

The Doctrine of Racial Intermarriage

1. Before I even begin this doctrine, let me acknowledge that there is no such thing as a pure race and that there never has been such thing as a pure race. Even if you believe in evolution, we all had the same origin. And most believers know that we all came from the same man: Adam. **And God created man in His own image, in the image of god He created him, male and female, He created them** (Gen. 1:27). Gen. 5 gives the descendants of Adam, which includes Noah. Noah and his children and their immediate families, all descended from Adam, will be the only ones who survive the flood Gen. 5–9) and all of mankind will be descended through them (Gen. 10). **So, thus, He [God] blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those who were with him in the ark...Now the sons of Noah, who came out of the ark, were Shem, Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was populated** (Gen. 7:23 9:18–19). In other words, we cannot marry outside our own family, let alone outside of our own race. So, let me herein state that *race* is a nebulous and possibly even an impossible concept to correctly define.
2. Furthermore, because Adam sinned knowingly, his sin is passed onto us and we all have his sin imputed to us, as well as carry an old sin nature along with us wherever we go. So all men have sinned and are bound together by their sins and rebellion (Rom. 3:23 5:12–21 6:23).
3. We have all the same *blood*. This is true medically as well as theologically: **He made from one every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined the appointed times and the boundaries of the habitation** (Acts 17:26).
4. That being said, let us define a *race* as a group of people whose relatively recent ethnic and family background is notably different from the relatively recent ethnic and family background of another group of people. That is, I may be thought to be Caucasian, as opposed to someone else who might be considered to be Hispanic or African American. This means that if our family history is traced back over several hundred years (and, in rare cases, several thousand years) the preponderance of our ancestors would be considered to be of the same background (i.e., my ancestors would also be considered to be Caucasian). The oldest race would be the Jewish race. Now, this does not mean that there has been no racial intermarriage in my background nor does it mean that no racial intermarriage has been in the background of anyone else. My line of ancestors will eventually go back to Noah and then to Adam and the same will be true of anyone else on this earth, no matter who they are and how much different we look from one another.
5. Part of Satan's plan is to get us off on a lot of side issues and false issues; to cause dissension among believers; to make believers, or, more specifically, Christianity, look foolish to the outsider; and, discredit Christianity and Bible doctrine through any means possible. The concept of intermarriage **and** the arguments against it are a part of Satan's plan.
6. I was particularly reminded of that last issue when watching the television show *Politically Incorrect* one evening. Two of the issues raised were homosexuality and racial intermarriage. One person who seemed to know the Bible was there with three others and the host. The point made was that the idea that homosexuality is not forbidden in the Bible and that is just one man's interpretation of a couple of passages. Although the pastor (or priest; I've forgotten who it was), tried to quote the relevant Scripture, he was cut off and the subject of intermarriage was brought up and the illustration was given that some people read the Bible and interpret it to say that intermarriage is forbidden. The passage quoted was from Exodus I believe that had to do with not mixing some materials either in the making of the tabernacle or of the priest's clothing—I don't recall which and cannot find the passage quoted. However, the interpretation of such a passage as a forbidding of racial intermarriage is preposterous. It was taken completely out of context. However, since some fringe group (the KKK, which has some connection to Christianity) made this claim, the point of the speaker was that (1) you could make any kind of claim that you wanted to and *prove* it by the Bible; and, secondarily, (2) if groups like the KKK use the Bible to support their various racist doctrines, that other believers are doing the same thing when they claim the Bible is against homosexuality. The pastor or priest was shouted down before he could make an correct points. Now, do you see how absolutely clever Satan is? He associates Bible-believing Christians with racist extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan (they do this themselves because they are Satanically-influenced). He casts doubt on Scripture, showing that if some racist group can quote some Scripture which, by some bizarre kind of exegesis, seemingly forbids racial intermarriage, that this makes all Scripture suspect and open to pretty much any sort of a goofy interpretation.

This allowed the audience and the participants in this panel to (1) dismiss the Bible as being filled with goofy ideas or with passages that could be interpreted in accordance with any sort of whim; and, (2) they were able to dismiss the notion that the Bible clearly teaches that homosexuality is a sin. And, when the pastor or priest tried to give a clear explanation of this, he was shouted down and talked over.

