***Fornication

RV142-02***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 8:7 through Revelation 9:21. We're looking at "The Trumpets of Doom." This is segment number 10.

We have come to the sixth trumpet and have discovered that, under the sixth trumpet judgment, one-third of all humanity which was left upon the tribulation earth is killed. The specter of death is everywhere, and fear will, at that time, grip the minds of millions of people around the globe. People who had engaged in sophisticated intellectual discussions, challenging the existence and the authority of a personal God, now know that He is indeed out there, and that He is bringing judgment upon them.

**Idols**

The response of the tribulation world to this divine demonstration, however, is to stubbornly continue worshiping their idols. This is man's way of insulting God because of the frustration which God's power places upon rebellious humanity. These are people who are seeing their smug opinions blown out of the water, and who are being demonstrated to all the world, with all their university degrees, to be both stupid and foolish.

**Murders**

In Revelation 9:21, we have had it pointed out to us that these rebels will, first of all, not repent of their murders. People will continue to take each other's lives as they express the vilest emotions that can come up from the sin nature. Women at that time will continue to murder their unborn children through abortion, and the government of the antichrist will slaughter all opposition without mercy, just as the communists do today.

**Drug Usage**

Furthermore, we have seen that they would not desist from their sorceries, and we have indicated that sorcery was, from ancient times, associated with the drug culture. Therefore, this passage is declaring to us that there will be widespread indulgence in drug usage. Of course, that is clearly on the horizon today. So, what we had portrayed for us here is a society in which no one will feel safe –, a society which has been turned into a jungle, and into one vast killing field.

**Fornication**

The next item that John observes concerning the rebellion of tribulation humanity is that they will not repent and desist from their fornication. The word used in the Greek Bible is the Greek word "porneia," from which we get the word "pornography." This is the word for illicit sexual relations. The Bible is very explicit in the design of God for the use of human sex. In the tribulation era, this design of God will be more violated than it ever has been in the history of the human race. Up to that time, there will be then no restriction on fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, and bestiality. All of these practices destroy the individual eventually, as well as the society which tolerates it.

So, in the tribulation, there is going to be unbridled sexual lust running rampant. Marriage and the family will receive its final death blow, and it will no longer be the foundation of society. Single parent homes will become even more numerous than they are today. Day care centers for the care of children will be provided by the government on a widespread basis at taxpayers' expense, so that mothers may escape from the role of caring for children. And parents will be pursuing careers of money and ambition, which they will discover does not leave them very much time for their children.

Pornography today is politically protected, and in the era of the tribulation, it will undoubtedly be freer than it is today for the poisoning of the moral climate. So, there will be ultimately no human decency left.

The disease, which naturally results, as it inevitably does in a society which goes sexually immoral, will now rise to horrendous proportions, and will add to the death toll that God is imposing through other judgments.

The word Paul "porneia" ("fornication") basically refers to illicit sex. The word is usually translated into English by the word "fornication." We generally understand that to mean illicit sex between unmarried individuals. However, sometimes in the New Testament, this word is also used for illicit sex between a person who is married, as well as one who is unmarried. For example, in 1 Corinthians 5:1, we have it used in that way. The Corinthians church was a very evil group of believers. They came into the Christian life, but they found it very difficult to shake off the ways of the ancient world, and particularly, the sexual ways of the ancient world. So, Paul says that this has been brought to his attention: "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you (that is, in the church congregation), and such fornication as is not so much as named among the gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." Here we have the declaration that the fornication here (and it's using this word "porneia"), involves a married woman; namely, this individual with his father's wife.

The New Testament also uses another word for illicit sex, which gives us some guidance at certain points as to specifically what God is saying. That is the Greek word "moicheia." This is the word which is generally used to describe illicit sex between married people. So, it is generally translated into English as "adultery."

