

CHAPTER 7

The Lord's Hatred of Racism; the Lord's Love of Brotherhood

Presented by Rick Davis May 30, 2006
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I. Our Nation's Laws and Constitution

I love my country. I thank God that I live in this country. For all its faults that the media persistently reports about it, I think that this is the best place to be. Over the centuries, we have had some great, noble-minded leaders. One of my favorite people, in fact, one of my heroes, is Abraham Lincoln. As you know, he was President of the United States during and after the Civil War until he was assassinated. He is best known for the Emancipation Proclamation, a presidential order that freed the slaves in all of the states in rebellion. Lincoln was moved to do this as fulfillment of a promise to God.

On July 10, 1858, as part of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Lincoln said in a speech the following:

My friend has said to me that I am a poor hand to quote Scripture. I will try it again, however. It is

said in one of the admonitions of the Lord, 'As your Father in Heaven is perfect, be ye also perfect.' The Savior, I suppose, did not expect that any human creature could be perfect as the Father in Heaven.... He set that up as a standard, and he who did most toward reaching that standard, attained the highest degree of moral perfection. So I say in relation to the principle that all men are created equal, let it be as nearly reached as we can. If we cannot give freedom to every creature, let us do nothing that will impose slavery upon any other creature.

At a speech given at Lewistown, Illinois on August 17, 1858, Lincoln criticized the ethical neutralism of his opponent, Stephen Douglas. Lincoln referred specifically to slavery in a speech that was an appeal to the deeper meaning of the Declaration of Independence and to the original thirteen colonies. Hear what Lincoln said:

These communities, by their representatives in old Independence Hall, said to the whole world of men: "We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This was their majestic interpretation of the economy of the Universe. This was their lofty and wise and noble understanding of the justice of the Creator to His creatures. Yes, gentlemen, to *all* His creatures, to the whole great family of man. In their enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest

posterity. They erected a beacon to guide their children and their children's children, and the countless myriads who should inhabit the earth in other ages.

Lincoln firmly believed that the dignity of man is derivative. That is to say that Lincoln did not see man as good in and of himself. He saw that man derives his own glory from being created in the image of the living God.

Abraham Lincoln loved God and feared God. He also revered the Constitution and took his oath of office very seriously. Many people have forgotten that the Emancipation Proclamation only applied to the slaves in the rebel states. He knew that he had the authority to declare their freedom in states that were in rebellion and where martial law could be said to exist (even though the Union certainly did not control much of the territory in the South when the proclamation was issued).

But Lincoln also knew that he did not have the authority, under the Constitution, to free slaves that may be present in what were usually free states. He knew that a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery could (and would) come later, but he did what he could lawfully do during the time of war. His proclamation was not all that was needed, but it was a strong move in the right direction.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul said, "Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11). Abraham Lincoln exhorted Americans to aim for the very things that Paul said that the Corinthian Christians should.

So have we, as a nation, reached that highest degree of moral perfection of which Lincoln spoke as it relates to respecting our fellows regardless of race? Obviously, we have not. Yet, if we love God, we ought to continue to seek that end. For it is an expression of love for God and to our

fellow man when we truly act like we believe that all men were created equal, and we love each other without regard to race, parentage, or skin color.

II. The Holy Law of God

Now, we know that the United States Constitution and the Texas Constitution define and protect our rights. We know also that all of our federal and state laws protect our rights and govern our conduct, oftentimes by telling us what is against the law to do.

All of us have violated the law in some respect, some in bigger ways, some in smaller ways. Some have only committed traffic violations; some people have committed very serious, very cruel crimes. But if a person violates the law, is sentenced after conviction, and then serves the complete sentence, does the law have any further hold on the man? No, no additional punishment can be assessed for that previous violation of the law.

But the law of God is altogether different from man's law. Granted, it does tell us things that we should not do. Yet, all of us at some point have violated God's law, some in bigger ways, and some in smaller ways. Can any one of us say that we have fully paid the penalty for even one of our violations of God's holy law?

