

THE ORIGIN OF RACE[®]

By Cooper P. Abrams, III

CONTENTS

Introduction

What is Race?

Biblical Passages which have been Supposed to Indicate the Origin of Race

The Role of Genetics in Race

Concluding Statements on the Origin of Race

Introduction

An explanation of how the races came into being is quite puzzling for the average Christian. It is not uncommon to hear Christians responding to this question with explanations which have roots in evolution and other unbiblical teaching. Many times we hear false explanations such as tanning effects of the sun on the people who settled in Africa caused them to develop a very dark skin, or of those in the East, because of a more moderate climate developed the yellowish tones of the Oriental peoples. The Caucasian peoples of the Northern hemisphere have lighter or white skin because of being exposed to a lesser degree of sun light. Other explanations often offered as the origin of a race are the curse on Cain (Gen. 4:10-15) and on Ham's son Canaan (Gen. 9:20-25). Such explanations are false not being supported by the Bible or by science.

At some point in life every Christian will be confronted with what is called the "racial problem." When this occurred Christians and churches have often responded in ignorance to the truth as to the origin of race. The problem is often compounded both by false interpretations of the Bible and the erroneous teachings of evolution which has caused many to doggedly support false ideas. In order to face the issue and make a correct Biblical response, the Christian first needs to understand what the Bible has to say on the matter. Second, he needs to accent this Biblical knowledge with information from modern unbiased scientific investigation.

It is the author's objective to present an explanation from a Biblical and scientific point of view of how the races of man came into existence. It is not the intent of this paper to deal with any of the sociological issues or cultural influences, but to explore an epistemological route to the matter. The answer to the matter of the origins of race is actually quite simple.

What Is Race?

We first need to examine the definition of the word race.

Race is commonly thought of as being three divisions of mankind; the Caucasian, Mongoloid and Negroid races. Webster's New World Dictionary has this definition:

RACE: Any of the major biological divisions of mankind, distinguished by colour and texture of hair, colour of skin and eyes, stature, bodily proportions, etc: many ethnologists now consider that there are only three primary divisions, the Caucasian (loosely "white race"), Negroid (loosely "black race") and Mongoloid (loosely, "yellow race"), with various subdivisions: the term has acquired so many unscientific connotations that in this sense it is often replaced in scientific usage by "ethnic stock" or "group".

It is interesting to note that this definition infers the fact that the term is a loose one and that modern science is replacing it with other words. Also by definition race is determined by the physical characteristics. Traditionally biblical scholars have concluded that the three races were the progeny of Noah's three sons, Shem, Japheth and Ham.

Japheth is said to be the father of the Caucasian race, Shem of the Mongoloid race and Ham of the Negroid race. Some have interpreted Noah's prophecies of his sons in Genesis 9 to be the Scriptural basis for discrimination of one race to another. Particularly, the supposed curse on the son of Ham, Canaan was purported to be Biblical support of Negro slavery. We will deal with that later in this paper.

Basically race is a vague term and is difficult to define. If race is based on the colour and texture of hair by what guidelines are we to classify the different shades of hair from black to blonde? A look around at a group of people indicates that hair colour has little to do with what we think of as a race. In any group of Caucasian people no two hair shades are alike. Hair texture and the person's stature also differ with each individual. Although skin colour appears to be an easier method of distinguishing one race from another, a closer look presents the fact that it, too, is a vague rule of thumb. The problem lies in determining how to classify all the varying shades of colour between black and white. In order to accomplish this, one must increase the number of races and list various subgroups. As the classification process continues it tends to make the classification less significant and definable.

Thus the task of defining a race is highly subjective making it unscientific. It also brings us to the conclusion that race is not clearly definable and it is not a good term to be used in describing the variations among people.

The question that first must be answered is: "Are there races of men?"

The difficulty of classifying man into different races has been shown. Perhaps a better term than would be varieties of man. Even the evolutionary science concludes that all existing varieties of man are members of the same species. Inter-racial marriages are common and the children are produced with no biological difficulties. Prominent anthropologist, Ruth Benedict stated that the peoples of the earth are a single family and all have a common origin (Ruth Benedict, "Race: Science and Politics").

