

MARRYING IN THE LORD



“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

(2 Corinthians 11:2)



MARRYING IN THE LORD

“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.”

(Proverbs 9:1-6)

MARRYING IN THE LORD

Scripture reading: 1 Corinthians 7:34-40

There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

INTRODUCTION

It is a DOCTRINE TO BE REJECTED (Item Number 34, Christadelphian Statement of Faith) “that marriage with an unbeliever is lawful.”

The fact that this involves a “DOCTRINE” concerning the basis of our fellowship around the table of the Lord should impress upon the believer’s mind the importance of a correct understanding of this matter, and should guide them to seek the counsel of the Word of God, rather than the untrustworthy reasoning of men.

Psalm 118:8-9

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

Psalm 146:3

Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

The admonition of Paul to the Corinthians, as well as to all brethren, is to marry only in the Lord. This would be applicable to both the unmarried as well as the widowed, as these are the two classes being addressed in verses 34 and 39 of 1 Corinthians 7. But was this merely the friendly advice of an elder brother, or did Paul actually have the “spirit of God” which in effect made his judgments the commandments of Christ? The latter becomes obvious based on the accounts given in Acts 9:10-16 and 2 Corinthians 10:13.

Acts 9:10-16

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

2 Corinthians 10:13

But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

Nevertheless, we must not let the burden of proof against the lawfulness of alien marriage rest on the testimony of the apostle Paul alone, for Scripture must agree in principle on all accounts, not just one account.

It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true (John 8:17).

With the above principle in mind, the searching of the Scriptures becomes a necessity within which the Truth may be found concerning marriage with the alien.

OLD TESTAMENT PROOFS

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

In this passage we have the introduction of two classes of men (as well as two attributes of mankind – Galatians 5:17) that would be at enmity with one another: the SEED OF THE WOMAN and the SEED OF THE SERPENT. Enmity (Hebrew *ebah*, Greek *echthra*) means hatred and opposition, i.e. “against”, as in the case of the carnal mind *which is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be* (Romans 8:7).

So then they that are in the flesh [or those of the alien class of men] *cannot please God* (Romans 8:8), and therefore they fall into the class of men identified as the Seed of the Serpent. This is a class into which all men are born as SONS OF ADAM, but out of which are called the SONS OF GOD, that is, the brethren of Christ.

Acts 15:14

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Nevertheless, there is always the danger of the sons of God sliding back into the ways of the carnal man if the Scriptures are not our sole guide in matters of conduct.

Genesis 6:2-6

That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to

them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Again, in Genesis, these two classes come into view, styled the SONS OF GOD and the DAUGHTERS OF MEN, whose co-mingling resulted in the great apostasy of the antediluvian age. The fruits of this unholy union so grieved the Father in heaven that He purposed to destroy all flesh upon the face of the earth, save Noah (and through his justification his wife, sons, and their wives), who, by faith, trusted in the LORD and remained safe in the ark.

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Christ's brethren are, in symbol, on board the Ark of God through Christ's atoning and justifying sacrifice with Christ at the very helm of the vessel, guiding the body of believers through a stormy and perilous world that is flooded with the wickedness of man. In short, to mingle with those outside the safe haven of the Ark is to risk disaster.

1 Peter 3:18-22

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

LESSONS FROM THE PATRIARCHS OF ISRAEL

Genesis 24:2-4

And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

Genesis 28:6-7

... Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram.

In the accounts concerning both Isaac and Jacob, they were specifically told NOT to take wives for themselves from among the Canaanites. Rather, they were told to take wives from among the household of Abraham. It may be argued that, even so, the wives which they chose (Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah) were perhaps idolaters, but such is inconclusive. In any case, this does not destroy the type employed for the heirs of Abraham to choose for themselves wives or husbands (as the case may be) from among the household of their brethren.

As a further example, in Genesis 34:1-16, the very idea of giving Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, to Shechem the Hivite was considered *a reproach* to the house of Jacob. The Hivites were but a small faction of the many Canaanites in the land, not belonging to the SONS OF GOD but rather to the DAUGHTERS OF MEN.

Exodus 23:32-33

Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Exodus 34:12-16

Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst

of thee: But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.

