

MIXED MARRIAGES

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A mixed marriage is a marriage between two people of different religious belief. A mixed marriage is also a marriage between two people from different races, tribes or country. There are two sides to this coin called mixed marriage. One is religious and the other is racial. The religious mixed marriage is not encouraged by the scriptures, but racial marriage was not discouraged except on the basis of religious considerations. Many who have ignored biblical instructions on marriage had had bitter experiences in their marriages and regretted ever going against the word of God on the subject. We are going to look closely at what the scripture teaches on this subject in this study.

1. INTERRELIGIOUS MARRIAGE

Gen 6:1-8

6:1 When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. 3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

NIV

After Abel was killed by Cain his senior brother, Seth was born, and his descendants began to call upon the name of the Lord. So they were referred to as sons of God, while the descendants of Cain were referred to as sons of men. The sons of God (that is, the professors of religion, who were called by the name of the Lord, and called upon that name), married the daughters of men, that is, those that were profane, and strangers to God and godliness. The posterity of Seth did not keep by themselves, as they ought to have done, both for the preservation of their own purity and in detestation of the apostasy. They intermingled themselves with the excommunicated race of Cain: They took them wives of all that they chose. But what was amiss in these marriages?

1. They chose only by the eye: They saw that they were beautiful, which was all they looked at.
2. They followed the choice which their own corrupt affections made: they took all that they chose, without advice and consideration of God's will for their lives.
3. That which proved of such bad consequence to them was that they married strange wives, were unequally yoked with unbelievers, and they became corrupted, and it grieved the

heart of God that He contemplated the destruction of mankind and all living creatures and starting all over again with Noah's family.

God's command concerning inter-religious marriage

Ex 34:15-16

15 "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. 16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

NIV

Deut 7:1-5

7:1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2 and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. 3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. 4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. 5 But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

NKJV

It was forbidden to marry outside of the nation of Israel because of the danger of being persuaded or seduced into worshipping other gods by their spouses. God was saying through this instruction that it is better to marry someone who believes and practice the same faith with you. This was proven to be true as we saw in the history of the Jews that they were led astray in following other gods through their mixed marriages.

2 Cor 6:14-18

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

*"I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people."*

17 Therefore

*"Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,*

*And I will receive you."
18 "I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the LORD Almighty."
NKJV*

God commands the believers in Jesus Christ as He commanded the Jews under the Law of Moses to keep away from inter-religious marriage. Marrying an unbeliever is termed an unequal yoking – a mismatch. Living together as husband and wife with someone who is a temple and carrier of demons is not the best, and definitely will bring a lot of problems. Being bonded in marriage to an enemy of God is not right. The believer is light and the unbeliever darkness, and there can be no fellowship between light and darkness. They are two parallel lines that never meet. The Believer is righteous and the unbeliever unrighteous. God answers the prayers of the righteous, but the prayers of the unrighteous is an abomination to Him the scriptures says (Prov 15:8).

The best thing to do is to come out from among them and be separate. Marry only your own kind. Marry from amongst God's people. No matter how beautiful or handsome the person is, do not marry an unbeliever. No matter how rich and wealthy, educated, highly connected the person and the family may be in the society, do not marry an unbeliever. Marry only a true and practicing Christian.

King Solomon became an idol worshipper through interreligious marriage

1 Kings 11:1-8

11:1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites-- 2 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." Solomon clung to these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. 7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. 8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

NKJV

King Solomon who started very well with God ended up an enemy of God, a worshipper of satanic spirits because of his refusal to follow God's command to marry only from among his own people. His lust for women grew to the point he could not control himself and obey the commands of God. As long as men continue to focus on beauty and externals they will continue to disobey God and have mixed religious marriages. This is fatal to the faith of any disobedient believer. What will make a man to marry 700 hundred wives and 300 concubines (mistresses)? Definitely, it is lust. Beautiful women and handsome men will never finish, and you cannot allow yourself to be pressured, seduced or misled to go outside your faith to marry because of beauty,

or handsomeness or any other external thing you are focusing on. Do not tell yourself, I will pray for his / her conversion. Let the person be converted first and mature a little before talking about marriage.

Interreligious marriage was of bad consequence to the Jews after their return out of Babylon

Ezra 9:1-4

9:1 When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. 2 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." 3 So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. 4 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.

