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## **Hometown Hatred and the Gospel of Inclusion, Part One**

This Saturday, hatred is coming to my hometown of Athens, AL.

A short, 30 minute drive north on Interstate 65 will take you to Pulaski, TN, the hometown of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). In recent weeks, the KKK have been requesting a permit to protest and march in downtown Athens. You can read the local news by going [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). The bottom line is that both the city (mayor) and county did not want to issue a permit to the KKK, but according to law, they were required to do so. The organizer of the KKK rally goes by the name J.L. Thomas of a nearby town, and it is said that the purpose of the rally is to protest illegal immigration.

When I got word that the KKK received a permit, I began investigating the matter, finding info about Mr. Thomas, what the KKK is up to these days, and how they plan to use illegal immigration as a gateway to hate. [History reveals](#) that the KKK has declined from 4-5 million in the 1920's to roughly around 5,000 people today. However, the KKK has found a new party platform in order to “brainwash” (see video) young white males through the issue of illegal immigration.

The application passed out at these rallies have this qualifying paragraph below as a person signs up:

I am a White Christian man or woman. I am not married to a nonwhite. I do not date nonwhites nor do I have nonwhite dependents. I practice my belief in a racial integrity. I believe in the ideals of the Western Christian Civilization and profess my belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. I understand that The Knights is a legal and law abiding political movement and that I will never be asked to commit an unlawful act. I understand that I can resign at any time.

As you can see, the application is clearly racist and attempts to cloak the KKK within the garb of Christianity and “the ideals of the Western Christian Civilization.” Already there has been talk about how to handle the protests of the KKK and the inevitable hatred that will be spewed from the center of the town. Lee Roop of *The Huntsville Times* says that [there are three options for Athens](#): ignore the Klan, protest the Klan, or try to run the Klan out of town on stretchers. Karen Middleton of the *Athens News Courier* reports that several local church leaders are [planning to stage a silent counter-protest](#) where they will hold up a sign spelling “love.” Needless to say, the

emotions are high and responses varied in exactly what to do with the unwelcomed visitation of hatred to my hometown.

I have been sitting on this issue for almost a week as it has taken several days to allow my emotions to subside, think clearly on the matter, and respond in a way that (I hope) would honor Jesus and reflect the gospel which he has entrusted to us. For the sake of length, I will post some of my thoughts in future posts, along with resources and biblical texts that speak to race, the gospel, and the church.

For now, let me ask you this question.

**If the KKK came to your town, bringing hatred and recruiting racists, how would you respond? If you are a pastor, minister, or leader in your church, how do you counsel your members to react in a Christ-like, gospel-centered way?**

Think about that, and please share your thoughts. How we apply the Gospel and Scripture to race, immigration, and hate groups is a reality for those of us in the South, and such a situation requires more than a knee-jerk reaction and emotive rhetoric.

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## **[Hometown Hatred and the Gospel of Inclusion, Part Two](#)**

[In my last post](#), I mentioned that the Ku Klux Klan is planning a protest in my hometown of Athens, AL. I feel like this is a good place to share a little about my story and how it relates as a citizen of Athens, Alabama as well as the kingdom of God.

My family is Assyrian-Iranian. Ethnically, my ancestors are Assyrian. Nationally, we are from Iran. Put together, I am quite the minority in the United States. Those of you familiar with the nations described in the Old Testament know that the Assyrians were no friends of the Israelites. Indeed, my ancestors were enemies to God's chosen people, Israel. I can imagine that there was quite a bit hatred between the Israelites and Assyrians, you think? But it does not stop there. My family immigrated from Iran in the early 70's after my grandfather was killed in a car accident. Not being Muslim made life difficult for my family in Iran, and without the protection my grandfather and his cohorts provided for our village, it was inevitable that my family had to either leave the country or pay the consequences. My mother and her four brothers worked to pay for one plane ticket at a time and eventually all but their other sister made it to the States. Knowing a distant cousin, their destination was a small town of Athens, Alabama.