Hosea 2:18-20

And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

Malachi 2:11-15

Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Upon entering the land of promise, the children of Israel were told to *make no covenant with them*, that is, with the inhabitants of Canaan. Marriage is a covenant (Hebrew *beriyth* – to choose, in the sense of cutting; a compact, made by passing between pieces of flesh; confederacy, or league), which is entered into upon agreement, and

consummation. Hence, they are no longer “twain” but “one flesh”. It is a covenant second only to the covenants of promise entered into as brethren of Christ at baptism. How important then is this principle of making no covenants with those outside the Israelitish camp, who could possibly endanger the efficacy of the greater covenant entered into with God.

THE PATTERN OF THE LEVITES

Leviticus 21:13-14

And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.

Ezekiel 44:22

Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.

The Israelites of the Levitical order were set apart from the other eleven tribes. They had no continuing possession in this life. Their inheritance was the caretakership of the oracles of God, and so their calling was higher than the rest, bringing them into complete submission to God at the risk of being cut off from Israel if they failed to comply.

Among their stringent rules of moral conduct the forbiddance of marriage with the alien was certainly not the least, but bore equal weight with other laws which were designed to maintain the purity of the Truth and to protect the eternal welfare of the individual. It is evident from Ezekiel’s prophecy that the stringent moral codes of the Levitical order will again be applicable to the Levite priests in the Kingdom Age to come. But in the mean time, is there any application to the brethren of Christ?

1 Peter 2:5-9

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on

him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Christ's brethren are a royal priesthood, or holy nation, who have a high and holy calling after the manner of the Levitical priests of the past, and those to come in the future.

Christ, having entered into heaven as Mediator and High Priest, now stands in the Most Holy Place where Aaron once stood. Christ's brethren would then fulfill the spiritual role of the Levitical priests who ministered in the Holy Place and inside the gates of the Tabernacle. The natural Jew, then, is left outside the gates along with the uncovenanted Gentile. This is confirmed by the words of Paul to the believers in Galatia, saying that the natural Jew (the circumcised) who once enjoyed special favor from God under the Mosaic Covenant, were now *fallen from grace* (Gal. 5:1-6). In other words, since Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Covenant and brought into full force the Abrahamic, the only way of justification and reconciliation to God for both Jew and Gentile, is through baptism (symbolic Death, Burial and Resurrection, or Re-birth) into Christ, constituted Sons of God.

If the natural Jew was not lawfully permitted to marry the daughters of the Canaanites, then certainly the Levite priests would be forfeiting their office by doing such. On a spiritual level, the warning should be quite clear. Eternal life is at stake. Our present probation, as part of the Royal Priesthood spoken of by Paul, will determine whether or not we will attain to that higher order of Zadokian Priests in the Kingdom Age; that is, the immortal class of King-Priests who rule and reign with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev. 5:10; 20:4-6).

PRESERVATION OF THE TRUTH

Deuteronomy 25:5-6

If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no

child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

The preservation of inheritance of the household was the object of this law of Moses. Brethren of Christ also have an inheritance to preserve, that being the Abrahamic, as fellow heirs in Christ (Gal. 3:29). Marriage with the "stranger" is to risk the loss of our eternal inheritance.

Numbers 25:1-2,6-8

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods... And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 7:2-4

And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

Judges 2:1-2

And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break

my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?

Judges 3:1-8

Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath. And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years.

2 Kings 17:15

And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

Ezra 9:1-2

Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

Ezra 10:2-3, 11

And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law... Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

Nehemiah 13:23-27

In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?

Jeremiah 2:25-26

Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets.

Time and time again Israel was admonished to keep far, far away from alien marriage as it was the primary source of apostasy, bringing in strange wives and strange gods among the people. (Do not our “Christian” neighbors also worship false gods whom they call “God the Son,” “Jesus our Creator,” and other such nonsense?) Here it is important to note that Ezra regards the matter as a “trespass” and likewise Nehemiah regards it as a “sin” which Solomon had committed.

Thus, it is established by the mouth of two witnesses (Ezra and Nehemiah) that marriage with the alien is a sin. It is not only unwise, or merely wrong to do; it is a transgression of Divine Law.