The supposed biological differences such as dissimilarity in blood have proven to be incorrect. Blood is classified according to type, and all types are found within all supposed races of man. Blood transfusions are based on types A, B, AB, and O and are given without regard to race. It has also been supposed that different races have differing intelligence levels. The idea presented that the Caucasian race is the most intelligent with the Negroid race being the least intelligent. This idea originated with Darwin's evolutionary ideas that man is a descendent of primates. He concluded quite unscientifically that the Negro is more closely related to monkeys and apes because they look more like a primate. Since he looks the least like a primate, Caucasian is higher up on the supposed evolutionary chain and is more intelligent. Often the Oriental is portrayed as being the more advanced species of man because of less body hair.

Modern testing of the races has shown that intelligence is not a measurement of race, because intelligence levels differ greatly with individuals within every race. Further cultural influence and advances account for most supposed examples of differing intelligence.

The next question is: "Can race be Biblically defined?"

The term race does not appear in the Bible and it refers to the differing peoples in terms such as family, tribe, people and nation. It groups people according to familial relationships and then into nationalities. An example of familial relationship is found in Genesis 10, where the genealogies listed are grouped by family. It should be noted that nowhere are the sons of Noah associated with race or colour. An important passage on this matter is found in Genesis 10:5:

"By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations" (Gen. 10:5).

Note that familial and national division is shown as well as division by geography and language (or tongue). The significance of this will be discussed later in the paper. Nowhere in the Bible is prejudice based on what we determine as race; i.e. the colour of hair, skin, eyes or any physical characteristics. When God commanded the children of Israel to be a separated people and/or to utterly destroy other peoples, it was always based on the principle of separation from sin. This same principle of separation is presented in the New Testament when Christians are commanded to come out of the world and not be unequally yoked with the unsaved. (See 2 Cor. 6:14)

In Scripture there are several references to problems in which people with different racial background were involved. In each case the instruction is clear that God made no distinction between races as to salvation or blessing. In Numbers 12:1-16, Miriam and Aaron openly criticized Moses for marrying the Ethiopian woman. But the issue was jealousy over the leadership of Moses and the criticism was over marrying a foreigner, any foreigner, not because she was an Ethiopian. (Number 12:2). In the New Testament Simeon called Niger and Lucius, who was from Cyrene, were probably a black men who had an active place in the church at Antioch. Their names and countries is the only clue given as to their race. When God spoke of groups of peoples, it was

always in the context of their nationality not their race. The most notable reference to racial prejudice was the Jews unfavourable feelings for the Samaritans. The Samaritans were mixed racially the Assyria colonists brought in to settle Palestine after Israel was taken captive, and only a remnant of Jews were left in the land. The Jews who were left, inter-married with these non-Jews which was forbidden in Israel. The groups not only mixed racially, but also merged their religions into a Judaistic cult which the orthodox Jews hated.

The Jews also perverted their special position with God into a false national and ethnic pride and looked down on all Gentiles seeing them as "dogs." They considered themselves as superior to all other people however their ethnic pride did not come from God, but from their sinful hearts. When God called Abraham; Genesis 12:3 records that "In thee all the families of earth would be blessed." Genesis 22:18 says that from Abraham's seed "all nations of earth would be blessed." Both these passages are Messianic references to the coming of Christ, the Saviour of the World as Paul explains in Galatians 3:6. God offer of salvation was to all of the world. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 10:1-11:18; I John 2:2) One classic passage being Romans 10:11-13.

"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:11-13).

Both the Old and New Testaments show that God does not hold any significance as to race. God sees us as one people; as "man." Physical characteristics are not a part of God's evaluation of man". . .for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). Race as defined by Webster's Dictionary is not a Biblical term and nowhere can it be shown that physical characteristics of a people are a reason or guide to distinguish one from another.

