

GOD'S RACIAL BIAS

The Bible is the story of only one racial family. In ancient times, the different races lived with a racial consciousness of their own people. Conflicts between neighboring peoples were racial battles. Our Hebrew ancestors were probably more cautious about race-mixing than any of the others because God had made His will so explicitly clear to them.

For instance, after the Adamic family had left the Garden of Eden and moved eastward into the Tarim Pendi Basin of western China, they began to mix with the neighboring races, just as Cain had done, who had long lived there already. The Great Flood happened because of that racial adulteration of God's special family. Gen 6:2-3 says, *"It came to pass when men began to be numerous upon the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God having seen the daughters of men that they were beautiful, took to themselves wives of all whom they chose."* The problem was that God's children were breeding with other races. So, God was angry and said, *"I will blot out man whom I have made from the face of the earth."* Then in Gen 6:9, *"But Noe found grace before the Lord God. . . .Noe was a just man. Being perfect in his generation, Noe was well-pleasing to God."* The word for *generation* is γενεα/genea, which means "race." Noe's family was saved because it was the only non-adulterated family left!

The fact is that God favored one racial family to the exclusion of all others. The Bible expresses zero concern for any other group, except the descendants of Cain whose purpose was to be the opponents of God's family. But the other races of the world meant nothing to the God of Abraham, the God of Jacob.

Unfortunately, when Bible translators create an English version of the Bible, they do not make it clear that racial purity was so important to God. Often translators use the English word "stranger" to indicate any type of person who is not a registered tribe-member. One word which is often translated as "stranger" is αλλογενης/allo-genes. "Allo" means other. "Genes" means race! The word means "other-race," but it is translated as "stranger," just like another word, προσηλυτος/proselytos. Let's take a look at these two words and get a clearer idea of how God felt about race.

προσηλυτος/proselytos is, of course, the root of our English word, "proselyte," which means a person from outside the group who is accepted into the group. One sectarian church, like Baptist, might accept into its membership a person who converts from another sectarian church. A school might proselyte an athlete by enticing him to switch over to its school. The word implies nothing about race at all. For the ancient Hebrews, a proselyte was simply a convert to the Hebrew religion. The matter of racial values is a cultural matter which is a separate issue. In the O.T. we can find many indications that "race" was an extremely important matter, and therefore, we can be sure that they would not be accepting converts from other races. In Numbers 15:14-15, God is speaking to Moses, saying, *"And if there should be a stranger (proselyte) among you in your land, or one who should be born to you among your race (geneais), and he will offer a sacrifice, a smell of sweet savour to the Lord – as ye do, so the congregation shall offer to the Lord. There shall be one law for you and the strangers (proselytes) abiding among you, a perpetual law for your race (geneas): as ye are, so shall the stranger (proselyte) be before the Lord."* Clearly, these strangers, proselytes, who are to be welcomed into the worship congregation are of the

same race for the text states "*your race*" twice. We must presume that among the Israelites there were people who chose to be estranged from the religion. When one was converted to join the worship group, he was a proselyte. It was also true that some Israelites lived here and there throughout the middle-east. Many had remained in Egypt when Moses left with his large group. There were probably others scattered throughout the Palestine, Assyrian, and Babylonian region who had left Egypt during the 400 year sojourn there. These people would certainly know their racial identity, and when one converted to the new religion of Moses, which began in the Sinai desert, then he was a proselyte, but he was also of the same Israelite race. These people were to be welcomed into the family, and the gift of God's Law would be for them also.

But, there are other kinds of "*strangers*" who were NOT to be welcomed into the Israel family. These people were described in the text as *αλλογενής*/allo-genes, which means "other-race." In Numbers 18: we find the Lord speaking to Aaron regarding priestly practices. God said to take members of the tribe of Levi to minister before the tabernacle. "*And they shall keep thy charges, and the charges of the tabernacle; only they shall not approach the holy vessels and the altar, so both they and you shall not die. And they shall be joined to thee, and shall keep the charges of the tabernacle of witness, in all the services of the tabernacle; and a stranger (αλλογενής – other race), shall not approach to thee.*" God continues to explain that the Levites shall serve as priests, but that the Aaronic priesthood will take care of anything behind the veil. "*and ye shall minister in the services as the office of your priesthood; and the stranger (αλλογενής – other race) that comes near shall die.*" God makes clear that other-races are not to approach the tabernacle or altar at all. In fact, if other race persons wished to worship the God of Israel, they were not permitted to do so in sight of the tabernacle, but must worship at a distance out of sight.

