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wives by simply throwing them out of the house with nothing but the clothes on their back. The stronger spouse could offer a less than equitable distribution of physical property and deny the weaker spouse parental rights, and no higher power would protect the rights of the other spouse.

Such an inequity is apparently why Moses commanded a writing of divorcement for those who sought to put away. Matthew 19:8 indicates that Israelites had been divorcing their spouses prior to Moses' regulation of it. Their hardness of heart in regard to this issue undoubtedly signified that divorce was an accepted practice among the Jews. Therefore, Moses regulated their putting away by requiring a writing of divorcement, in which the interests of the weaker vessel were somewhat protected:

“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife” (Deuteronomy 24:1-2).

Here is the crux of the matter: Scripture teaches that it is the ungodly **spouse** who is ultimately responsible for putting away without just cause, not the civil authorities. Jesus said it was the lawless husband who *“causeth her to commit adultery”* when he puts away *“his wife”* without just grounds (Matthew 5:32a). Moreover, the husband is also guilty of putting a stumbling block before a third party, for the Lord added: *“and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery”* (Matthew 5:32b).

Our current civil procedure(s) for divorce, like Moses' *“bill of divorcement,”* slows the process of man's putting away, providing time for consideration of the divorce's ramifications, and potential change of heart), and ensures protection of the rights of both parties. Both of these beneficial, built-in by-products of American civil divorce laws are righteous and just.

“Sending away” (divorcement) is **what** one spouse does to the other – whether divinely approved or not. **How** that “sending away” is accomplished is generic and is determined by one's culture (i.e. jurisdiction). Each civilization has its own procedure for finalization and confirmation of divorcement (putting away).

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“I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH”

Dustin Bengé

“I” – It is Christ's church.

“Will” – It is Christ's purpose.

“Build” – It is Christ's work.

“My” – It is Christ's possession.

“Church” – It is Christ's bride.

So, the next time you think it's all up to you, remind yourself, it is Christ's (Matthew 16:18).

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Civil process also provides a definitive and recognizable point at which the process of putting away is final, when those involved are divorced, not just separated (Cf. 1st Corinthians 7:5). This definitive and verifiable means of establishing when one is divorced preserves the rights of both parties involved and aids in the discernment of those who consider marriage to a person who has been involved in a divorce. Moreover, the finality of civil law is beneficial for maintaining decency and order (esp. for those in the church), in determining who may justly marry, and/or whether someone must be disciplined for violating the law of God.

Nevertheless, some brethren would advocate a return to the mayhem and chaos of unregulated pre-Mosaic divorce practices. In so doing, they would actually promote nullification of the benefits that God graciously provided for mankind through His ordinance of civil government (Titus 3:1).

Some brethren are now attempting to deflect attention away from the Lord's rule regarding those who are “put away” by denouncing the role of our civil government in divorce as evil, when its purpose is solely to do good and offset the violence committed by those who put away. Such accusations are a slanderous smoke screen and rejection of divine teaching regarding the benefits of God-ordained higher powers (2nd Peter 2:10; Jude 8).

Isaiah wrote, *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”* (Isaiah 5:20-21).

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"It's often been said that the gospel contains some 'hard truths.' I understand what is meant by that, but the reason the gospel is viewed in such a way is not because its truths are hard, but because our hearts are. The gospel dares to confront us about the sin we love to commit."

– Darrel B. Harrison

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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GOD'S PROVISIONAL CARE VIA CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Jeff Belknap, adapted

In Romans 13:1-7, we see that God appointed governmental powers for a purpose: to protect the physical rights, property and safety of His people. His purpose and intent in appointing rulers was for the good of all people.

This is not to say that in certain civilizations and times, governments have not used their power for evil in the unfair treatment of its citizens. The decree to *"submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake"* and to *"honor the king"* was commanded when Nero was the Roman Emperor (1st Peter 2:13-17). Nevertheless, such abuses do not negate the divine purpose for civil government.

Even though laws do not always uphold divine precepts, divorce laws in this country are aimed at protecting the physical rights of both parties. Divorce laws concern themselves with separation of previously-shared physical assets and custody of children. These laws may indeed finalize divorces that are contrary to the will of our Father, just as the laws of Jesus' day did. Yet, they still protect the physical rights of all citizens under their control, thereby upholding God's ordained purpose for them.

In fact, if we did not have such an "unjust" civil government to regulate and ratify such matters, ungodly husbands could "put away" their
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