

Searching the Scriptures

QUESTION: Can a non-Christian in an unscriptural marriage remain in that relationship with God's approval if he or she is baptized for the forgiveness of past sins?

ANSWER: NO - all unscriptural relationships must be severed. Marriage is a lifelong commitment (Matt. 19:6; Rom. 7:2) between a biological male and biological female (Gen. 1:27). God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) but permits it for one and only one reason: sexual immorality [adultery] (Matt. 19:9; 5:32; 1 Cor. 7:10,15). Divorce for any reason other than that which God allows is unscriptural (Rom. 7:3a). Those ineligible to marry cannot do so with God's approval or acceptance. Those in such a relationship would be considered "fornicators and adulterers" (Heb. 13:4). They would not be scripturally married in God's eyes regardless of what Civil Law allows (Acts 5:29). Divine Law governs all marriage: Christian as well as non-Christian (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6). Therefore, a non-Christian (outside of Jesus [alien sinner], Eph. 2:11-12; Col. 1:21) in an unscriptural marriage, if baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), must sever any unscriptural relationship in order to meet with God's approval. God forgives every sin of which a person repents (2 Cor. 7:9-10; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). If one repents of sin (adultery), but continues to do it, true repentance has not occurred. When we repent of sin we must determine in our heart not to sin any longer (Acts 26:20; Rev. 9:20-21)! If one is a thief, that sin must be left behind when Christ is put on (Eph. 4:28). If one is a fornicator, fornication must cease when washed in the Lamb's blood (1 Cor. 6:9-11). If one is a liar, lying must stop when in Christ (Rev. 21:8). Therefore, if one is in an unscriptural marriage, that relationship must be severed when baptized into Jesus (Rom. 6:3-4; 7:2-4). Paul used marriage to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:22-33). It is a relationship with one groom (Christ) and one bride (Church) characterized as "glorious, holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). We must strive to have the kind of marriage that reflects our relationship with Christ (Eph. 5:23,25).



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