

WISER THAN SOLOMON?

Jon Macon

In Deuteronomy 7:1-4, prior to entering Canaan, the Israelites were commanded to utterly destroy the inhabitants of the land, and to show them no mercy. He also told 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.”* God knew that if His people married unbelievers, they would forsake Him. So often God tells mankind what is best for him, but man does not listen to his Creator. Israel did not listen, and God’s warning came to pass exactly as He said. Unfortunately, many Christians today still do not listen to God’s warnings not to marry unbelievers. Nevertheless, *we* must take heed not to repeat the mistakes that so many others have made by ignoring God’s wisdom.

The sons of God and daughters of men

Genesis chapter five traces the line of God’s faithful and righteous servants beginning with Adam and down to Noah. A heritage of 1,500 years of obedience to God was rapidly destroyed. In Noah’s time, “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” (Gen 6:5-6). We know the rest of the story. God destroyed all but Noah and his family in the Flood. But what caused the whole world to turn so quickly away from God? Genesis 6:1-2 gives the reason: “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that *the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*” Those men were children of God, but they married pretty women, who were of this world, “daughters of men.” Sadly, this was not the last generation of “sons of God” to make this mistake. Following the typical pattern, Israel took very little time in breaking the commandment He gave them in Deuteronomy chapter 6. After the conquest of Canaan, Judges 3:5-7 says, “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.”

Solomon’s grave error

King Solomon is known for the great wisdom that God gave to him (1 Kgs 3:12; 4:29-34). Yet he also fell to the temptation to marry many women who were not faithful and obedient servants of God, “and his wives turned away his heart” (1 Kgs 11:1-3). *“For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect*

WISER THAN SOLOMON?

(continued)

with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father” (1 Kgs 11:1-4). All of his wisdom was not enough to overcome these temptations. Solomon did repent and return to God before it was too late, and the Book of Ecclesiastes contains the lessons that he learned. In Ecclesiastes 7:26-28, Solomon says, “*And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account: which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.*” What else did he learn? “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man*” (Eccl 12:13). Later, righteous Nehemiah reminded another generation of Israelites of this when they were repeating the same mistakes. Nehemiah 13:23-27 says, “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?”

The teachings of the New Testament

In the New Testament, we no longer have a law which forbids us as Christians from marrying people of other physical nations. But the spiritual principle behind that Old Testament law is still found in the New Testament. We are told not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” but to “come out from among them, and be ye separate” (2 Cor 6:14-18). We must not be deceived, bringing in “evil communications” into the family by marrying an unbeliever will corrupt (1 Cor 15:33). This little leaven will leaven the whole family (Gal 5:9). A Christian widow should marry again “only in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39). If this instruction is good and wise for a second marriage, it also is for a first marriage. The prospective mate should already be faithful before the marriage. No one will be spending more time teaching our children than our mate. We must find someone who is a *faithful* Christian who will be teaching our children later (2 Tim 2:2). In almost every case, when a Christian marries a non-Christian, the Christian is “converted” away from Christ rather than the non-Christian being converted to Christ. *Every* Christian needs to learn from these examples in the Bible and determine only to marry a faithful Christian!