7. There are some passages, when not examined in context, that seem to indicate that racial intermarriage is forbidden by the Bible.
 - a. Ex. 34:16a seems to warn against intermarriage between Israel and the people of the land. However, this is tied directly to the heathen religious practices of the people of the land. Ex. 34:11–16 reads: “Be certain to observe what I am commanding you this day. Observe, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Watch yourself that you do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, so that it does not become a snare in your midst. Instead, you are to tear down their altars and smash their religious pillars and cut down their Asherim. For, you will not worship any other god, for Jehovah, Whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. So you will not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods and someone invite you to eat of his sacrifice, and you take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters fornicate with their gods, and cause your sons to fornicate with their gods.” You will note that the emphasis here is not upon the forbidding of intermarriage, but the forbidding of involvement with the heathenistic religious practices of the population of the Land of Promise. This is the key to every passage which forbids intermarriage between Israelites and anyone else.
 - b. Moses said the following to the people: “When Jehovah your god brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, you will clear away many nations before you—the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites—seven nations greater and stronger than you. Furthermore, when Jehovah your God delivers them before you, you will completely destroy them. You will make no covenant with them and you will show no grace to them. Furthermore, you will not intermarry with them. You will not give your daughters to their sons, nor will you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; then the anger of Jehovah will burn against you, and He will quickly destroy you. Instead, you will do this to them: you will tear down their altars and smash their religious pillars, and you will cut down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.” (Deut. 7:1–5). Again, in context, the problem is not intermarriage but the results of intermarriage with a heathen people.
 - c. Joshua also warned the people against intermarriage during his final message: “So take care to yourselves to love Jehovah your God. For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know with certainty that Jehovah your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you, but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which Jehovah your God has given you.” (Joshua 23:11–13). Now, although Joshua does not mention exactly the problem, this has been mentioned once by God and once by Moses; he simply alludes to the fact that the problem will be one of intermarriage leads to entanglement with the other races in terms of their heathenistic religious practices. It is more implied than stated here.
 - d. Ezra 9–10 deals with intermarriages which have taken place long after the establishment of Israel in the land. Just as above, the key to the sin of intermarriage is not the act of intermarriage, but the influential actions of the heathen who are married to Israelites (Ezra 9:10–14).
 - e. King Solomon’s marriages are clearly denounced in Neh. 13, but the key, as all along, is the influence that these women wielded over him. “Did not Solomon, the king of Israel, sin regarding these things? Yet among the many nations, there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless, the foreign women caused even him to sin.” (Neh. 13:26–27).
 - f. Solomon’s sins, which were a result of marriage to foreign women, are enumerated in I Kings 11:1–8: Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which Jehovah has said to the sons of Israel, “You will not associate with them and neither will they associate with you, for they will certainly turn your heart away after their gods.” Solomon held fast to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives—princesses; and three hundred mistresses, and his wives turned his heart away. For it came to pass when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not

wholly devoted to Jehovah his God, as the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians; and after Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites. Furthermore, Solomon did what was evil in the sight of Jehovah and he did not follow Jehovah fully, as David his father. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus he also did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their Gods.