We have these words illustrated in Matthew 19:9: "I say to you, whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication." And here, the word is "porneia" is used, where it is used in the broader sense of marital unfaithfulness: "Whosoever puts his wife away except it be for marital unfaithfulness, and shall then marry another, commits 'moicheia' (commits adultery), and whosoever marries her who is put away dies commit 'moicheia'" (adultery." So, here in this one verse, you have both these words used, and it illustrates their distinct meanings. "Porneia" means "fornication," but also general sexual immorality. "Moicheia" (adultery) means specifically illicit sex between married people.

We may also see this illustrated in Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage is honorable in all men, and the bed is undefiled, but fornicators (and here it uses the word 'pornous,' which is the noun form related to 'porneia' for fornicators) and adulterers (and that uses the other word related 'moicheia' for adulterers), God will judge." So, here in this one verse, there's again that distinction that there's something different between these two words. One refers to illicit sex between unmarried people, the other refers to illicit sex of married people.

The distinctions of these two Greek words then basically is this: In the restricted sense, "porneia" refers to illicit sex between two unmarried people of the opposite sex. This is generally translated in your Bible as fornication or sexual unfaithfulness, or some combination of words like that. "Moicheia," in general, denotes illicit sex involving married people, and is generally translated as adultery. In a wider sense, "porneia," as I said, refers to sexual immorality, whether married or unmarried.

The Bible is very explicit on the issue of the use of sex within the human race. It's hard to believe that what is going on in our society today is such a bold contradiction of what the Bible teaches on this subject. Somebody who did not know anything about the Bible, and simply listens to what goes on in society in general, and what is poured through the television and entertainment media, would think that there are really no ground rules for the use of human sex – that it is really something for human beings to sort of decide on what they're going to do or not do. But that is a very great mistake. Because people think that the roof is not going to cave in on them if they violate what is declared to be God's viewpoint on sexual morality, they think that He's not really out there keeping records; observing; and, eventually, planning indeed to take action. That's a great mistake. He has been very explicit in the Word of God, and I'll indicate a few passages to you.

**Adultery was a Capital Crime in the Old Testament**

This was, of course, made very clear to the Jewish people under the Mosaic Covenant. Exodus 20:14 is the classic declaration: "You shall not commit adultery." This is the Hebrew word for general sexual immorality. Leviticus 20:10 indicates that this applies equally to men and women: "And the man who commits adultery with another man's wife, even he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulterous shall be put to death." Under the Mosaic Law, adultery was a capital crime. When God places that severe a judgment on something, you know that it's serious business. However, it does not seem to be that serious to those who are engaged in it, because there is the element of pleasure. This is what Moses was referring to in his quotation in Hebrews, when Hebrews tells us that Moses chose not to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season in Egypt. And the fact that sin is a distinct pleasure clouds human judgment into thinking that it's innocent and it's all right.

It's like the line of the song that we used to hear a few years ago: "How could this be wrong when it feels so right." The human judgment there was that this is pleasurable – therefore, it cannot be objectionable. However, we have to go for a standard that is beyond what man, in this contaminated sin nature, can judge in these matters. So, it was very clear in the Old Testament that sex was reserved for marriage relationships.

In the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 6:13-18 deals with this subject, and it uses this general word for sexual immorality: the word "porneia:" "Foods for the body, and the body for foods." That expression was a philosophical statement in the Greek world in the good-time city of Corinth. What it was saying was that this was the way people would justify gluttony. They would say, "The body needs food, and food needs to be eaten by the body. Those who have to go together. Therefore, they should be indulged. Food should be poured into the body. The body is designed to take in food."

However, God says that He shall destroy both it and them. God says, "Gluttony will lead to your destruction." Then, He says, seeming again to indicate a secondary kind of attitude, which was very clear in Corinth, "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and, the Lord for the body." What he is saying here is the same line of thinking: "Sex is attached to the body. The body finds fulfillment in sex. Therefore, the two are interrelated, and the two should be indulged." But Paul says, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that that's not true. The body is not for sex. The body is for Jesus Christ.

So verse 14 says, "And God has both raised up the Lord and will also raises up by His own power." The body that you have – yes, it will die, but it's not going to stay dead. For you as a Christian, it will be raised indeed as a glorified body. Therefore, it has an additional sanctity.