My mother and her four brothers attended Athens College (now Athens State University), and I have been told that there were the first immigrants to ever attend there. Eventually, she and her four brothers transferred to Ole Miss where they completed their engineering degrees and began working for the United States government. For the most part, our family had been experiencing the American dream. We left the land of fear to enter into the land of the free. Yet, as tensions arose between the United States and Iran in the 1980's, it became more and more difficult for our family to be publicly identified as immigrants from Iran. For much of that decade, my family

quietly held our identity due to the hatred and fear of Americans of what Iranians might do to the United States. It was not until 1987 that our family was finally together when my mother's sister and her family arrived from Belgium through an act of Congress (literally).

I share brief summary of my family background for this simple reason. As an Assyrian, I am by lineage an enemy of God's chosen people. As an Iranian, I am by nationality an enemy of the United States. And wonder of wonders, God had set into plan before the foundations of the earth were laid to bring the gospel message of Jesus Christ to my family in America. God brought a Mississippi boy from Yazoo City to marry a woman from Tehran, Iran under the divine providence of God, and it is through this working I was brought forth and came to faith in Jesus Christ at First Baptist Church, Athens, Alabama. I am forever grateful that God included me in his saving purposes—an Assyrian/Iranian-American who is least deserving of ever hearing the good news of Jesus Christ. Because you see, my background does not only make me an enemy of Israel or of the United States, I am by nature an enemy of God as a depraved sinner who at one time was under the judgment and wrath of God. While it is true that one would hardly die for a righteous person, God demonstrated his love towards us, toward me, that while I was yet a sinner, Christ died for me (Romans 5:8). Beyond all the social-political-racial categories that could cause offense, hatred, and hostility, the fact that I am a sinner whose sin is an outright offense against a holy God is an outrage and utter abomination. This redemption and justification as seen through the gospel whereby sinners are accepted in the sight of a holy God must then become the lens through which all other categories (e.g. social, political, racial, etc.) are interpreted and understood.

So when I think about Athens, I think about the gospel of inclusion, that in that town God reached down and saved me. And when I get word that, in this same town, the KKK comes to spread hate and racism, my heart is grieved. For it is through the unconditional, ever-reaching love of God that came to me and changed my life so that I can join the heavenly throng of peoples from all nations, tongues, and tribes who will gather around the throne and worship Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. The vision and purpose of such organizations like the KKK is horribly wrong not simply because of its social implications primarily but because of its gospel implications. They know not why the gospel has come; they know not what the kingdom looks like; and they know not what heaven will be.

A central theme in the New Testament is the fulfillment of the promise that God's purposes of salvation would extend to all the nations and peoples of the earth. This truth is the single biggest obstacle for Jews to overcome, for up until that time, they alone were God's chosen people. The Jews had their own hometown hatred when it came to Samaritans, much less the Greeks or barbarians. And the mystery is that through Israel's stumbling and hardening of their hearts, the riches of God's grace is given to the Gentiles as those grafted in by the kindness and severity of God. In the consummation of all things in Christ, there will be for eternity praises unto Jesus, Savior of the *world*, sung from the lips of millions in thousands of languages where the white man will be but a minority. The racial integrity spoken of in Scripture is not that of a mullet-wearing white man from the South; rather, it is seen when that first-century Palestinian Jew will welcome redeemed sinners to their heavenly home which He has prepared for us—a home where Jews, Gentiles, Greeks, and yes, Assyrian-Iranians will live as one people with one identity. As I

eagerly long for that day, I find myself praying, ‘Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’”

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### **Hometown Hatred and the Gospel of Inclusion, Part Three**

Continuing on the issue of racial reconciliation and the gospel, I want to provide some links and resources for those of you interested in going deeper. This list is not exhaustive by any means, but it is a good starting point for further reading. In the following post, I will provide some Scripture texts and commentary on this issue as well.

#### **John Piper: (transcript and audio available)**

- >> [Why Deal with Racial Issues?](#)
- >> [How and Why Bethlehem Pursues Ethnic Diversity](#)
- >> [Abortion, Race, Gender, and Christ](#)
- >> [Racial Reconciliation](#)
- >> [Every Race to Reign and Worship](#)
- >> [The Meaning and Significance of Race, Part 1](#)
- >> [The Meaning and Significance of Race, Part 2](#) (audio only)
- >> [Racial Harmony and the Gospel](#) (audio only)
- >> [Race and Cross](#)
- >> [The Ethics of Interracial Marriage](#)
- >> [Interracial Marriage: Celebrating and Serving Diversity in Christ](#)
- >> [Racial Harmony and Interracial Marriage](#)
- >> [The Peril of Partiality](#)
- >> [Class, Culture, and Ethnic Identity in Christ](#)
- >> [Implications of Being Made in the Image of God](#) (audio only)
- >> [Jesus Is the End of Ethnocentrism](#)
- >> [Racial Diversity, Racial Harmony, and the Gospel Walk](#)
- >> [The Reformed Faith and Racial Harmony](#)