Biblical Passages Which Have Been Supposed To Indicate The Origin Of Races

The Curse on Cain (Genesis 4:11-15)

Often we hear the mark of "Cain" being related to black race. To briefly deal with this erroneous idea it should be pointed out that the Hebrew word "oth" does not mean "mark" as an outward physical token placed on Cain. Lapeled says that the word is better translated "sign." Also, the text does not say that God set a mark "in" or "on" Cain and certainly does not even hint at the mark being related to his skin colour or physical characteristics. The word used indicates God gave him a sign of guaranty, or an assurance that he would be protected. Ryrie says it was a sign to reassure him of God's gracious protection of his life." Furthermore, even if one were to take the position that Cain was given the mark of being black, all of his progeny died in the flood and since Noah's sons were Sethites(Genesis 5) and the curse would have ended with the flood which makes the issue mute.

The curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:18-27)

One of the great tragedies of erroneous Biblical interpretation has been the interpretation of Genesis 9:18-27 as relating to a curse upon the black people. Specifically, some individuals have used the prophecy of Canaan being the "servant of servants" to mean that he would be the slave of Shem and Japheth.

Leupold believes that the curse was on Canaan and did not include Ham's three other sons. If this is a correct, it would be difficult to relate the Negro of Africa to the descendants of Canaan who settled in the Middle East.

Henry Morris believes the curse was addressed to Canaan but included all of Ham's progeny as well. He reasons that the prophecy seems to have world-wide implications and that if the curse was limited to Canaan and his decedents then historically the prophecy has not been properly fulfilled. He states that although the prophecy is addressed to Canaan, Ham committed the sin. He explains that the servant of servant phrase does not mean slave of slaves and in history has not occurred among Ham's decedents.

A strong argument against this passage having any racial implications is the fact that Ham's decedents are not all black. Ham's progeny includes the Egyptians, Sumerians, and Ethiopians. Further, Canaanites who settled in the Middle East do not appear to be black. Morris also states

that these three streams are not three races and not what the Bible leaders nor what modern anthropology and human genetics teach.

No matter which view is held, the passage cannot be used to support the idea that the Negro race originated in the curse or that slavery is justified.

The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1—9)

The search for a correct understanding of the varieties of man, called “races”, is found within these passages. To begin, verse one states that all mankind spoke the same language. This is completely contradictory to evolution which teaches that language evolved from animal sounds, to speech, and finally to language. Because there was no language barrier all men on earth conversed freely with all others. Just think of what that would do toward relieving the international tensions today. Men could communicate with each other with full understanding. But man lost the ability due to his sin.

Such was the situation at the tower of Babel. The people congregated and built a great city which was in direct opposition to God's expressed command to scatter and populate earth. (Genesis 9:1) Because of their disobedience, God confounded their language and scattered them over all the earth (Genesis 11:7—8). This scattering of these groups all over the earth is the real cause for the origin of modern races of people.

The act of confounding the language of man seems to imply that many different languages were created and that each family of people had their own separate language. The division was not based on skin colour or physical characteristic, but on familial relationships. Families or tribes of people were given a common language and they separated from the other groups speaking a different language. The passage also says that God scattered them over the entire surface of the world. It is important to realize just what was occurring in this incident. As the people began to group themselves together they began to migrate in all directions away from Babel. At Babel they were a homogenous people, but with God giving them different languages they separated and became in time became heterogenous.

God did not indiscriminately change the languages of the people, because to do so would have broken up and confounded families. The genealogies in Genesis 10 extends past the time of confusion of languages so it would seem that God kept families together by giving them all the same language. Also Genesis 10:5 states God divided them by language, family and nations.

At this point it is very important to keep in mind that as these groups of people migrated further from the Middle East they became isolated from other groups.

The geographical direction of different families in accordance with Genesis 10

Families were generally grouped together and for the most part they all migrated in one general direction. To illustrate, the following is a selected list of names from the genealogies of each of Noah's sons with the general geographical location associated with each from history:

Descendants of Japheth: The Indo-European of western Asia and of Europe. (Gen. 10:2-4)

Gomer: Probably the Cimmerians which are mentioned by Homer as the people of the far north (Odys. xl.14). They are believed to be identical with the Cimmerians of Roman times and the Cymry of Wales.

Magog: Josephus and Greek writers generally relate to them as the Scythians of Southern Europe. Also associated with the Tartars of Russia.

