

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

1. God's Original Plan for Our Relating to Our Environment and World

A. Genesis 1: 26 – Genesis 2:3.

- (1) In Our Image - The Trinity – Personal & Relational God
- (2) Authority and Stewardship over fish, birds, cattle, and insects.
- (3) Male and Female Partnership, Authority, & Stewardship
- (4) Fruitfulness, Multiplication, Filling, & Subduing
- (5) Provision of food
- (6) God's Blessing & Pleasure
- (7) God Rested

B. Genesis 2:4 – 25

- (1) God's Breath & God's Forming
- (2) Tree of life and Tree of Knowledge of good and evil
- (3) The River
- (4) Establishment of Marriage
- (5) Ethnicity based on control of environment & Scattering

2. Humanity's Plunge Into Sin & Its Consequences

A. Genesis 3

- (1) Temptation
- (2) Disobedience and Its Consequences

B. Genesis 4-10

- (1) Introduction of Violence – Murder
- (2) Cain Builds a City

- (3) Cycle of Revenge – Lamech
- (4) Certainty of Death
- (5) Judgment from God – The Flood
- (6) Godly Line Preserved
- (7) Hope in the Midst of Judgment & Renewal of World

C. Genesis 11

- (1) Settling Instead of Scattering
- (2) Making a name for ourselves – Building our own sandcastles
- (3) Being able to do what they wished
- (4) Confusion of the languages
- (5) Lord scatters them
- (6) Ethnicity based on language/communication

3. God's Redemptive Response to Ethnic Rebellion in Old Testament

A. Genesis 12

- (1) Call of Abram
- (2) A great nation
- (3) God will bless the nation
- (4) God will make nation a blessing
- (5) All the families (ethnic groups) of the world will be blessed

B. Exodus to Deuteronomy

- (1) Exodus 12:33-38 – Plundering the Egyptians – Aliens join
- (2) Exodus 12:48 – Circumcised Alien may eat Passover
- (3) Exodus 12:49 – Same law for native as stranger
- (4) Exodus 22-21 – Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.
- (5) Exodus 23:9 – Do not oppress a foreigner; for you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt
- (6) Exodus 23:12 – Sabbath rest for foreigners
- (7) Leviticus 16:29 – Rest on day of atonement
- (8) Leviticus 19:10 – Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.
- (9) Leviticus 19:33-34 – When foreigners reside among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigners residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love

them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

(10) Leviticus 23:22 – When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God.

(11) Leviticus 24:22 – You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born. I am the LORD your God.

(12) Leviticus 25:23 – The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers.

(13) Leviticus 25:35 – If any of your own people become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you.

(14) Deuteronomy 10:18-19 – He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigners residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.

(15) Deuteronomy 14:28-29 – At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

(16) Deuteronomy 23:7 – Do not despise an Edomite, for the Edomites are related to you. Do not despise an Egyptian, because you resided as foreigners in their country.

(17) Deuteronomy 24:14,17-18 – Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is an Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns... Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

(18) Deuteronomy 26:11-13 – Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household. When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. Then say to the LORD your God: "I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the

foreigner, the fatherless and the widow according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your commands nor have I forgotten any of them.

(19) Deuteronomy 27:19 “Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless, or the widow.” Then all the people shall say “Amen!”

(20) Deuteronomy 31:12 – Assemble the people-men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns- so they can listen

C. God’s Choice of Israel

(1) Deuteronomy 7:7-8 – The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

(2) Deuteronomy 9:4-6 – After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

D. Psalms and the Prophets

(1) Psalm 67

(2) Psalm 68:31 – Envoys will come from Egypt; Cush will submit herself to God.