Verse 15 explains that: "Do not you know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a prostitute? God forbid." The human body is part of the body of Christ. Therefore, what you do with your human body, you're doing to Jesus Christ. That puts a whole new perspective on sexual morality. What you do with your body, you do to Jesus Christ. And it's not only in the matter of sexual immorality, it's in everything else that can be abuse of the physical body.

Verse 16 says, "What? Do not you know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body; for two, He said, shall be one flesh? And he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit?" We have a unity with God the Holy Spirit that cannot be dissolved. There is a unity which is created between two bodies in a sexual relationship.

So, verse 18 says, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is outside the body. But he that commits fornication sins against his own body.

Then verse 19 gives the ultimate point: "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have of God, and you are not your own?" This is a great advancement over the condition of the Mosaic Law. In the Old Testament, people were not indwelt by God the Holy Spirit on a permanent regular basis. But in the era of the church, this is true of every Christian.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 further demonstrates that the Bible is very explicit about what you can or cannot do with human sex. It is not an up-for-grabs, anybody's opinion. In this passage again, where it refers to fornication, it is using our word "porneia," which is the general word for sexual immorality, whether it between married or unmarried people. The principle applies here to both: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication." Whatever other plans God may have for your life, one thing that you know is the will of God is sexual integrity. Therefore, you must restrain and avoid general sexual immorality: "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (that is, his body) in sanctification and honor." Sanctification means set aside to God: "Not in the lusts of sensuality, even as the gentiles who do not know God; that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned and testified."

And what he is referring to in this context is defrauding another brother through such acts as adultery; defrauding another person through taking their virginity that is not yours to take; or, defrauding, in any way, a human being who is put into a sexual relationship which has enormous consequences to the individual outside of marriage after the euphoric moment of that moment in time.

Verse 7 says, "For God has not called us until uncleanness, but unto holiness." He is talking to these people now as Christians: "He therefore that does not despise man, but God, who has also given unto us the Holy Spirit." Here again, the same emphasis is made. How can you take your body, and make it a function of sexual morality with God the Holy Spirit (right there, present) indwelling that body (part of your very life) forever joined to you?

So, for the Christian, this business of sexual morality carries even greater degrees of concern and sobriety, and rightly, it should. The sin of illicit sex, of course, does include, as Jesus taught, the mental attitude of lust toward someone of the opposite sex. Matthew 5:27-28 tell us about that. The reason that is a sin is because it is the basis that leads to overt action of sexual immorality.

It is marriage which is the key that ties all this together in a very sanctified and a very beautiful way. Marriage sanctifies sexual relations; that is, the word "sanctify" meaning again, setting it apart to a divine use. So, suddenly here, that which is grossly evil in the sight of God outside of marriage becomes enormously attractive to God inside marriage. It is something in which God delights that human beings should participate in inside marriage, as he must recoil from, in His holiness, when they when they do this outside of marriage.

I stress once more that Hebrews 13:4 declares to us that: "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." There's nothing wrong with marriage. There's nothing wrong with sexual relationships between a married man and his wife within the marriage relationship. The reason I stress that is because, in times past, there have been religious groups that have viewed sex as the original sin in the Garden of Eden, and have viewed that as the thing that they must avoid at all costs if they are to become holy people acceptable to God. The truth of the matter is that the godly use of the gift of sex is what God delights in. However, that is governed by the storage and the use of Bible doctrine in your human spirit.

It does little good for you to tell people: "You should not be sexually immoral." It does little good for you to tell that to your children. It does little good for you to tell that to your fellow Christians. It does no good to tell that to the unbeliever. That is because the guiding, controlling element is the indwelling Holy Spirit, and your capacity to function upon doctrine which you have stored in your human spirit. Most Christians are so starved and so empty of doctrine that they do not have the capacity to rise through the Spirit of God's guidance, through that doctrine, to be able to imitate the person of Jesus Christ in his sex life. And that's what we're after.

