

WRONG THEN, WRONG NOW? A REFUTATION OF PAST ARGUMENTS AGAINST INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE IN LIGHT OF THE LGBT REVOLUTION

by
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INTRODUCTION

American approval of interracial marriage (IM) is uncomfortably recent. A simple majority of Americans did not approve of IM until the mid-1990s.² Many who disapproved of it in earlier centuries cited the Scriptures as their authority,³ and their firm stances caused ripple effects even into the 21st century. Bob Jones University did not drop its interracial dating ban until 2000,⁴ and in 2016 a Christian woman wrote of her initial discomfort with her white daughter's marrying a black man.⁵

¹It is our privilege this year again to feature an article by an M.Div. student at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. Mr. Francia submitted this article and was one of three finalists in the 2020 student paper contest for the Midwest Region of the Evangelical Theological Society. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a single winner was not named.

²Frank Newport, "In U.S., 87% Approve of Black-White Marriage, vs. 4% in 1958" (25 July 2013), available at <https://news.gallup.com/poll/163697/approve-marriage-blacks-whites.aspx>, accessed 2 October 2019; Lydia Saad, "Gallup Vault: Americans Slow to Back Interracial Marriage" (21 July 2017), available at <https://news.gallup.com/vault/212717/gallup-vault-americans-slow-back-interracial-marriage.aspx>, accessed 2 October 2019.

³Ariel [pseud.], *The Negro: What is His Ethnological Status?* 2nd ed. (Cincinnati: n.p., 1867); Josiah Priest, *Bible Defence of Slavery; and Origin, Fortunes, and History of the Negro Race*, 5th ed. (Glasgow, KY: W. S. Brown, 1852).

⁴"Statement About Race at BJU" (released in 2008), par. 7, available at <http://www.bju.edu/about/what-we-believe/race-statement.php>, accessed 2 October 2019.

⁵"A Controversial Article and What We Can Learn," available at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/a-controversial-article-and-what-we-can-learn>, accessed 2 October 2019. On this site, Jason Cook, Jemar Tisby, and Isaac Adams "respond to the article 'When God Sends Your White Daughter a Black Husband.'... The article has been removed from TGC's website at the request of [its] author, who regrets hurting many readers. An article intended to celebrate God's work in this family's life also became an occasion for hurt and pain."

Fortunately, BJU recanted of their earlier opposition to IM, as have many others. But unfortunately, these recantations are very recent. Unfortunately, while formally acknowledging that the Bible allows IM, many Christians may still recoil at the thought of *their* children marrying interracially. And unfortunately, past opposition to IM has made Christians subject to the charge of radical inconsistency: “Christians once opposed IM, then they changed their minds. Christians now oppose gay marriage, so they ought to change their minds again. The reason they oppose gay marriage *must be* similar to the reason they opposed IM, and that reason is *bigotry*.” Jonathan Zimmerman, after the decision of the United Methodist Church to affirm biblical marriage, put it this way, “The UMC is on the wrong side of history, but history suggests it will right itself soon enough.”⁶

This issue is important because biblical authority and consistency are on the line. The Bible cannot prohibit IM in one era of church history and then permit it in a later era. So, though virtually no Christian today opposes IM,⁷ it is still important for Christians to explain what the Bible says—and *does not* say—about IM. Though many unbelievers may not wish to entertain a thorough exegetical discussion on the topic, Christians must at least be able to illustrate that though many appealed to the Bible to oppose IM, the Bible itself does not prohibit it. Christians should also be able to show that IM differs significantly from same-sex marriage.

This issue is also important because Christians must act and think as *Christians*, not just skilled exegetes or apologists. Christians must humbly admit their own wrongs and the wrongs of their predecessors. Confession of wrong thinking and wrongdoing is essential to the gospel.

