

# *Is God a racist?*

The nineteenth century English authoress George Eliot wrote that, "It is much easier to say that a thing is black, than to discriminate the particular shade of brown, blue, or green, to which it really belongs. It is so much easier to make up your mind that your neighbour is good for nothing, than to enter into all the circumstances that would oblige you to modify that opinion."

In this article, I would like to explore the thorny subject of racism, to ask you to examine your feelings on it, and to compare them with God's Word.

Racism is a subject we would all prefer to avoid. But two recent events pushed the topic into the forefront of my thoughts. The first of these occurred a few months ago when, while searching in our local public library for some other music, I happened to listen to Canadian singer Neil Young's song, "Southern Man," and I was deeply moved by its lyrics:

**Southern man, better keep your head  
Don't forget what your Good Book said  
Southern change's going to come at last  
Now your crosses are burning fast.**

**I saw cotton and I saw black  
Tall white mansions and little shacks  
Southern man, when will you pay them back?  
I heard screaming and bullwhips cracking  
How long? How long?**

**Lily Belle, your hair is golden brown  
I've seen your black man coming round  
Swear by God I'm going to cut him down!  
I heard screaming and bullwhips cracking  
How long? How long?**

This song provoked much controversy when it was first released in 1970, because Young's shocking lyrics picture and recall the years of slavery in the United States and the blacks' struggle for reform in the nineteen-sixties. However, I certainly do not suggest – and I do not think that Neil Young suggested when he wrote these lyrics – that every white inhabitant of the southern (more specifically the south-eastern) United States holds extreme racist or pro-slavery views.

## ***Church of God racist?***

The second event that led to my musing on the topic of racism was a disturbing conversation with a young lady who recently – and quite suddenly – stopped attending church services. When the opportunity arose, I asked her if she would mind telling me why she stopped coming to church. Her reply truly stunned and upset me. One of her reasons, she said, was that she had perceived quite a high level of racist attitudes in our church – both in the conversation of the general membership and in the messages of the ministry!

Racism in God's true church? Surely not! Could it be true? Had this young lady merely misunderstood some discussions or sermons on the subject of God's special relationship with Israel? Or is the church of God – and the Church of the Great God in particular – racist? More questions – questions that are seemingly ludicrous: Is it acceptable to be racist? Can racism be right? Can racism be Biblical? Is God a racist?

## ***Terminology***

Let us pause for a moment and, so that there will be no misunderstanding, let us consult Merriam-Webster's Dictionary on the terminology that we will use in this article:

### **Racism:**

- 1: A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.
- 2: Racial prejudice or discrimination.

### **Racial:**

- 1: Of, relating to, or based on a race.
- 2: Existing or occurring between races.

### **Discrimination:**

- 1: The act or practice of discriminating categorically rather than individually.
- 2: Prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment.

### **Prejudice:**

- 1: Injury or damage resulting from some judgment or action of another in disregard of one's rights; especially in detriment to one's legal rights.
- 2: Preconceived judgment or opinion.
- 3: An adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge.
- 4: An irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics.

### **Intolerant:**

- 1: Unable or unwilling to endure.
- 2: Unwilling to grant equal freedom of expression.
- 3: Unwilling to grant or share social, political, or professional rights.
- 4: Bigoted.

### **Bigot:**

**Etymology:** Middle French: Hypocrite.

A person obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his or her own opinions and prejudices.

## ***More questions***

Now that our racism terminology is clarified, more questions begin to flood the mind: As physical Israelites, are we superior to physical Gentiles? For any readers who are new to our literature and web sites, let me explain that it is our belief that the Caucasian peoples of North America, the British Isles, Australasia, Southern Africa, some other Commonwealth countries and some western European nations are the descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. This is explained in more detail in "The United States and Britain in Prophecy" by the late Herbert W. Armstrong.

But, even though we have been especially blessed by God, are our white-skinned, Caucasian peoples somehow *better* than black, Hispanic, "coloured," oriental, American and Canadian Indian, and other indigenous people? (By the way, if some of my titles for the various races are politically incorrect according to the latest trends and opinions, please forgive my lack of awareness in this area. I certainly do not wish to cause offense to any individuals or groups.) Please think about this logically. Why should skin colour equate to righteousness, morality or purity? Biology, history, and anthropology all fail to bear out this absurd concept.

