

UNEQUALLY YOKED

Written by Colin Newman
Saturday, 26 May 2012 15:52 -

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” 2

Corinthians 6:14

In the course of my missionary work I have all too often come across the disastrous and tragic consequences of Christians marrying unbelievers. On numerous occasions, while counselling the distraught Christian married to an unbelieving spouse, I've heard of how the other partner appeared to be a Christian, claimed to be a Christian, made a public profession of faith in Christ, but later on revealed that it had all been a charade to secure their marriage. On numerous occasions the tearful Christian has asked: *“Why did nobody warn me?”*

Considering how much the Scriptures teach concerning marriage, and the many passages forbidding intermarriage with unbelievers, it is extraordinary that there is so little preaching and teaching on this important matter.

Abraham

The Father of the Faithful, Abraham, commanded his servant: ***“And I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of the Earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”***

Genesis 24:3-4

“Now my master made me swear, saying, ‘you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I dwell; but you shall go to my father’s house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.’” Genesis 24:37-38

Isaac

The Bible tells of Jacob’s twin brother Esau who took Hittite wives. ***“And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebecca.”***

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Genesis 26:34-35

“Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: ‘you shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.’”Genesis 28:1

The Law of Moses

“Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.”Deuteronomy 7:3

“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth...because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers...therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them...therefore you shall keep the commandments, the statutes and the judgments which I commanded you today to observe them.” Deuteronomy 7:6-11

When the children of Israel were preparing to take the promised land, the Lord warned them: ***“But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.”***

Numbers 33:55

Joshua's Warning

Joshua warned the children of Israel that if they intermarried with the heathen nations, ***“Know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.”***

Joshua 23:12-13

The Sin of Solomon

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The Scriptures record Solomon's great sin of marrying ***"many foreign women, as well as the daughter of pharaoh; women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sideonites and Hittites, from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, you shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods."***
1 Kings 11:2

Ezra Repents for the Sin of Intermarriage

In his great prayer of national repentance Ezra warned against mixed marriages. Israelites had married the daughters of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perisites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites.

"For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the Holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass. So when I heard this thing I tore my garment and my robe and plucked out some of the hair on my head and beard and sat down astonished. Then everyone who trembled at the Words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice. At the evening sacrifice, I rose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God. And I said: 'O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.'" Ezra 9:2-6

"Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons...that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever." Ezra 9:12

Intermarrying with the heathen nations around them, Ezra describes as: ***"...our great guilt...our iniquities...these abominations..."***

Ezra 9:13-14

Nehemiah's Warning

When Nehemiah discovered that some of the believers had ***"married women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab"*** and that many of their children could not even speak the language of Judah

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“but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them, and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying you shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon, King of Israel, sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, he was beloved of his God; and God made him King over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?”

Nehemiah 13:24-27

Nehemiah drove from the priesthood a man who was married to a pagan. Nehemiah banished him ***“because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan.”*** Nehemiah 13:28-30

Do Not Follow the Crowd

The Law of God warns the believers against following what is popular: ***“You shall not follow a crowd to do evil...”***¹ Exodus 23:2

The Apostle Paul warned: ***“Do not be deceived; evil company corrupts good habits.”*** 1 Corinthians 15:33

Marriage

As part of the Order of Service for Marriage, in the Book of Common Prayer, the minister is required to say to persons about to be married: *“I require of you both, as you will answer on the dreadful Day of Judgment when the secrets of all shall be disclosed, that if either of you knows any reason why you may not be lawfully married you now confess it. For be assured that those who marry, other than as allowed by God’s Word, are not joined together by God, and the marriage is not lawful in His sight.”*

The Laws of God revealed through Moses prohibited marriage between an Israelite and a Canaanite.

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The New Testament warns us not to be **“yoked together with unbelievers”** 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Marriage is defined in Webster’s Dictionary as *“the act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and woman for life. Marriage is a contract, both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God Himself...for promoting domestic felicity and for securing the maintenance and education of children.”*

Adultery

The 7 th Commandment declares: **“You shall not commit adultery.”** Exodus 20:14

Webster’s Dictionary defines adultery as *“Violation of the marriage bed; a crime or civil injury, which introduce, or may introduce, into a family, a spurious offspring... the unfaithfulness of any married person to the marriage bed...all manner of lewdness or unchastity...an unnatural union.”*

Webster’s Dictionary defines adulterate as *“To commit adultery, debase by foreign mixture.”*

Adulterated is defined as: *“Corrupted; debased by mixture with something of less value.”*

God’s Will for Marriage

“Marriage is honorable among all, and the marriage bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4

The Bible tells us that God seeks **“...godly offspring...”** Malachi 2:15. When God established His Covenant with Abraham, He said:

“And I will establish My Covenant between you and your descendants after you in their generations for an everlasting Covenant...you shall keep My Covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.”

Genesis 17:7-9

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Marriage not only involves two individuals, but two families. We need to honour our parents and seek the guidance of our church leaders when we consider marriage. Those who became unequally yoked are being short sighted and selfish. They are neither honouring their ancestors nor considering their descendants. Nor are they placing God's Word above their own emotions.

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His Covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments.” Deuteronomy 7:9

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