If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that we have not and that we cannot. The Bible says that the eyes of God are too pure even to look upon evil. Thus, if we are to stand before God and have fellowship with Him, we have to be made pure.

This brings us to the purpose of God's law. God's law is not so much to provide us with a checklist of things to do. Instead, God's law makes us painfully and dreadfully aware of our need for a Savior. The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 7:13, "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righ-

teous and good.” But we also see in Psalm 19:7, “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.”

That’s from the NIV. The NKJV translates the verse: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.” What is it that revives or converts the soul? Why, Scripture is very clear: it is the law of the Lord.

John Bunyan, the author of that Christian classic *Pilgrim’s Progress*, said, “The man who does not know the nature of the Law cannot know the nature of sin.” Likewise, Martin Luther said, “The first duty of the gospel preacher is to declare God’s Law and show the nature of sin.”³⁵

John Wesley said “The first use of [the Law], without question, is to convince the world of sin. By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig-leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is ‘wretched and poor and miserable, blind and naked.’ The Law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His ‘mouth is stopped’ and he stands ‘guilty before God.’”³⁶

Much of modern Christianity and many churches have forgotten this powerful and necessary truth. Jesus is often preached as the great life enhancer. “Give your heart to Jesus, and He will give you love, joy, peace, and happiness... He will heal your drinking problem, your drug problem, your marital problem, your problem with anger” and so forth. To be sure, faith in Jesus Christ changes us from the inside out, but we have to come to Jesus in humility with a humble heart.

With the law of God, God breaks the hard heart. With the gospel, God heals the broken heart. Friends, if I examine myself and you examine yourself in the light of the Ten Commandments, you and I can see that we deserve hell. We deserve God’s eternal punishment.

The holiness of God is so great that His justice requires sin to be punished wherever it is found. Because the justice of God is so thorough, so complete, so overwhelming, so dreadful, we see that we are in desperate need of the mercy

of God. And how is it that we obtain the mercy of God? We obtain it by faith in Jesus Christ. The law was given to make us aware of our need for a Savior and to show us what we would do if we truly loved God.

III. The Greatest Commandment

Now let us consider the passage in Matthew when Jesus was asked the greatest commandment in the law.

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:37-40

What is it that God really wants? God wants us to love Him and to love our fellow man. He wants us to love Him more passionately than any lover.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is about God’s creating a bride for Himself out of mankind. Think about it. When God created woman, he put Adam into a deep sleep. Then God opened his side and took out a rib and created woman. The woman is the counterpart to man. In the same way, the church is the counterpart to Jesus Christ.

The Bible is one great love story. The most erotic book in the Bible is the Song of Solomon. Solomon’s bride is the Shulamite woman. Do you realize that the Hebrew word Shulamite is simply the feminine version of the Hebrew word for Solomon?

God is preparing us, that is, we believers, to be the bride of Christ. Just as God opened the side of Adam to create

woman for man, God opened the side of Jesus Christ when he hung on the cross. Out of Jesus' side flowed blood and water: blood for the redemption from sin and judgment, water to symbolize the life-giving Holy Spirit. Everything that happens to us happens to fulfill God's purpose in our lives and to perfect us as His bride.

Do you see how the law of God not only makes us aware of our need for a Savior, but also shows us what our actions would be like if we truly loved God and our neighbor? It teaches the nature and intent of the second greatest commandment.

If I love my neighbor, I will not pursue his wife in any kind of improper relationship. If I love him, I will want to strengthen his relationship with his wife, and my actions towards him will further that. If I love God, I will not even think improper thoughts about his wife because that would dishonor God and reveal that I am also discontent with the life that God has provided for me. It would be as if I were saying, "God, your love is not enough for me."

If I love my neighbor, I will not steal his possessions. Usually, his possessions represent his or his family member's hard work. If I, indirectly, am forcing one to work to replace what I have stolen, I have put that person into a form of slavery. If I love God, then I will not even covet (or earnestly desire) my neighbor's possessions.

If I love my neighbor, I will not lie to him because lies are the tools of the enemy, Satan. Lies also offend our heavenly Father, for God is Spirit and his worshipers must worship him in Spirit and in truth. Jesus even said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me" (John 14:6).