What about the Creator of the races and the Originator of the church of God? What does He think about racial discrimination and bigotry? Did He somehow make a mistake when He created the genes of Ham and Japheth into Adam and Eve? Quoting the apostle Paul: I speak as a fool!

Also, what about the idea of the human Jesus Christ as a target of racism? Later in this article we will mention one example when Jesus was just such a target. But if He walked among us today, would *we* discriminate against Him? Impossible, you say? During His years as a human being, Jesus Christ certainly was *not* the ivory-skinned, chestnut-tressed young man depicted in so many classical paintings and stained glass windows. He was a robust, hard-working Jew who spent much of His time in the sunshine and the open air. Recent scientific research bears out the probability that Jesus had rugged looks, dark skin and black hair and beard; also that He would have resembled a modern Hispanic or coloured person rather than a Caucasian. ([See the BBC's "Son of God" series](#))

More frank questions: Is it acceptable for us to harbour hatred for Gentile people because their skin is a different colour than ours? Or because we feel that it may be wrong for them to be in "our" countries – on "our" property?

Please do not mistake my strong opposition to racial intolerance for support for our nations' misguided immigration and multiculturalism policies. It may be true – and history may yet prove – that the leaders of our modern Israelite nations have been very wrong in allowing thousands of Gentile immigrants – both legal and illegal – within our borders. Perhaps any anger we possess on these issues, however, might be better levelled towards our politicians and lawmakers, rather than against the Gentile immigrants themselves. After all, who can blame Gentile immigrants for wishing to get out of their homelands, so wretched as some of them are, and to obtain a share of what God has blessed us with?

I will openly admit that, when it comes to the subject of Gentile people in Canada, I, like many of my fellow Canadians, see a lot of things that I personally do not approve of. Without taking the time and space to go into the details, suffice it for me to say that I do not like these conditions. I do not think they are right. But *not* because I feel that the Gentile peoples are inferior. You already know that I do not. But because I believe that this is not the way God, ideally, wants it to be. But wait! Neither are most other things in today's wretched Babylon the way God ideally wants them to be! Let us not forget this: that if God is supremely and totally sovereign, is it not He who has caused – or at the very least, allowed – all this Gentile immigration to take place? Perhaps He has caused it so that the Times of the Gentiles may be ushered in, according to prophecy:

**And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)**

**But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. (Revelation 11:2)**

Permit me to ask the same question that historian Thomas Carlyle asked in 1846, "Do military men of these times understand the wooden horse?" Like many of my countrymen, I sometimes find myself honestly wondering – with all due respect – where the loyalties of some Gentile immigrants lie. If it came to conflict between their home nations and ours, who would they fight for? Would they rise up against us from within? Again, I ask these questions with all due respect to what I hopefully believe to be the peace-loving majority of Gentile immigrants. I am certainly not one to believe in conspiracy theories but, since the horror of September 11, 2001, I sometimes even find myself speculating as to whether some Gentile people have been purposely sent here by the governments of their home nations in order to infiltrate our defences, to act friendly to us, to gain our trust, only to repeat the ancient and oft-repeated Trojan Horse trick, but on a much vaster scale.

I should add at this juncture that we should be careful not to make the mistake in assuming that racial intolerance only exists between Caucasians and Gentiles. It does not. Some of the most brutal genocides in history have been perpetrated between one Gentile race and another, some of them between neighbouring tribes of the same race. On this morning's news, it was reported that, over this past weekend, a young Filipino schoolboy in Vancouver was racially taunted and beaten to death – not by whites – but by some of his Indo-Canadian classmates!

Now, let us move the narrative to a deeper study of God's Word, which states that:

- God initiated a special status for Israel,
- God loved Jacob, yet "hated" Esau (Romans 9:13; Malachi 1:2-3),
- God favoured physical Israel, still does to a lesser extent, and will again in the future,
- God poured out His blessings upon Israel in order to fulfil His promises to Abraham,
- God blessed Gentile nations as they accepted Him, His ways, and His chosen people,
- God commanded Old Testament Israel to separate themselves from Gentiles,
- Old Testament Israel was to reject all impurity, idolatry and other sin that was extant in the Gentile nations.

