

A wife is a lawful wife even during the betrothal year and punishable as such

By WmTipton

A woman was the covenant wife of her husband during the whole betrothal year.

If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. (Deu 22:23-24 KJV)

This 'betrothed' woman IS this neighbors WIFE as proven by clear scripture (a mans 'woman' is his 'wife' except where proven otherwise by the texts). So Jesus isn't referring to premarital sex, the two were married lawfully. Jesus said "wife" in His exception clause, as well He would since lawful marriage WAS the topic at hand in Matthew 19. A wife was a "wife" lawfully as soon as she was betrothed/contracted in marriage. Jesus was not only referring to premarital sex in Matt 19 as some assert, because in the custom Jesus lived in "betrothed" was not a Premarital state, it was unconsummated marriage. It was Lawful, binding, permanent marriage as proven by Joseph and Marys case. Joe was her lawful husband and therefore the earthly father of Jesus, just as he is called in scripture.

There is no distinction made between "espoused wife" and "wife" as far as the punishment for willful sexual sin in the OT. When Jesus says "except for whoredom", He shows that to divorce frivolously for the purpose of marrying another is an act of adultery. What has changed, though is mercy to the sinner. By not issuing the death of the woman found in adultery, Jesus has shown that the adulteress isn't to be put to death because of mercy's sake.

An interesting point is that if a woman isn't the lawful "wife" of her husband during the betrothal year, that would mean that Jesus would have been illegitimate having not been born with both a father and mother who were lawfully married. If Mary wasn't Josephs lawful "wife" when Jesus was born that would make Him illegitimate. *IF* Mary wasn't Josephs lawful WIFE, the Jews would have made Jesus and Marys life hell over it....Jesus being a "messiah" and born to a woman who was not "married" lawfully. Knowing anything about the Pharisees at all shows us that they would have been pointing this out first and foremost if Jesus was born out of wedlock.

Mary would have been put to trial as well if she wasn't Joseph's LAWFUL COVENANT WIFE and was with child..especially this particular child who drew attention to her whole family. We might think a woman could go unnoticed in this matter normally, but certainly the popularity of her Son would have drawn the Pharisees attention to her "unmarried with child" status.

Mary was Joseph's LAWFUL wife. That is scriptural and cultural fact.