

# **Bible Study**

Aug. 16, 2022

## **So What's the Truth about Curses?**

### **I. Announcements:**

### **II. Introduction:**

#### **A. David Ayollo's story**

#### **B. Opening Discussion**

##### **Questions:**

- 1. What is a curse? What does it mean to curse someone?**
- 2. Are curses real? Do they carry any real power? And if, so how does that work?**
- 3. Can Christians be cursed? If so, who might curse us, and what might that cost us?**
- 4. Finally, if you suspect that you are laboring under a curse, what can you do about it? How do you break the power of a curse?**

### **III. Question #1: What is a curse? What does it mean to curse someone?**

**The dictionary defines the word "curse" as both a noun and a verb, and it offers us two definitions for each one.**

- 1. "Curse" as a noun — "a coarse or blasphemous word or phrase used to express anger or other strong emotion." In this definition, "blasphemous" words are what we would refer to as "profanity." We use the word "profane" as the opposite of the word "sacred," and so profanity is language that is irreverent, unholy, impious or un-Godly. Profanity means to speak against the sacred name or nature of God. The common use of OMG or of GD are most common examples. The verb form would be to use such language. On the other hand, "coarse" language is like the F-word or the S-word, etc.**

**Beth's rule: either way, blasphemy or coarse words, from and spiritual perspective are an attempt to project your own spiritual author-**

ity at the expense of God's glory.

2. A "curse" is also defined as "a solemn" (or even casual — my addition) "utterance which invokes a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something." That's where we're going to spend most of our time tonight. From this point forward tonight, this is the kind of curse or cursing that we're going to talk about.

**IV. Question #2: Are curses real? Do they carry any real power? And if, so how does that work?**

- A. Are curses — solemn or even casual utterance invoking a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on something or someone" — is this type of curse a real thing? Does this kind of curse carry real power?**

And the answer is "Absolutely!" Curses are very, very real and sometimes carry the power of death and life.

- B. How do curses work?**

What we as Christians very rarely recognize is that the entire spiritual realm around us operates on the power of the spoken word. Language is the most powerful creative force in the universe.

1. God spoke the universe into existence. Heb. 11:3 — *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."*
2. God testifies to the power of His own language. Isa. 55:10-11 — *"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."*
3. Jesus cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead and calmed a violent storm simply by the authority resident in His voice.
4. In the same way, the apostles also cast out demons (Paul/the woman with a python spirit, Acts 16:18); healed the sick (Acts 3:1-10, Peter & John/the crippled man at the Gate called Beautiful), and even raised the dead (Peter/Dorcas, Acts 9:38-42).
5. In the same way, Satan & his demons have only two weapons, lies and accusations, both of them used through the power of the tongue. (Rev. 12:9-10)

**We as human beings can also use our faculty of speech to invoke supernatural powers to bless or to inflict harm upon ourselves as well as other people, places or things. To inflict harm is to curse.**

**1. People:**

**Peter cursed Ananias & Saphira, resulting in the death of both of them. (Acts 5:1-10) vs. 7-10 — “About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?” “Yes,” she said, “that is the price.” 9 Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.” 10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.**

**2. Places:**

**Jesus spoke out curses against three cities in Matt. 11:20-24. (vs. 23-24 — “And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”**

**3. Things:**

**Jesus cursed the fig tree. Matt. 21:19-21 — “And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. 20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.**

**C. How does the spoken word translate into real power?**

**In the same way that kings exercise their authority by COMMANDING that certain things be done, we (as children of God) share in the authority of God, our Father. Look at the huge truths, the truth bombs that lie**

within what we call “The Great Commission.”