- g. The general concept is brought into the New Testament in II Cor. 6:14: **Do not be yoked together with unbelievers, for what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?** Although marriage is not directly in view here, the general principal is given: and the problem is not a matter of interracial marriages, but the problem is a marriage or some other sort of union between the believer and the unbeliever. It would be much better, for instance, for a Black and a Caucasian to intermarry, than it would be for a Bible believing Christian and an unbeliever. Now, let me quickly add, if you find yourself in that position right now, you don't get to use that as an excuse to walk away from your marriage.¹
8. We have specific instances in Scripture where intermarriage occurred and, in some cases, it received God's stamp of approval.
- a. The most famous intermarriage was between Rahab and Salmon. Salmon was a Judahite, several generations removed from Judah, and a member of the armed forces which attacked the land of Canaan under Joshua. The first city which Joshua struck was Jericho. Now, God had given very clear instructions to destroy everyone who was a part of Jericho. However, Joshua sent spies to examine Jericho and the lay of the land, and they were welcomed by Rahab, a prostitute who lived in Jericho. She gave her testimony as a believer in Jesus Christ and swore her allegiance to Israel. Not only did she hide the spies, but she was spared her life, along with the lives of most or all of her family, and she apparently married into Israel and was a part of the line of our Lord Jesus Christ. The point here is that intermarriage with the heathen of the Land of Promise was unequivocally forbidden. However, Rahab changed her allegiance from Jericho to Israel, and she thereby became a part of Israel. This was a result of her faith in Jehovah, the God of Israel. My point is this: you cannot use the passages found in Exodus and Deuteronomy to outlaw intermarriage between races, as not only do we have a very famous exclusion, but Rahab is in the line of the humanity of our Lord. Joshua 2:1–24 6:22–25 Matt. 1:4–5 Heb. 11:31
 - b. The next example is not quite as convincing, but is important. Moses married a second time (his first wife is never heard from again after Ex. 18); and he married a Cushite woman. Although Thieme, back in his more racist days, says that this was a white Egyptian; and most authorities say that she is an Ethiopian; we really do not know what color she was, although given the racial makeup of the Ethiopians and Egyptians, it is likely that they were Black or very dark skinned. When Moses marries this woman, Miriam, the sister of Moses, will throw a fit, and bring Aaron into the fray. Although God said nothing one way or the other about the second marriage of Moses, he called Miriam and Aaron out for a visit and chewed them out for questioning the authority of Moses. As a result, Miriam became leprous for several days (Num. 12:1–16).
 - c. Judah, the son of Jacob, married a Canaanite woman, who bore him three children, only one of whom survived (Gen. 38:2–20 I Chron. 2:3).
 - d. In Judges 3, we will read about the Moabites ruling over Israel for eighteen years. However, sometime later, Ruth, a Moabitess, married Boaz, and became a part of the line of Christ (Ruth 1:1–4:22 Matt. 1:5–6).
 - e. Since Ruth's marriage and Rahab's marriage would both constitute interracial marriages, this means that both David and our Lord were descended from interracial marriages.
 - f. The first book of Chronicles—particularly the first nine chapters, is filled with references to various interracial unions.

¹ Here is where we apply: **If you are bound to a wife, do not seek to be released (I Cor. 7:27a). If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away. and a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise, your children are unclean (I Cor. 7:12b–14a).**

- i. David's sister, Abigail, married an Ishmaelite, and bore him Amasa (we are assuming they were married—I Chron. 2:15–17).
 - ii. Sheshan was a Judahite who had no sons, only daughters. What he chose to do was to give his daughter to Jarha, his Egyptian servant in marriage, and they had a son, whose line is followed out (I Chron. 2:34–41).
 - iii. One marriage is only covered briefly in I Chron. 4:17–18, and there was some corruption of the passage; however, what appears to be the case is that one of Pharaoh's daughters—and we are very likely speaking of the pharaoh of the exodus—and Mered, a Judahite, who is likely a member of the generation of promise (it is possible that he was of gen X, and his sons were of the generation of promise). He had two wives, one a Jewess and the other the daughter of pharaoh, and his sons founded several of the cities of Judah. Now timing here is important. Mered, as a slave, would not have married a daughter of Pharaoh. So, we have two possibilities: (1) Mered was an early inhabitant of Egypt, being a recent descendant of Judah when Joseph was a ruler in Egypt; or, (2) Mered was a recently freed man and Bithia, the daughter of Pharaoh, chose to become a part of the mixed multitude who left Egypt with Israel. Since Mered is one of the many groups of men who is listed without a family line which extends very far back (we only know that he is a Judahite by the fact that he is in I Chron. 4); it would be reasonable to assume that several generations of his ancestors were slaves to the Egyptians (Ex. 1:8–11). If he were a part of the royalty of Egypt, or related to it by virtue of Joseph's position, then we would expect that we could follow his unbroken line all the way back to Judah. In any case, this is a great, unknown story which the Bible barely mentions in two verses of Scripture.
9. In summary, there are no passages anywhere in the entirety of the Scriptures which forbid people of other *races* marrying one another. In the only passages where intermarriage is forbidden, (1) the reason given is to prevent the Israelites from falling into idolatry; and, (2) there are very important and notable exceptions to the general prohibition. Whereas, a couple might want to take interracial differences into account when thinking about marriage, this should not ever be the deal maker or breaker.