Never, even after the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities when they adopted corrupt chaldean magic practices, and until the time of Jesus did the Israelites of the Jerusalem temple accept persons of other races into their religious family. In 132 BC, the leader of Jerusalem, John Hyrcanus, brought the Edomites into the Jerusalem religion, but Edomites (from Esau) were considered to be racial relatives for Edom was Israel's brother. It would not be until the organization of the Catholic church, in the fourth century AD, that lost-sheep-Israelite Christians began to reach out to other races, under their new "universal gospel" belief that Jesus came for everyone.

Obviously, when reading a modern English version of the Bible, one can get very confused by the passages which seem in conflict. The word, *stranger*, is used both for proselytes who are of Israelite race and for the *allogenes* who are of other races. It is unlikely that modern translators would be permitted to make the distinction clear because the political and religious agendas are the same, to promote race-mixing and a belief that all races are equal. However, if one looks at the original language of the Bible text, it is clear that racial purity was a primary theme of God for His children. One of the commandments speaks to this issue, saying "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" Modern Christians have been taught that the command regards sexual violation within a marriage, but that is not what the ancient Israelites understood. In order to understand this, it is first important to understand their cultural values. Sex was NOT a centerpiece of their religion, and the husband was hardly criticized for promiscuity. David went after Bathsheba, even having her husband killed, and God said David was "*a man after my own heart.*" Several centuries before that, David's ancestor, Juda, who fathered the tribe of Juda, bedded Tamar after she had

dressed up like a prostitute and waited for Juda by the city gate. Ask yourself why Tamar might think her deception would work with Juda! It did work, and Tamar mothered the twins Phares and Zara, who later became the tribe of royalty for Israel. My point is that sex was not the centerpiece of their religion, like it is for Christians today, so they did not consider the adultery commandment to regard illegitimate sex. Of course, they wouldn't see it that way because sexual looseness was covered in another commandment against coveting a neighbor's wife. Surely, two commandments regarding sex were not necessary. For our ancient ancestors, the commandment against adultery, being one of the top three commands, regarded one of the most important values of God for them – no race mixing!

There are many other occasions in the Old Testament when the word, *αλλογενης/allogenes*, was used. In order to increase your own understanding of God's emphasis on race, I will list references to the other passages, and you can undertake a little study of your own. Be sure to read not just the single sentence, but to consider the whole context of who is talking, and to whom, and what circumstances are in play. Here are the references where the word is used, but is probably translated into English as "stranger."

Genesis 17:27 – Abraham circumcised himself and all members of his house, including those of other races.

Exodus 12:43 – *"This is the law of the Passover: no other race shall eat of it. And every house-servant bought with silver - him shalt thou circumcise, and then shall he eat of it."* First, no other race shall eat of it, period. That sentence is complete and ends with a period. Then, other servants obtained with silver must be of the same race because they are permitted to share in it.

Exodus 29:33 – Speaking of Aaron and his sons eating the meat of sacrifice, God says, *"They shall eat the offerings with which they were sanctified to fill their hands, to sanctify them; and a stranger (αλλογενης - other race) shall not eat of them for they are holy."*

Exodus 30:33 – Regarding the anointing oil for sanctifying priests, God says, *"Who shall make it in like manner, and who shall give of it to a stranger (αλλογενης - other race), shall be destroyed from among his people."*

Leviticus 22:10-13 – Regarding the care and/or eating of priestly holy things, God says: *"And no stranger (αλλογενης - other race) shall eat the holy things. But if a priest should have a soul purchased for silver, he shall eat of his bread. And if the daughter of a priest should marry a stranger (αλλογενης - other race), she shall not eat of the offerings of the sanctuary. And if the daughter of a priest should be a widow, or put away, and have no seed, she shall return to her father's house, as in her youth; she shall eat of her father's bread, but no stranger (αλλογενης - other race), shall eat of it."*

Leviticus 22:25 – *"Neither shall ye offer the gifts of your God of all these things by the hand of a stranger (αλλογενης - other race), because there is corruption in them, a blemish in them: these shall not be accepted for you."*