#### **IX Marks Ministries:**

- >> [Pastors’ and Theologians’ Forum on Race](#)
- >> Sam Lam: [“Nine Lessons I Learned From Yellow \(And One More\)”](#)
- >> John Piper: [“Did Moses Marry a Black Woman?”](#)
- >> D. A. Carson: [“Five Steps for Racial Reconciliation on Sunday at 11 a.m.”](#)
- >> John Folmar: [Pastoring a Multi-Ethnic Church](#)
- >> Thabiti Anyabwile: [Many Ethnicities, One Race](#)
- >> Rickey Armstrong: [Review of \*On Being Black and Reformed\*, by Anthony J. Carter](#)
- >> Anthony J. Carter: [Review of \*From Every People and Nation\*, by J. Daniel Hays](#)
- >> Ken Jones: [Review of \*The Faithful Preacher\*, by Thabiti Anyabwile](#)
- >> Eric C. Redmond: [Review of \*Reconciliation Blues\*, by Edward Gilbreath](#)
- >> Juan R. Sanchez Jr.: [Review of \*Being Latino in Christ\*, by Orlando Crespo](#)

>> Jeremy Yong & Geoffrey Chang: [Review of \*Growing Healthy Asian American Churches\*, edited by Peter Cha, S. Steve Kang, and Helen Lee](#)

### **Thabiti Anyabwile:**

- >> [Defining “Race”](#)
- >> [What Race Does not Explain](#)
- >> [Thabiti’s Top Ten Tips for Talking About Race](#)
- >> [Jesus and Affirmative Action](#)
- >> [Talking to Children About Race](#)
- >> [Fiction](#)

### **Justin Taylor:**

- >> [Race Stuff 101](#)
- >> [Race and Grace](#)
- >> [Race and Barriers](#)
- >> [Race and Responsibility](#)

### **Other:**

- >> [The PCA Pastoral Letter on Racism](#)
- >> [All Churches Should Be Multiracial: The Biblical Case](#) in *Christianity Today*
- >> [Elect from Every Nation](#) by Paul Kjoss Helseth
- >> [Biblical Antidotes to Racism, Part 1](#) by Ronald Kalifungwa
- >> [Biblical Antidotes to Racism, Part 2](#) by Ronald Kalifungwa
- >> [The Divided Church](#) by Anthony Bradley
- >> [Racial Reconciliation and the Christian Gospel](#) by Tim Gombis
- >> [The Truth About Ethnicity](#) by Phillip Way
- >> [‘Mystery of the Gospel’ = Multi-ethnic Community?](#) by Mark Robinson

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## **[Hometown Hatred and the Gospel of Inclusion, Part Four](#)**

In my fourth and final post on “Hometown Hatred and the Gospel of Inclusion,” I want to focus on the Scriptural account. An excellent resource which I have been reading this week is a book by J. Daniel Hays entitled [From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race](#).<sup>[1]</sup> The concluding section of this post will have the summary of Hays’ superb treatment on this subject. While I would love to talk about race in the Old Testament (especially the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 and the ethnic makeup of the Ancient Near East), I am going to specifically address race in the New Testament.

## Gospel Inclusion in the Gospel of John

Beginning with the Gospel of John, one can quickly see that Jesus explaining that his purpose for coming is to dwell not only in a geographic region of the world but in the hearts of the redeemed from every corner of the planet. He came to his own (Israelites), but his own did not receive him. But to *all* who did receive him and believed on His name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:11-12). When Jesus first enters the scene during the ministry of his cousin John the Baptist, John exclaims, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the *world*” (John 1:29). Indeed, from the very introduction of his gospel account, John wants his readers to understand that the right to becoming a child of God was not due to inheritance, lineage, or deservedness of man (John 1:13), but through the universal scope of God’s redeeming purposes, saving grace comes to sinners regardless of geographic location, ethnicity, and background.