(3) Psalm 117

(4) Psalm 2:8 – Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

(5) Isaiah 2:1-4

- (6) Isaiah 9 – “he will honor Galilee of the nations”
- (7) Isaiah 11:10-11 – In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. In that day the LORD will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean.
- (8) Isaiah 19:23-25 – In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.”
- (9) Isaiah 42:1 – “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.
- (10) Amos 1 – 4 – God speaks and prophesies to all the nations
- (11) Amos 9:7 – “Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites?” declares the LORD, “Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?”
- (12) Amos 9:11-12 – In that day, I will restore David’s fallen shelter – I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins- and will rebuild it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,” declares the LORD who will do these things.
- (13) Jonah 4 – God’s concern for Nineveh
- (14) Micah 4 Many nations coming to the Lord
- (15) Zechariah 8:20-23 – This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the LORD and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.’ And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty to entreat him.” This is what the LORD Almighty says: “In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’”

E. Some Old Testament Characters

- (1) Tamar
- (2) Rahab
- (3) Ruth
- (4) Bathsheba
- (5) Widow of Zaraheth
- (6) Naaman the Leper

4. The Coming of Jesus

- A. Jesus' Genealogy
- B. Wise Men from the East at Jesus Birth
- C. Luke 4:13ff
- D. Matthew 4:12-16 – Galilee of the Gentiles
- E. Jesus and the Syrophenician Woman – Matt 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30. Also feeding of four thousand.
- F. At Caesarea Philippi – Jesus promises to build his church. Matt. 16:13-20.
- G. John 10:16 – I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.
- H. John 12:20-24 – Greeks: “Sir, we would like to see Jesus” Jesus: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”
- I. John 17:20-23 – “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

5. The Establishment and Growth of the Church

A. The Birth and Growth of the Church in Acts

- (1) The Day of Pentecost
- (2) Acts 6 – The Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews - Judea
- (3) Acts 8 – Church Scatters Through Persecution – Samaria & Ethiopian Eunuch
- (4) Acts 9 – Conversion of Saul

- (5) Acts 10-11 – Conversion of Cornelius
- (6) Acts 11:19-30 – Outreach to Gentiles at Antioch – Barnabas and Saul
- (7) Acts 13 – Commissioning of Paul and Barnabas
- (8) Acts 13-14 – Missionary Journey
- (9) Acts 15 – Council in Jerusalem
- (10) Acts 16-18:22 – Missionary Journey
- (11) Acts 18:23-21 – Missionary Journey
- (12) Acts 21-26 – Arrests, and Hearings in Jerusalem and Caesarea.
- (13) Acts 27-28 – Travel to and arrival at Rome

B. Teachings in Epistles Concerning the Nations

- (1) Book of Romans – esp. Chapter 15
- (2) I Corinthians 9:19-23 – Becoming all things to reach all for the sake of the gospel.
- (3) I Corinthians 10:31-33 – So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the church of God – even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.
- (4) Galatians 2:1-10 – Ethnicity, Culture, and Social Class (ECS).
- (5) Galatians 5:26-29 – So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
- (6) Ephesians 2:11-22 – “has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,”
- (7) Ephesians 3:1-13 - The Mystery of the Gospel
- (8) Colossians 1:15-20 – All reconciled to Christ through the cross
- (9) Colossians 3:10-11 – “and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”
- (10) James 2 – Warning against partiality or discrimination.
- (11) I Peter 2 – Live according to the new sense of peoplehood.

- (12) I Peter - Be prepared to endure suffering for Christ
- (13) I John 3-4 – Priority of love in action

6. Hope for All Peoples

A. Worship in Heaven

- (1) Revelation 4 & 5 - Worthy is Lamb
- (2) Revelation 7:9 – After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

B. Renewal of the Whole Creation

- (1) Revelation 11:15 – The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.”
- (2) Revelation 21:1-2 - New City, the New Jerusalem
- (3) Revelation 21:1-2 – Bride and Bridegroom
- (4) Revelation 21:6 – He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.”
- (5) Revelation 21:22-26 – I did not see a temple in the city, because the LORD God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.
- (6) Revelation 22:1-2 – Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

- (7) Revelation 22:12-14 – “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”

As we reflect on the pain and suffering that have resulted from many years of oppression, conflict, alienation, and hostilities among different ethnicities and races, we long for God’s ultimate redemption and reconciliation. The future of the church, of all ethnicities and races is tied up with the ultimate solution of the conflicts of the ages. Paul sums it up well from his familiar passage in Romans 8:18-25:

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”