

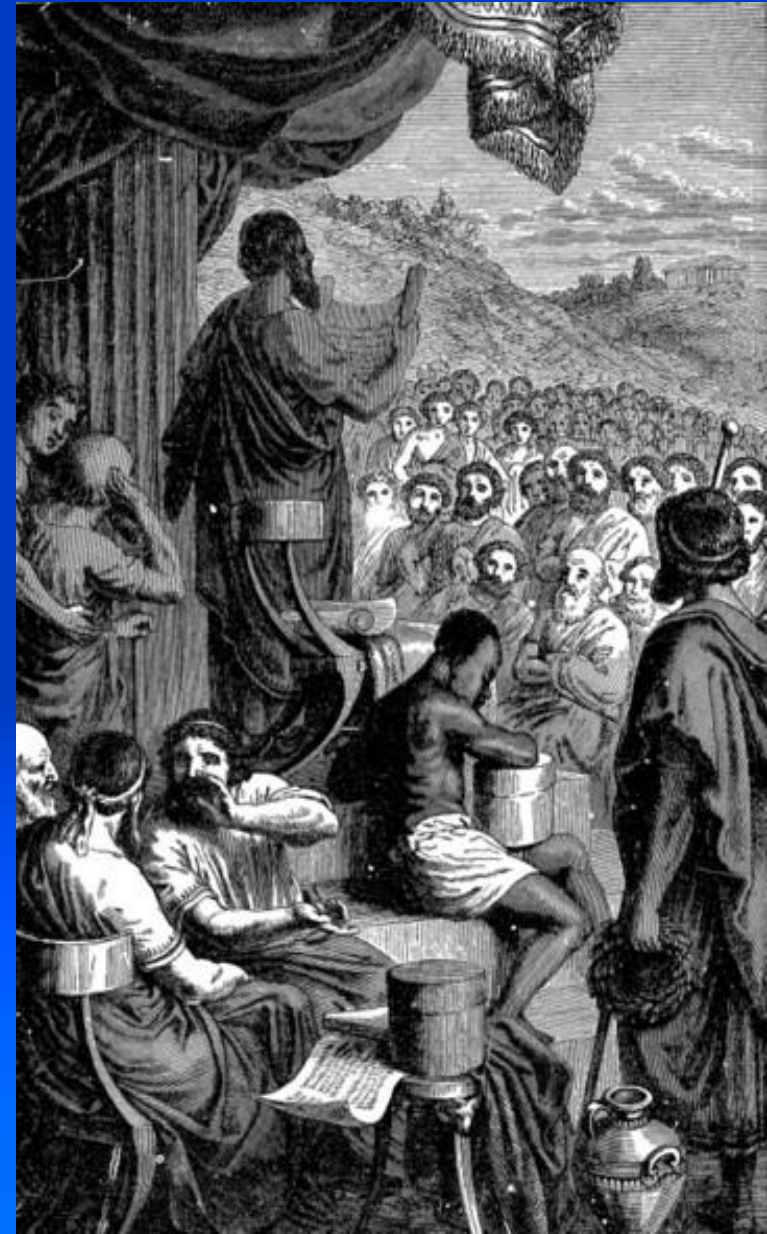


## Spiritual Adultery

- The disease that debilitated 450 B.C. era Jewish religion is the same as affects today's Judeo-Christianity: Adultery
- Marriage is a God-created institution between a man and a woman, to demonstrate a spiritual pattern of the relationship He wants with His worshippers
- Bible therefore uses marriage metaphors; God as husband, Believers as His bride
- Believers who tolerate other gods, come into union with others who do, violate the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment that prohibits adultery

# THE CONSEQUENCES HIT HOME

- 20<sup>th</sup> day of 9<sup>th</sup> month (winter) the Jews arrived at the Temple
- Crowd had a few days earlier agreed to divorce foreign wives
- Ezra reminds them of their guilt, tells them to confess to God, and to separate from the “peoples of the land” and foreign wives
- Christian commentators have always been bothered by this demand for “mass divorce”



# LESSER OF TWO EVILS?

Evil

Lesser Evil

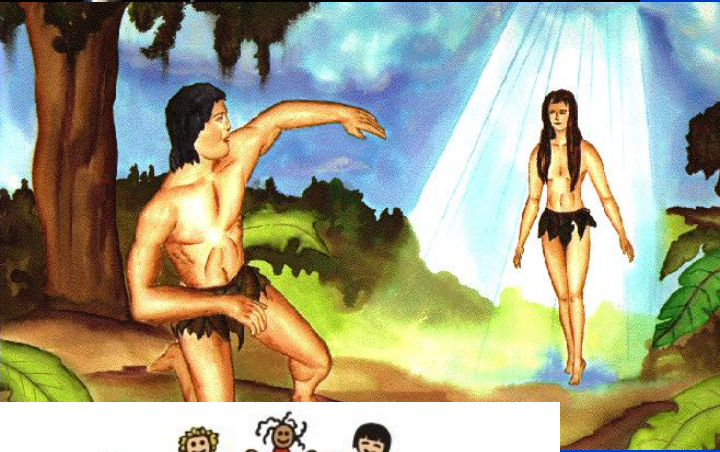
- *Yashav* = cause to dwell
- *Yatsah* = send away
- Unlikely the Lord saw unions as “marriages”
- Equally unlikely, then, it was true “divorce”
- Bible commentators say it was 1) Biblically endorsed racism, or 2) lesser of 2 evils
- NO to both !!
- The “marriage” was the sin, the “divorce” was terminating the sin
- Effects of sin have a long reach, collateral damage is the norm



SIN

God will forgive you for any one you commit; Rarely will he relieve you from the consequences . . .