The godly use is governed by the Word of God, and all of your determined self-will, and all of your promises to do better, and all of your good intentions will go exactly nowhere. And that's true whether it's in your thought life or whether it is in your external physical life. It is illicit sex, which obviously destroys the family foundation in the society and opens the individual to self-destruction. This is why the Word of God has been so explicitly clear on warning against this.

However, there is a way, of course, for Christians to handle this. When the believer have stepped out of line, the first thing you do not want to do is to tell all the rest of us about it. There is a certain voyeurism type of believer that might enjoy listening to your escapades, but most Christians, who have walked with the Lord for any length of time, do not care to listen to your gross sin. There are some people sometime that you may have to cut off as they, even under the guise of seeking help, want to tell you all the details of their immorality. However, when it does happen, there is, of course, 1 John 1:9. It covers that like it covers any other sin. It is confession, and it is ceasing and desist from that violation of God's moral code.

Sexual immorality in American society, however, has now brought down a cloud of spiritual confusion in the thinking of our people. One of the reasons our country is increasingly going into terrible, terrible conditions (and the worst are, indeed, yet ahead) is because of what is happening on the illicit sex realm. The things that I brought as illustrations to you (just from this past week), in the previous session, are all ultimately tied back to the blindness and to the darkness that cutting loose from sexual biblical sexual patterns has brought upon this nation. Rejecting the practices and the standards which have made the United States great is a sure way to make us a has-been power, which, of course, is where we are going. Because of the sexual immorality of this country, in large measure, the enemies of our country are making great inroads into our nation's security and into our nation's well-being.

The ultimate attitude that a Christian (a child of God – a believer) must have was so well declared by that noble Joseph who was sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers, and then propositioned by the wife of his master. In Genesis 39:7-10, we see what a tough position it was to be in as a young man. When not under observation, there are a lot of Christians who are very moral people sexually just because they never had a chance to be unobserved and to be immoral. But here's a situation (a prime, ideal opportunity). Because Joseph was filled with doctrinal understanding; because he knew God was out there; because he knew the essence of God; and, because he functioned with the awareness of the omnipresence of God, even though he did not have our high status of an inner dwelling Holy Spirit, he was able to rise to the challenge to reject the proposition of Potiphar's wife.

Genesis 39:7-10: "And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and she said, 'Lie with me.' But he refused and said unto his master's wife, 'Behold my master does not know what is with me in the house? And he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I. Neither has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?'" You can see how deep the spiritual understanding of Joseph was? You would have thought he would say, "How then can I do this great wickedness against my master Potiphar?" This is just after he had enunciated all the great things that Potiphar done to him; the graciousness with which he treated him; and, the great trust that he had placed in him. But he didn't say that. He didn't say, "How could I do this great sin against my master's wife?" He didn't say, "How can I do this great sin against my family, wherever they are back in Canaan?" Again, as David in his sin of adultery, when he finally came around to admitting it and confessing it, didn't blab to human beings. But when he spoke to God, he said, "Against You and You only have I sinned."

So, here Joseph says, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" That puts it in a much more sober perspective – that sexual immorality is not just a bad thing against other people. It is a sin against God.

The commandment against adultery in the code of the Mosaic Law had a certain background which gave perspective to the importance of that commandment. No sin was regarded with greater horror among the Jews than sexual immorality. They had learned that from God, and yet they violated it extensively. Part of the problem was that they entered the land of Canaan. The land of Canaan was filled with morally debased people of the most loathsome kind. It was the worst kind of influence. At the heart of all the worship of the sun, which was the worship of Satan, was the worship of sex. That's how they worshiped the sun-god – through illicit sex.

This is the point of the movie I told you that Universal is releasing, The Last Temptation of Christ. In the movie, Jesus has an illicit relationship. Then Jesus says that he has now discovered that God is not some person out there, but God is His female sex. This is the grossest kind of blasphemy that you could have found in Canaan. This is what the Jews were surrounded with. The deification of the reproductive forces naturally came to an epitome in the sexual relationship. So the Canaanites worshiped their gods through sacred priests and priestesses who were acting as prostitutes. When you came to church to worship your god, so to speak, you did it through illicit sexual relationships.