On these last two points, here is a quote from Collins' "Pageant of History":

**Compared with Babylon, Egypt and Greece, the Jews did not contribute any important inventions or works of art or philosophical ideas. Their genius was expressed in the sphere of religion. So great was the gulf between their worship of one God and the debased and idolatrous cults that surrounded them that it is not surprising that they felt themselves to be unique.**

God made it very clear to Israel – His Old Testament "church" – that they were to maintain a separation between themselves and the rest of the world:

**But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. (Leviticus 20:24)**

**Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. (Ezra 10:11)**

**Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. (Jeremiah 51:6)**

God commanded the Israelites to strictly separate clean and unclean animals, as a symbol of their separation from the Gentile world:

**You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine. (Leviticus 20:25-26)**

Moses was obedient to these commands:

**For how then will it be known that your people and I have found grace in your sight, except you go with us? So we shall be separate, your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth. (Exodus 33:16)**

We know, however, that, as the years went by, Israel continually rejected her special marriage relationship with God and repeatedly refused to separate herself from Gentile culture. In similar warnings, Jesus Christ, through his apostles, commands His church – the New Testament Israel of God (Galatians 6:16) – to come out of Babylon:

**Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." (II Corinthians 6:17)**

**And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)**

It is not the Babylon of modern Iraq or other Gentile nations that God's New Testament people are to come out of, however, but the Babylon that exists *within* modern Israel: within Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, other commonwealth countries, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and other Israelitish, western European countries. The filth and paganism practiced by our modern Israelite nations today in no way sets us apart from the Gentile nations – and certainly does not set our nations *above* them. Quite the opposite, in fact! While the Gentiles desire to share what Israel has, the Israelites – both ancient and modern – have repeatedly envied and gone after what the Gentiles have and do. Just one interesting example in this regard is the manner in which millions of modern Israelites spend many hours prior to and during their vacations lying in the sun for the purpose of darkening their own skin colour!

In some respects, the Israelites have become more Gentile than the Gentiles themselves! As we have already mentioned, modern Israel continues this trend by welcoming Gentile immigrants into our nations and by encouraging them to continue their heathen practices, sugar-coating rank idolatry as mere harmless and colourful aspects of "multiculturalism." Despite claims to the contrary, our modern Israelite nations are not – and have not historically been – true Christian nations. They have failed to separate themselves from heathen cultures and practices as God commanded them.

So, once again we ask: Are our white, Caucasian, modern Israelite people inherently better than the Gentiles? Sadly, the answer must be: No. To our shame, they most certainly are not!

## ***What does God think?***

Here, once again, is the most important question in this whole discussion: What does *God* think of racial prejudice? What did Jesus Christ think of it? What, if anything, did He teach on the subject during His earthly sojourn?

As we begin looking into these questions, let us – just for now at least – assume that our friends and neighbours consist of our fellow physical Israelites and that our enemies are Gentile peoples. We will come back and modify this view later, but this has generally been the accepted idea throughout history – despite the in-fighting and sibling rivalries between various Israelite tribes in ancient and more recent times. Let us apply these notions to the section of the so-called Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus said:

**You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor [*Israelites*] and hate your enemy [*Gentiles*].’ But I say to you, love your enemies [*Gentiles*], bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,**

**that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-47)**

Here, Jesus teaches us that developing love for our enemies is a necessary part of becoming godly, perfect children of God. Luke's account puts it this way:

**But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies [*Gentiles*], do good to those who hate you,**

**bleed those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies [*Gentiles*], do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36)**

Again, we see that love for our enemies is a necessary part of becoming godly, merciful children of God. After reading these accounts, we might reason, "Very well! I will be kind and merciful to Gentile people. I will even send money to help alleviate their poverty. But only if they remain in their own homelands!" This may sound satisfactory, but it is just not the way things really are! We *do* have lots of Gentiles within our borders, and we are totally unable to change that fact. So then, because we do have many Gentiles dwelling within our borders, are we justified in hating or mistreating them? Does Jesus have anything to say about our present situation? Did the era and the area of His human sojourn experience any situations that were similar or parallel to ours? Most certainly!

## *Lessons from the Samaritans*

Let us look at a few examples regarding the people the Jews of Jesus' time despised most – the Samaritans. Who were the Samaritans? And why did the first century Jews hate them so much?

The gospel accounts of Luke and John contain quite a lot of information on these people. But first, a little background from the Old Testament. The split between Judah and the northern kingdom arose around 975 BC, in the time of Jeroboam and Rehoboam. This, of course, caused some initial animosity between north and south. At first, Samaria – meaning *watch-mountain* or *watch-tower* – was merely the name of a city in the territory of the tribe of Manasseh. It was built on the strategically well-placed "hill of Shomeron" by Israel's King Omri about 925 BC as the capital of the northern kingdom, the whole of which eventually adopted the name *Samaria*.

