



“One Blood, All Nations”

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It's a privilege to have a few moments of your time to talk about spiritual and eternal matters. It's amazing how the Bible is so timeless and perennially powerful. There really is nothing new under the sun. The problems we face as a people today are problems that others have faced in almost every era of time. Consequently, the eternal word of God is able to address those issues today just as it did yesterday. Hate, injustice, ignorance, inequality, and sinful bigotry are almost as old as the human race itself. Ever since sin was introduced to the world, our world has been a broken, divided, and troublesome place to live. The division and disorder that sin eventually brought into our world though has been reversed in Christ Jesus. It's critically important that we who are Christians understand that.

I want us to look at a verse out of Paul's famous sermon on Mars' hill in ancient Athens. Paul was taken by the philosophers of the city to the Areopagus to address the people about the claims of Christianity.

Acts 17:22-28 *“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”*

Athens was the seat of learning, culture, and sophistication in that time. The many pagan gods to whom they were devoted were represented by impressive idols and opulent temples dotting the landscape of Athens. They are a representation of the Gentile world who had abandoned their Creator for gods of their own making and desires. But the great apostle Paul points them back to the beginning, saying that

every nation, tribe, and tongue had a common beginning: GOD. Today, we'll consider the significance of that truth: *From one blood all nations.*

We live in a world filled with all kinds of people. People who look differently, think differently, talk differently...the world is made up of a variety of nations, ethnicities, cultures, and languages. We tend to group people together based upon the physical and perhaps cultural features they have in common. We think of the world as made up of various races and ethnicities and, unfortunately, if we're not careful we judge and treat people differently based upon those differences. The history of the world is filled with racial and ethnic strife and one group falsely believing itself to be superior to another. Wars have even been fought, even in modern times, over this evil philosophy. This was true even reaching back to ancient days.

The ancient city of Athens, Greece was a robust center of learning, philosophy, and culture in the apostle Paul's time. It was a wealthy place filled with sophistication and worldly people. Consequently, the Greeks of Athens viewed themselves as superior to other people in intellect and just about every other way, just as many people do when they find themselves in similar circumstances. When Paul went there and toured the city, he was given the opportunity to tell them about the one true God who indeed created the universe and all therein, and he preached that eloquent and powerful sermon upon Mars' Hill. In Athens, there were statues and temples representing just about every form of pagan religion at that time. All the while, the true and living God from whom all things came was unknown to them. So, Paul began by telling them that the true God of heaven transcended any temple made with hands and rather, dwelt in and over His creation. He narrows the human race--now made up of nations, tribes, and various ethnicities and backgrounds--to one common beginning.

Acts 17: 25-26 "...seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth..."

The apostle Paul affirms that all human beings are the creation of God. The phrase "**of one blood**" is not referring to literal blood coursing through one's veins or blood type, but actually means *of or from one man*. The English Standard Version translates it, "**And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.**" The NIV says, "*From one man, he made all the nations that they should inhabit the whole earth. And he marked out the appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.*" So, Paul is clear that all of humanity has a common beginning. That beginning was Adam, the first man.

The Bible declares that in the dawn of time, God created the first human and made him in His own image, breathing into his body the breath of life, making man a living soul (**Genesis 2:7**). From the man, He created the woman and placed her by his side as a help and companion in life (**Genesis 2:21-22**). Every human being on the face of the earth can be traced back to that pair, Adam and Eve. **Genesis 3:20** states that Eve was *the mother of all living*. But Adam and Eve committed sin and they lost their state in the garden of Eden. In the course of time, their offspring became increasingly sinful to the point that God wiped the planet clean of all human life except for Noah and his family (**Genesis 6**). So, the human race started over through Noah and his house.

If that be the case, you might ask why there are so many physical differences in the human family. Why different skin colors and varying physical traits? Where did all the diversity that we find in the world today come from? The Bible says in **Genesis 11** that when mankind came to a place later named Babel and rebelled against God refusing to spread out over the earth, God stepped in. He scattered them

apart, confounding their language so they could not communicate. As a result, mankind dispersed throughout the earth and settled apart from one another.

