



RACISM AND THE BIBLE

Origins: Christian geneticists believe that Adam and Eve were both middle-brown in color, and that all colors came from them. This suggests that God likes diversity; and to be godly, Christians must like diversity too. “Red and yellow, black and white; all are precious in his sight.” Racial distinctions arose after Babel when God divided the earth’s population into many small language groups. Now, since there are about 6700 languages in the world today, upwards of 6700 small groups spread out from Babel to populate the world. Subsequent migration, separation, isolation, and interbreeding produced the unique distinctions we now have. The color of most of the world’s population today is middle-brown.

Racism in ancient Israel: Instead of being a light to the nations (2 Chron. 6:32–33), Jewish self-righteousness and legalism led to a separation from the Gentiles, hatred of the Jews, and the grievous reproach of *amixia* (unsociableness). “For the reproach of ἀμιξία, that is, the refusal to have fellowship with other peoples, cf. Est. III. 8; Poseidonius 87, fr. 109 (Diodor. XXXIV. 1; Josephus, *Ant.*, XIII. 8, 3; Tacitus, *Histories*, V. 5)” (Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, 92). Diodorus says “they alone of all nations do not take part in social intercourse with other nations, and regard them all as enemies (μόνους γὰρ ἀπάντων ἔθνῶν ἀκοινωνήτους εἶναι τῆς πρὸς ἄλλο ἔθνος ἐπιμιξίας καὶ πολεμίους ὑπολαμβάνειν πάντας)” (34:1). Tacitus says “they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies. They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart” (sed adversus omnis alios hostile odium. Separati epulis, discreti cubilibus) . . . (5:5). Racism, be it from prejudice, self-righteousness, or religious legalism, kills any ministry you could have with the people or nations you hate. Jonah’s hatred of the Assyrians, for instance, caused him to reject God’s call (chaps. 1–2) and later to minister in Nineveh with a bad attitude (chaps. 3–4). “You will be a witness for Him to all men” (Acts 22:15). “I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more” (1 Cor. 9:19).

Application: In verses where Greeks or Gentiles are contrasted with Jews, substitute for Greeks or Gentiles any race, color, or nation that is despised by another race, color, or nation; e.g., Whites for Jews and Blacks or Hispanics for Gentiles.

1. God does not wish “for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). He “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19).
2. Salvation is for everyone: “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved” (John 10:9; cf. 6:51; 8:51). “The gospel . . . is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).
3. Jesus “died for all” (2 Cor. 5:15a) and “in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). He tasted “death for everyone” (Heb. 2:9). “I . . . will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32).
4. “In every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him” (Acts 10:35). “Everyone . . . who practices righteousness is born of Him” (1 John 2:29).
5. All believers in the Church Age are members of the body of Christ: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks” (1 Cor. 12:13). “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him” (Rom. 10:12). “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).
6. Anyone can be a disciple of Jesus: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24).
7. Anyone can have intimate fellowship with Jesus (Rev. 3:20), serve Jesus and be honored by God (John 12:26), and receive answers to prayer (John 9:31). “O Thou who dost hear prayer, To Thee all men come” (Psa. 65:2).
8. The new self, renewal, and true knowledge, are for all believers: “put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— a *renewal* in which there is no *distinction* between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all” (Col. 3:10–11). All can be “led by the Spirit of God” (Rom. 8:14).
9. Gentiles can fear God (Acts 10:22; 13:43; 17:4,17), be obedient, “choose what pleases Me,” “love the name of the LORD,” “minister to Him,” “be His servants,” and lay up great rewards for the millennial Kingdom (Isa. 56:3–8; cf. Rev. 3:21).
10. Anyone can be first in God’s kingdom: “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).
11. Obedient Gentiles are better than disobedient Jews (Rom. 2:25–29) and will be blessed more: “The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you shall go down lower and lower” (Deut. 28:43).
12. Gentiles can have more faith than Jews: “I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel” (Matt. 8:10).
13. In judgment, there is no partiality with God (Deut. 10:17; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:6–11; Rev. 20:13; 22:12). “The LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness, or partiality, or the taking of a bribe” (2 Chron. 19:7).
14. We are commanded to love (1 Thess. 3:12), honor (1 Peter 2:17), and do good works for all men (Gal. 6:10). “Always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men” (1 Thess. 5:15b). Israel was commanded to show love to foreigners living in their land: “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself” (Lev. 19:34). “He . . . shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (Deut. 10:18–19). Such provision (Lev. 25:35) was made through gleaning (Lev. 19:10; Deut. 24:19–21) and tithing (Deut. 14:28–29; 26:12–13).
15. Protect minorities: “The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow; But He thwarts the way of the wicked” (Psa. 146:9; cf. cities of refuge in Josh. 20:9).
16. Do not oppress or take advantage of minorities: “Thus says the LORD, ‘. . . do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow’” (Jer. 22:3b). “If you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow . . . then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers” (Jer. 7:6–7; cf. Exod. 22:21; 23:9, 12; Lev. 19:33; Deut. 24:14; Ezek. 22:7, 29; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5).
17. Fairness must be shown to everyone in a court of law: “Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear *the cases* between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God’s. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it’” (Deut. 1:16–17). “You shall not pervert the justice due an alien” (Deut. 24:17). “Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien” (Deut. 27:19). Yet no partiality shall be shown to aliens (Exod. 12:49; Lev. 18:24–30; 20:2; 24:16, 22; Deut. 15:30).
18. The right to worship God may not be denied to Gentiles: “And if an alien sojourns with you, or one who may be among you throughout your generations, and he *wishes to* make an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD, just as you do, so he shall do” (Num. 15:14; cf. Exod. 12:48; Num. 9:14). Don’t exclude them from services: “Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, in order that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law” (Deut. 31:12). “There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them” (Josh. 8:35).
19. Racial prejudice and slurs are prohibited: “You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not detest an Egyptian” (Deut. 23:7). “Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God” (1 Cor. 10:32). “. . . showing every courtesy to all men” (Titus 3:2b RCL). “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” (Rom. 12:18). “I also please all men in all things. . . that they may be saved” (1 Cor. 10:32).