Many have argued the biblical case against same-sex marriage,⁸ so this paper will not focus on that issue. This paper will examine and refute three past-held views of anti-miscegenation in order to demonstrate that the Bible does not prohibit IM.⁹

⁶“God Once Opposed Interracial Marriage, Too,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (10 March 2019), available at <https://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/Op-Ed/2019/03/10/God-once-opposed-interracial-marriage-too/stories/201903070010>, accessed 2 October 2019.

⁷Kinism is a modern-day fringe position that holds that the Bible prohibits IM; this author will address Kinist arguments later in this paper.

⁸Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015); Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001); Robert A. J. Gagnon and Dan O. Via, *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

⁹This paper will focus primarily on black-white relations: (1) because in the American context, much of the historical debate focused on black-white relations, and (2) because these two skin colors represent the two opposite ends of the melanin spectrum. Therefore, it follows that if blacks and whites can marry, then people of other skin colors can also intermarry.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL BASE OF THE THREE VIEWS

These three views share a common anthropological base—they hold that there is a significant difference between people of different skin colors. Logically, to hold that people of different skin colors should not intermarry, one must first prove that there are, in fact, *different* races. Proponents have generally held one or more of three positions.

The first position that IM opponents held was that blacks do not descend from Adam and Eve and are therefore not human. This is a *prima facie* unbiblical position. Yet during Reconstruction, Buckner Payne aimed to demonstrate from Scripture and his natural observations that “the negro is not a human being—not being of Adam’s race.”¹⁰ On this basis, he held that blacks have no soul and were thus unfit for intermarriage with whites.¹¹

The second anthropological position is that the ‘Curse of Ham’ (Gen 9:25–27) created a permanent distinction between blacks and people of other skin colors. While most who held this view in the 19th century used the ‘Curse’ to justify skin color-based *slavery*,¹² many in later years also appealed to the implications of the ‘Curse’ to prohibit integration and intermarriage.¹³

The third anthropological position is that God’s created order reveals that people of different skin colors should not intermarry. In 1954, G. T. Gillespie wrote,

In all nature...all living creatures are drawn together in larger or smaller groups by certain affinities based upon common physical characteristics. Animals by instinct mate only with their kind... No intermingling or crossbreeding with animals of widely different characteristics takes place except under abnormal or artificial conditions... The fact...that human beings everywhere and under all conditions of life tend to segregate themselves... only goes to prove that all human relations are regulated by this universal law of nature.¹⁴

More recently, “Nil Desperandum” (pseudonym) argues that “opposition to miscegenation should hardly require any biblical text...it is grounded in racial realism, which is itself grounded in a healthy understanding of natural revelation.”¹⁵

¹⁰Ariel [pseud.], *The Negro: What is His Ethnological Status?* 21.

¹¹Ibid., 45.

¹²Priest, *Bible Defence of Slavery*.

¹³For some examples, see Stephen Haynes, *Noah’s Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford, 2002), 116–18; David Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justification for Slavery* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 1–4.

¹⁴*A Christian View of Segregation* (Greenwood: Association of Citizens’ Councils in Mississippi, 1954).

¹⁵“A Response to R. C. Sproul, Jr.: Is Interracial Marriage a Sin?” (9 December

The Anthropological Base Refuted

The Bible does not affirm any significant difference between people of different skin colors that would prohibit their intermarrying: all people descend from Adam and Eve, the ‘Curse of Ham’ did not create any racial distinction, and there are no significant biblical or scientific ‘racial’ distinctions.

All Skin Colors and Ethnicities Descend from Adam and Eve

The Scriptures consistently state that all humans descend from Adam and Eve. Acts 17:26 says that God “made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.”¹⁶ Genesis contains genealogies which record the ultimate descent of all people (e.g., 5:1–32; 10:1–32). Further, theologians throughout church history have held to mankind’s unity in Adam. Augustine of Hippo wrote, “What is true for a Christian beyond the shadow of a doubt is that every real man...however unusual to us may be...*the color of his skin*...is descended from the single first-created man.”¹⁷ Charles Hodge likewise wrote that “the race is not only the same in kind but the same in origin. They are all the children of a common parent.”¹⁸ Millard Erickson adds that the “interfertility of all races with one another” adds significant anthropological evidence to mankind’s unity in Adam.¹⁹ The Bible is clear that all people of all skin colors descend from Adam and Eve, and this doctrine is absolutely essential to the gospel (Rom 5:12, 19).