These practices were, of course, an enormous temptation to the Jewish people. For this reason, God had been very explicit to them that when they came into the land, after their 400-year sojourn of slavery in Egypt, that they had a cancer. They have a moral cancer of the greatest kind existing in the land which God had given them – in their Promised Land. And there was only one way that you could deal with this cancer. You could not heal it. It had to be cut out.

Therefore, God's instructions were very clear: "When you go in, you kill every person in that culture. You do not leave children behind who can grow up and say, "We're Canaanites. We want to know about our culture." Then they will discover how their parents and their forefathers used to live, and how they used to worship their God. God says, "You must not even leave the children alive, because they will grow up to restore the memory of the evils of the Baal Worship." But the Jews did not do this, in the face of explicit warning.

I Deuteronomy 23:17-18, so that these people would not respond to what was around them, God here says, "There shall be no harlot of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel." There was not going to be a priestess prostitute, and there's not going to be a priest prostitute in the worship of Israel: "You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the price of a dog." The hire of a harlot is what she would receive as payment for her services as a prostitute. The price of a dog is what a male prostitute would receive in payment for his services: "You will not bring this into the house of the Lord your God for any vow." That is interesting in itself.

The money that you earned in this way was contaminated money. God said that if you insist on doing this evil, you will compound it, if you take this money to bring it to God to pay a vow that you have made to Him, or to pay a commitment of an offering that you're going to make to Him. The money that you have brought under these illicit sinful conditions – you must not insult God by bringing the money to Him. That's an interesting principle.

Think of all the ways that you can earn money that is condemned in the Word of God – that is sinful, dishonorable, and improper. And after you got it, you turn around and drop it in the offering box? You better think again. While we do not live under the Old Testament law, we do see here a basic spirit (a basic principle) of God's personal righteousness: "Do not bring this kind of money to pay for a vow, for even both these are abomination unto the Lord your God. Money from male or female prostitution is an abomination to God. He doesn't need it, and He doesn't want it.

So, sexual immorality extended in a wide way through the Canaanite world, and the Jews picked it up. In fact, in time, respectable women among the Jews were caught up in the Baal worship, and felt that they could get closer to God by participating in the cult prostitution of the Canaanite religions.

Jezebel was one great example of that. She had many high places – hills and groves which were specially designed for people to engage in sexual practices for the worship of the gods. It was amazing that the Jews could degenerates to where even women in high places could pursue this kind of action. The Jews themselves regularly drifted off into this kind of sexual immorality in the process of worshiping the Baal god, and, of course, it was very appealing to the sin nature.

**The Protection of Women**

The seventh principle of the Mosaic moral code is very important also, because if there's anybody in the world that needs protection, it is women. I have had irate people speak to me about mentioning in a marriage ceremony the words "weaker vessel" – reading that Scripture where God says, "To the man, you take care of this woman that you are now taking as a wife because she needs taken care of. She is a weaker vessel. She needs your care." She may be a little gal who likes to go out and pump muscles, and she may know how to give you an elbow blow under the chin that will send you reeling, because she's been reading all those karate books. And she may know how to flip you over the shoulder and do all those wonderful things. But even though she may know how to exercise a little muscle flexibility and agility over you, internally and psychologically, the way she's composed, she is dependent upon her right man. That's what God said to Eve in the Garden of Eden: "Eve, you will never find fulfillment except in your right man. You will look for your right man in whom you will find rest, fulfillment, and peace. Until you find him, you will not have this, and you will not find it on your own, being one of the boys.

So, the seventh principle exposes women, in the nature of the case, that they are not as strong as men; they are not aggressive like men are, generally; they do not operate in the same calculating mental way; and, they have more responsive feeling. Therefore, they can be taken advantage of. It was important that God provide this protection for women alone.

