

How does the Bible identify race?

One blood—Acts 17:26–28

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.

One image—Genesis 1:26–28

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, 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.

Race: from one blood and in one image. One race.

What about Babel? Confusion of the *language* (literally, "lips," Gen 11:6–9), not the blood, nor the image. To what end? That instead of all the families being united against God, God instead might use one of the families to save all of them! (Gen 12:1–3; Deu 32:8).

The idea of "races" depends upon a denial of Adam (one blood) and a denial of God (one image). Through the centuries, even believers have committed this error. But, it is not at all surprising that the idea of race, a truth-denying invention of man, would infect all unbelieving cultures, and especially our own as it more and more denies both Adam and God.

Science confirms not the man-made lie, but Scripture-taught truth. We are so genetically similar that we can transfuse and transplant across ethnicities. We are all the same color (melanin), just different amounts of it.

The common concept (manmade construct) of race

Where does the idea of "race" come from? The concept of race doesn't come from the Bible, but is an invention of man. We attempt to define it by appearances, but in actuality there is a wide, gradual gradient of appearances, etc., across what we would call ethnicities (families or nations), but we have invented the "races" that we describe.

To paraphrase an example from Dr. Voddie Baucham: "African American" refers to a continent (but Egyptians don't get categorized) and a nationality (though one need not be a citizen of the nation to get categorized). These are artificial designations based upon superficial distinctions applied across inconsistent lines of demarcation.

What about racism?

Ironically, we are inclined to accept the idea of race because of a sin that sometimes goes by the (ironic) name of racism. What we call racism is really a subcategory of two kinds of sin: hatred and pride (vainglory).

The fallen man does not love God with all his heart, and therefore cannot love others as himself. As long as one's heart and life are aimed self-ward, he cannot love his neighbor. We prefer our own interests to others'. Our first-table/first-great-commandment sins are visited, in God's wrath, by our bondage to second-table/second-great-commandment sins.

Romans 3:9–18

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

As it is written:

"There is none righteous, no, not one;
There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.
They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one."
"Their throat is an open tomb;
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";
"The poison of asps is under their lips";
"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."
"Their feet are swift to shed blood;
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
And the way of peace they have not known."
"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

So, apart from Christ, all men are inherently proud before God and others.

And, apart from Christ, all men are inherently hateful to God, as seen especially in their being hateful to others.

It is not surprising, then, that when people look and sound differently, it is the default position of the fallen man to think, feel, speak, and act toward them as being less than we are. This is true for everyone.

The only thing that keeps it from becoming worse is God's *common grace* and *special grace*. God often providentially restrains this by permitting men to see that it is better for themselves if all treat all others well., and then especially restrains and even to some extent eliminates this to the extent that the gospel penetrates a culture.

One of the reasons we have a strong cultural conscience that hatred or pride over superficial differences is wrong is that we are living off of borrowed capital from generations in which the gospel had further penetrated our culture. Generations in which we knew that we are all made

from one blood. Generations in which we knew that we are all made in the image of one God. Generations in which even unbelievers had this default worldview.

The evaporation of this cultural conscience actually leads to hatred and pride over superficial differences that is *excused by calling it "fighting racism."* Ironically, the social philosophy known as "intersectionality," and its subset "critical race theory," says things like "only one race can be racist." "They alone are hateful," is itself a deeply hateful conviction. "We can never be proud or oppressive," is itself a deeply proud and oppressive conviction.

Look back at Romans 3:9. The Jews wanted to believe that they were a superior race. But one of the bedrock foundations of the gospel is that even the Jews—who were set apart by God's covenant, God's Word, God's worship, God's holiness—are identical to the Gentiles in their fallen standing before God.

The concept of "race" is incompatible with the gospel

"There is no difference." That's an essential truth at the core of the gospel. There is no difference between those who are fallen in Adam. And there is similarly no difference between those who are redeemed in Christ.

Romans 3:19–30

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

Many who grew up in the church memorized v23, isolated from its context. But right here, at the heart of the gospel, is the fact that all who are in Adam are the same in their condemnation, and that all who are in Christ are the same in their justification.

God had made a distinction between Jew and Gentile for the purpose of the redemption of all the nations and all the families. The Jews wanted to make this into a racial distinction. The apostle rejects that distinction. He says instead, "one in Adam," or "one in Jesus," but no such thing as how the Jews thought of it, or what we might call "races."

"Racial justice"

What about injustice in our land? First and foremost, justice must be defined by God's Word.

Sin is different than crime. Sin can be punished only by God, and it is punished by various visitations of judgment in this life, and ultimately by Hell. Crimes are particular sinful actions, with particular sinful results, and God has instituted civil authority for punishing these evils.

It is injustice when things that God identifies as crimes go unpunished. But it is also injustice when things that God does not identify as a crime are punished.

Romans 13:1–4

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

1Peter 2:13–14

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.

Is it possible that that inconsistencies in punishing the evil or rewarding the good may trend along artificially constructed "racial" lines? It is a near certainty! But the civil authority's duty is consistent application and enforcement of God's laws, *not* the eradication of the sins in the heart that lead to such crimes.

The only thing that even *can* eliminate sin is the Spirit-wrought work of conversion, in which spiritually dead men from every family and nation are spiritually resurrected, and who they were in Adam is displaced by who they have become in Christ. At that point, the Spirit begins the life-long work of striving against the flesh (remaining sin from their original nature) of those who have been made new in Jesus.

Are you a racist?

Since this is the *ONLY* thing that even begins to eliminate this sin, we should not be surprised if each of us finds remnants of it in our hearts. *BUT*, if you are a believer, you cannot accept the identity "racist" any more than you can accept the identity "homosexual." This not only lies about your fundamental identity (either "in Adam" or "in Christ"), but it is ungrateful and unbelieving toward the God and Savior in Whom you were crucified and resurrected. (cf. Romans 6:3–14; 1Cor 6:9–11). This does not mean that rooting out remaining sin is easy. But it does mean that your remaining sin is *NOT* your identity, and that essential way it gets rooted out is through employing God's means in dependence upon God's Spirit.