The ‘Curse of Ham’ Did Not Create a Racial Distinction

Despite the abuse done to Genesis 9:24–27,²⁰ the text itself gives no evidence that Noah’s curse caused Ham and his progeny to become permanently black and enslaved:

When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son

2011), par. 10, available at <http://faithandheritage.com/2011/12/a-response-to-r-c-sproul-jr-is-interracial-marriage-a-sin>, accessed 6 April 2017; idem, “On Interracial Marriage: The Moral Status of Miscegenation” (5 May 2011), pars. 11, 24, available at <http://faithandheritage.com/2011/05/the-moral-status-of-miscegenation>, accessed 6 April 2017.

¹⁶All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the 2011 edition of ESV.

¹⁷*City of God*, ed. Vernon J. Bourke, trans. Gerald G. Walsh, et al. (New York: Image Books, 2014), 353, emphasis added.

¹⁸*Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: Scribner and Co., 1873), 2:77.

¹⁹*Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 498.

²⁰For examples, see Haynes, *Noah’s Curse*; Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era*.

had done to him, he said, “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.” He also said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.”

J. Daniel Hays aptly refutes the pro-slavery reading of this text with the following argument.²¹ First, Noah curses Canaan, not Ham—the Canaanites are *closer* ethnically to the Israelites than the black Africans descending from Ham (i.e., the Cushites). Since Noah cursed Canaan, and *not all of Ham’s descendants*, his curse does not even apply to the black African people group.²² Second, this curse draws attention to the broader narrative of Israel’s conquest of land of Canaan, which fits with the fact that Moses’ original audience was to inherit this land. Overall, the suggestion that Noah’s curse mandated the differentiation and generational enslavement of Africans is special pleading. Such a view could not conceivably have been in the minds of Moses’ original audience.

There Is One Human Race

Though all people descend from Adam and Eve, what is one to make of the great variety of different skin colors and hair types? Both biblically and scientifically, there is one human race that contains a variety of different skin colors. Brian Howell and Jennell Paris write,

Race is a cultural category that divides the human race into subspecies based on supposed biological differences...physical features used to identify races are arbitrary in terms of their biological or genetic value. Biologically speaking, there is no more reason to group people according to hair texture, skin color, or eye shape than by any other biological feature.²³

Howell and Paris further state that the modern idea of racial categories is rather recent:

By adopting the idea of racial difference and racial superiority...European colonialists...had a seemingly natural reason to keep Africans enslaved, while preventing poor European servants from finding common cause with poor African laborers. These processes are seen in...journals, plantation records, and church records that began referring to people by color.²⁴

²¹*From Every People and Nation*, 54–56. The following paragraph is drawn primarily from his argumentation.

²²Piper notes that, per Genesis 10:15–18, Canaan is actually Ham’s one *non-African* son, and none of Canaan’s descendants go on to inhabit Africa at all (*Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2011], 263–67).

²³*Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 71.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 72.

Biologically, there is actually greater genetic variation *within* groups of the same skin color than between them.²⁵

Regarding the similarity between the idea of *race* and *ethnicity*, anthropologist Eloise Hiebert Meneses states that “people are inclined to use the terms *race* and *ethnicity* as functionally synonymous, with the former emphasizing biological connections within a group, and the latter, cultural connections within the same group.”²⁶ Howell and Paris define *ethnicity* as “a category based on the sense of group affiliation derived from a distinct heritage or worldview as a ‘people.’”²⁷ Regardless, it will be demonstrated that the Bible allows for marriage between different skin colors and ethnicities.

