

The Bible Banner

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Was Jesus A "Mental Divorcer?"

By Tim Haile

Some brethren are very quick to label you as a "mental divorcer" if you disagree with them on the role of civil government in "establishing" marriages and divorces. They accuse you of the "mental divorce" position if you say an innocent person may put away his fornicating mate in the sight of God without the involvement of civil divorce procedure. Interestingly, from what I have seen in this present controversy, this appears to be the *only reason* that has been cited for labeling someone with this position! I find this strange, for if one's divorce position is wrong merely on the basis of it being a "mental" position, then wouldn't it seem logical that there might be other ways that one could be guilty of such?

These particular labelers are guilty of a terrible oversight. In the absence of any scripture for their position, and in their zeal to criticize and vilify their opponents in controversy, some brethren, though I am sure unwittingly, have indicted Jesus as a "mental divorcer!" I say this because Jesus nowhere connected "putting-away" with the actions and procedures taken by human courts and judges.

Those who have followed my writings know my position. I have shown that the word "apoluo" (put away) is not inherently a **legal** term. It is a term of repudiation. It means simply "to loose, to leave, to dismiss or depart." In discussing the repudiation of one's mate, whether approved or unapproved by God, Jesus used a word that has absolutely nothing at all to do with civil courts or judges. Jesus used "apoluo" in Matthew 19:9 in precisely the same way that He used it in other places. Thus, if one is a "mental divorcer" for teaching that civil divorce procedure is not inherent in biblical repudiation, then Jesus is a dreaded "mental divorcer!"

The mental divorce labelers are in quite a predicament. Thus far, they have failed miserably at establishing a scriptural link between biblical putting away and civil divorce procedure. Without this link, their position is contrived, based purely upon human opinion and speculation. Now, with their constant, yet groundless allegations of "mental divorce," their search for this missing verse becomes all the more significant. Their position compromises our Lord's integrity. They had better find out a way to defend it!

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