**Matt. 28:18-20** — *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

1. All spiritual and physical authority rests in the person of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 2:8-11, Acts 2:32-36, Heb. 7:26)
2. Christ shares that divine authority with men who act in faith. (The Apostles in Matt. 10:1, Luke 9:1-2, Luke 10:1,8-9)
3. Just as when Adam sinned and provided the devil with authority that had been given to him, so we, by our words, can provide the enemy with avenues of authority to steal, destroy or even foment diseases and kill those we speak against. We — not only believers but non-believers as well — can provide the enemy with spoken permission to inflict harm upon ourselves or upon others.
  - a. Again, Ananias & Saphira (Acts 5:1-10)
  - b. Jesus allowing Legion to enter into pigs (Mark 5:11-13)  
*“A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12 The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” 13 He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.*

V. **Question 3: Can Christians be cursed? If so, who might curse us, and what might that cost us?**

**Yes! Christians can be cursed.**

- A. We can inherit curses from past generations. (Adam, Rom. 5:12 — *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.”*)
- B. We can be the targets of curses that other people speak. (Again, Ananias & Saphira, Acts 5:1-10; Paul & False Teachers, Gal. 1:8-9)  
Gal. 1:8-9 — *“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach*

*a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!*

- C. We can invite curses into our lives by dabbling or engaging in witchcraft, worship of other gods or ongoing sin. (Paul & the young man caught up in sexual sin)

*1 Cor. 5:4 — "So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord."*

- D. We can take up curses on our own by bringing dark images or items associated with witchcraft into our homes.

*Acts 19:11-12 — "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them."*

- E. We can invite curses into our lives by the things that we speak over ourselves, our families, our homes, businesses and social circles.

*Matt. 12:35-37 — "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 36 But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."*

- VI. Question 4: Finally, if you suspect that you are laboring under a curse, what can you do about it? How do you break the power of a curse?

I don't believe you can pray away a curse. You can't negate a curse through medication or counseling. The only way I know how to break the power of a curse is through deliverance or both denunciations and proclamations. Most clergy are not trained and do not practice deliverance.

Deliverance, denunciations and proclamations are all functions of authority. In these processes, you don't ask God to do what He has already given you the authority to do for yourself. You draw upon the authority of Christ in you, cancel dark assignments, cast out any dark power, and declare blessings over the affected areas of your life or the lives of those affected.

**It's important to add in some cautions here. Please understand these things.**

- A. Deliverance is a process of confronting dangerous entities which would very much like to destroy you. Don't do that from a frivolous heart or with a lack of any prayer and training.**
- B. A faith-understanding of your spiritual identity, righteousness and authority is a prerequisite for accomplishing a successful deliverance exercise. Don't walk into a deliverance situation without this foundation.**
- C. Don't enter into a deliverance exercise if the person needing deliverance (1) is not willing to change life practices which invited darkness into his life in the first place, (2) or does not have a good core group of people who will encourage and hold him or her accountable.**
- D. Do not do deliverance alone. Try not to touch the person during the actual deliverance process.**

**VII. Other Resources:**

***Pigs in the Parlor*, a book by Frank & Ida Hammond, is the classic how-to book on deliverance.**

***They Shall Expel Demons*, a book by Derek Prince.**

**You-tube teachings of Pastor Vlad Savchuk.**

The Apostle Paul described this situation which he struggled with before he came to Christ. He cries out in Rom. 7 saying, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For I don’t do the good I want to do, but instead do the evil that I don’t want to do.”* And he concludes in vs. 24, *“What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is infected by death?”*

We’ve all been there. Am I right?

So why study righteousness? Very, very briefly, I’m going to give you four reasons why Christians need to study righteousness.

1. What you’ve been taught about righteousness in most religious settings is simply wrong. What you’ve been taught is wrong.
2. Jesus Himself said that, without righteousness, you can’t go to Heaven. It doesn’t get more straightforward than that. Listen to Matt. 5:20: *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*
3. Heb. 5 tells us that, without a clear understanding of righteousness, we can never mature spiritually beyond not just kindergarten but spiritual breast milk and diapers.
4. Righteousness is the centerpiece of our spiritual armor, and we are practically defenseless without it.
5. Even though, according to Rev. 1:6, God has made us to be *“kings and priests unto God and his Father,”* Rom. 5:17 says that, as long as we live, it is impossible for us to reign in life without His gift of righteousness.