Between 762 and 721 BC, the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom, took its people into captivity, and replaced them with Gentile "people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim" (II Kings 17:24). The hatred began in earnest around 432 BC, when the descendants of these usurpers began intermixing with some Israelites who remained in the area, after the Aaronite Manasseh, grandson of the high priest, married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite – the Assyrian governor of Samaria. There is some disagreement amongst Bible scholars as to the origin of this Sanballat (whose name, by the way, means "sin brings life"). Some feel that he came from Horon – otherwise known as Horonaim, Choronayim, or Choronajim – a place in Moab. Others feel that he either came from – or at least resided at – Beth-horon in Samaria on the old, pre-exilic frontier between the Israelite territories of Benjamin and Ephraim. Yet others feel that he was from Persia. One thing we can be reasonably sure of, though, is that Sanballat was a Gentile. Nehemiah tells us that the Jews hated him even more because of his opposition to the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

The intermixing between the Israelites and these Gentiles led to great hatred, as the Jews, who considered themselves to be racially pure, began to spurn this new, "mongrel race" – as the Jews called the Samaritans – and any who would have anything to do with them. The Jews' loathing of the Samaritans because of their partial descendance from Gentile people may be considered somewhat hypocritical if we consider the Jews' acceptance of Ruth who was a Moabitess (Ruth 1:4, 22; 2:2, 6, 21; 4:5,10) and of Moses who had married an Ethiopian woman (Numbers 12:1).

As the Gentile supplanters had, of course, brought their paganism with them, the resultant Samaritan people concocted a bizarre mixture of old, Assyrian, heathen practices and some worship of the true God of the Israelites:

**However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put them in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities where they dwelt... So they feared the LORD, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away. (II Kings 17:29, 32-33)**

Over 700 years later, when Jesus sent His disciples out on a preaching and healing tour, He commanded that they should not visit any Samaritan or other Gentile cities:

**These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:5-6)**

On first reading these verses, we might immediately jump to the conclusion that Jesus shared His Jewish brothers' discriminatory attitude toward the Samaritans. But this command was *not* because Jesus deemed the Gentiles to be inherently inferior, but because He specifically wanted the disciples to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel – His divorced Bride – to give her a prime, first hand opportunity of regaining what she had thrown away.

At a later date, Jesus *did* send His disciples into a Samaritan village and followed them there Himself and, even though the Samaritan residents of that village rejected Him, He was compassionate to them:

**Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51-53)**

Note the reason why the Samaritans initially refused to receive Jesus. It was because they knew that He was on His way to Jerusalem. The Samaritans believed that their own Mount Gerizim – rather than the Jews' Mount Zion in Jerusalem – was the proper place of worship for the true God. Their stance was somewhat understandable if we will remember that that God had put a special blessing upon Mount Gerizim hundreds of years before the dedication of the Jerusalem temple:

**Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. (Deuteronomy 11.29)**

**And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, "These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. (Deuteronomy 27:11-13)**

Also, this difference regarding the "official" place of worship may have been one of the original reasons why Sanballat had opposed Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. Continuing in Luke chapter 9:

**And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village. (Verses 54-56)**

It appears that James and John thought that their harsh, pro-Jewish, anti-Samaritan words might gain them some "Brownie points" from Jesus. But by His compassionate and corrective words, Jesus condemned the Jews' historical treatment of the Samaritans as emulated here by these sons of thunder.

On another notable journey through Samaria, Jesus healed ten lepers, one of which was a Samaritan:

**Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:11-19)**

Notice that Jesus openly called the Samaritan leper "this foreigner." Other Bible versions translate the Greek word "allogenes" as "stranger," "one of another race," "one from a strange land," or "alien." But Jesus was not being racist in any way when He used this term. Although in our day He might likely be accused of using politically incorrect terminology, He was just telling it like it was. The man was not a Jew. He was not an Israelite. As he was a mixed-race Samaritan, he was considered to be a Gentile. Jesus *was*, however, making a definite point by His implication that the other nine lepers, who we may assume to have been Jews, should have known better and should have led with an example of thankfulness. Despite the leper's nationality, Jesus was kind to him, rewarded him for His faith and his thankfulness, and caused Luke to bear everlasting record that it was the foreign, Gentile Samaritan alone who made the effort to seek Jesus out to thank Him for His healing.