Madai: Medes who lived in area of Caspian Sea.

Javan: Comes from the term Ionian which means Greeks.

Descendants Ham: The Egyptians, Ethiopians, Libyans and Canaanites. (Gen. 10:6-20)

Cush: Peoples of central and Southern Arabia. The Ethiopians are shown as being inhabitants of both sides of the Red Sea. Also, they had a skin of a different appearance. (Jer. 13:23) Pictures on monuments show that they were a mixed race, some Negro, some Semite and some Caucasian. This is a very important fact and will be referred to later.

Mizraim: Refers to areas of upper and lower Nile River of Egypt thus a reference to Egyptians.

Phut: Generally associated with the Egyptians and more specifically Libya.

Canaan: The area settled by Canaan and his sons was west of the River Jordan. His first born

Sidon (Zidon) name stood for the whole Phoenician coast.

Descendants Shem: The peoples of the Middle East and Southern Asia. (Gen. 10:21-32)

Eber: Abraham was the sixth generation of Eber who settled in Mesopotamia in the area of Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 11).

Elam: Geographically the region beyond the Tigris River, east of Babylonia. The Elamites became a strong nation and were recognized as sovereign by the Babylonian states.

Asshur: The Assyrians of the head waters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

Lud: The Lydians of Asia Minor.

Aram: Aramaeans of Syria and Mesopotamia.

From these observations it seems that Shem's progeny settled in the Middle East, Ham's people went south into Africa and that Japheth's descendants migrated north into Western Asia and to Europe.

It's important to recognize that from the Bible and from history the specific statements cannot be made that Shem fathered all Orientals, Ham all black people or Japheth all the white people. Note that the Ethiopians are represented as being all three colours. This is a very good example which shows that Ham produced peoples of varying colours. This point will become more and more evident when one sees the importance of genetics and how it works.

The Role Of Genetics In Race

How genetics work.

At this point, three things should be evident. Firstly that race is a term which attempts to define physical characteristics of peoples, and seeks to group them together. Secondly, the physical characteristics appear to be closely associated with geological locations. People, who have the same combination of physical characteristics, generally come from the same area on earth.

Thirdly, as in the case of Ham being progenitor of white, black and yellow peoples, these same physical characteristics can appear within any group of people.

The explanation of these seemingly confusing conclusions is found in the study of genetics or the physical characteristic generator in man, the gene.

Webster defines gene as:

In "genetics, any of the elements by which hereditary characters are transmitted and determined, regarded as a particular state of the organization of the chromatin in the chromosome; factor: theoretically each mature reproductive cell carries a gene for every inheritable characteristic, and thus an individual resulting from the union of two such cells receives a set of genes from each of its parents."

It can be seen from this definition that it is the gene which determines the physical characteristics of men. Each parent contributes his or her genes to their offspring and the child is a product of both.

The father of genetics, Gregor Mendel made this observation:

A gene may be recessive and, in the presence of a dominant gene, it becomes latent, not causing the formation of its trait. In a later generation it may occur, not accompanied by its dominant partner and so produce its characteristic trait.

When the male sperm fertilizes the female egg, the genes of each are mixed. Some genes are dominant over other genes and these produce the physical characteristics of the offspring. An example would be a mother having brown eyes and a father with blue eyes. They could produce either brown-eyed or blue-eyed children. If the child produced would have brown eyes, it can be seen that the genes which produce brown eyes won out over the blue eye producing genes and are the dominant ones. The blue eye producing genes are called "latent" and although they did not produce blue eyes in this mating, they are present in the child, and they could be the in later generations.

When we look around us today and see all of the different physical characteristics in people and relate this to Adam who was the first man, we can see that in Adam, the potential combination of genes was enormous.

Francesco Ayala states that:

On the basis of only 6.7% heterososity the average human couple could have 10 children before they would have to have one child identical to another! That number is far greater than the number of atoms in the known universe!

Considering this fact it is easier to understand how Adam produced all the different varieties we see in people today. Also very important is the evidence that after a number of generations, there appears to be strong evidence that certain genes become dominant and the variability of characteristics is limited. This does not mean that other genes are not present. But it does mean some genes, once they reach a point, become dominant and continue to be dominant in future generations. This only occurs with inbreeding or selected breeding.