Numbers 1:51 – *"And in removing the tabernacle, the Levites shall take it down, and in pitching the tabernacle they shall set it up: and let the stranger (αλλογενης - other race), that advances die."*

Numbers 3:10 – *"And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons over the tabernacle of witness; and they shall keep their charge of priesthood, and all things belonging to the altar, and within the veil; and the stranger (αλλογενης - other race), that touches them shall die."*

Numbers 3:38 – *"They that encamp before the tabernacle of witness on the east shall be Moses and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charges of the sanctuary according to the charges of the children of Israel; and the stranger (αλλογενης - other race) that touches them shall die."*

Numbers 16:39-40 – *"And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest took the brazen censers, which the men who had been burnt brought near, and they put them as a covering on the altar: a memorial to the children of Israel that no stranger (αλλογενης - other race) might draw nigh who is not of the seed of Aaron, to offer incense before the Lord."*

Numbers 18:4 & 7 – (see page 2)

Isaiah 56:3-6 – *"Let not the stranger (αλλογενης - other race) who attaches himself to the Lord, say, Surely the Lord will separate me from his people: and let not the eunuch say, I am a dry tree. Thus saith the Lord to the eunuchs, as many as shall keep my sabbaths, and choose the things which I take pleasure in, and take hold of my covenant; I will give to them in my house and within my walls an honourable place, better than sons and daughters: I will give them a name during the coming ages, and it shall not fail. Also to the strangers (αλλογενης - other race) who attach themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be to Him servants and handmaids; and for all who keep my sabbaths from profaning them, and that take hold of my covenant; I will bring them to my holy mountain, and gladden them in my house of prayer: their whole-burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations (εθνεσιν/ethnesin -this word usually means the ethnic Israelites), saith the Lord that gathers the dispersed of Israel; for I will gather to him a congregation."* Here is a beautiful passage that helps to put the race-issue in a more comfortable light. While the other races are not esteemed or valued by God like His own Israel family, yet any of them who choose to serve the true God will be blessed for living according to His will rather than living wickedly. Their lives will be blessed and fruitful. This cannot make one of them a spirit-being because he would have to have been born from above (John 3:3) to have eternal life. Nevertheless, some of them who do good will live through the end-time catastrophe and their race will continue into the kingdom of heaven. So, those individuals who choose to serve the true God and Jesus as Lord should be permitted to do so, and should be welcomed, even if not to the altar of worship. We cannot overturn all the passages where God's warning is clear that other races shall not come near His altar. But, it seems they could certainly worship among themselves. The eunuchs were Israelites, and were despised because they could not bear children. For them God offers a special place in His house, for they have earned a special blessing by their chaste lives. To *"take hold of my covenant"* means to live by God's laws and His will. As for accepting the burnt offerings and sacrifices of other races on God's altar, the last portion of the passage seems quite pointed to the Israel family. And to

consider that other races might be welcome at God's altar would be to cast His clear warnings against that completely aside. This passage is easy to read as a contradiction to God's instructions to Moses, Aaron, and the priesthood. Our God changeth not! See the passage below in Jeremiah 28:51 where he wails that other races have come into the sanctuary and the house of the Lord. Certainly, we must let clear passages help us interpret the difficult passage of Isaiah here.

Isaiah 60:8-12 – *"Who are these that fly as clouds, and as doves with young ones to me? The isles have waited for me, and the ships of Tharsis among the first, to bring thy children from afar, and their silver and their gold with them, and that for the sake of the holy name of the Lord, and because the Holy One of Israel is glorified. And strangers (αλλογενης - other race) shall build thy walls, and their kings shall wait upon thee: for by reason of my wrath I smote thee, and by reason of mercy I loved thee. And thy gates shall be opened continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; to bring in to thee the power of the nations and their kings as captives. For the nations and the kings which will not serve thee shall perish, and those nations shall be made utterly desolate."* The isles are Britain, where God was sending his family as they were being purged from Canaan by the Assyrians and then by the Babylonians. No more have we had gated cities like in the middle-east period of our history. Even as the New Jerusalem, we are not gated. This passage hints at the new kingdom in the ages to come.

