

Closing: Where Do We Go From Here?

- A. We must recognize our heart problem.
- C. Plantinga: *“Doesn’t our ‘love of economic liberty’ sometimes look a lot like greed and our ‘hunger for distributive justice’ a lot like envy?”*
- B. Responsibility must precede reconciliation.
- i. The goal is not developing a sense of *white guilt*. But it is to move us from the comfort of *white complacency* to Gospel activity.
 - ii. Reconciliation must look something like Isaiah 58:6-12.

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Why is it important to recognize the Biblical truth that there is one human race and that we all descend from common parents – Adam and Eve?
- How might Isaiah 58:6-12 be applied in addressing the historic oppression of African-Americans – individually or as a group?
- What does it mean to say that responsibility must precede reconciliation? Biblically, why do we have responsibility toward those who are still suffering the consequences of ethnic enslavement and oppression?
- How can you as an individual engage people from the African-American community (if you are white) or the white community (if you are African-American) in a way that may help each other understand life through the others' eyes?
- What does the account of Cain and Abel teach us about racism in America?
- As a means of growing in understanding, read:
www.understandingrace.org/resources/pdf/disease/smedley.pdf

Genesis: Truth for Understanding Our World (Part 13)

Jerry Cisar — January 24, 2016

Texts: Genesis

Genesis: Racism and Our Responsibility

I. What does Creation teach us about *racism*?

- A. Genesis teaches us that there are no races, but one human race.
- i. Genesis 1:11-12, 21, 25
 - ii. Genesis 1:26-28
- B. The development of the idea of race was specifically driven by the need for a capable labor force which is cheap and abundant.
- i. Modern racism has its roots in *scientific racism* and/or *social evolution*.
 - ii. Alan Jacobs tells this history well ([Original Sin](#)).
“When a man as prominent as Stephen Douglas rose to defend slavery on grounds like those of the scientific racists— ‘I positively deny that he [the Negro] is my brother or any kin to me whatever,’ he proclaimed in 1858, in one of his debates with Abraham Lincoln— many Christian leaders in the South repudiated him fiercely. One of the greatest of them, the Presbyterian James Henley Thornwell, insisted that ‘No Christian

man...can give any countenance to speculations which trace the Negro to any other parent but Adam.' And, to make the point more forcefully, Thornwell insisted that 'the instinctive impulses of our nature, combined with the plainest declarations of the Word of God, lead us to recognize in [the Negro's] form and lineaments, in his moral and religious and intellectual nature, the same humanity in which we glory as the image of God. We are not ashamed to call him our brother.' Black people share with white people a common creation in the image of God and a common corruption inherited from Adam; and in this double sharing lies the truest fellowship, the profoundest brotherhood."

C. What the Bible **doesn't** teach.

- i. Descendants of Cain?

- ii. Descendants of Ham?

II. What does the *Fall* teach us about *racism*?

A. The Fall and Corruption

- i. Genesis 6:5
- ii. *Racism* is the invention of evil from the fallen heart of man and grieves God.

Salvation is intended not only to address our guilt, freeing us from condemnation, but to sanctify us transforming us from corruption to righteousness or justice.

B. What moved God to judge the earth

- i. ... with the "flood"? (Genesis 6:11-12)

- ii. ... at Sodom and Gomorrah? (Genesis 18:20-21)
 - The word for *outcry* is a technical word for *the cry of pain* or *the cry for help from those who are being oppressed or violated*.

C.J. Wright concludes, "*In this case, God's intervention to destroy the cities would be seen as breaking their power over the poor and oppressed in the surrounding area—an act of biblical justice.*" (The Mission of God)

b) Ezekiel 16:49-50

God hears the cries of suffering people regardless of whether they are talking to Him or not!

C. The Fall corrupted every human heart, but that corruption is targeted in redemption.

III. What does the story of Cain and Abel teach us about *racism*?

A. **We are our Brother's Keeper.** (Genesis 4:9)

- i. The real descendants of Cain are those who act as if they are not their brother's keeper.
- ii. If we all descend from Adam and Eve, we are all brothers/sisters. Therefore we have a responsibility toward one another, to care for one another.
 - a) The Good Samaritan: It is not enough to say that the victim needs to get himself up and to a hospital. It may in fact be the only way he will get there, but that only indicts those who pass by.
 - b) Loving our neighbor was never intended to come without a cost.

B. Our brothers' blood cries out to God from the ground on which it was spilled. (Genesis 4:10)