

interacial marriage

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Because racism is so prevalent, and some believe that interracial marriage is prohibited in Scripture, (throughout the Old Testament), the question 'should we marry people outside our culture' is very important.

a simple answer?

We could answer straight away by stating the fact that none of us is "pure" ethnically as we all have ancestors from different parts of the world making any arguments against intermarrying seem futile. However, there are practical problems that arise from this kind of relationship and we should look at what the Bible says before making any quick decisions.

Solomon was judged for marrying, not simply foreign women, but foreign women who believed in false gods. In fact, in the Old Testament provisions were made for Gentiles to convert to Judaism (cf. Exodus 12:48, 49).

Actually, the prohibitions were not strictly against Jewish-Gentile marriages as racial mixture, but against believer-unbeliever marriages (cf. Deuteronomy 7:3).

One should also remember both Rahab and Ruth, Gentile women of faith; they were both accepted into the community of believers (they are even in the genealogical line of Jesus! Matthew 1:5).

"But," someone may say, "the New Testament prohibits being unequally yoked. Therefore, people of different races shouldn't marry."

The passage being referred to here is 2 Corinthians 6:14f. This is where the apostle Paul rhetorically asks, "What fellowship hath light with darkness?" In accordance with the Old Testament teaching, Paul is simply prohibiting believers from intimate fellowship with unbelievers. The context speaks nothing of skin color.

There are absolutely no grounds in either the Old Testament or the New Testament to prohibit interracial marriages.

Thankfully, God does not judge humans by external appearances. Though humans have a tendency to judge people by how they look, including skin color, God is not that blind and judges the heart. The beauty of God's judgment is that he is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34), and thus we are to judge the same way (1 Timothy 5:21; James 3:17).

God has created all things, including the color of our skin (Genesis 1-2). We all come from the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. The apostle Paul taught the same when he declared that God created all things, that He is the Lord of heaven and earth, and that He made all nations from one man, Adam (Acts 17:24-26).

Sometime after Adam and Eve fell, God established a covenant with Abraham. This covenant was intended to be international in scope -- irrespective of cultural boundaries or skin color, that through Abraham's offspring ("seed") all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-4).

The prophets of the Old Testament longed for the time when both Gentiles and Jews would stream unto the Lord, when the Messiah would be a light unto the Gentiles as well as the Jews, when God would pour out his Spirit on all peoples (cf. Psalm 2:7-8; 22:27-28; Isaiah 2:1ff.; 42:6; 49:6; Joel 2:28ff.)

These hopes and promises have been fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul tells us that the promised seed of Abraham was Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). The beauty of the ministry of Christ is that in him there are no barriers between Jew and Gentile, slave and freeman, male and female (Galatians 3:28); there is neither circumcised or uncircumcised, Barbarian or Scythian in Christ (Colossians 3:11). And those who become followers of Jesus are part of Abraham's seed and heirs of His (Galatians 3:29).

On the day of Pentecost, God began to pour out His Spirit on all people (Acts 2; fulfilling Joel 2:28ff.).

The early ministry of the apostles was hindered to the extent that they failed to see that Gentiles were to be accepted into the body of Christ, without being converted to Judaism first (Acts 10:14, 28; 11:2-3, 8).

But God himself confirmed this fact through mighty works among the Gentiles (Acts 10:3, 11-13, 19-20, 22b, 30-33, 44-46; 11:5-10, 13, 15-17). The church responded to God's work and will with obedience, acknowledging joyfully the full inclusion of Gentiles into the body of Christ (cf. Acts 11:18). Philip even baptized an Ethiopian man, who was probably black (Acts 8:26ff.).

Oh, and if you recall, in a heavenly vision, the apostle John was able to see clearly the plan of God fulfilled. Here, before the throne of God and the Lamb, in heaven, a great multitude was standing arrayed: they were from every nation, tribe, people and language (Revelation 7:9ff.). This inspiring scene accords perfectly with our Lord's greatest commission, "go and make disciples of the nations" (Matthew 28:18f.).

So, we have seen that there is no prohibition against interracial marriages in the Bible. We have also seen that God's plan of salvation includes drawing his people from every nation, tribe, people and language.

May we have this same desire, eschewing all forms of racism and ungodly prejudice.

Other thoughts . . .

For anyone considering marrying a person with different skin color or from a different culture, there are things that must be taken into consideration.

First, there will be opposition and condemnation from some people in society.

Second, children of interracial marriages are sometimes discriminated against and teased.

Thirdly, people from differing cultures have unusual differences to overcome. Often, intercultural marriages, more than interracial marriages (for not all people from different cultures differ in the color of their skin), encounter greater difficulties within the relationship. Cultural practice and prejudice is often more difficult to overcome than is skin color.

Last, as the old saying goes, when you marry the person, you marry the whole family. One must be prepared to possibly encounter familial ostracization and condemnation.

But all of these difficulties have been encountered by Christians for almost two millennia, though often for reasons other than interracial marriage.