## ***Who are our friends and neighbours?***

Earlier in this article, we made a temporary and theoretical assumption that all our fellow physical Israelites are our natural friends and neighbours, and that all physical Gentiles are our natural enemies. Was this a correct assumption? Jesus thinks not, as is shown in the clear lesson contained in His well-known parable of the Good Samaritan:

**And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor? (Luke 10:25-29)**

Here we are told the "specific purpose statement" for the parable of the Good Samaritan. It was to make known to this lawyer – and to us – who are our friends and neighbours, and how to differentiate between true friends and enemies.

**Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. (Verses 30-31)**

Please note that this priest was a fellow-Israelite of the wounded man – an Israelite of the tribe of Levi and of the sub-tribe of Aaron. We don't know the nationality of the victim – the "certain man" – but we may assume that he was a Jew. Neither does Jesus tell us the nationality of his attackers.

**Likewise a Levite when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. (Verse 32)**

Notice once again, this man was a member of the tribe of Levi; he was another fellow-Israelite. As Israelites and as full-time servants of God and His people, both the priest and the Levite would have been expected to possess more in the area of compassion.

**But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Verses 33-37)**

What are the lessons for us here? One lesson is that one's friend and neighbour can be anyone who treats us well. Anyone! Even a foreigner, a Gentile, a person of a despised, "mongrel" race! Also, that one's enemy is anyone who mistreats us – even a fellow-Israelite – a person of our own race and nationality. Who then should we consider to be our friends? And who, in turn, should we be friendly towards? Fellow Caucasian Israelites? Fellow Israelites who might stab us in the back, rape us, or rob us? Or peace-loving, law-abiding Gentiles, such as Africans, Orientals, Hispanics, native Indians – even Iraqis – who treat us kindly?

It is very bad judgment and totally *wrong* for us to tar every person of any race with the same brush. As Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan shows us, there are good and bad people in every race.

## ***The woman at the well***

In the fourth chapter of his gospel account, John, the apostle of love, describes a remarkable conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman:

**He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. (John 4:3-4)**

Why did Jesus *need* to go through Samaria? Was it just because the usual route would take Him that way? Or was it, perhaps, so that He could meet this woman?

**So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." (Verses 5-7)**

Now ladies, please don't get the wrong impression! Jesus was not being a racist or a chauvinist when He said this. The woman was a water-carrier. Even though she did not like it (as we will find out a little later), drawing water was her job.

**For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. (Verses 8-9)**

Can we see how incredibly deep-seated was the Jews' hatred of the Samaritans? Considering the hundreds of years of animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans, this woman was shocked that Jesus would have anything at all to do with her.

Notice also that she instantly recognized Jesus as being a Jew. There is no record that He *told* her that He was a Jew, so how did she know? There must have been something about His accent or His physical appearance that proved it to her. Was the skin colour of a Jew lighter than that of a Samaritan? Or perhaps darker? When I recently looked at photographs of modern day Samaritans on their official web-site ([www.the-samaritans.com](http://www.the-samaritans.com)), I was surprised to see that they generally look quite light-skinned.

**Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" (Verses 10-12)**

The Samaritan woman claimed descendency from Jacob through the Israelite (possibly Levitical) branch of her ancestors.

**Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."  
(Verses 13-15)**

You see, she didn't like her job!

**Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."  
(Verses 16-18)**

It is a very significant fact that the Samaritan woman had had five husbands and the one she then had (but initially denied that she had) was illicit. As well as indicating that certain remnants of godless, immoral, heathen practices were still mixed into the Samaritan way of life, it also fits with the fact that one of the Samaritans' most urgent problems was – and still is, to this day – the continuation of their people. The Encyclopedia Britannica article "Samaritans" informs us that the Samaritan population is so small that the people have great difficulty finding acceptable spouses, while staying within the bounds of God's rules regarding whom one may and may not marry:

**Their principal problem is how to perpetuate themselves without infringing the forbidden degrees of marriage.**

Continuing in John chapter 4:

**The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." (Verses 19-20)**

As mentioned earlier, a long-standing bone of contention between Samaritans and Jews is that the Samaritans believe that the true place for God's temple is on Mount Gerizim, not on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The Samaritans did have a temple on Mount Gerizim and, to this very day, they still sacrifice their Passover lambs there.

**Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. (Verses 21-22)**

Again, in saying this, Jesus in no way intimated that the Jews were inherently any better than the Samaritans. He very well knew that subsequent events in His own life would prove that Jews could be just as wicked, cruel and murderous as any other people:

**"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this." (John 8: 37-40)**

Rather, He was just stating the simple fact that salvation is of the Jews. A few phrases later, He told her exactly *which Jew* salvation is of. Continuing in chapter 4 of John's gospel account:

**But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:23-24)**

Jesus pointed out to the woman that the physical location of worship is of lesser importance than is the spirit of true worship. He also intimated that the physical location would soon become of even lesser importance due to the imminent destruction of the Jerusalem temple, which would occur in 70 AD.

**The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" (Verses 25-27)**

Jewish chauvinism and hatred of the Samaritans was so great and so deep-rooted that even Jesus' disciples were amazed that He would spend any of His precious time talking to a woman – and a Samaritan woman at that!

**The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him. (Verses 28-30)**

By this time, the woman was pretty well convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah. She went and told this to the Samaritan men – probably their rulers and priests. While she was away, Jesus made this observation to His disciples:

**Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! (Verse 35)**

They were still in Samaria when He said this. Although there may have been some duality in the statement, the spiritual harvest He was referring to directly was that of the hated, mixed-race Samaritans! Jesus knew that this group of despised Samaritans would welcome and accept Him and His message:

**And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.**

**And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." (Verses 39-42)**

These mixed-race people – part Israelite and part Gentile – were more accepting of Jesus than were His own people, either in Galilee or in Judea.

About a year after this incident, Jesus Himself was called *a Samaritan* by some Jews who had up to this point believed on Him, but now were turning against Him:

**Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed."... Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (John 8:31, 48)**

These Jews called Jesus "a Samaritan" as an abusive epithet, perhaps because of His home and upbringing in Nazareth which was situated in the northern area of the old northern kingdom; perhaps because they were aware of His supposed lineage from Ruth, the Moabitess (Matthew 1:5; Luke 3:32); or perhaps because they knew that He did not, as we have seen, hesitate to spend time with and communicate compassionately with the Samaritan people; but also, no doubt, because He told them, as the Samaritans did, that the Jewish leaders and their methods were not of God. As in the conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well, He did not side with the specific arguments of the Samaritans against the Jews, but making it appear so may have been another excuse for the Jews to accuse Him. One can better understand why the Jewish authorities hated Jesus so much, assuming that they were aware that He conversed with the hated Samaritans and that He was repeatedly conciliatory to them. Likewise, we can understand the additional hatred of the Jews for the new Christian church when its members continued Jesus' example by taking His message to many Samaritan villages:

**So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. (Acts 8:25)**

There were no people more hated by the Jews than were the Samaritans. But Jesus and the early church loved them and did not treat them as inferior. This was quite a turnaround for Jesus' disciples. We have seen what their previous attitudes to the Samaritans had been. This remarkable change in them is further evidence of the vast power and effectiveness of God's Holy Spirit.

## ***No difference to God***

The main purpose of this article has been to ask you to compare your views on the subject of racism with those of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and to work towards lining up your attitudes with theirs. In this last section, I would like to add to Jesus' views on racism, those of the apostles who, as we have already seen, made a point of visiting many Samaritan villages in order to preach the gospel. Let us now look at some other New Testament scriptures – specifically in Paul's letters – which show beyond the shadow of a doubt that, to God, as regards access to conversion and salvation, there is no difference between Israelites and Gentiles.

But was it not Paul, in his letter to the Roman congregations (Romans 9:13), who quoted Malachi 1:2-3, and reminded them that God had said, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated"? Of course it was. But we must be careful not to take this verse out of its proper context, in which Paul repeatedly stresses that Israel had rejected Jesus Christ, along with the truth and salvation He brought with Him. Let us examine a few other relevant verses from this same letter:

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. (Romans 1:16)**

**But glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 2:10)**

On initial reading, and considering the word "first," these two verses may appear to state that God gives the Jewish Christians a priority and a better opportunity for salvation than He does the Gentile Greeks. But this is not the case. As we have already seen, Jesus *had already* given Israel – His beloved but wayward and estranged Bride – the first opportunity for reconciliation with Him. Most Israelites had rejected that opportunity (Luke 13:34). They still do so today! So, through His Holy Spirit, God had moved His promise from physical Israel to spiritual Israel – His new Bride and His church – and had, beginning with Cornelius, given the physical Gentiles the opportunity to be grafted into it (Acts 10:1-48; Romans 11:11-26).