### III. The Big Secret

So what we need to know is this: There are two kinds of righteousness in the Bible, and they are diametrically opposed to one another.

**Type A: Works Righteousness**

“Works Righteousness” is a system by which men earn the favor of God through obedience to His commandments. It’s that simple. In Deut. 6:25 — (divide the Bible) — no less authority than Moses Himself de-

clares to the children of Israel, *“if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.”* What Moses is really saying is that, if we are entirely obedient to every single commandment that the Lord hands down to us, our obedience will stand as our righteousness. In other words, to Moses and the Jewish people, all the way up to Christ, righteousness and obedience were absolutely synonymous. And God’s Law was the prescription by which they tried to get there.

The bad thing about “works righteousness” is that it never, ever worked. No human being other than Jesus of Nazareth ever lived his life in complete obedience. Everyone else failed. The Pharisees and doctors of the Law tried harder than anyone, perhaps, and, while it brought them social standing, they never achieved true righteousness. No one ever achieved God’s standard of righteousness by being completely obedient.

**Rom. 3:10-12** — *“There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none who understands, there is none that seeks after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.*

So what the Bible teaches us is that the 1st righteousness never, never, never ever works.

### **Type B: The Righteousness of Faith**

The righteousness of faith comes to us as believers through the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it comes to us through faith, through belief, through surrender to God and by receiving from Him His own — His own! Not ours but His own! — His own divine righteousness.

**Rom. 5:17** — *“For if, through one man, death ruled because of that man’s offense, how much more will those who receive such overflowing grace and the gift of righteousness rule in life because of one man, Jesus the Messiah!”*

**Matt. 6:33** — *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

## **VI. The Example of Abraham**

Because God is not ruled by time, there were a small crowd of men and



women in the Old Testament who actually discovered the righteousness of faith and are people we will come to know in Heaven. A number of these are listed in Heb. 11, which is often called the Hall of Faith. Three people — Abel, Enoch and Noah, all who lived before Abraham are mentioned in this chapter.

Then God comes to Abraham, the Old Testament character who fathered both the Jewish and Arab people, the man with whom God chose to make a binding agreement to open the doors of Heaven even to us. Now make no mistake, Abraham is considered the Father of Faith because of the covenant of faith which God made with Abraham. But the covenant of faith was still built upon the foundation of Christ's death, burial and resurrection even though Abraham Himself lived 1,800 years before Christ was born.

I want to go back tonight and show you what happened to Abraham and, by His example, how God sees you and me.

*Gen. 15:1-6 — “After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield and your very great reward.’  
2 But Abram said, ‘Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?’  
3 And Abram said, ‘You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.’  
4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.”  
5 He (God) took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he (God) said to him (Abraham), “So shall your offspring be.”  
6 Abram believed the Lord, and God credited it to Abraham as righteousness.”*

This example of Abraham's righteousness by faith is held up as an example all throughout the New Testament, and both Paul and James refer back and quote this verse, Gen. 15:6. Paul does that twice in Rom. 4:3 and Gal. 3:6. James quotes Gen. 15:6 in James 2:23.

Paul concludes Gal. 3 with these words, *“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

## V. So How Does God See Our Sin?

### A. God's Promise:

*Gen. 15:1 — “After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, (Abraham's protection) and your very great reward. (Abraham's provision)”*

## B. God's Time-Table:

**Gen. 18:10** — *“Then one of them (Jesus) said, ‘I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.’”*

## C. Abraham's Sin:

**Gen. 20:1-2** — *“Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, 2 and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, ‘She is my sister.’ Then Abimelek king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her.”*

## D. God's Response to Abraham:

### 1. Protection

**Gen. 20:3-7** — *“But God came to Abimelek in a dream one night and said to him, ‘You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman.’ 4 Now Abimelek had not gone near her, so he said, ‘Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? 5 Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and didn’t she also say, ‘He is my brother’? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands.’ 6 Then God said to him in the dream, ‘Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her. 7 Now return the man’s wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all who belong to you will die.”*