If I love my God, I will honor my parents, because I know that this pleases God. I will love my earthly parents even if they are not worthy of love because they did not provide for me, they abandoned me, or they abused me. Instead, I

will love them with the compassion of God with the fervent hope that they may come to repentance, repenting of the sins that they may have done, and with the fervent hope that they would come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

If I love God, I will not take His name in vain, for His name is above all names and He is worthy of all power, honor, glory, and majesty. Also, if I love my neighbor, I will not take God's name in vain, because I don't want to lead my neighbor to disrespect God or lack a desire to love God.

If I love God, I will not put anyone or anything before Him: not my wife, not my children, not my possessions, nothing. For if I love God, I will recognize that every good and perfect gift is from above, and even the hardships that I endure come with the permission of my loving Father, that He may draw me closer to Himself.

There is none but Christ. Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, and is the magnificent expression of God's sacrificial love for us.

IV. The Lord's Hatred of Racism

Let us move on to the primary message. God hates racism. We can see this clearly in His Word. The Bible is clear that God is not a respecter of persons. He does not show favoritism. During the formation of the early church, and after it was revealed to Peter that the gospel of Jesus Christ is for the Gentiles (non-Jews) as well as the Jews, Peter said in Acts 10:34-35, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right." (The King James Version renders this sentence "God is not a respecter of persons.")

Second, Paul wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28-29). Thus, in

the eyes of God, it makes no difference if a believer is a man or woman, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, or any other race. We who believe in Jesus Christ are all one in Him.

The Bible is also very clear that Jesus will come a second time to the earth. The first time he came as a suffering servant. The second time he will come as a conquering king. Terrible times will come upon the earth before Jesus' second coming (2 Tim. 3:1-5), and things will go from bad to worse as the time draws nearer. When describing the times shortly before His return, Jesus said in Matthew 24:4-8:

Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

The Greek word in this passage that is translated "nation" is *ethnos*. *Ethnos* could also be accurately translated as "ethnic group." I bring this verse to your attention to show you that Jesus lists ethnic group rising up against ethnic group among all of the bad things coming upon the earth. The Lord lists racism as a bad thing.

For an even more vivid and powerful Biblical illustration of God's attitude towards racism, we should go back to the Old Testament. Remember that Miriam was Moses' sister, and Aaron was their brother. Remember also that Moses was very close to God: "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend" (Ex. 33:11).

There came a time when Miriam instigated grumbling against her brother Moses, apparently resenting his position, and she led Aaron to do the same. They used the fact that

Moses had married an Ethiopian woman as an excuse for criticism (some Bible translations use the phrase “Cushite woman” but it is generally accepted that Cush is what is now known as Ethiopia). The account is found in Numbers 12:1-3 (NKJV):

Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. So they asked “Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it. (Now Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)

God summoned Miriam and Aaron to appear before Him. He rebuked them and, apparently because Miriam was the chief instigator, God afflicted her with leprosy. In Numbers 12:10-13 it is written: “When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam—leprous, like snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had leprosy; and he said to Moses, ‘Please, my lord, do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. Do not let her be like a still-born infant coming from its mother’s womb with its flesh half eaten away.’ Moses cried out to the LORD, ‘O God, please heal her!’”

From this passage, we see that Moses had married a woman whose skin was probably very black. It is easily and reasonably inferred that God has no problem with interracial marriages. Thus, we should not have any problem with them either. God punished Miriam for speaking against both Moses’ authority and Moses’ Ethiopian wife.

But the nature of Miriam’s punishment reveals even more than that. In order to understand the significance of the nature of Miriam’s punishment, it is useful to look at another circumstance immediately preceding this one to

see how God sometimes dealt with those who grumbled against Him.

Consider when the Israelites wandered in the desert and grumbled against God and craved meat.

The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, “If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!”

Numbers 11:4-6

In Numbers 11:18-20 Moses said, “Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, when you will eat meat. The LORD heard you when you wailed, ‘If only we had meat to eat! We were better off in Egypt!’ Now the LORD will give you meat, and you will eat it. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it—because you have rejected the LORD, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt?’”