So, with distance and new geographical locations and environments, humans adopted distinct cultures over time. As the human race multiplied, differences continued to emerge, physical and otherwise. Now separated as years and generations passed, these groups became more genetically isolated and geographically and environmentally separated until they took on more distinct physical characteristics, such as varied skin colors or pigmentation. Over the succeeding centuries, nations, kingdoms, and empires arose and cultures developed so that the human race became quite diverse physically and culturally. But all had a common beginning.

Sometimes artists depict Adam and Eve as fair-skinned European-type people, as though the garden of Eden was in England, France, or America. But, of course, that's not the case. Rather, it was located in what we know today as the Middle East. Though we don't know for sure what color their skin was, there is a very good indication that the skin of the original two human beings was darker than it was lighter. My point is that no ethnicity, no skin color can lay claim on Adam and Eve. The Bible simply makes the point that they were made in God's image--they were created living souls—and that all of mankind came from them. Again, Paul said that God made from one blood or one man all nations of the earth and appointed the times and places when and where they would live throughout history (**Acts 17:26**). So, in creation, we have a common beginning.

Many have rejected the biblical world view and the Bible's teaching about our beginnings, instead believing that human beings are the product of macroevolution—that man descended from an apelike creature over millions of years. Though the theory of evolution is not the cause of racism, which I DO NOT want to suggest, it has certainly helped to reinforce it in the minds of some people who believe that certain groups have evolved at different rates, leaving some closer to their “evolutionary ancestors” than more advanced peoples. If you believe in molecules to man evolution, we certainly disagree over that matter, and I certainly do not accuse you of racism. I don't even want to imply such. I simply want to point out that this particular world view did indeed lead some people to advance the idea that particular races are superior to others. But, you see, the Bible doesn't teach that. That is NOT the biblical world view. The Bible teaches that all of mankind descended from one man and one woman whom God created in His image.

So, mankind was spread out over the earth and nations were established and God had a plan to redeem the human race from its sin. Please follow this carefully. Of all the nations of the earth, God did choose one nation through which to work to bring His plan to pass. He chose the nation that descended from Abraham, the Jews. Why did God choose them? On what basis did He choose them to the exclusion of other nations? He chose them because His plan involved eventually bringing His Son into the world to redeem mankind. He chose Abraham and promised him that he would be the one out of whom He would make a nation and would consequently bless the world through that nation.

Listen carefully: God did not choose Abraham because of the color of his skin, whatever it was. Nor did He choose him because of his wealth or because of the city or kingdom where he lived at the time. He didn't choose Abraham on the basis of anything you could see on the outside, but rather on the basis of what was on the inside—namely, his faith in God. God kept His promises to Abraham, creating a nation from his loins, the nation of Israel. Now, why did He choose Israel? Because He only wanted to bless them and He despised all the other nations of the earth? No. His plan was for the Jews to be missionaries and channels of blessing to the other nations of the earth spiritually. You see, the people

who descended from Abraham were to serve as a light to the rest of the world. To bring redemption—not only to themselves, but to the rest of the world—through Jesus, who would be born of their number. It was through them that God would bring a Redeemer, stepping down the stairs of heaven to reconcile this fallen world back to Himself. Once Jesus came and offered Himself as the sacrifice for sin, their purpose for an ethnic nation was fulfilled, and the door of salvation was then opened to people of every nation, tongue, and tribe.