An example was my FDS (Field Dog Stud Book) registered Irish Setter "Bryan's Red Sun" (we just called him Sam"). He is the product of selected breeding over many generations. As a dog breeder, one basic rule I quickly learned was that to produce an Irish Setter, I had to breed a male and female Irish Setter. This is where the term "pure breed" comes from. In other words, in Sam's historical blood line for several hundred years only dogs of the same family were bred together. No other breed of dog ever was allowed to "cross breed" into his blood line. The key to producing a particular breed is that it is isolation from other breeds. The genes which produced the red-coloured hair and general physical appearance of the Irish Setter have become the dominate by selective breeding, and consistently produce the same characteristics over and over again in every generation.

Through the example of Sam we see that isolation of a group of dogs from other groups of dogs produces what could be called "race." Note, however, that even within the "race" or "breed" now called Irish Setter there is still much potential for variation.

Isolation of peoples and genetics

In this paper we have seen that the decedents of Noah's three sons were generally dispersed over all the earth. Also, the physical characteristics of any of the sons were not exclusive to his progeny. Each could and did produce different coloured offspring.

The most important factor in reaching an explanation for the origin of race is the understanding that as the migration from the Middle East proceeded contact with other groups became less frequent, and finally the group became isolated from all others and the groups became smaller. Because of this isolation men and women married within their own group. Thus, inbreeding took place within an isolated group and between kin. An example of how isolation caused particular characteristics in a group of people would be the American Indian.

The American Indian originated from oriental peoples who came across the Bering Strait which connected eastern Asia and Alaska. As they migrated south and east they became isolated from the peoples of Asia. American Indians are considered to be Mongoloid people, but differ from the Asian Mongoloids of China and Japan. One must then assume that genetics caused the American Indian to be somewhat different from other Mongoloids of Asia. By moving into North America they became isolated from other Asian peoples. Their group was at first small and they married among their kin from within his group. The dominant genes of the group then surfaced within a few generations and began to produce the general characteristics which are common to the American Indian today.

Some groups moved further south into Mexico and South America, and they, too, became isolated. This isolation caused somewhat differing physical appearances in each group.

Thor Heyerdahl, the anthropologist, studied for years the people of North America and the Pacific islands. He has shown that the Polynesian people came from North America and migrated in boats to the Pacific Islands. The isolation of these people produced the Polynesian race.

Without isolation it is unlikely that "race" would have ever occurred. It is a vital part of understanding how genetics caused the different physical characteristics of isolated groups of people which we call races.

Concluding Statements On Origin Of Race

As Noah's decedents migrated from the Middle East after the Tower of Babel, their numbers grew smaller as they extended further out. As the groups grew smaller, close kin inter-married and the certain genes within the gene pool became dominate, while others became latent. Within a few generations these genes produced the skin colour, hair colour and texture, bone structure and other physical characteristics that made each group distinctive within its isolated geographical area. Generally, the people of northern Europe were white. South Africans were black. People of Middle East and Far East were yellow.

This paper has tried to show that findings of modern science in genetics have offered a reasonable and logical model which when combined with Scripture, explains how the races came to be. I have deliberately ignored the evolutionary model of origin of races in this paper as the primary purpose was to present a Biblical and scientific model. There is no empirical evidence for the hypothesis of evolution and it has ever been shown to shown that evolution happened in any degree. Evolution in all aspects, including theistic evolution, is contrary to the Word of God and true science. All of the empirical evidence supports the Creation Model. The lie of evolution has been the source of ethnic genocide since its inception. This false humanistic idea has been at the heart of the decline in morals of the once great United States. At best evolution explanation for the origion of race is silly and a child's fairy tale.

The model or explanation or the origin of race as presented in this paper can afford the Christian with a basic understanding of how race came to be. It is easily understood when all the evidence is considered. Racial differences can never honestly be said to be the result of curses placed on people by God or the nonsensical theories of evolution.

Race occurred because of the work of the physical laws of human genetics that Almighty God instituted and race has no spiritual significance.

phantocomp