“Instead of bringing them over to ‘the Way of the Tree of Life,’ they were beguiled into the ‘Way of Cain.’ For Sons of God to marry daughters of Belial is to jeopardize their fidelity to God. This practice has ever been fruitful of Apostasy” (Elpis Israel, page 119).

If this is true in regards to Natural Israel, then so much the more should it apply to Spiritual Israel – keep away from strange wives!

THESE ARE OUR EXAMPLES

1 Corinthians 10:1-14

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

As told us by the Apostle Paul, the previous examples were given

not for the benefit of making an interesting history book, but for the benefit of the believer that we might not make the same mistakes, but rather “flee from idolatry.” Could marriage with the alien be idolatry?

Idolatry may take many forms, and the self-serving of the flesh rather than serving God is certainly a prevalent form which is rampant in modern society. Let the believer be careful, then, not to serve themselves in the choosing of mates, but rather to serve God in the keeping of His instructions to marry in the Lord.

Luke 1:5-6

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Zacharias and Elisabeth are both described by Luke as being *righteous before God, walking in all the commandments*, thus they were chosen to be the parents of John the Baptist, whom among the prophets of Israel, said Jesus, “*there hath not risen a greater.*” Nevertheless, this passage contains some important details which are relevant to the subject of marrying in the Lord.

Zacharias was a Levite priest in the course of Abia (meaning *his father is Yahweh*), being the eighth course of the priestly administration. Eight (8) is the number of regeneration, new beginning or commencement. This is important as it brings to light the fact that the literal priesthood was about to witness a new beginning in the priestly order. First, with the sacrifice of Christ; second, the renting in twain of the veil in the temple; and third, the ascending on high of Jesus Christ as High Priest and Mediator, bringing nigh unto God his brethren as a spiritual, not literal, priesthood (I Peter 2:9-10). Know then that the type which follows concerning Elisabeth has a spiritual import that we cannot ignore.

Elisabeth was *of the daughters of Aaron*. Why was this detail revealed? Here the Companion Bible makes an interesting footnote, that “the female descendants of Aaron always married priests.”

This observation is in perfect harmony with the accounts given in

Leviticus 12:13-14 and Ezekiel 44:22 concerning the mortal Levite priests of past and future. But more importantly for the believers, it is in perfect harmony with the account given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:39, that Christ's brethren, the spiritual sons and daughters of God (by adoption) who jointly comprise the royal priesthood of Gentile times, have no right to marry anyone other than another "priest" in the lineage of the great high priest, Jesus the Christ.

BE YE SEPARATE

John 17:11-16

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Unequal yoking together is a metaphor stemming from the Law of Moses which forbade the yoking together of different animals of varying strengths, whereby the burden would be uneven and painful for

the animals (Deut. 22:10). The simple lesson is that having a spouse that is not interested in spiritual matters will detract, if not altogether destroy, the work of one of God's servants.

1 John 2:15-17

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The separate status of believers (under the constitution of righteousness) should constrain them to desire the Kingdom of God first above all things, including marriage. Therefore, the covenant entered into with God comes first; marriage and other considerations are secondary. To reverse this priority is, in effect, to love the world more than to love God.

THE MARRIAGE TYPE

1 Corinthians 11:2-3

Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Ephesians 5:23-25

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the ecclesia: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the ecclesia is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the ecclesia, and gave himself for it.

Colossians 3:18-19

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

1 Peter 3:1-8

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

Revelation 19:7-9

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

The marriage union is used in the Bible to typify the relationship of Christ with the ecclesia. The ecclesia consists of individuals who

are chosen as a Bride, called out of the world and into the covenants of promise.

Several books of the Bible figure prominently in this demonstration of the type and are worthy of our closest examination in individual or collective study. They are Ruth, Esther, and Song of Solomon. In Ruth and Esther we are given the accounts of two women, one a Gentile and the other a Jew, who each play a part, by genuine acts of faith, in securing salvation for themselves and on behalf of others. They each display the seriousness of mind and spiritual deportment that Yahweh desires as the bride for His beloved son (typed by others in each account). In the Song of Solomon, the bride and the beloved are both described in a collection of twelve beautifully scripted songs regarding the union of the bride and the groom, as it were. Yet this union is really more like an espousal, or an engagement at the first, which, Yahweh willing, will consummate in marriage following the judgment seat of Christ because of the faithfulness of the Bride.