Ephesians 2:14-16 “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:”

The “*both*” Paul is speaking of is Jews and Gentiles, and that encompasses all the people of the world. With Christ having come and the purpose of the Mosaic Law fulfilled, God erased any national or ethnic distinction between the peoples of this earth. He could therefore say this:

Galatians 3:27-28 “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Black, white, red, brown, yellow—you are all one in Christ Jesus. When Peter (the Jew) was called to the house of Cornelius (the Gentile) in Caesarea in **Acts 10**, Peter boldly declared, **“Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10:34-35).**

Listen to me, friend: God only distinguishes between two groups of people in this world: those who are saved through faith in Jesus and those who are lost. And that’s it. The Lord Jesus does not have a white church, a black church, a red church, a brown church, or a yellow church. He has ONE, and it’s the blood-bought church that He established and died for. He doesn’t see you or me as this color or that color, this race or that race. He sees us all as fallen sinners in need of a savior. And thanks be to God that He sent that Savior to any man, woman, boy, or girl on the face of this earth so that we could be saved. I want you to think about this: because of man’s sin and rebellion at the tower of Babel so long ago, God scattered the human family and confounded their language and division was the result. That sprang from man’s pride, from man’s efforts to thwart God’s authority. But on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in **Acts 2**, He reversed it. He brought them back together through the gospel and made them one in Christ. That is His plan, His will, and His desire for us today.

Where does that leave room for prejudice and hatred? Where does that leave room for racism and ethnic bigotry? It doesn’t. But truth be told, many of us have been guilty of looking at and treating people differently because of the color of their skin or because of the part of the world they come from or their socioeconomic background or culture. The world’s history is very dark where this is concerned. Perhaps because of people’s life circumstances, we judge them. Or the side of the tracks that they live on.

James 2: 8-9 “If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.”

It doesn't get much plainer, does it? The royal law and the law of Jesus Christ Himself teaches every one of us as His people to love our neighbor. Who is our neighbor? Who are we to love? Jesus settled that question a long time ago when He told the story in **Luke 10** of a Samaritan who stopped and helped a bloodied man along the way from Jerusalem to Jericho. You remember that man fell among thieves and there came a Jewish priest and a Levite who was of the priestly tribe—you might say the preachers or religious workers of that day who came and beheld the man in that condition, but carelessly and callously passed on their way. Jesus said, "*a certain Samaritan*" and the very mention of that word would've caused the nostrils of those Jewish hearers to flare in indignation. They were filled with such hatred and spite for the Samaritan people, considering them as less of human beings. Jesus said the Samaritan came and rescued and cared for that man. Then He asked the question: *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* Who was it that fulfilled the law of God? Who was it that loved his neighbor as himself? They couldn't even bring themselves to say the word *Samaritan* because of the hatred that was within them. They simply had to say *the man who showed mercy* to the man who had fallen among the thieves.

Friend, the point of that story was not just to be kind or good to people. It wasn't merely to be helpful to those we see in need. The real point of the story to Jesus' audience then and to us even today is this: Who is my neighbor? Who was the neighbor to the man who fell among thieves? It wasn't the favored or pious priest or the Levite; it was the Samaritan. And the Jews didn't think any more of a Samaritan than some in our society think of those who are different from them today.

There is very little that you or I can do to affect political change in this rocking and reeling world. And that's not the calling of Christians anyway. The world is the world, and it will always be the world until Jesus comes again. But let me tell you what the church CAN do and what the church MUST do. We must be a light in this dark world embroiled in hate and such division. We as the people of God can make a difference in the life of every person we meet by affording them the respect, love, and dignity that they deserve as our fellow human beings by treating them with love and equality. We must show the world what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves, what it means to pass along the love of Christ to others for whom He died. And He died for ALL who will come to Him in faith—no matter what the color of their skin may be or what walk of life from whence they came. If you call yourself a Christian today and harbor prejudice and hatred in your heart for others, you're not pleasing God. You are angering God, and you need to repent and ask God to forgive you. May we all move forward with cleansed hearts and renewed minds to do as Jesus said and go and make disciples of all nations and to preach the gospel to every creature. For as the song says, "red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight." We live in the midst of a troubled and broken world, but Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace came to bring peace to your heart and to mine, to teach us how to live and how to think and how to love. If you don't have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ through obedience to His word, I hope you'll turn to Him today. I hope we can assist you in obedience to the gospel.

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