Ken Ham posits a reasonable explanation for the variety of different skin colors: Adam and Eve (and Noah and his wife) perhaps had a middle brown skin color, and after the Tower of Babel, due to linguistic, geographic, and environmental factors, different people groups formed. Over time, each group reproduced mostly within its own geographic area. Thus, skin colors became more pronounced, resulting in the situation as it is today.²⁸

Furthermore, as Erickson noted,²⁹ humans of different skin colors can and often do reproduce. Simply put, natural revelation does not suggest that people of different skin colors cannot marry—it suggests that they can.

THE THEONOMIC VIEW³⁰

The theonomic view holds that the Bible forbids IM because the Mosaic Law prohibited marriage between Israel and other nations. God did in fact prohibit Israel from marrying the nations: “You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons” (Deut 7:3; cf. Josh 23:12–13; Ezra 9:1–2). In the 1960s, Kenneth Mathews tells of a pastor who refused “to label interracial marriage a sin, preferring to put it in the ‘inadvisable’ category,” and, “since the OT prohibited the intermarriage of Israelites

²⁵“AAA Statement on Race” (n.d.), available at <http://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2583>, accessed 6 April 2017.

²⁶“Science and the Myth of Biological Race,” in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and the Christian Faith*, ed. Alvaro Nieves and Robert J. Priest (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 34.

²⁷*Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 76.

²⁸*The New Answers Book: Over 25 Questions on Creation/Evolution and the Bible*, 4 vols. (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 1:228–31. It is also significant to note that when a dark and light-skinned person reproduce, their children are often light brown-skinned, resulting in a less pronounced race. Thus, the process whereby skin colors became more pronounced “starts over” with an interracial child.

²⁹*Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 498.

³⁰The name of this view does not suggest that theonomists oppose IM.

with a different race, he reasoned that it was best that we too not do it.”³¹ “Nil Desperandum” (pseudonym) likewise states,

Scripture contains specific prohibitions on intermarriage between Israel and other nations... The purpose of avoiding intermarriage was for religious purity.... Yet, it still is significant that the commands were done along ethnic lines. Israel was forbidden from marrying other nations, not just unbelievers in the abstract.... This can have import today: there might be danger in marrying into other ethnic groups.... Race should likewise be a factor of consideration for marriages today, rather than disregarded as insignificant.³²

The Theonomic View Refuted

The Law did prohibit intermarriage between Israel and the nations. But God’s purpose in this prohibition was to keep Israel theologically pure, not ethnically homogeneous. God *allowed* Israel to marry foreigners if they submitted to the Covenant. God’s concern was worship, not outward features of appearance.

Exodus 12:38, 43–49

A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds...

And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

This text delineates Passover regulations for non-Israelites. Israel leaves Egypt with a “mixed multitude” (v. 38). Among this mixed multitude, the foreigner (פְּנִיָּה) is not to eat the Passover (v. 43). However, a sojourner (גֵּר, LXX προσήλυτος) may, but only if the men in his family are circumcised, thus becoming “as a native of the land” (v. 48). The ‘sojourner’ (גֵּר) was a convert, and therefore able to participate in the Passover (cf. Num 9:14, “If a stranger sojourns among you and would keep the Passover...so shall he do. You shall have one statute, both for the sojourner and for the native.”)

³¹Kenneth A. Mathews and M. Sydney Park, *The Post-Racial Church: A Biblical Framework for Multiethnic Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 117.

³²“On Interracial Marriage: The Moral Status of Miscegenation,” par. 19.

Deuteronomy 7:1, 3–4

When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you... You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.

