

WRONGFUL MARRIAGE

Ezra 9-10

5/1/16

God's people throughout the ages have been tempted to marry those who are not saved or followers of the true God.

They always struggled with the same questions many today struggle with.

Why is it that all the attractive girls are Moabites, Ammonites, and Hittites?

Why is it that none of the cool guys are saved?

Why does the grass always look greener on the other side of the fence?

Why is it that the only fruit we are attracted to is found on the forbidden tree?

Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi each confront this same problem within a period of less than 40 years.

God has repeatedly told His followers to only marry fellow believers.

Deuteronomy 7:3-4 "Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.

Joshua 23:12-13 "For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, 13 . . . they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

1 Corinthians 7:39 A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

The issue is NOT race but religion.

Rahab was a Canaanite and Ruth a Moabite

Joseph, Moses, and David all married women of other races.

Solomon married many unsaved women.

1 Kings 11:4 For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God

His sin ultimately led to the decline and destruction of the nation.

Now in Ezra's day, God has graciously brought Israel back to the land.

They have rebuilt the temple, yet they have gone right back to the sin that led to their destruction.

1. Their religious intermarriage was unfaithfulness to God. 9:1-2 10:2,6,10

They have forsaken and broken His commandments. 9:10,14

They have transgressed His law. 10:13

They had committed spiritual adultery

- It was a breach of trust
- A violation of their covenant relationship with God

Malachi 2:11 "Judah has dealt treacherously, and an *abomination* has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has *profaned* the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god.

Abomination- Detestable, abhorrent, wicked, something for which God has a strong aversion,

Profaned- defiled, polluted, violated, dishonored

2. Their sin *grieved* Ezra. 9:3-4

9:3 tore garment and robe, pulled hair from head and beard

- These were outward expressions of his grief over their sin.

appalled- stunned, dismayed, horrified

9:4 trembled at the words of God

3. Ezra prayed and *confessed* their sin 9:5-15

He fell on his knees and stretched out his hands to God. v. 5

He is ashamed and embarrassed. v. 6

He acknowledges God's goodness and confesses their sin

- Notice the use of 'we', 'our', and 'us'.
 - ♦ Ezra knew that the sin of a few is sufficient to contaminate the many.

He recognizes that God has the right to judge them and fears what God might do

4. The people made a *covenant* with God. 10:1-8

As Ezra is praying, making confession, weeping, and prostrating himself and mourning over the unfaithfulness of the exiles a group gathers with him

v. 1 They began weeping bitterly

v. 2 They confessed their sin

v. 3 They desired to forsake their sin and make a covenant with God to put away their foreign wives and children.

- ♦ Their marriages had been wrong from the outset.
- ♦ Their proposed action was drastic.
- ♦ It appears to be harsh.
 - ◇ But they chose this solution to protect their families and nation from religious syncretism and God's judgment.

- ◆ Undoubtedly an appropriate provision was made for the divorced wives though we are not told of the arrangements.
- ◆ These chapters should not be taken as authorization for a NT believer to divorce an unbelieving spouse.

1 Corinthians 7:12b-13 . . . if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away

v. 4 They encourage Ezra to be courageous and act.

- ◆ They assure him that they will support him.

vv. 5-8 Ezra takes charge

5. Their repentance was demonstrated by their actions. 10:9-44

9-17 They decide on the process that they would follow.

15 The opposition

- ◆ I am sure that the opposition didn't say that they were opposing God.
 - ◇ They most likely tried to make Ezra rather than God the issue.
- ◆ I can imagine what they might have said.
 - ◇ "Ezra is harsh and unloving."
 - ◇ "He is insensitive. It's not that big a deal."
 - ◇ "Ezra is overstepping his bounds."
 - ◇ "Who elected him anyway? What they do is none of his business. It is between them and God."

18-44 113 individuals are named

17 priests, 10 Levites and 86 others

The high priest's sons had intermarried. v. 18 cf 5:2

Think how Ezra must have felt

Truths That Matter

1. God cares about who you marry so be careful who you date.

Genuine born-again Christian

Opposite gender

Someone who is not disqualified by a divorce that God doesn't recognize cf Matthew 19:9

The issue is not that you will be attracted to someone that you shouldn't marry. The issue is what choice will you make.

- Like the fruit on the tree in the Garden of Eden.

Some will try to get around God's clear commands.

- "I prayed about it and feel that this is God's will."
- "I prayed that certain circumstances would work out so that I could break it off, but since they didn't happen it must be God's will for me to marry this person."

These people are putting their feelings, their conditions, and their interpretation of circumstances ahead of God's clearly revealed word.

- God's will is not determined by our feelings and circumstances but by His word.

God cares who you marry.

2. Being disciples of Jesus implies that we live a distinctive life-style. 1 John 2:15-17

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

- We must take seriously the cultural and ethical factors that result in disobedience to God.
 - ♦ Our values are to be different from those around us.

Christians who adopt a life-style that negates Christ's commands are harming the future of the church.

1 Corinthians 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*?

We need to take sin seriously.

Sin has consequences

- Natural consequences
 - ♦ Loss of their children
- Divine discipline
 - ♦ Loss of God's blessing
 - ♦ Loss of their country

Blatant sin reveals what we really think of God and who is really in charge of our lives.

- Who is really our Lord?

On the other hand, when we confess and repent, God is merciful.

Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God,
You will not despise.

4. Share the message of salvation with your unsaved friends and relatives.