# WHICH IS GODLY: DIVISION OR UNITY?



- God's prime governing dynamic: divide, elect, separate
- Light from dark, land from sea, male from female, animal life from human life, Jacob from Esau, gentiles from Hebrews, saved from un-saved
- Human evil inclination demands unity
- Church demands unity and says it is Godly
- No distinction to be made between sexes, nations, governments or religions

# HUMANITY WANTS NO DISTINCTIONS

- Ezra points out God's will to divide and separate  
Ezra 10:11
- Separate YOURSELVES
- God originally separated Israel from foreigners, but Jews thought it good to take down the barriers
- In 21<sup>st</sup> century, God-defined roles and distinctions are called bigotry, intolerance, and phobias, even in some mainstream Christian denominations
- Rev. 18:4 ***“Come out of her My people.....”***



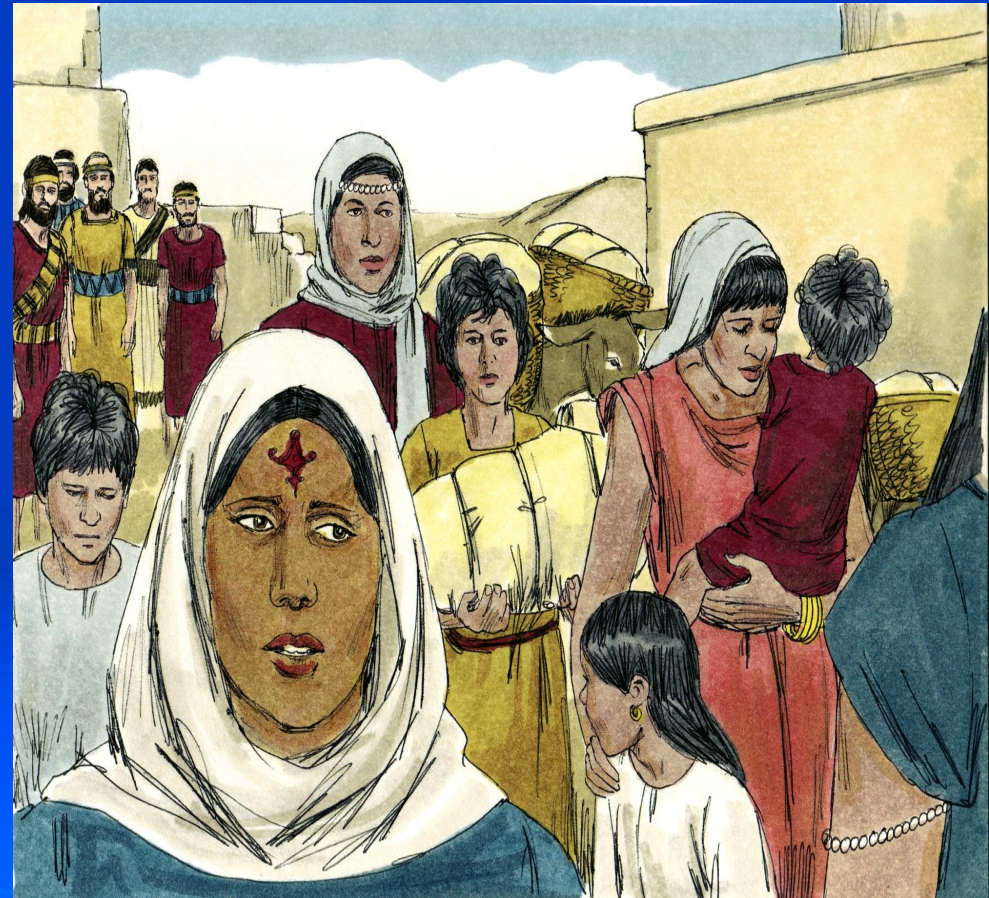
# GOD DEFINES ADULTERY

- Church and Judaism deep into adultery as were Jews of Ezra's day
- We prefer our own doctrines to God's Word
- We intertwine the pagan with the holy, and chase after the gods of this world
- We adopt pagan observances while refusing God's appointed times
- The Rapture will be the ultimate division, election, and separation, and it is NOT far away!



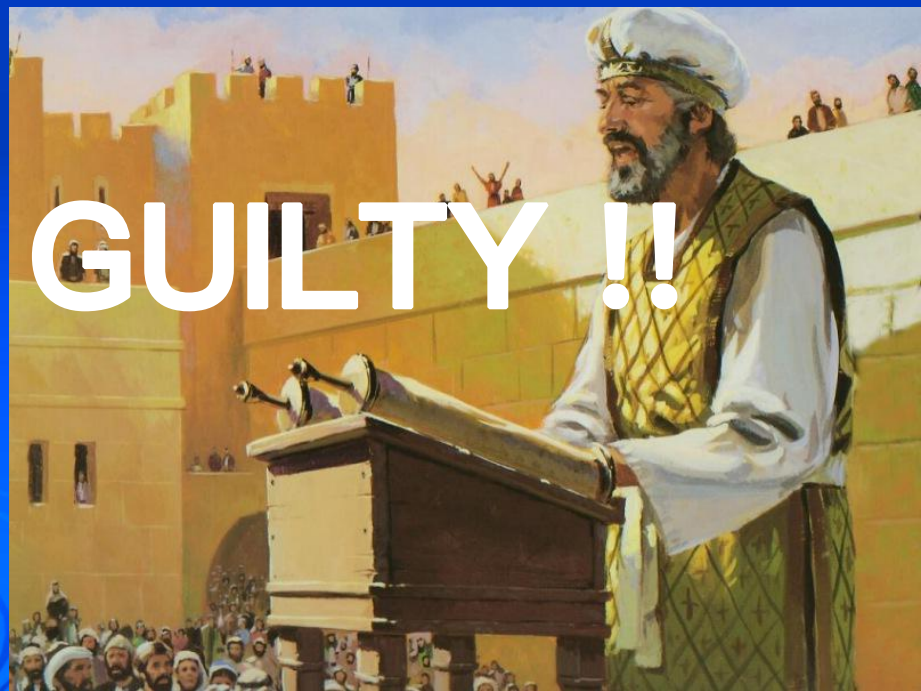
# THE PROCESS BEGINS

- Too many people, and every case is unique, to settle this in a day or two
- Who was guilty?
- Who would decide?
- What about children and grandchildren?
- Leaders would represent the community and set guidelines
- Elders and Judges would handle the cases
- Jonathan, *Meshulam* and *Shabtai* disagreed, but were overruled by the majority



# ALL LEVELS OF JEWISH SOCIETY WERE GUILTY

- Cases reviewed from 1<sup>st</sup> day of 10<sup>th</sup> month to 1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month (3 months)
- This exercise aimed mostly at returned exiles
- Religious leaders in exile had turned away from Torah and had created their own new doctrines and traditions
- To challenge the orthodoxy is always met with sneers and wonders how if everybody is doing it they could ALL be wrong?





# EZRA'S STORY IS OUR STORY



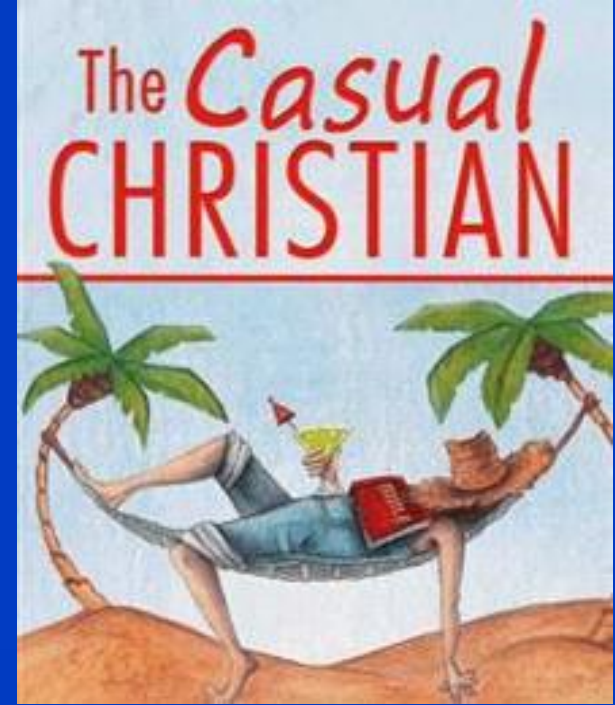
- It was necessary for Ezra to be given great authority or he could not have enforced any reform of the Hebrew religion
- Ezra would have been counted as a trouble-maker and heretic and laughed out of town
- Today many come from years in synagogues and churches, where we realized something was wrong
- Why doesn't everyone see it?
- We were told that we weren't qualified to interpret God's Word, or that this church or synagogue had its own set of doctrines

**DANGER**

**FALSE  
DOCTRINES**

# THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

- Which do we desire more: The praise of men, or the approval of God ?
- A comfortable manmade faith? Or a less easy Bible-based faith?
- Shall we have the faith, perseverance, courage and devotion to God's truth as the **ONLY** true religion?
- Ecclesiastes 1:4 -9



**There is nothing new under the sun, but there is something old we do not know**