First, this passage applies specifically to the nations *inhabiting* the Promised Land (v. 1), and therefore does not directly apply to Cush, the region in Africa south of Egypt.³³ In fact, those who inhabited Palestine were *closer* ethnically to the Israelites, yet Israel is forbidden from marrying them and is allowed to marry other outsiders (Deut 21:10–14). Therefore, this injunction cannot be based on ethnicity or skin color.³⁴ Second, God states the purpose for the prohibition—Israel is not to serve other gods (v. 4). Other OT texts corroborate this same purpose (e.g., Exod 34:15–16; Num 25:1–3; Josh 23:7–8, 12; Neh 13:23–27). Ezra 9:1–2 may appear to connote that race is an issue—officials approach Ezra to tell him that Israel has intermarried “so that the holy race [seed, CSB] (זֶרַע) has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands.” However, Ezra cries a prayer of repentance for the nation (vv. 6–15), saying that the people with whom Israel has intermarried practice “abominations” (vv. 11, 14), indicating that their worship, not their race, is the issue.³⁵ The purpose of the intermarriage injunction is to prevent apostasy.

Numbers 12:1–15

This passage presents Moses’s marriage to a Cushite, and Miriam and Aaron’s opposition to the marriage. The Cushites had dark skin and inhabited what is modern day Sudan and Ethiopia.³⁶ It is likely that Moses met this Cushite woman because she was among the mixed multitude that left Egypt with Israel (Exod 12:38).³⁷

³³Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 77.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 78.

³⁵The use of זֶרַע here may indicate that the officials and Ezra know that the Messiah (the seed, Gen 3:15) must come from Israel, thus supplying another reason that Israel stay theologically pure.

³⁶Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 34–39. For example, Jeremiah 13:23a reads, “Can the Cushite change his skin, or a leopard his spots?” (HCSB). God uses a notable skin color, black, to draw an illustration.

³⁷Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, New American Commentary (Nashville: B&H, 2000), 200.

Miriam and Aaron likely protest this marriage because they want to question “Moses’ exclusive right as Israel’s leader,” and they single out his wife’s ethnicity as a justification for opposing the marriage,³⁸ seen in the emphatic repetition of ‘Cushite’ in verse 1, “because of the Cushite... for he had married a Cushite.”³⁹

God’s manner of punishment in verses 14–15 demonstrates an important theological theme in the passage. God sends Miriam, a native Israelite, outside the camp. The Cushite woman, a foreigner, stays in the camp.⁴⁰ This ironic reversal from the norm shows that ethnic outsiders could join and receive blessings concomitant with the covenant community (e.g., Deut 28:1–14), and thus become fitting prospects for marriage.

Therefore, God clearly authorized intermarriage in the OT. He welcomed sojourners willing to submit to the Covenant into Israel (cf. Num 9:14), allowing Moses to marry a black African. His purpose in prohibiting Israel from intermarriage with the nations was to keep Israel theologically pure, not to keep Israel strictly ethnically homogenous.

The Question of Ethnicity

“Nil Desperandum” replies that “it still is significant that the [OT] commands were done along ethnic lines. Israel was forbidden from marrying other nations, not just unbelievers in the abstract.”⁴¹ The OT prohibitions do reference ethnicity, but they do so because Israel functioned as a theocratic nation state, and thus a close connection between ethnicity and faith existed in the OT. The NT church, however, does not function in this capacity. Regardless of one’s leanings toward or away from a dispensational hermeneutic, there are some clear functional differences between OT Israel and the NT church. Israel was (with some exceptions mentioned earlier) a distinct national-ethnic people group, with defined geographic boundaries. The church, however, has neither of these—it by definition comprises every tongue and nation (Rev 5:9), and is to spread across the earth (Acts 1:8).⁴² There was, therefore, a sufficient reason that the OT intermarriage prohibitions identified nations rather than unbelievers in general: OT Israel was a

³⁸Ibid., 200–201.

³⁹Piper holds that God’s manner of punishing Miriam, who becomes “leprous, like snow” (v. 10) reveals that God punishes Miriam’s disdain for black skin by giving her unnaturally white skin (*Bloodlines*, 212). Contra Piper, the same phrase occurs elsewhere in the OT, where the sin of racism does not seem to be in view; e.g., Exodus 4:6 “So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, the skin was leprous—it had become as white as snow.” 2 Kings 5:27 “So [Gehazi] went out from [Elisha’s] presence a leper, like snow.”

⁴⁰Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 76.

