terror shall be put to an end very soon. He will be cast into the lake of fire with all who have been seduced by him (see Rev. 20:10).