



Introduction

Racism is extremely complex — involving history, tradition, culture, religion, economics, politics, and a host of other factors. In light of the complexity, we often claim ignorance, which more often than naught is interpreted as indifference. It is such an important issue — we cannot be or appear indifferent.

Scripture gives us a strong position on the sin of racism and how God views all people. I want to walk thru a biblical theology of race so that we can know God's heart, we can communicate strongly, we do not appear indifferent to this sin, and so we can fulfill the two great commands of loving God and loving others! Where Scripture is strong, we should be strong. And scripture is strong on this issue.

I. All Peoples and all nations share a common origin

- **Genesis 1:26-27** — *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*
- All people are made in the image of God. All were created with the same dignity and value, regardless of their race.
- John Stott — *“Both the dignity and the equality of human beings are traced in Scripture to our creation.”*
- The first page of the bible demolishes every theory of racial superiority or racial inferiority.
- **Acts 17:26**—*“He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.”*
- All people therefore share a common origin and common race.

II. Sin enters into mankind and it spirals down fast

- **Genesis 3** — man and woman are deceived.
- **Romans 5:12** — *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”*



- Tony Carter — “What's going on when Alton Sterling is openly slain by those sworn to ‘protect and serve’? What's going on when those who are seeking to ‘protect and serve’ are brutally cut down on the streets of Dallas in the line of duty? What's going on when over 60 people were shot in Chicago over the 4th of July weekend in predominantly black neighborhoods, with 32 of them shot within a 15 hour time frame — including children? What's going on when we see racism, brutality, injustice, violence, abuse, and hatred in our world and call it everything but what it is — sin? What's going on? The answer is sin. And when we fail to speak openly and honestly, holistically and biblically about sin then we really have no answer to the ever pressing question, ‘What's going on?’... We are called to preach Christ. To preach Christ is to preach life. The answer to hate is not hate. The answer to violence is not violence. The answer to death is not death. The answer to sin is not sin. The answer to hate is love. The answer to sin is forgiveness. The answer to sin is the grace of God found only in Jesus Christ. When sin is the problem (and it always is) the answer is Christ. This is the answer, the good deposit, given to the church. This is what makes the church relevant. This we must never forsake. Sin is senseless. It always has been and always will be. The only answer to the senselessness of sin that makes any real sense is Jesus Christ.”¹
- John Piper — “The other thing that would happen if we saw how united we are in sin is that the sins of others would look like the out-workings of our own hearts, and we would be slower to judge and quicker to show mercy. The doctrine of total depravity has a huge role to play in humbling all ethnic groups and giving us a desperate camaraderie of condemnation leading to the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ.”²
- In Genesis, The story continues and it is not pretty! After man's fall into sin, the sinfulness becomes only more pervasive.

III. Man scatters and separates into different nations

- In Genesis 9, man's sinfulness was so great that God judged the whole earth. Apart from a precious remnant in Noah and his family, all humankind was eradicated.
- After the flood, God commanded everyone (again) to be fruitful and multiply, to worship and serve God.

¹ Tony Carter from blogpost “What's Going on?”, July 08, 2016. <http://thefrontporch.org/2016/07/whats-going-on/>.

² John Piper, *Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian*, p. 136.



- **Genesis 11:9** — *“Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.”*
- It’s the culmination of their consistent sin and rebellion against God. Because of sin, as soon as they are separated, they begin judging each other and hating one another.

IV. God reveals a plan to bring blessing to all the peoples of the earth

- **Genesis 12:1-3**—*Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*
- The rest of the OT is the story of Abraham and his people, the people of Israel. Israel was to be picture for all the world to see, to see how good and gracious God is to his people. She was to be a light to the nations.
- So, God set her apart. God made lavish promises to her and blessed her. God sent her prophets, priests, and kings. God established her as a nation unlike any other nations of the earth.
- Yet, all throughout her history, Israel would have known that the best is yet to come.

V. In Christ, God reconciled all people to himself.

- **Galatians 3:13-14**— *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us— for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.”*
- No longer was his covenant offered mainly to people of one race, it included all the nations of the world. Through Spirit-born faith.
- Darrell Bock — “God always intended to offer salvation to all races through Jesus.”³

³ Darrell Bock, *Luke: Volume 2*, p. 1940-1.



VI. The church is a community in which all people are welcomed through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ

- In Genesis 11, God disperses them and confuses their language, and then at pentecost, God begins the process of bringing them back together, thru the gospel of Christ and into the church.
- **Acts 2:6-11** — *“And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belong to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians — we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”*
- John Stott — *“Nothing could have demonstrated more clearly than this the multi-racial, multinational, multilingual nature of the kingdom of Christ.”*⁴
- John Piper — *“The gospel of Jesus does not enter controversy as another ideology or philosophy or methodology for social improvement. It enters like dynamite. It enters as the power of the Creator to reconcile people to himself and supernaturally make them new.”*⁵
- **Galatians 3:26-29** — *“For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.”*
- J. Daniel Hays — *“Greeks are still Greeks. Slaves are still slaves. Females are still female. What are obliterated are the barriers formed by these differences and the relative value and status among the people of God based on these differences.... Paul is emphasizing the unity that all people have in Christ.”*⁶
- **Ephesians 2:14-16,18** — *“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making*

⁴ John Stott, *The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts*, p. 68.

⁵ John Piper, *Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian*, p. 87.

⁶ J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*, p. 186.



peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility...For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."

- The church is a community in which all races of people have been reconciled together in Christ. Therefore, the church *must* be a community in which all races fellowship and worship.
- John Piper — "The bloodline of Jesus Christ is deeper than the bloodlines of race. The death and resurrection of the Son of God for sinners is the only sufficient power to bring the bloodlines of race into the single bloodline of the cross."⁷

VII. The picture of God's people at the climax of history portrays a multi-ethnic congregation gathered together in worship around God's throne.

- **Revelation 5:9** "*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, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.*"

So, the killing of racism in the church of Jesus Christ is not a secondary issue.

- It is a primary issue. Christ died so that we could experience reconciliation with God and with each other.
- It is part of the cure of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Ray Ortlund — "It's time for us Christians to stop perceiving "church" as a weekend option and start seeing it as Ground Zero for world reconciliation."
- Mark Noll — "The Christian faith that has been so prominent in so many ways throughout American history has, again on balance, been a beneficent force at home and abroad. Christian altruism, Christian philanthropy, Christian consolation, and Christian responsibility are not the only forces for good in American history, but they loom very large and have had very positive effects. And yet.... and yet.... The American political system and the American practice of Christianity which has provided so much good for so many people for so many years, has never been able to overcome race."⁸

⁷ John Piper, *Bloodlines*, p. 13-14.

⁸ Mark Noll, *God and Race in American Politics: A Short History*, p. 177-78.



Conclusion

Racism is complex — but when you have these biblical categories — all are created in the image of God, all have value and dignity and worth, all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, and Christ has come to break down the dividing wall of hostility. When you have these categories and these scriptures, then you can speak strongly where God's word is strong. You have a message. Don't be indifferent.