⁴¹“On Interracial Marriage: The Moral Status of Miscegenation,” par. 19.

⁴²Rolland McCune, *Dispensationalism* (Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000), 65–66.

distinct people group and a theocratic nation state; there was an inseparable connection between being an Israelite and the imperative to follow Yahweh.

The NT counterpart to this Mosaic Law applies only to faith, not ethnicity. Both Paul (1 Cor 7:12–16) and Peter (1 Pet 3:1–6) acknowledge that marriages have occurred between believers and unbelievers, and that such marriages are undesirable. Also, several NT chapters describe Jew-Gentile relations (e.g., Acts 15; Rom 14–15), indicating that ethnic mixing clearly occurred. Paul clearly prohibited a believer from marrying an unbeliever (1 Cor 7:39), yet he did not prohibit Jew-Gentile relations. Rather, Paul blessed Jew-Gentile relations because of Christ's work of reconciling both Jew and Gentile to himself and placing them into the church (Eph 2:11–22). Thus, the NT corroborates the OT principle that faith, not ethnicity, is the issue in marriage.

THE SEGREGATIONAL VIEW

The segregational view holds that the Bible prohibits people of different skin colors from inhabiting the same geographic area, and therefore prohibits IM altogether. The Supreme Court Case *Loving v. Virginia* demonstrates an example of this view. In 1958, Richard Loving, a white man, married Mildred Jeter, a black woman; they were then arrested for violating Virginia's IM statute. The trial judge who sentenced them said that

Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And, but for the interference with his arrangement, there would be no cause for such marriage. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.⁴³

Proponents like David Carlton have appealed to Deuteronomy 32:8 and Acts 17:26:

God gave the nations their respective inheritances (Deut 32:8–9), which sentiment is echoed by the Apostle Paul, who adds that God divided the nations so that they would grope for God and find Him (Acts 17:26–27).... To subvert ethnic and racial boundaries is to violate God's law. This is especially true of marriage, the foundation of the social order and the nation, and thus the most important institution for the nation to safeguard.⁴⁴

⁴³"*Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1," par. 4, available at <http://law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/388/1>, accessed 2 October 2019. Others who hold this view are G. T. Gillespie, *A Christian View of Segregation: An Address Made Before the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., November 4, 1954* (Greenwood: Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, 1954), 8; and Bob Jones, Sr., "Is Segregation Scriptural?" Radio Address (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University, April 17, 1960); cf. Daniel Turner, *Standing Without Apology: The History of Bob Jones University* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2001), 226.

⁴⁴"Kinist Orthodoxy: A Response to Brian Schwertley, Part 4" (7 January 2015),

More recently, John Piper tells of a man who wrote to him saying, "I would never marry a black. Why? Because I believe God made the races, separated them and set the bounds of their habitation."⁴⁵ The man cited both Deuteronomy 32:8 and Acts 17:26 for support.⁴⁶

An examination of both passages reveals that one must anachronistically read segregation into these texts in order to appeal to them for support. Deuteronomy 32:8–9 reads as such: "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage." Positively, this passage is part of God's larger purpose in establishing the Israelite nation. These verses occur within Moses's song of praise after Joshua's commission to lead Israel. When Moses states that God "divided mankind" and "fixed the borders of the peoples" (v. 8), he likely refers to the events recorded in Genesis 10–11, wherein people "spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations" (10:5), and "the LORD dispersed them...over the face of all the earth" (11:8).⁴⁷ Also, Deuteronomy focuses on God's establishing nations and their boundaries as Israel is about to enter Canaan. Verses 8–9 repeat this focus, stating that God "carved out a geographical inheritance for his elect people and arranged the allotments of all other nations...to accommodate that purpose."⁴⁸ Negatively, the passage does not go so far as to suggest that different ethnicities should not intermarry. The text does not make a clear enough stance on intermarriage to prove that many Egyptians sinned at the Exodus by following Israel, as did Moses by marrying a Cushite woman. The topic of segregation is altogether absent from prominent evangelical commentaries.⁴⁹

Acts 17:26–27 likewise mentions nothing of races staying within boundaries so that they do not intermarry:

And he made from one man every nation of mankind on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their

par. 6, available at <http://faithandheritage.com/2015/01/kinist-orthodoxy-a-response-to-brian-schwertley-part-4>, accessed 8 April 2017.