The Jews had a very low esteem of women. Because women were never allowed to study the Mosaic Law, one of the Jewish prayers that was regularly repeated was, "I thank You that You have not mainly a gentile, a slave, or a woman." And when it came to educating a woman, the Jews viewed that as the ultimate obscenity. They were so contemptuous of women in Jewish society that they would avoid talking to a woman, especially in public. This is why, at the incident where Jesus is sitting at the well in Sychar, and He's carrying on a discussion with this terrible adulterous woman who had had seven husbands over a string of time, and the disciples come up, they were shocked. The master was sitting there talking to a woman, and in public where people could see Him. That was the frame of reference that they operated from. That was what shocked them.

**A Right Man and his Right Woman**

But on the other hand, the Bible is very clear that there is nothing so great as the right man having his right woman. The classic passage in the wisdom literature, Proverbs 31:10-31, explicitly lays out what a great thing it is to have that right and good wife. It's a great tribute to the good wife.

**Divorce**

So, the Mosaic Law sought to bring protection in a variety of ways to women, not the least of which was through the seventh commandment against adultery. The Jews insisted on divorce, which had never been instituted in God's natural order. It was an alien factory. There was no way that you could put divorce into the human relationships of people. It is always a tearing, shredding thing. It's like throwing sand into your automobile engine. It cannot operate. Therefore, when it does happen, something had to be done for the protection. And Matthew 19:5-7 tell us that Moses, when he saw what the Jews were doing, laid out some very strict ground rules that he felt had divine justification for how women who were divorced were to be treated, so that they had some protection, and they were not just thrown out like dogs.

When you came to Christianity, the whole picture changed dramatically. There was a demanding, uncompromising call for sexual purity and infidelity in the marriage relationship until death do you part. When Christianity came along, it was an exclusivity to one another in marriage, and indeed it was, by God's order, till death do you part. It was by God's order, till the time came when the husband or the wife laid the other one to rest in the arms of Jesus, at the moment of death. But until that time, the union could not be broken.

Christians are called upon, as we've seen, to respect the fact that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. This was in great contrast to the Greek and Roman world, which viewed the body as the source of all evil. The Christian viewed of the body, and of marriage and divorce, in fact, ultimately revolutionized the Greco-Roman world. Marriage became a sacred state, and became the desirable normative position in which a person would be in life. That is what God has designed, except for a certain exclusive group of human beings that the Bible tells us that God has ordained to be celibate, and who therefore find fulfillment in service to God. In the Word of God, a husband or a wife find fulfillment in one another.

But Paul, in 1 Corinthians 7, as he discusses that matter, makes it very clear that, unless you have from God this special gift of celibacy for a special call, as Paul had it, this is not your normal road to pursue. In 1 Corinthians 7:2, we have the stress made against fornication. And the solution for that is for every woman to have her own husband, and for every husband to have his own wife.

Again, in the New Testament, divorce was explicitly forbidden, except for two conditions that were brought into the picture in the age of grace. The first of those is in 1 Corinthians 7:10-15. Paul says, under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, "But until the married, I command you, yet not I, but the Lord: let not any wife depart from her husband. But if she does depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband, and let not the husband put away his wife." That is talking about divorcing each other.

Verse 12: "But to the rest I speak, not the Lord." This does not mean that what he is saying here is not inspired. It is information to which God the Holy Spirit has led him. But in the previous statement, he says, "I got this directly from the Lord when He was teaching me out there in the Arabian Desert: "Now this I have in my consultation with God, and in the revelation that He has made to me: If any brother has a wife that does not believe, and should be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away."

He is saying that you have a wife, and she is not a Christian. You become a Christian, and he loathes what you have become. She says, "I'm not going to live like this. I'm not going to give up the booze. I'm not going to give up the smoking. I'm not going to give up the partying. I'm not going to give up the fornicating. I'm just not going to take up this lifestyle that you have come to as a Christian. I don't want to. This is not the marriage I entered," and she chooses to depart. That's called desertion. Then he says, "You let her go."