NKJV

On their return to Israel, the Jews including the priests and Levites began marrying and having children by the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. As soon as Ezra the priest learnt of this evil, he went into fasting and prayers. The issue was dealt with decisively. All were mandated to put away these women and their children from their lives and Israel. They swore an oath to put them away, thereby, cleansing themselves and the land and prevented another judgement of God upon the nation.

No one can be wiser than God his creator. We must agree to the truth that God sees what we don't see and that he knows what we don't know. We must all agree to the fact that God is wiser and knows what He wants and is doing. We must all agree also that God loves us and relates with us on the basis of love. His instruction on this subject is in love and nothing else. He doesn't want to loose us through backsliding and idol worshiping. He wants us to be married only to the ones who will encourage and partner with us in serving Him. He only says what He means, and means what He says. God has commanded in His wisdom and we cannot but obey Him.

Eph 5:17

17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

NIV

It is foolish to ignore God in this matter. Many have done it and have regretted it. Do not be a victim of "love". Do not be a victim of the scheming of the devil. Submit to the will of God and be saved.

2. INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE

God is not opposed to interracial marriage. What God is opposed to is interreligious marriage to protect His children and faithful followers from falling away and following other gods. An alien

among the Jews that is circumcised as a result of his faith in the God of Israel is permitted to eat the Passover, and intermingle with the Jews. What gives them access to God is the faith expressed through circumcision.

Ex 12:43-45

43 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "These are the regulations for the Passover: "No foreigner is to eat of it. 44 Any slave you have bought may eat of it after you have circumcised him, 45 but a temporary resident and a hired worker may not eat of it.

NIV

Ex 12:48-49

48 "An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the LORD's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat of it. 49 The same law applies to the native-born and to the alien living among you."

NIV

Israel had twelve tribes and any Jew could marry from any tribe of his choice.

In the New Testament, there are no racial boundaries. So we could marry from any tribe, nation or colour as long as the person is born again.

Gal 3:26-29

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

NIV

Col 3:11

11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

NIV

What should be uppermost in your heart as a believer is the will of God in the choice of a life partner. The tribe, colour, or nationality is not an issue. The language or the customs of the people is secondary. The most important thing is knowing deep within you that the person you are interested in or is interested in you is a true believer in Christ. And, that, you can only find when you seek God with all your heart. Always remember, not all who go to church are true believers. Not all have made a personal commitment to Christ, and not all are committed to their decision to follow Christ.

The challenges of interracial marriage

1. The major challenge in interracial or multicultural marriage is ability to adjust to the culture of the people you are married to. Once love brings you to a man or woman of another culture, it is essential that you take out time to study the person, his family and culture very well

to see if you can adjust without difficulty when you eventually get married. Learn the way they greet, the way they talk and the use of words, their dressing, eating habits, dances, spirituality, and relationships with their families and their concept about marriage. You should not be lazy in making this study. Once you are convinced based on the evidence and information you have, then, go in faith of the Lord and love, and you will have a successful marriage.

2. The second challenge is food. Food from different cultures differs. It is essential that the wife to be make effort to learn how to cook the foods of the people of the husband. Yes, you will have to cook your culture's food also, but more of your husbands than yours. You have to condition your mind to love to cook and eat his kind of food. So you have to get tutorials from your husband or a close friend or relative of his. The husbands to be should also know that they too have to adjust to love to eat the wives tribal meals as prepared by the wife. Let there be variety to reflect the two cultures, but more of the husbands.

3. The third challenge is coping with unpleasant remarks from those who do not appreciate or approve your choice of marrying someone of another culture. You don't have to expect every family member, friend or members of your tribe/race or that of your intended spouse to applaud your decision. Just close your ears to what they will say and ignore what they will do to discomfort you.

Counsel

It must be stated here and clearly too, that the husband must be prepared to protect the wife from his family and tribal people. There are certain rites and ceremonies that Christians are not permitted based on the teachings of the Bible to get involved in, it is the duty of the husband to protect the wife from being harassed, or forced into such. Marriage is according to the Bible for the Christian and not according to my tribe or family. Follow God and not your culture and you will enjoy your marriage and be blessed by Him. You must do everything within your power in Christ to make your spouse to be proud of you any day, any time, and never to regret marrying you. Let your love be visible for all to see. Let your devotion to God be pronounced. And let your protection of your spouse be clear and loud.