⁴⁵*Bloodlines*, 205.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Evangelical Press Study Commentary (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2006), 497; Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, New American Commentary (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 413.

⁴⁸Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 413.

⁴⁹The following commentators mention nothing of segregation in this portion of Deuteronomy: Currid, *Deuteronomy*; Merrill, *Deuteronomy*; Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976; J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002); J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1974).

way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.

Segregationists have appealed to the phrase “having determined...the boundaries of their dwelling place” (v. 26). However, this phrase hardly indicates that Paul is announcing his support of racial segregation on Mars Hill.⁵⁰ Like Deuteronomy 32, these verses tell of God’s sovereignty in determining nations’ borders. Though God in his sovereignty did, and continues to, carve out definite borders for nations, his doing so does not indicate that he condemns intermarriage of people with different skin colors.

Moreover, the Bible records Christians of different races attending the same church. First, the Scriptures are not even very concerned with differences in skin color in the first place; the Bible presents Jew and Gentile, not black and white, as a much more prominent ethnic divide. Christ breaks this Jew-Gentile divide in the sense that Jews and Gentiles are frequently members of the same church in the NT (e.g., Rom 14–15; Eph 2:11–22). Second, there were people of different ethnic backgrounds and races in the early churches. Acts 13:1 mentions Simeon, also called Niger, who is a leader at the church in Antioch. Simeon was likely a black African and was a prominent member in the Antiochian church.⁵¹

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEW

The eschatological view holds that IM facilitates the one-world order of the Antichrist, and therefore the Bible prohibits IM. Bob Jones, Jr., held this view, which provided part of the basis for Bob Jones University’s rule against interracial dating.⁵² During the 2000 presidential race, Bob Jones III stated on *Larry King Live*,

We don’t let [two people of different races] date because we were trying, as an example, to enforce something, a principle that is much greater than this.

We stand against the one-world government, against the coming world of anti-Christ, which is a one world system of blending, of all differences, of blending of national differences, economic differences, church differences, into a big one ecumenical world. The Bible is very clear about this.⁵³

⁵⁰Homer A. Kent, Jr., *Jerusalem to Rome: Studies in the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), 140.

⁵¹Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 177–78.

⁵²Daniel Turner, *Standing Without Apology*, 225–26. The administration adopted the rule after the parents of an Asian student expressed to BJU that they did not want their child to date outside of his or her culture.

⁵³“CNN Transcript—Larry King Live: Dr. Bob Jones III Discusses the Controversy Swirling Around Bob Jones University—March 3, 2000” (n.d.), pars. 45–46, available at <http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0003/03/lkl.00.html>, accessed 8

G. T. Gillespie echoed this same concern:

The problem [of race relations] has also been complicated by the worldwide spread of Karl Marx's doctrine of Internationalism and the Classless society, combined with the vigorous propaganda of Soviet Communism to bring about a world revolution and the breakdown of all national and racial distinctions and to effect the complete amalgamation of all races.⁵⁴

In response, the Bible nowhere states that interracial mixing will contribute to the Antichrist's rise.⁵⁵ Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:6–7 speaks of what is known as the 'restrainer' of the Antichrist—the entity which restrains Antichrist's rise until the appointed time.⁵⁶ There are different thoughts regarding who or what the 'restrainer' is; several commentators are simply unsure.⁵⁷ Assuming the 'restrainer' is the church, it is still not evident that preventing IM is a means of the church's opposing the Antichrist's rise to power.

Bob Jones University noticed this fact and recanted, albeit embarrassingly late. Bob Jones III said "we realize that... interracial marriage is not going to bring in the world of the anti-Christ by any means."⁵⁸ He further stated that he could not point to a single verse in Scripture to prohibit IM.⁵⁹ The eschatological view thus falls flat for severe lack of biblical support.