But if she says, "I don't understand this. This is not fun – the way we're living now, like we used to live. We don't have any more good times." But she chooses to remain with you as the wife. You are a child of God. You're a sheep. You're married to a goat. The Bible says, "You stay in the relationship."

Verse 13: "The woman who has a husband that does not believe." This is the woman who has married a goat: "And if he'd be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is set apart (in God's special care) by the husband. So, are the children. They are not unclean. They are in the product of a very genuine marriage. So, they are holy."

Now verse 15 says but suppose that it doesn't work out that way. Suppose that you do not have willingness to go on: "But if the unbelieving depart, let him go. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace." So, this is a declaration that, at this point in time, a person who will not live with an individual, and deserts (and that's the principle), there comes a time when you cannot control that. You may find, even as Christians, that you are married to someone who gets so far out in left field, away from the things of God, that the person just deserts. When that man or that woman has deserted you, it's traumatic, and it's unhappy. But God says, "You have to let the person go." You then are free. You are no longer bound in that situation. And if there's a remarriage situation, you are then free indeed, because that marriage is truly gone and dead, it must be only to someone who is a Christian.

The other limitation for breaking a marriage is Matthew 19:9. Jesus says, "And I say unto you, whoever shall put away his wife (that is, divorce her) accept it be for sexual immorality." That is the general word "porneia," which would include "moicheia" (adultery): "And shall marry another, commits adultery, and whoever shall marries her which is put away commits adultery." So, a wife or a husband by implication, who is unfaithful, has given you the ground for divorce. I do not take this to mean that if somebody sins in this way, that that is what you must do, or should do. I take this to mean a persistence in this lifestyle – a persistence in the violation of sexual purity and of sexual integrity in the marriage union. Then for various reasons, it's not only sinful, but it becomes dangerous. And that gives you a proper ground for limiting (terminating) the marriage. So, whatever the tribulation people are going to do, the Word of God is again very clear that God has ground rules for people going into a marriage relationship; staying in that relationship; and, continuing with personal fidelity to one another.

One of the things that is incumbent upon people who get married is, of course, that they leave their parents, and the Bible says, "They cleave to one another." Matthew 19:5 says that, based upon Genesis 2:24. They become the new focus of loyalty. And wise parents, of course, want to assist their children to make this break with themselves, and to create their own homes and their own families. There is an order of authority within the marriage relationship which helps keep the thing together. Some of the reasons that sexual immorality enters a marriage relationship is because the lines of authority are broken.

**Authority in the Family**

That line of authority goes from God to the husband, to the wife, and to the children. If you have a wife who does not wish to be under her husband's authority, she is inviting sexual immorality into the marriage. A husband may not exercise his authority. He may be the laid back type that lets his wife take charge and make all these hard decisions. He stands around and waits until she tells him what to do and when to jump, and he won't blow his nose, right nostril or left, until she tells him to, he, too, is inviting her to expand herself. She's going to get tired of that kind of a wimp, and she's going to go out there to find herself what she calls a real man, who can blow his nose on his own initiative.

1 Corinthians 11:3 says, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and that the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." That's the chain of command: God; husband; mother; and, children. You cannot change this. You cannot break this.

Ephesians 5:22 lays upon the wife the responsibility of being in subjection to her husband's authority. He is the final authority in the home, and this is not a creation to intimidate or to abuse women. It is, again, one of the New Testament protective measures for women, and it is certainly of divine origin.

1 Timothy 2:11-13 clarify that a little further when it says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection, but I do not permit a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, and then Eve." This is the natural order of authority. Charismatic women preachers have a fit with this passage.

**A Mutual Relationship**

The relationship in the marriage has to be, then, of mutual dependence and of fulfillment of love toward the wife, and she respect for her husband (Ephesians 5:33). The wife is to obey the authority line of the husband, and he is to be kind and considerate of her as a weaker vessel.

In 1 Peter 3:7, God puts it this way: "In like manner, you husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together in the grace of life, that your prayers being not hindered." It is very important that the husband treat the wife in such a way that there is no interruption in their physical communion.