Isaiah 61:5-6 – This passage is somewhat a continuation of the previous, prophesying about the new kingdom to come. *"And strangers (αλλογενης - other races) shall come and feed thy flocks, and aliens (αλλοφυλων - other race people) shall be thy plowmen and vine-dressers. But ye shall be called priests of the Lord, the ministers of God: ye shall eat the strength of nations and shall be admired because of their wealth."*

Jeremiah 51 (28-LXX):51 – *"We are ashamed, because we have heard our reproach; disgrace has covered our face; aliens (αλλογενης - other races) are come into our sanctuary, even into the house of the Lord."* The prophet is wailing in shame for what Israel had brought upon itself by its apostasy. Jeremiah lived more than a century later than Isaiah, and he makes it clear that other races are not permitted in the sanctuary or the house of the Lord.

Jeremiah 42 (49-LXX):17 – *"And all the men, and all the strangers (αλλογενης - other races) who have set their face toward the land of Egypt to dwell there shall be consumed by the sword, and by the famine: and there shall not one of them escape from the evils which I bring upon them."* The prophet was warning Jerusalem not to call on Egypt for help in a war against Babylon, for they already had an agreement that they would not do that. God was warning them that it would be doom for them to look to Egypt for help. Egypt serves in the Bible as the symbol of World. The Israelites sojourned in a World which was not their rightful home. That is to say that we are foreigners in this kingdom of World. Those who expect to be saved by the World will be doomed, not just Israel but other races, too. All will perish.

Ezekiel 44:7-9 – *"O house of Israel! that ye have brought in aliens (αλλογενης - other races), uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, and to profane it, when ye offered bread, flesh, and blood; and ye transgressed my covenant by all your iniquities; and ye appointed others to keep the charges in my sanctuary. Therefore thus saith the Lord God;*

No alien (αλλογενής - other races) , uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of all the children of strangers (αλλογενής - other races) that are in the midst of the house of the Lord." The Lord's house is his people, Israel. We are also called His temple and His holy city. It is in the people that He dwells, not in a geographical location. We are His nation. He warns against other races inside His house.

Obadiah 1:11 – The prophet is railing against the Edomites, foretelling their doom because they stood against Israel when other races were attacking Israel. *"From the day that you stood in opposition, in the days when foreigners (αλλογενής - other race) were taking his forces captive, and strangers (αλλοτριοι - other enemies) entered his gates and cast lots on Jerusalem, you also were one of them."*

Zacharias 9:6 – *"And aliens (αλλογενής - other races) shall dwell in Azotus, and I will bring down the pride of the Philistines (αλλοφυλων - other racial tribe). [Note that Philistines are not a specific ethnic group; the word denotes, in general, other-race groups. Note also that the Greek word, φυλων, is the word used by taxonomists as *phylon* or *phyla* to designate race or a broad basic division of the plant or animal kingdom (Websters Unabridged Dictionary, p.1353).]*

Malachai 4:1 – *"For, behold a day comes burning as an oven, and it shall consume them; and all the aliens (αλλογενής - other races), and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that is coming shall set them on fire, saith the Lord Almighty, and there shall not be left of them root or branch."*

If you have pondered the above passages, then you have gotten a pretty good idea of how God views the non-Israelite races, and what their end will be. The Malachai passage is from the very last verses of the Old Testament. He speaks of end time events when the world will be mostly destroyed and only God's select family will be saved to start a new civilization in the coming ages.

Now, imagine, if you can, that Jesus comes along and overturns God's racial plan in order to come for everyone. A faithful Son doing His Father's will, and making payment for that very violation in the past? Actually, it wasn't Jesus who said He came for everyone; rather it was the church a few centuries after Jesus had died which came up with this universal gospel teaching. Jesus made the explicit statement that He did not come for anyone except the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Nevertheless, modern Christian preachers teach, and people believe, that Jesus came for everyone including all the races of the world. A primary theme of God, consistent through the entire Bible, has thereby been cancelled so that Christians today make the very opposite message the a centerpiece of their religion. Yes, there are a very few passages which somewhat permit a loose interpretation, by which one can squeeze other races into the plan. BUT, in order to maintain that weak interpretation, one must IGNORE a multitude of very clear statements and warnings by God. Every person should seriously ponder how God might react to such flagrant defiance of His will!

by Roger Hathaway, June 16, 2005

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