In John 1-3, we see Jesus ministering in Jerusalem and Judea; however, in chapter 4, Jesus states that he “had to pass through Samaria” (John 4:4, KJV reads “must needs”). This necessity was precisely because salvation was intended to come not only to the Jews, but to the **Samaritans** as well. These half-breeds and outcasts of Israel were despised by the Jews, but the King of heaven overthrew the cultural, racial, and societal norms with a new kingdom ethic which embraces not only Jews but Samaritans as well. Finally, in John 12:12-26, we pick up on the scene where Jesus makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem just prior to his death. The Evangelist notes that “among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks” who told Phillip, “We wish to see Jesus” (John 12:20-21). When word got to Jesus, he replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (John 12:23). What is the relationship between the **Greeks** seeking Jesus and Jesus’ response? Throughout the gospel account, Jesus continues to say, “My hour has not yet come . . .”, but here we see it being inaugurated. Jesus, receiving word that the whole world (Greeks) have sought him, knew that the worldwide redemptive mission had received the cosmic scope of including all races and peoples such that John 3:16 would have its soteriological fulfillment in the hour of his glorification and atonement for sinners through the cross.

## Gospel Inclusion in the book of Acts

Now let’s turn our attention to the book of Acts. Prior to Jesus’ ascension, he left these parting words: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Analogous to the Great Commission found in Matt. 28:18-20, Jesus gives his followers the mandate to make disciples and be His witnesses throughout the whole world. The same Samaria that was a place of geographic necessity would soon become a missiological necessity of the early church. The Gentiles who came seeking Jesus would soon hear the message of reconciliation and good news of Jesus Christ to the Jew and also the Greek. The account of the early church begins at Pentecost, where in Jerusalem the church began through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-41). After Stephen is martyred and Christians scattered through persecution, we find Christians in Judea and Samaria “going about preaching the word” (Acts 8:1-4). As Phillip “proclaimed to them the Christ,” God began to work miracles among the Samaritans, leading eventually leading to salvation and receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17). Later in this chapter we see Phillip telling “the good news about Jesus” to an Ethiopian eunuch

under the divine leading of the Spirit (Acts 8:26-40). Already we can see the gospel advance overcoming racial barriers and geographic lines from Samaritans to Ethiopians (Africans).

The missionary work of the Spirit through the early church continues in Acts 10 where we find the gospel advancing to “the ends of the earth,” fulfilling the promise made in Acts 1:8. Peter preaches the good news to the Gentiles (Acts 10:34-43) and “the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles” (Acts 10:45). The issue of Gentile inclusion became the central issue at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Peter’s proclamation was startling but also gospel sweet. He declared,

“Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:7-9).

There you have it. No distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Every barrier and division between Jews and Gentiles were torn down through the advance of the gospel and the evangelistic work of the Holy Spirit.

## **Gospel Inclusion in the Pauline Epistles**

### *Galatians*

In the book of Galatians, we see that the gospel of justification by faith carries social and ethnic implications. To be made right with God through the reconciling work of the cross leads to being made right with your redeemed brother through the reconciliation of Christ’s love and our union with Him. R.B. Hays writes,

“Paul holds forth the vision of a community of faith in which all are one in Christ (2:11-21; 3:26-29). This is not merely a matter of an isolated slogan in Gal. 3:28; it is a central theme of the letter as a whole. Jews and Gentiles are no longer divided because Christ’s death brought us together. **Therefore, all manifestations of racial and ethnic divisiveness are betrayals of ‘the truth of the gospel.’** Galatians is one of the canon’s most powerful witnesses against a culture of imperialism that excludes anyone from fellowship on the basis of criteria not rooted in the gospel.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Paul explains to the church in Galatia that the Abrahamic promise was “practically synonymous with the New Testament gospel” when he quotes Gen. 12:1-3 in Gal. 3:8.<sup>[3]</sup> J. Daniel Hays explains,

“This equation of gospel and Abrahamic promise is significant for our study of race because we found the Abrahamic promise running like a scarlet thread throughout the Scriptures, surfacing especially when the biblical authors are stressing the universality of God’s plan, his call, or his people.”<sup>[4]</sup>