1 Peter 3:1 says, "In the same manner, you wives be in subjection to your own husbands." And it is interesting that that word there is a military word meaning "fall in line under his authority:" "Be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any do not obey the Word." Here we have a husband who either is not a Christian or is out of fellowship (out of contact with the Word): "That also may, without the Word be won by the behavior of the wives, while they behold your chaste conduct coupled with fear," and so on.

So, there are some women who have never learned that beating their husbands with words is not the way to get them to come around to proper conduct, but rather their fulfilling of their divine role is the way for them to be preserved in their proper conduct, including their sexual integrity.

The husband and wife, furthermore, are to maintain sexual integrity by not denying each other that opportunity. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 very carefully indicate: "Let the husband render unto the wife her due." That means "her due" relative to sex: "Likewise also the wife to the husband. The wife does not have power over her body, but the husband; and, likewise also, the husband has not power of his own body, but the wife. Do not defraud (do not deny) one another, except it be with consent for a time, that you may give yourself to fasting and prayer, and come together again, that Satan does not tempt you for your incontinency." It is a dangerous thing not to maintain the sexual relationship in the marriage. That is an invitation to go roaming and looking elsewhere. Some wives think that sex is the way to keep their husbands in line, and they make a very serious mistake when they play that game.

The Christian principle, then, in marriage is reciprocity – duty and privilege on both sides in partnership. Nobody is exploited.

The permanence of the Christian marriage is based, of course, upon the law of God, and it is nurtured by love, compatibility, and all those other things, but it is not dependent on that. Nowhere in the Bible will you see the statement made that the reason marriage is permanent is because love continues. Some preachers now have a ceremony that says, "Do you promise that you will stay together as long as love continues?" And what they're doing is explicitly now adjusting to the sin nature's desire to break off and to splinter the marriage. The Bible never says that you stay with somebody because you still love them. It never says that you continue with somebody because you're compatible with them. It never says that you stay with them because you continue to find fulfillment in that person. It doesn't even say that you stay with them because you find happiness, or peace, or anything else. It's really amazing. The only thing that God's word says is that you stay because you took a vow before God to have a lifelong relationship.

**Monogamy**

Of course, marriage is clearly monogamous. Everybody has his own wife; and, her own husband.

**Homosexuality**

We have not touched upon other sexual conflicts that will exist in the tribulation era, but this is the basic. This is the norm. I will only mention in passing that the Bible also condemns the perversion of homosexuality and of lesbianism. It is a perversion and it is called sin. Therefore, it is not genetic. It is volitional. This will be widespread in the tribulation era, you may be sure.

**Bestiality**

We may also mention, as one of the things that John sees that these people in the tribulation will not cease from doing of their fornication (of their sexual immorality) is the perversion of bestiality: sex with animals. It is now becoming very chic to have pictures that are being printed of children having sex with animals. It is the latest "in thing" in the pornographic world. It is a big, big seller now. The Word of God is very explicitly clear that the perversion of bestiality was again a capital crime, and anybody who engaged in that was executed under the system of Israel. So, that is condemned, and, of course, that will be widespread in the tribulation.

**Incest**

One final thing we should mention to tie this up is the perversion of incest – sexual relations between family members. This, too, is clearly condemned in the Word of God. It was, again, a capital crime in ancient Israel. It again will be one of those areas of sexual expression that the people of the tribulation will not cease and desist from, even though they see, before their very eyes, the God who is out there bringing death to millions upon the face of the earth. How vile and determined the human heart can be indeed, when it chooses to pursue sin. Thank God that the only reason you and I may hope to be different is because God has now regenerated what is within us to make us compatible with His nature, and has given us the capacity through the Spirit of God, and working through the Word of God to be able to execute a life which sexually is sanctified, and which pleases God, and which glorifies Him. You can glorify God with sex. You can degrade and humiliate and insult God with sex. And it is the Word of God (it is doctrine in the human spirit) that is the beginning point of being a person who has control of that element, and who can dignify himself in that relationship, and who can glorify God with his sex life.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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