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Does the Bible Support Racism? (Part II)

Titus 3:1-2: (NRSV) *¹Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone.*

Special Guests: Jerry Brunson and Ron Mitchell from the Soul Tempo Singers



A few weeks ago we began a conversation about racism and its origins. We talked about the mythical "Curse of Ham" which led to a mythical subduing of the black race. All of that said, we also looked at some history and effects of racism over the last 1,500 years and asked plainly, does God show any kind of a racist approach to humanity? This week we want to continue looking at this difficult and sensitive subject through the lens of scriptural understanding and truth.

Please see our program from January 18, 2015 entitled, "*Does the Bible Support Racism? (Part I).*" First, a quick review from Part I:

(Source: Blog "The Origins of the Curse of Ham," by Jeremy Pierce, April 22, 2008)

...The people who first came up with this justification for slavery of Africans were very early Muslims, and that view was dominant within the Islamic world (but not outside it) for 100 years until it spread to Europeans via eventually colonial Americans began to adopt it. So it wasn't even initially a misreading of the Bible. The relevant parts of the Qur'an don't mention Ham at all, so it's not even a misreading of the Qur'an. It's simply a fabrication in order to justify the kind of slavery Muslims had been imposing on black Africans.

To understand this "Curse of Ham" business, we need to establish the context.

What is unusual about this text? Genesis 9:18-19: Why is only *one* of Noah's 16 grandsons, Canaan, mentioned here? Genesis 9:20-23: This is a good lesson in generational respect and honoring our mothers and fathers.

There was a mockery and disrespect displayed on the part of Ham: Genesis 9:24-27: We found that Noah, in fact, cursed Canaan prophetically as he and his posterity became very evil and were eventually wiped out. We also confirmed that Canaan had nothing whatsoever to do with the black race. However, this concept was used to justify the evil of slavery.

God DID choose who He would bless. God favors those who follow and obey Him.

Abraham - another "favorite" of God was given the first promise of unique far-reaching favor: Genesis 12:1-3: Why was Abram given this unprecedented promise? He was willing to follow God!

Abram would be tested on his dedication, especially with the test regarding Isaac: Genesis 22:18

So, if God favored people, how did He treat those who were *not* favored?

God's direction gives a blanket command of compassion upon the less fortunate: Leviticus 19:9-10

God's direction gives a very general application and focus on the individual rights of each man: Exodus 21:16

God's direction inherently contains the warning against all abuse: Exodus 21:26-27

God's direction presents common respect for all men: Leviticus 19:33-34

God's direction instructs compassionate treatment of all: Deuteronomy 5:14: (Slaves mentioned twice to make the point of compassion!)

God's direction allows the people of Israel to live in a world of sin and deal with other peoples who would have been enemies in a firm way, yet with all of the above requirements: Leviticus 25:44-46: This was society in those days, with no middle class. Indentured servitude gave people the opportunity to stay alive. God gave Israel guidelines on how to handle this situation. In exchange for work, slaves were given food, shelter and respectful treatment. Notice, there is no provision to sell the slave - permanency yes, for sale, no. Why? Citizenship has its advantages as well as the circumstances of war and crime:



(Source: McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia) (II.) Non-Hebrew Slaves. (1.) The majority of non-Hebrew slaves were war captives, either the Canaanites who had survived the general extermination of their race under Joshua, or such as were conquered from the other surrounding nations (<043126> Numbers 31:26 sq.) ... And others may have been resident foreigners who were reduced to this state either by poverty or crime.

Servitude in the Old Testament under the Jewish Law was a way for less fortunate people to survive and thrive in society. There were even provisions made for those who never wanted to leave their masters because they loved them so much; they could dedicate their lives to service. Imagine you were treated well enough that you never wanted to leave! That was the picture of Old Testament servitude. That is not the same as today.

**So, how do these guidelines change in the New Testament?
Is there a new way and a new message?**

John 8:32: (NASB) *and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*

RICK: On the line with us now are Jerry Brunson and Ron Mitchell of Soul Tempo. Good morning, Jerry and Ron! First of all, Jerry and Ron, who are you? Who is and what is Soul Tempo? Let's start with that.

JERRY: Well, Soul Tempo is an inspirational vocal group from New Haven, Connecticut, and we've been around a little over 20 years now. It is just a blessing to be able to spread the gospel to people throughout the country and around the world. It consists of four members. And it's just a blessing what we do. God has truly put us together, and we just enjoy ourselves. We produce records and write songs. We just go out and share our blessing with people and try to give people hope and words of inspiration through song. That's what Soul Tempo really consists of.

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Our accountability to God is reflected through all aspects of our life: Titus 3:1-2: (NASB)

¹Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, ²to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

This is God's proclamation through the Apostle Paul on how people should be seen one to another: Galatians 3:23-29: (NASB) *²³But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.*

Several weeks ago, we talked about individually dealing with, approaching and combating racist attitudes. There is a four-step process to do that.

1. Enlightenment: Titus 3:1-5: (NRSV) *¹Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone. RICK: This is enlightenment from a scriptural standpoint. It is saying, okay, remind them they are living in a different environment now because of Christ. ³For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. ⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*



2. **Empowerment:** Titus 3:6: *This Spirit He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

3. **Choice:** Titus 3:7: *so, that having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

All in Christ are equal - no matter what their status is otherwise: 1 Corinthians 12:12-20: (NASB) ¹²*For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If the foot says, because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear says, because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. ¹⁹If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰But now there are many members, but one body.*

4. **New Life:** Titus 3:8: *The saying is sure. I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone.*

*So, does the Bible support racism?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*