How God dealt with the grumbling Israelites and gave them what they asked for is set forth in Numbers 11:31-34:

Now a wind went out from the LORD and drove quail in from the sea. It brought them down all around the camp to about three feet above the ground, as far as a day’s walk in any direction. All that day and night and all the next day the people went out and gathered quail. No one gathered less than ten homers. Then they spread them out all around the camp. But while the meat was still between their teeth and before it could be consumed, the anger of the LORD burned

against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague. Therefore the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had craved other food.

Men, do you see the significance of the nature of God's punishment? When the people complained about not having anything but manna, God said, in essence, "You want meat? I will give you so much meat that you will be repulsed by it; it will come out of your noses."

Now look how God rebuked Miriam in light of this passage that immediately precedes the account of Miriam's grumbling against Moses and his Ethiopian wife. Miriam resented Moses and used his interracial marriage as a pretext to criticize him and stir up trouble against him. She appealed to the peoples' inner, ungodly prejudices and looked down on Moses' wife because she was darker in appearance.

Miriam was presumably light skinned in appearance. As her punishment, God made her leprous, white as snow. It is as if God were saying to her, "You think you are so special because you are white? I will make you white as snow, and your flesh will appear hideous, half eaten away."

There were only three other occasions in the Bible where a person was afflicted with leprosy as a form of discipline. They were Gehazi, Elisha's servant (2 Kings 5:27), King Azariah (2 Kings 15:5), and King Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:19). In all three of these other cases, the men showed contempt for the holiness and grace of God. Miriam's case was the first and was intended to be a warning (Deut. 24:9).

Whenever we look down on other people because of the color of their skin, we are being contemptuous of God, His holiness, and His image. They are created in the image of God just like the rest of us. Thus, from a biblical perspective, not only is racism a bad thing, God hates racism.

We could end the discussion here with this conclusion that God hates racism. But if we want to pursue personal godliness, we should go further and examine Moses' response. Remember we serve Him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay" (Deut. 32:35), and Moses apparently had that attitude as well.

Few things are more hurtful to a person than to see a spouse ridiculed, mocked, or despised. Indeed, for most people, for one to see his or her spouse hurt is worse than suffering the wound oneself.

Surely Moses ached when he heard insults hurled at his wife. Yet how did he respond? He responded with godly compassion, recognizing that Miriam's and Aaron's foolishness provoked the wrath of God. When he saw Miriam's punishment, "Moses cried out to the LORD, 'O God, please heal her!'" (Num. 12:13).

When we are targets of racism—whether racism forward or racism in reverse—we ought to have compassion for the foolish. As our Lord said at the Sermon on the Mount, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:44).

V. The Lord's Love of Brotherhood

When God hates something, He usually loves its opposite. Knowing that God hates racism, can we tell that God loves brotherhood and men expressing brotherly love towards one another? From His Word we can see that the answer is clearly, "Yes."

In Psalm 133:1, it is written, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

To the Ephesians, Paul wrote, "Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love" (Eph. 6:23-24). And without drawing any

distinction between men or women or the nationality of the people at Colossae, Paul wrote, “To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace and peace to you from God our Father” (Col. 1:2).

God called Peter to lead a Gentile (non-Jew) named Cornelius to the Lord. Jews ordinarily did not associate with Gentiles. Peter had a dream recounted in Acts 10 where he saw unclean animals and was told by the Lord to kill and eat. He protested and said that he had never eaten anything unclean. The Lord told him, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean” (Acts 10:15). When he finally arrived at Cornelius’ house, Peter said, “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right” (Acts 10:34-35).

Finally, in the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22:1-2, it is written:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Again, the Greek word translated “nations” is *ethnos*, meaning ethnic groups. In the eternal kingdom, God will heal all of the pain throughout all of history brought about by racism.

Men, I encourage and exhort you: let’s have a little heaven on earth. Let us love our fellow man without regard to race, parentage, or skin color. May God bless you, and may God bring great revival to the Estelle Unit.