In all of these accounts above, we see that the Bride exists within the realm of the Israelitish house BEFORE the actual marriage to the husband takes place. The Bride is expected to be a faithful virgin of the Household of God, being of “one mind” with the husband. *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”* (2 Cor. 11:2).

So also are Christ’s brethren to be of “one mind” with their spouse (1 Peter 3:8), both belonging to the one body in Christ Jesus. It is true that such a type as this may not always be attainable in a situation where an unbeliever accepts the Truth after already being married, but the many difficulties which may arise in such a relationship should be warning enough to the unmarried believer to stay far away from the same situation. As we have already seen, Israel failed miserably in this attempt, bringing in strange wives and strange gods among the people, and thereby sealing the pronouncement against them by the prophet Malachi: *...an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god* (Mal. 2:11).

MARRIAGE FOR BAPTISM

To introduce a potential spouse to the Truth is an honorable deed, but great care must be taken at the outset of any relationship that the truth of one's convictions be known: **the Truth comes first, all else is secondary**. If this principle is well established at the outset, then a foundation for developing a meaningful relationship is built upon the Truth. If such is not the case, however, then little progress in the way of Truth and life can be expected.

God is not mocked. While Yahweh deplores union with an unbeliever, an equally sad venture is to hurry someone to the waters of baptism for the sake of marriage. This has been tried many times and has failed many times due to a lack of conviction on the part of the soon-to-be (if not already) espoused person. The reality of the situation in the case of such failures is that there was no real basis of faith, but merely a "pass the test" approach to a set of baptismal questions where there was only a superficial (if any) conviction.

Three times in the Song of Solomon it is recorded, "*I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem [spiritual Israel], by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, **that ye stir not up nor awake my love, till he please***" (Song 2:7; 3:5; 8:4). The exhortation of Solomon is not to stir up a false sense of superficial love of God urged upon by mere emotion, romance or a temporary spiritual high before a true love of God has developed. Such a love, an agape love of Yahweh's Truth, must be patiently developed from one's own desire to draw nigh to God, not due to the desire or well-wishes of any others (family or friends) no matter how sincere. Such a love for Yahweh, developed by a sure conviction of Bible Truth, is the only sound foundation upon which a lasting and fruitful marriage in the Lord can be based.

SUMMARY

What will be the fate of the Truth if believers think themselves wise in repeating the same mistakes made by Israel of old? Will our children speak half the truth of Scripture and half the philosophy of men? God forbid.

There has never been a brother wiser than Solomon, nor stronger

than Samson, yet each of these men were beguiled by the voice of a strange woman. By taking fire into their bosom, they were burned by it. The spiritual implication could not be clearer. Marrying in the Lord is the only choice for the wise who will strive to douse the scorching flames of fleshly thinking.

If marriage with the alien is indeed a sin, then it must be dealt with as such. But in doing so, as individuals or as an ecclesia, it must be remembered that none of us is without sin, for *if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* (1 John 1:8).

At the same time, however, where sin is committed, let it be confessed, for *if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9).

With these two principles in hand, the responsibility of the ecclesia towards erring individuals is made clear. To look the other way, as if a problem does not exist, does nothing to help the erring brother or sister, much less the ecclesia as a whole, for *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*. On the other hand, to thrust them out without a view of possible reconciliation is certainly just as opposed to the spirit of Christ. In the end, it is obvious that much is dependent upon the attitude of the individual(s) in question. Where wrongdoing and sin is sincerely recognized and understood as the truth of the matter, then the way of reconciliation with the ecclesia and with Yahweh lies before the offender.

But marriage with the alien contended for as being a lawful course of action on the part of Christ's brethren is a "DOCTRINE TO BE REJECTED."

Albert B. Bryan

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***“Buy the truth and sell it not;
Also wisdom, and instruction,
and understanding.”
Proverbs 23:23***



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