### 2. Provision

**Gen. 20:14-16** — *“Then Abimelek brought sheep and cattle and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah his wife to him. 15 And Abimelek said, ‘My land is before you; live wherever you like.’ 16 To Sarah he said, ‘I am giving your brother a thousand shekels of silver to cover the offense against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated.”*

## VI. Summary

- A. There are two kinds of righteousness discussed in the Bible: (1) Works Righteousness and (2) the Faith Righteousness.

- B. No human being except Jesus ever pleased God through Works Righteousness. No one will ever gain entrance to Heaven by their works. You can't be good enough to please God.**
- C. Faith Righteousness is the only path to Heaven, the only path to a life that is pleasing to God.**
- D. If we place our faith in God, believing in Him and pursuing an active relationship with Him, we become heirs of God and will live with Him forever.**
- E. When we receive Christ into our bodies by faith, He forgives all of our sin — past, present and future — and cloaks us in the gift of His own righteousness. Just as He did with Abraham, He counts our faith to us as righteousness.**
- F. By the power of His Holy Spirit who enters into our body by our faith, our behavior is transformed over time so that obedience — completely beyond us before — becomes our daily lifestyle. This is all in accordance with God's purpose for us, that we be conformed to the image of His Son.**

**But here's the "good news" which is the English translation of the word "Gospel." I want to show you tonight what the New Covenant, the New Testament teaches. And to see that, we're going back into the Old Testament to one of the best stories I know in the Scripture.**

### **III.**

**The good news is indeed good because, through every generation from Adam to Joseph and Mary, there had been very little good news. Inside the Garden of Eden when Adam ate the forbidden fruit, all of mankind had been born under divine condemnation, under bondage to the sin nature which was their Adamic heritage, and subject to the harsh rule of Satan, Law, sin, judgment, condemnation, death and Hell. Even among God's chosen people, who placed their confidence in their obedience to the Law, the burden was far, far too much. As Paul wrote in Rom. 3, "There is none good, no not one." Even the Law, not just Ten Commandments but the 630 commandments of the Old Testament, was not a path to life. The Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 3 declared the Law itself to be a "ministry of condemnation" and a "ministry of death." Peter himself declared to the other apostles in Acts 10:15 that the God's Law was "a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were ever able to bear." No man, even among God's chosen people, was able to behave well enough to earn God's favor and acceptance except the very few that, against all odds, found the path of faith.**

**The very, very few who found acceptance with God found that acceptance not in their behavior, not in the commandments that they observed or failed to observe, but in faith. Abel was found righteous before God not by Law but by faith. Noah was found righteous before God not by Law but by faith. Even Lot, who fathered children through incest with his two daughters, was found righteous before God because of His faith. ((2 Peter 2:7) Abraham, says Gen. 15:6, "believed God (in regard to God giving him a son) and God counted it to him as righteousness."**

**The Good News of the Gospel then was that God was sending His own Son,**

a man born outside of the lineage and judgment of Adam, to give His own life as ransom for you and for me. The benefit of that ransom was that we were set free from the guilt and condemnation of Adam's sin and could then choose life by receiving the gift of God's own righteousness. We could, in effect, claim the blood of Christ as payment for our guilt and sin, respond to God's offer of eternal life and legal adoption, and live forever in the unending wealth of His inheritance.

That is the heart of the Gospel. That is very, very good news.

- III. The issue facing most of us is that coming out of slavery to sin and death into the freedom and Sonship of the Gospel is a spiritual change of gargantuan, massive proportions. And two facts war against us. First, that change is almost entirely invisible. And second, the guides that we trust in religious circles are often very good at bringing lost souls to the altar but they themselves limit the goodness of God and have no idea how to guide you in the newness of eternal life. They can guide you to the door of eternal life, but they refuse to believe in the fullness of grace and forgiveness which is our inheritance.

