

# Racism

*"The Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.'" (Acts 10:34-35)*

## Preliminary Thoughts

- 1) Define "racism."
- 2) Define "prejudice."
- 3) List some common statements which we make, or hear being made, which are racist.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
- 4) Why are some people racist?
- 5) Explain how each of the following things can contribute to racism.
  - Prejudice—
  - Discrimination—
  - Segregation—
  - Stereotyping—
- 6) How are the differences between races exaggerated when pink and brown people are called "black and white?" How do these terms polarize our thinking?
- 7) Is it possible for a person to be "racist" even if he is not white?
- 8) Would you agree or disagree that churches, as a whole, remain segregated along racial lines? Why or why not?

## What Does The Bible Say?

- 1) Was racial prejudice a problem in Bible times (John 1:46; 4:9; 8:48; Acts 22:21-23)?
- 2) What does the Bible say about those who judge according to outward appearances (John 7:24; 1 Samuel 16:7)?
- 3) Is there one race that is superior to any other (Genesis 1:26-27; Acts 17:26,28)?
- 4) God commanded Israel to remain a separate and pure race (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). Was it because they were a superior race? Did they think that was the reason?

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- 5) Racism is a sin of pride—one considers himself to be better than others. What does the Bible warn us about (Galatians 6:3)? How should we consider all other people (Philippians 2:3-4)?
  - 6) What is God's attitude about different races of people (Galatians 3:28; Acts 10:24-35; 17:26,28)?
  - 7) What does the Bible say about hatred for anyone (1 John 2:9-11; 4:20-21)? Could a Christian be a member of the Ku Klux Klan? Of the Black Panthers? Of a racial gang?
  - 8) How does love react to any man—regardless of race, social standing, or anything else (James 2:1-10)?
  - 9) What had God told the Jews about the Gentiles and salvation (Isaiah 2:2-4; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 28:19-20)?
    - What had Peter preached in the first gospel sermon (Acts 2:21,39)?
    - Why did it take a miracle for them to understand God's will (Acts 10:9-22,44-48; 11:1-3,15-18)?
    - What is the church supposed to be (John 10:16; Ephesians 2:14-18)?
  - 10) Did Peter sin in refusing to have fellowship with the Gentiles, or in refusing to socialize with them as equals (Galatians 2:11-16)?
    - Is there any difference between that attitude, and today's attitude that "*blacks should stay with blacks and whites should stay with whites*" (cf. Galatians 2:12; Acts 11:3)?
    - What should we do about racial distinctions and segregation (Colossians 3:10-11; Galatians 3:26-28)?
    - Is that attitude of "*equal but separate*" acceptable to God (Ephesians 2:16)?
  - 11) Some people have tried to use the Bible to justify racism—like in the following examples:
    - The curse of Cain (Genesis 4:1-15). What was the mark (4:15)? What was Cain's curse—being sent out or being marked?
    - The sin of Ham and the curse of Canaan (Genesis 9:20-25). Does the curse placed on Canaan infer that there would be perpetual servitude of the black race? Were Canaan's descendants settlers of Africa, and therefore black (Genesis 10:6,15-20; cf. Joshua 9; Judges 1)?
  - 12) Are interracial marriages condemned in the Bible?
    - Was God's prohibition against intermarrying with the Gentiles based on racial, or religious and moral grounds (Deuteronomy 7:1-4; Joshua 23:3-13; Ezra 9:12; 10:10-11; Nehemiah 13:23-31)?
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- Did God disapprove of Moses' marriage (Numbers 12:1-16)?
  - Who were the Gentile women in Jesus' ancestry (Matthew 1:1-17)?

### **Practical Solutions**

- 1) Listen to yourself talk. Are you prejudiced or racist?
- 2) Is racism—or bigotry—an innocent attitude if we only hold it in our hearts and don't express it (Mark 7:20-23)?
- 3) Is racism an area especially noted for accuracy, fairness, and rationality?
- 4) What commands can we follow to help us overcome racist attitudes?
  - Matthew 7:12—
  - Matthew 22:39—
  - Acts 10:34-35—
  - Titus 3:2-3—
  - 1 Samuel 16:7—
  - 2 Corinthians 5:16-17—
  - Matthew 28:19-20—
  - 1 Corinthians 15:33—
  - Philippians 2:3-4—