In Gal. 3:14, we come to see the new aspect of the Abrahamic promise as it is now identified with the promise of the Spirit. Indeed, it is through God the Evangelist (Holy Spirit) that we have seen the gospel advance and include all the nations and peoples of the earth. Later understand that being justified in Christ means that we all have a new identity whereby the major barrier-divisions of culture, viz. ethnicity, societal status, and sexuality, are torn down (Gal. 3:26-29). Hays notes, “This was radical theology for Paul’s day because it flew in the face of all traditional cultural norms. It continues to be radical theology today because it conflicts many of our cultural norms as well. The question for us today is whether we will follow our culture or follow the teachings of Paul on this issue.”<sup>[5]</sup> The bottom line in Galatians is that justification in Christ brings a union to the body of Christ which incorporates the people of God together as a redeemed community with a new identity.

### *Ephesians*

The case for the social and racial implications of the gospel is conspicuous in Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus. We are all quite familiar with Ephesians 2:1-10, especially verses eight and nine. However, what follows (Ephesians 2:11-22) is nothing short of culture-transforming. Paul proclaims “not only that the cross produced an organic unity among the various groups in the Church, but that it also eliminated the points of hostility between the groups and reconciled them to one another.”<sup>[6]</sup> For what we see is those who were separated, alienated, strangers, with hope and without God in this world, and “far off” have been “brought near” through the cross of Christ. Whether Jew or Gentile, “far off” or “those who were near,” Jesus preached peace to all so that in him we can have access to the Father as members of the household of God. Consider these piercing words from Klyne Snodgrass.

“Nowhere is this theology more important for modern Christians than in dealing with *racial hostility*. Christians of other races are part of us, and divisions cannot be allowed to continue. The racial barrier is like a festering wound in the body of Christ . . . **Sunday is the most segregated day of the week, for Christians worship along segregated lines . . .** The perversion of both active and passive racism must be challenged and stopped . . . Racism will have to be treated on two levels, both as a general societal problem and specifically within the body of Christ. Racism in an form is prohibited by the equality of all people before God and by his unrestricted love. But the theology of the body of Christ deals with the issue at another level. The point is not merely that all Christians are *equal*; rather, the point is that all Christians have been *joined*, which has far more significance and impact.”<sup>[7]</sup>

### *Colossians*

To the church at Colossae, Paul explains that “here” is a place Christians, whether Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, all find equal standing at the foot of the cross and at the heart of God’s redemptive purposes (Col. 3:11). So where is exactly “here” that Paul is talking about? Context reveals that Paul is calling the believers to put away the old self and all of its practices and put on the new self which is being renewed in the image of its creator (Col. 3:9-10). Hays concludes, “Thus the call for destroying barriers is presented in the context of exhorting believers to leave their old ways of the world and move to the new ways

of Christ. Racial prejudices and divisions belong to the old man, the worldly culture inherited in the flesh.”[8] Putting on the new self means that there can never be an “us versus them” or insider-outsider mentality to the kingdom. All who have called upon his name are saved by sheer grace and are accepted in the Beloved by sovereign mercy.

To the churches of Galatia, Ephesus, and Colossae, Paul declares to the believers that being in Christ and justified in Christ brings a new identity and a new outlook through the lens of the gospel—a gospel of inclusion which is proclaimed to all, inviting all to the banqueting table of God’s grace. It is clear that Paul’s understanding of God’s call and mission as it related to the progress of the gospel.[9] This mission that drove Paul to do all things for the sake of the gospel, all for the glory of God, and all for the sake of the elect, was grounded in God’s purpose from the beginning of time to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among the nations (Rom. 1:5).[10]

### **Gospel Inclusion in the book of Revelation**

Lastly, we must look at the fruition of the gospel of inclusion as seen in the book of Revelation. One of the important aspects of the Revelation is its relationship to the book of Genesis. Hays notes that “Genesis 1-11 presents the initial blessing of God in the garden, followed by the rebellion of sin and of mankind, followed by separation and scattering. The Abrahamic narratives (Genesis 12-22) then present the divine solution to this problem: redemption through the Abrahamic promise.”[11] That divine solution entails the blessing of “all the *families* of the earth” (Gen. 12:3) and “all the *nations* of the earth” (Gen. 18:18). Now fast forward to the end of the story where Scripture gives us this vision (Rev. 5:9):

