

VII. Racial Discrimination

- A. Genesis 1-2: all people on earth are descended from Adam and Eve
- B. Therefore: all people – from every racial background – share equally in being “in the image of God” (Gen 1:27), and all should be treated with respect, dignity, honor
- C. Scripture thus excludes any ideas of racial superiority/inferiority
- D. Some invalid and wrongful arguments that people have made to support racial discrimination

Argument 1: Gen. 9:25 Noah's curse on Canaan:

Genesis 9:20 Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, 25 he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." 26 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."

Answer: the curse on Canaan was fulfilled in the history of the Canaanites:

Genesis 10:15 Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, 16 and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, 17 the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, 18 the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. 19 And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

Deuteronomy 7:1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than yourselves, 2 and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. 3 You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons

Argument 2: Interracial marriage was prohibited in OT

Deuteronomy 7:3 You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons

Ezra 10:11 Now then make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives."

Answer: see the context: the prohibition was against marrying people of other religions

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Ezra 9:1 After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from 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 to be wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race¹ has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost."

Ezra 9:11 which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, "The land that you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land impure with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations that have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. Ezra 9:14 shall we break your commandments again and intermarry with the peoples who practice these abominations? Would you not be angry with us until you consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape?"

What is the NT counterpart to these OT laws?

→ Not marrying unbelievers (it has nothing to do with race) (1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14-18)

E. Some Biblical examples of interracial marriages viewed positively

Joseph: Genesis 41:50 Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph.

Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On [an Egyptian], bore them to him. 51

Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me

forget all my hardship and all my father's house."¹ 52 The name of the second he called

Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Moses: Numbers 12:1 Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite

[Ethiopian] woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. 2 And

they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken

through us also?" And the LORD heard it.

Others: Matthew 1:5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed

by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king. And

David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, Matthew 1:16 and Jacob the

father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

F. What is the historical origin of racial differences in the human race?

→ selective geographical isolation of different parts of the gene pool inherited from Adam and

Eve (see genetic map)

G. How should we relate to people of different racial & ethnic backgrounds?

1. OT commands about how Israelites were to treat "sojourners" who stayed among them:

Exod. 23:9; Lev. 19:34

Deuteronomy 10:18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. 19 Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

2. New Testament teaching on racial differences:

Luke 10:25-37: Good Samaritan

Matt 28:18-20: gospel to all nations

Gal 3:28: neither Jew nor Greek

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

3. Paul tells us a wonderful "mystery": How God is glorified by an interracial church

Ephesians 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles- 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is¹ that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. 8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints,

this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in¹ God who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord

- H. For discussion: How does this apply to:
1. Our personal lives?
 2. Church?
 3. Businesses?
 4. Civil laws?

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