What "being saved" means is that God has forgiven all of your sins (past, present and future), blotting them out of His memory. Then, as added insurance, He has drawn from the material substance of His own righteousness and clothed you eternally in the light and glory of that golden light.

Heb. 10 — although the second half contains some of the most difficult verses in the New Testament — affirms our eternal security four times in the first 18 verses.

Heb. 10:10 — *"We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

Heb. 10:12-13 — *"When this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool."*

Heb. 10:14 — *"For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."*

Heb. 10:15-17 — *"The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this, (saying)... 'Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.'"*

- IV And so we are left with this truth: if we have received the forgiveness and adoption which Christ died to offer us, then how does that change these

**things:**

**A. The Ten Commandments?**

**Rom. 10:4** — *“For Christ is the end, the fulfillment, the satisfaction, the culmination of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”*

**Rom. 7:4** — *“So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.”*

**Gal. 2:19** — *“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

**Rom. 4:15** — *“Where there is no law there is no transgression, no sin, no violation, no rebellion.”*

**B. Sin?**

**1. Sin in the Old Testament** — a violation of the law that resulted in judgment, condemnation, death and Hell.

**2. Sin in the New Testament** — an act of unbelief, falling short (hamartia) of the new nature, the new righteousness which God has granted us. When we sin as believers, God may allow us to suffer the consequences of those sins, but there is no eternal consequence, no divine condemnation.

**C. Conviction?**

**Heb. 10:1-2** — *“For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the [a]form of those things itself, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually every year, make those who approach perfect. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?”*

**John 16:8** — *“When he (The Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”*

**D. Confession?**

**James 5:16** — *“Confess (acknowledge openly and joyfully) your sins (failures, deviations) to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

**V. Summary**

**Picasso at Four Years Old — When Do You Forgive This Child?**

**Thank you for downloading these notes!**

**Please remember our upcoming Asia trip  
in your prayers and giving.**

## II. How do we approach divorce?

### A. Concerns re: Marriage as a Covenant or a Type

1. God demonstrated His position on the importance of keeping covenants in the story of Joshua & the Gibeonites.

*Sam. 21:1-6 — Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David sought the presence of the Lord. And the Lord said, “It is because of Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death.” ...3 David said to the Gibeonites, “What should I do for you? And how can I make amends, so that you will bless the inheritance of the Lord?...I will do for you whatever you say.” 5 So they said to the king, “The man who destroyed us and who planned to eliminate us so that we would not exist within any border of Israel— 6 let seven men from his sons be given to us, and we will hang them before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the Lord.” And the king said, “I will give them.”*

2. In a similar fashion, God demonstrated the importance of honoring His types by His refusal to allow Moses enter the Promised Land because Moses, in the wilderness, had profaned the type God was seeking to construct.

*Num. 20:10-13 — “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 8 Take the rod, and gather the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes;...and thou shalt bring forth water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink....And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together; and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. 12*



*Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.” NKJV*

## **B. An Apparent Contradiction**

### **1. Why then is it that God’s Law regarding divorce seems so entirely random and lacking?**

Considering that, in Jesus’ time, there was at least one eight-volume treatise on how to legally wash your hands, and that God maintained highly specific complex sets of laws regarding sacrifices or sexual practices or holidays or purification, it’s astounding that there are so few laws on something as significant as divorce.

The one Old Testament law that Jews at the time of Christ considered most significant wasn’t even about divorce primarily but about whether a divorced couple could re-marry. Nonetheless, a question posed by Pharisees in Matt. 19 reveals the attitude of Jewish authorities regarding divorce.