And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

At the conclusion of history, we see that there will be the worship of Jesus Christ from the redeemed comprised of “every tribe and language and people and nation.” This fourfold formula (tribe, language, people, and nation) occurs seven times in Revelation (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15). Richard Bauckham points out that

“in Revelation, four is the number of the world, seven is the number of completeness. The sevenfold use of this fourfold phrase indicates that the reference is being made to all the nations of the world. In the symbolic world of Revelation, there could hardly be a more emphatic indication of universalism.”[12]

The universalism that Bauckham speaks of is the completion of gospel inclusion where everyone with distinction (contrary to everyone without exception!) will be in the company of those purchased by the Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world. Hays summarizes the heavenly scene, writing:

“The consummation of God’s plan for human history includes a reversal of the judgmental aspects of Genesis for those who trust in Christ. The curse is removed; they return to the

garden to enjoy fellowship with God; and the scattered ones (every tribe, language, people, and nation), once separated from God, are now brought together under the reign of the Lamb, finding God's blessing as promised to Abraham.”[13]

## Conclusion

After having taken a brief tour through the Gospel of John, the account of the early church in Acts, the Pauline epistles, and finally the book of Revelation, the evidence is more than compelling to rejoice in the gospel of inclusion that brings the horizontal imperative of racial reconciliation and relational harmony for those united in Christ. I find the words of Hays well stated as he concludes his excellent treatment on a biblical theology of race.

“**The inclusion of all the nations of the earth into the people of God was not an afterthought by God**, or a shift in his thinking, but rather was part of his eternal plan from the beginning. Thus the mission of Paul to the nations was the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise as a redemptive solution to Genesis 3-11.

Furthermore . . . the individuals from all tribes, languages, peoples, and nations who believe are all justified in the same manner and are thus co-heirs of the kingdom and equal members of the body of Christ. However disparate we may be culturally, we are nonetheless joined together in organic unity by the Spirit. **The cross of Christ demolished all barriers between people and God, reconciling people who believe, both to God and to each other.** This horizontal reconciliation applies in particular to those Christians who differ from each other and between whom there exists traditional culture-driven hostility. Finally, the ultimate climatic view of Christ's triumphant kingdom portrays people of all races gathered together around the throne worshipping the Lamb together.

The New Testament teaching of Paul and Revelation has direct application to the racial division in the Church today. **All believers, regardless of ethnicity, are equally a part of the body of Christ, and it is important for all believers to think in this way and to come to grips with the theological implications of this reality.** Furthermore, God desires unity and reconciliation between his children. This desire of our Master is not an obscure doctrine hinted at on the fringes of Scripture, but rather a central theme that is stressed continuously throughout the New Testament. Individual prejudices and cultural-societal structures that divide Christians into groups based on skin color or other ethnic distinctions are contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. . . . **The New Testament teaches equality of all believers in regard to status and value, but it also teaches that the believer's identity should be based on Christ and not on culturally driven differentiations such as skin color.** Finally, the New Testament teaches reconciliation between Blacks and Whites and an end to the hostility between racial groups in the Church. In place of hostility, the Church is to celebrate unity in Christ through fellowship and worship.”[14]

[1]J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*. (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity), 2003.

[2]R.B. Hays, "The Letter to the Galatians" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*. vol. 11, ed. L.E. Keck. (Nasville: Abingdon, 2000), 195-96.

[3]J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 184.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., 186.

[6]Ibid., 190.

[7]Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians* (New International Version Application Commentary). (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 150-51.

[8]J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 189.

[9]For instance, see Romans 1:14-16; 5:15-21; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Gal. 1:16; 2:2, 8; Eph. 3:7-12; Col. 1:24-26; 2 Tim. 4:17.

[10]Cf. Rom.3:29-30; 9:22-26; 10:12-13; 11:11-12, 25; 15:8-12; Gal. 3:8, 13-14; 5:6; Eph.3:6; Col. 1:27; 1 Thess. 2:14-16.

[11]J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 193-94.

[12]Richard Baukham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies in the Book of Revelation*. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 336. Hays adds, "The fourfold formula clearly recalls the division of the world's peoples in Genesis 10, while the rest of the verse, including the stress on 'every nation' and the mention of the uncountable number of people, connects with the Abrahamic promise: that is, the answer to Genesis 10" (J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 198).

[13]J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 196.

[14]Ibid., 199-200.

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