

DATING: INTRODUCTION, part 2, 2 pgs

John the Baptist and then Jesus called for **repentance** in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. The good news about the kingdom was intended for the Jews, God's covenant people. ⁵ *These twelve [disciples] Jesus sent out, instructing them, Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,* ⁶ *but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,* **Mt.10: Gentiles were foreigners to God's covenant** with Israel but Jesus did not prohibit preaching the nearness of the kingdom to them, he just did not at this point send the disciples into Gentile areas. The **Samaritans were a mixed blood race** resulting from the intermarriage between Israelites left behind when the people of the northern kingdom were exiled and Gentiles brought into the land by the Assyrians. After Jesus had risen from the dead, the new covenant in his blood made people from every nation equally acceptable to be born into God's family. Consequently the Gospel was then preached to all nations, **Mt.28:19**

Leading up to the relevant passages on marriage between believers and unbelievers in the NT, Paul says things like *(We will all be held to a high standard for our service to God),* ¹¹ *therefore knowing the fear of the Lord we persuade others (the apostles were on-mission) ...* ¹⁷ *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation ...* ¹⁹ *In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation ...* ²⁰ *Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God,* ²¹ *For our sakes God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we [believers] might become the righteousness of God,* **2 Cor.5:**

In **6:11-13** Paul says that the apostles had spoken frankly to the Corinthians whom he loves as his own children. He practically begs them open their hearts and hear him. Yet they seem reluctant to.

2 Cor.6:14-17

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers *[a relationship between believers and unbelievers constitutes an unequal yoke]* . For what partnership does righteousness have with lawlessness? Or What fellowship does light have with darkness? And what agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer share in common with an unbeliever ? And what mutual agreement does God's temple have with idols? *[This is unthinkable! - There can exist no such union between the two.]* For you are the temple of the living God .

The contrast between believers and non-believers is put in the strongest possible terms and assumes they are distinguishable from one another. It's not hard to tell which is which. It becomes obvious very quickly that you cannot have fellowship around Christ with an unbeliever. The passage goes on using the language from several OT books to call for **disengagement** from the unbeliever. Wherefore come out from among them and be separate , says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean *[because you too will be defiled, thus rendered unfit for God's service]* . This language is not meant to demean an unbeliever, but is derived from OT cleansing ceremonies where instruments and sacrifices employed in the worship of God were **consecrated** or made holy - likewise people who have been **cleansed through forgiveness in Christ**. Christians are an entirely different race - people who have been forgiven by removal of sin and guilt and within whom the Spirit of God dwells are **incompatible with unbelievers**.

It is a matter of holiness and consecration to God that taking-up with unbelievers ruins. Under the OT, anything that was **defiled** could no longer be employed in God's service. The intrinsic difference between believers and non-believers is the governing factor regardless of the nature of the relationship, whether it be a temporary association or a more formal union such as a legal partnership or marriage. For a Christian to become involved with a non-Christian, **especially romantically**, puts everything he knows and believes at risk because physical and emotional intimacy will always prove too strong for a faith that ignores these warnings in the first place. It's like the test God devised for Israel where he left foreign people in the land to see if Israel would obey him or not, **Josh.23:13**. Attraction to the unbeliever is the first temptation to be overcome for rebellion lurks in the hearts of men. Desire for the relationship and then the continuance of it trumps every other consideration. Losing the spiritual battle here guarantees that one will rationalize the situation and wrongly decide the unbeliever is really a believer, or marginalize the issue so that it doesn't matter.

The Romeo and Juliet Effect. The more a one's parents or Christian friends disapprove of a relationship, the more drawn together that couple tends to be. Their relationship becomes stronger because there is **outside resistance** trying to keep them apart - A "forbidden" love with someone your Christian upbringing discourages you from courting and one with whom your Christian parents and friends cannot approve reveals just how powerful the union can become to overcome obstacles. And that bond will even triumph over direct Scripture that forbids it. I wish I had advise that would help you once you became aware of this intensifier of romantic feelings against any who would seek to separate the couple, but that's very late. If your child knew better or just didn't listen at the inception of the relationship, they are unlikely to listen now.

Following these prohibitions God promises to take the people who do not defile themselves by union with unbelievers as his own sons and daughters, **2 Cor.6:18**. Then follows, *Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God , 7:1* [He means to say that here is a turning point - as an act of holiness in the fear of God, get out of or discontinue such associations – almost impossible once you have grown close to someone .] Notice how backwards your approach has been. You think you care for them, but fail to even attempt to introduce them to Jesus who alone can forgive sin and grant eternal life. Instead you **bonded with them** in an unholy alliance based upon mutual attraction, an **indulgence** that screams from the very pinnacle of selfishness. The relation-ship you seek cannot exist without destroying you and damaging the reputation of the church of God. Of course all this rests upon one HUGE assumption - **that you who think of yourself as a believer are really in fact born of the spirit from above as you imagine**. That assumption is automatically called into question by your reckless and lawless actions in courting the affections of a non-believer, is it not?

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul, 1 Pt.2:9-11