The benefits the Jewish Christians *did* have were the treasure-trove of true knowledge that God had given them over the centuries, and the fact that they were less burdened with mountains of heathen superstitions to unlearn, than were the Gentile Greek converts. But because of these benefits, the Jews – and the other eleven Israelite tribes – also were subject to a sterner judgment than were the Gentiles:

**God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek. (Romans 2:5-9)**

As we saw earlier with the healing of the ten lepers, Jesus expected more from the Israelites than He did from the Gentiles, weighed down as they were with all their heathen baggage. Just one more verse from Romans chapter 2:

**For there is no partiality with God. (Verse 11)**

Please read that again. There is no partiality with God! Once again from the same letter:

**For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. (Romans 10:12)**

No distinction! The King James Version has it as, "No difference." We have many brothers and sisters in the church of God who are physical Gentiles. We in the Church of the Great God have physical Gentile brothers and sisters in Trinidad and Tobago, the Philippines, Africa, Australia, and right here in North America. We can be totally sure that God does not love them any less than He does His physical Israelite children.

Another point to ponder is this: How do you and I know that we are one hundred percent "pure" Israelite? Have you been able to trace – with total accuracy – your family tree back to Ephraim, Manasseh, Dan, or whatever other Israelite tribe you think your family came from? Even if you have (which is doubtful), does it make any difference to God whether you are a physical Israelite or a physical Gentile? Paul answers this question in his letter to the Galatian congregation:

**There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)**

"All one," Paul writes! He is promoting unity between Israelite and Gentile church brethren. He implies that for anyone to say that Gentiles have no right to salvation is as ludicrous as saying that women have no right to salvation. Anyone who does not like the idea of having physical Gentiles as his spiritual brothers and sisters had better take it up with God Himself, because He is the One who has made the decision! From Paul's letter to his Colossian brethren:

**Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.  
(Colossians 3:11)**

No separation. No difference. Just total unity through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit.

It is not the purpose of this article to pass judgment on any reader for his or her views on this complex issue. I understand very well that your thoughts on these things – like mine – have been shaped by a whole lifetime of experiences, which cannot possibly be wiped out in the few moments it takes to read this article. I want to repeat to you that I do not agree with many of our governments' destructive open immigration, multiculturalism and globalization policies, nor do I agree with the reverse discrimination that Caucasian people experience in this country and in other modern Israelite nations. If we were citizens of the world, we might be "free" to become involved with the governments of our nations, and to struggle to resolve some of these problems. It is likely, however, that the people who are active in these struggles are swimming against impassable currents, and are futilely and unknowingly working against God's will, as it appears that He is using these conditions to shape the course of end-time history. We need to keep reminding ourselves that we are *not* citizens of this world! We are citizens and ambassadors of the Kingdom of God and, as such, we cannot play any part with – or even against – the governments of this world, and we must realize that, according to God's will, these problems will probably get much worse before they get any better.

There are two possible outcomes: One is that these immigration and multiculturalism problems will contribute heavily towards the downfall of our Israelitish nations. The other is that the problems will get so bad that they will contribute to our peoples' acceptance of the Beast power which will rise up speaking great things (Daniel 7:8; Revelation 13:5) and so much of what seems like common-sense, perhaps including the correction and reversal of these destructive policies.

Whatever the outcome, we need to examine our own hearts and minds and compare them with those of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the apostles. What physical people have we disliked the most? For most of us, it is probably not the Greeks, the Scythians or the Samaritans. Perhaps it is the blacks, the Hispanics, the Mexicans, the East Indians, the American Indians, or the Orientals. We must stop treating them – or even thinking of them – as inferior.

"How long?" Neil Young asks in his song. How long will it be before *we* stop thinking of people of other races as inferior? Must we wait until Christ's return, when He will demand that we follow His example in regard to racial prejudice and intolerance? Or, as Jesus' disciples did, can we begin right away to use the power of God's Holy Spirit to turn our dislike into true, Christian love?

How long will it be before we are able to love *all* peoples as Jesus Christ does and as God the Father does?

How long?

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