CONCLUSION

All of the historical arguments against IM fail for severe lack of evidence. While Scripture strongly admonishes people not to subtract

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⁵⁴*A Christian View of Segregation*, 2.

⁵⁵To begin, it is important to consider that eschatology is a doctrine that is particularly susceptible to disagreement within orthodox Christianity. For example, preterists and futurists will disagree on whether the Antichrist came in the first century or will come in the future. Because of the amount of disagreement, eschatology is an area of biblical study which one must approach with special caution. This author proceeds in the following treatment of 2 Thessalonians 2 with a pretribulational view.

⁵⁶Dwight J. Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 332.

⁵⁷Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 314–19; Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 286–88; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, rev. ed., New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 224–29; Gary S. Shogren, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 285–88.

⁵⁸"CNN Transcript," par. 49.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, par. 52.

from the Bible (Rev 22:19), Scripture equally warns not to add to it either (Prov 30:5–6; Rev 22:18). Because solid exegetical support against IM is lacking, it is most likely that American anti-miscegenation originated in the divisive political environment around the time of the American Civil War. Many Northern and Southern theologians vigorously appealed to Scripture to support their own side of the War and the issue of slavery.⁶⁰ Anthropological arguments from Southerners like Josiah Priest and the pseudonymous author of *The Negro: What is His Ethnological Status?* likely held sway long after the end of the war. These arguments directly or indirectly provided fodder for figures like Leon Bazile, the segregationist trial judge in *Loving v. Virginia*, and the Kinist authors at FaithAndHeritage.com.⁶¹

In similar fashion, over the past two decades, much of the West has come to thoroughly embrace same-sex marriage. The Netherlands led the way in legalizing same-sex marriage in 2001, and the United States followed in 2015. Most recently in 2020, Northern Ireland has joined this rapidly growing list of countries to adopt same-sex marriage.⁶² The list of professing Christian groups adopting same-sex marriage is also growing; it includes, unsurprisingly, mainline denominations like the Episcopal Church and the PCUSA,⁶³ as well as organizations like the Reformation Project,⁶⁴ led by authors Matthew Vines and James Brownson.⁶⁵

If there is a lesson to be learned from the church's interracial marriage debacle, it is that Christians must stand firm on what the Bible clearly teaches, even in the face of overwhelming cultural pressure against it. Followers of Christ are called to emulate their Lord's disregard of temporal shame in favor of eternal glory (Heb 12:1–3; 13:13). Christians must refuse to bow the knee to the sexual revolution, lest they emulate those in the past who bowed the knee to the segregationist

⁶⁰Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006).

⁶¹"About Faith & Heritage Webzine," available at <http://faithandheritage.com/about>, accessed 26 March 2020.

⁶²Peter Coulter, "Same-sex marriage now legal in Northern Ireland," (13 January 2020), available at <http://bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-51086276>, accessed 26 March 2020.

⁶³"History: Episcopal Church," available at <http://episcopalchurch.org/lgbtq/history>, accessed 26 March 2020; Patrick D. Heery, "What same-sex marriage means to Presbyterians" (20 March 2015), available at <http://pcusa.org/news/2015/3/20/what-same-sex-marriage-means-presbyterians>, accessed 26 March 2020.

⁶⁴"Mission and Vision," available at <http://reformationproject.org/mission>, accessed 26 March 2020.

⁶⁵Matthew Vines is author of *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* (New York: Convergent, 2014); James Brownson is author of *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

culture. For “a man dies when he refuses to take a stand for that which is right...a man dies when he refuses to take a stand for that which is true.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶Martin Luther King, Jr., quoted in Bruce Morton, “30 Years After King: Still Seeking the ‘Promised Land’” (3 April 1998), available at <http://cnn.com/SPECIALS/views/y/9804/morton.mlk>, accessed 15 April 2017.

