

Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 86-Divorce and Remarriage

Sunday AM-October 18, 2026

Introduction

This study guide is based on Lesson Number 86 of the Gospel of Matthew series ("Divorce and Remarriage"), delivered on October 18, 2026, at New Life Church in Benson. The lesson examines Jesus Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:31–32) alongside parallel scriptures in Deuteronomy 24:1–4, Matthew 19:1–9, and Ephesians 5:22–32.

Through a careful examination of historical traditions, Old Testament law, and biblical grammar, the sermon highlights God's original intent for marriage as a permanent, sacred covenant designed to mirror the divine relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church.

Quiz: Short-Answer Questions

1. What is the memory verse for October, and what key truth does it state about God's power?
2. What African proverb did missionary Galen and John Coner share during their update from Senegal, and what lesson does it teach believers?
3. According to Ephesians 5, what visual relationship does human marriage represent to the world?
4. What was the prevailing view and practice of divorce taught by the scribes and Pharisees during the time of Jesus Christ?
5. Why did Moses permit the writing of a certificate of divorce in Deuteronomy 24, according to Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:8?
6. What were the three main reasons or protections provided to a woman by a legal certificate of divorce under Judaic law?
7. What is the only condition mentioned by Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:32 where divorce is technically legitimate, and how does God prefer believers to handle marital brokenness?
8. How did Joseph demonstrate grace and righteousness when he learned Mary was pregnant in Matthew 1:19?
9. What does the Hebrew word translated as "uncleanness" in Deuteronomy 24:1 actually mean in its original context?
10. How does understanding the structure of conditional "if" statements in Deuteronomy 24:1–4 change the interpretation of Moses' teachings on divorce?

Answer Key

The October memory verse is Jeremiah 32:17, which states: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing

too hard for You." See complete messages with YouTube recording, documents

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1. "All things are possible for God because He created all things through His infinite power."
2. The proverb shared from Senegal was, "No man can hug or embrace a baobab alone." It teaches believers that the work of the Church is too vast for one person to accomplish individually, meaning Christians must unite and support one another in faith to bring people into the presence of Jesus Christ.
3. According to Ephesians 5, human marriage serves as a visible symbol displaying the spiritual relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church. Because the bond between Jesus Christ and His Church is permanent and unbreakable, God intended for Christian marriage to reflect that same eternal faithfulness.
4. The scribes and Pharisees taught that a man could divorce his wife for almost any trivial reason, such as burning food or walking in public without a veil. They believed that as long as the proper legal paperwork was completed, a "no-fault" divorce was entirely allowable.
5. In Matthew 19:8, Jesus Christ explained that Moses allowed a certificate of divorce strictly because of the hardness of human hearts. He clarified that divorce was never part of God's original design for humanity, as God created marriage from the beginning to be a lifelong union.
6. A certificate of divorce served as an official statement that the woman was free from her former husband's marital claims, provided legal evidence permitting her to remarry, and protected her against false slander or accusations of prostitution.
7. Jesus Christ stated in Matthew 5:32 that sexual immorality (adultery) is the only valid exception where divorce is permitted. However, God's ultimate desire is for spouses to repent, love, and forgive one another so that broken marriages can be healed through His grace.
8. Joseph was described as a righteous and just man who chose not to expose Mary to public disgrace or harsh punishment when he learned of her pregnancy. Instead, he decided to quietly end their betrothal privately, demonstrating mercy and restraint under the law.
9. In the original Hebrew context of Deuteronomy 24:1, the word translated as "uncleanness" does not mean sexual immorality or adultery. It literally refers to a spouse behaving in an "obnoxious" or improper manner.

10. Proper translation shows that Deuteronomy 24:1–3 consists of a continuous chain of conditional "if" clauses rather than commands. Moses was setting up protective conditions to prevent a woman from being completely defiled, rather than giving a direct command or approval for men to divorce their wives.
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Essay Format Questions

1. Explain how Paul's teaching in Ephesians 5 establishes marriage as a "divine perspective" rather than merely a human contract. How does this perspective alter a believer's approach to marital commitment?
 2. Compare and contrast the Pharisaic concept of "no-fault divorce" in the first century with modern views on marriage. How does Jesus Christ challenge both viewpoints using scripture?
 3. Discuss the difference between a divine command and a divine permission in biblical law, using Moses' allowance of divorce certificates in Deuteronomy 24 as your primary example.
 4. Analyze the character of Joseph in Matthew 1:19. How did his actions reflect true Old Testament righteousness, mercy, and God's grace in the middle of a difficult situation?
 5. How do the examples of Hosea's marriage and God's relationship with Israel demonstrate God's heart regarding forgiveness versus legal divorce?
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Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apodosis:** The main clause or conclusion in a conditional sentence that expresses the final result (an "then..." statement).
- **Baobab:** A massive tree native to Africa, referenced in an African proverb to symbolize a task too large for one person to accomplish alone.
- **Certificate of Divorce:** A legal document given under Jewish law that declared a woman set free from her husband's household and free to remarry without being slandered.
- **Discourses:** Major structured speeches or collections of teachings delivered by Jesus Christ in the Gospels, such as the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7.
- **Intended Hope:** A community organization supported by New Life Church through ministry fundraising events.
- **Jeremiah 32:17:** An Old Testament scripture exalting God's supreme power as Creator, chosen as the memory verse for October.

- **Operation Christmas Child (OCC):** A mission effort that packs shoeboxes with toys, tools, clothing, and supplies to send to needy children around the world.
- **Protasis:** The introductory or conditional clause in a sentence that establishes an initial premise (an "if..." statement).
- **Scribes and Pharisees:** Religious leaders and legal scholars during the time of Jesus Christ who emphasized strict Rabbinic traditions and outward adherence to legal formalities.

Greek Words and Pronunciation Guide

During the sermon, specific Greek grammatical terms were used to clarify the sentence structure of Deuteronomy 24:1–4 and correct common misunderstandings regarding biblical divorce laws.^[^1]

1. Protasis

- **Phonetic Pronunciation:** PROH-tuh-siss [p R O T A S I S]
- **Definition:** In Greek grammar, a protasis is a subordinate conditional clause that sets up a hypothetical condition or minor premise, usually introduced by the word "if." In Deuteronomy 24:1–3, a series of protases ("if this happens...") are used to describe a sequence of events before any moral conclusion is drawn.^[^2]

2. Apodosis

- **Phonetic Pronunciation:** uh-PAH-duh-siss [a p o d a p o d o s o s]
- **Definition:** An apodosis is the main clause or primary conclusion of a conditional sentence that declares the result or outcome, typically introduced by the word "then." In Deuteronomy 24, the apodosis does not occur in verse 1 as often mistranslated, but is delayed until verse 4, showing that Moses was limiting legal options to protect women rather than commanding divorce.^[^3]

^[^1]: These Greek grammatical terms were highlighted in the sermon to demonstrate how proper translation of conditional sentences prevents misinterpreting Old Testament legal permissions as divine commands. ^[^2]: Protasis establishes the minor premise ("if..."). In the context of the sermon, verses 1 through 3 of Deuteronomy chapter 24 contain multiple stacked conditional clauses. ^[^3]: Apodosis provides the main legal conclusion ("then..."). The sermon notes that in the ancient text, the true apodosis only arrives in Deuteronomy 24:4, demonstrating that God was regulating the consequences of human sin rather than instituting divorce.