Listen first to the Old Testament Law in Deut. 4:1-3 —  
*“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens, if she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, that he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her away from his house,...<sup>2</sup> and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man’s wife, <sup>3</sup> and the latter husband turns against her, writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand, and sends her away from his house, or if the latter husband who took her to be his wife dies, <sup>4</sup> then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, after [e]she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.*

### **2. The Consequence of This Lack of Clarity: Any-Cause Divorce**

**Note:** The word “indecency” is a Hebrew word which implies “shameful exposure or nudity.” But it also can be stretched to mean simple “indecency.” The Law provided

no guidelines as to the limits of what this word, *eh-r-vah*, could actually mean. Over time, the patriarchal leadership of Israel came to a position where “Any-Cause Divorce” was available and commonly accepted by men. Examples.

“Any-Cause Divorce” served the unethical, unjust men of Israel very, very well. But it was a brutal, cruel practice that devastated untold numbers of women. A divorced woman had very little means of support. She was regarded as damaged goods. She could be separated entirely from her children. The law demanded no alimony, no support. Divorce was customarily an extremely violent but entirely permissible course of action...for men.

Wives, already positioned precariously in terms of economic opportunity and social standing, had no such rights. In 1910, a Cambridge scholar named Israel Abrahams testified before a governmental commission on divorce with these words: *“Divorce was always from first to last, in Jewish law, the husband's act.” The common term used in the Bible for divorce is shilluach 'ishshah, "the sending away of a wife" We never read of "the sending away of a husband." The feminine participle, gerushah, meaning "the woman thrust out," is the common term applied to a divorced woman. The masculine form is not found.”*

It’s in the context of this situation that, in Matt. 19:3, the Pharisees challenge Jesus. Listen to their question: *“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”*

### C. Are There Biblical Grounds for Divorce?

Yes.

From Crosswalk — The only valid reason for a Christian couple to get a divorce is if one is unfaithful (and unrepentant).

If one spouse really isn’t a Christian and abandons the marriage, then the Christian spouse is allowed to divorce the unbelieving spouse.

**A Christian who divorces is allowed to remarry only if he or she was the wronged party in the failed marriage.**

**ADULTERY: Matt. 19:3-9** — *Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?” 4 And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no person is to separate.” 7 They \*said to Him, “Why, then, did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?” 8 He \*said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”*

**Shorter Version: Matt. 5:31-32** — *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

**MAYBE EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL NEGLECT —**

**1 Cor. 7:3-5** — *The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise the wife also to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise the husband also does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time....*

**1 Cor. 7:32-34** — *I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; 33 but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of*

*the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*

3. That leads us to the Book of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament where God says, “I hate divorce.” I know counselors who will NEVER, EVER counsel people to divorce because, they say, God said in the Bible that He hates divorce. If you study those verses however, what you find is that what God really hates is (1) the violation of a covenant agreement AND (2) the violence that men perpetrated upon women in the process of divorce.

The second thing is to realize that this is not only the work of a single young man, however disturbed he may have been. Behind young Salvador Ramos there was a conscious darkness that compelled Salvador to do what he did, and, even now, the only regret that this demonic force carries away is that he could not cause more pain and suffering than he managed. The darkness is still there, and it’s largely unacknowledged by anyone — an anonymity that it seeks out and prefers.

I saw some time ago a meme where an elementary student said, “My teacher told me that guns were responsible for mass murders. The next day, I told her that my pencil failed my science test.

What I hate most about this explosion in violence, not just in schools but in urban streets all across America, is that every incident of random violence in America is followed by a tsunami of lawmakers and activists demanding limitations on guns in America. Just like the young man whose pencil failed his math test, anyone of reasonable mind can see that guns themselves are not the central issue here.

What we have is a cultural issue. And that cultural issue can be divided into two major arguments.

#### A. The First Argument, God’s Judgment upon Nations

All through the Old Testament, the people of Israel went through

times of spiraling through seven steps thru chaos and judgment to repentance and salvation.

Obedience  
Apathy  
Disobedience  
Chaos  
Judgment  
Repentance  
Salvation

Judges 17:6, 21:25 — *In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul lays out a similar track for nations, tribes and cultures within a New Testament context.

Rom. 1:18-32 — *18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

*21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.*

*24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.*

*26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed*