

A Question of Divorce

Big Questions of Life – Mark 9&10

ABS statistics 2000-2006

- **736,000 marriages registered**
- **369,000 divorces registered**
- **averaging around 47,000 per year**

A Question of Divorce

- **What does the Bible teach?**
- **How does God feel?**
- **How should Christians respond?**

What does the Bible teach?

- **Created good**
- **Tragically fallen**
- **Graciously redeemed**

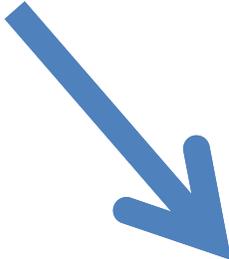
Mark 10

1 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them. 2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

Mark's Gospel



Luke's Gospel



Matthew's Gospel

Mark 10

- **Mark 10:2 “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”**
- **Matthew 19:3**
**“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife
for any and every reason?” (lit. for ‘any cause’.)**

The Old Testament

- **Deut. 24:1** If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house...
- **Ex. 21:10** If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. **11** If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.

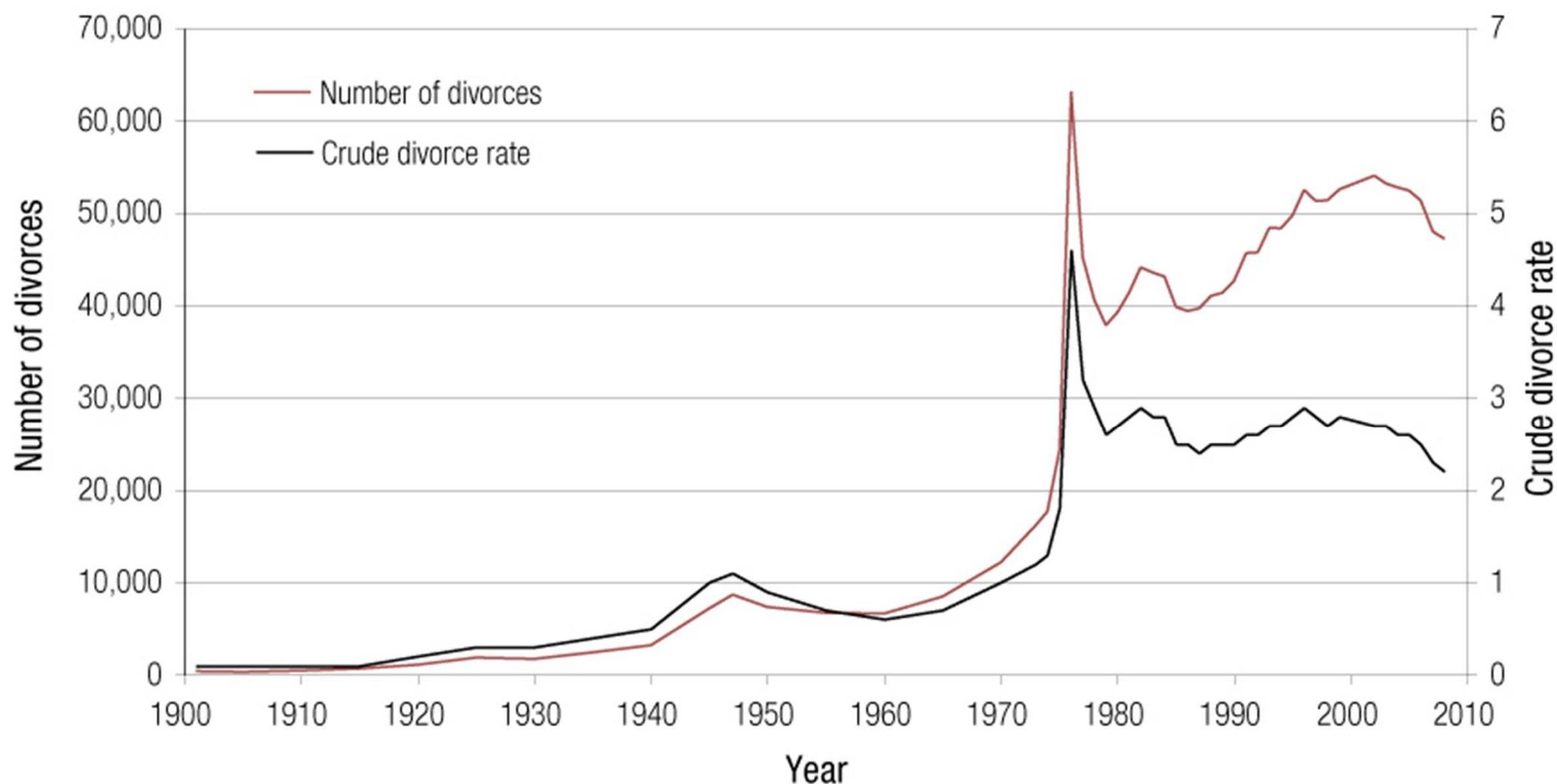
Rabbi Shammai

- **conservative**
- **divorce only if marriage covenant is broken**
 - food
 - clothing and shelter
 - intimacy
 - faithfulness

Rabbi Hillel

- **liberal**
- **divorce for 'any cause' or 'no fault' divorce**

Number of divorces and crude divorce rate, 1901–2008



Sources: ABS (various years), *Marriages and divorces Australia*, catalogue no. 3310.0; ABS (various years), *Divorces Australia*, catalogue no. 3307.0.55.001

Mark 10

3 “What did Moses command you?”

4 They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

Mark 10

5 “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. 6 “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ 7 ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Mark 10

10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. **11** He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. **12** And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

Matthew 19:9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, *except for sexual immorality*, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

What does the Bible teach?

- **Marriage is created good.**
- **Marriages should be cared for and strengthened by all.**
- **Divorce is a sign of our tragic fallen-ness and failure.**
- **Divorce can be a legitimate and pastorally-appropriate outcome when the marriage covenant has been devastatingly broken.**
- **Remarriage is an option after such a divorce.**

How does God feel?

- **God is the hurting divorcee**
- **God is the persistent suitor**
- **God is the redeeming lover**

How should Christians respond?

- **Created good**
 - rejoice in the good
- **Tragically fallen**
 - have a robust view of sin
- **Graciously redeemed**
 - lay hold of God's grace in Christ