

The Kinist Heresy: A Biblical Critique of Racism

Chapter 3: New Testament Evidence and Philosophical Considerations

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In our two previous lectures we defined kinism and spent a good deal of time looking at how they interpreted Scripture in order to justify their views. We noted that they not only violate standard Protestant procedures of interpretation but also came to conclusions that contradict virtually every orthodox scholar or commentator since the Reformation began. The great issue in the Old Testament was faith, not race. One could become part of the covenant people if one believed in the God of Israel, had a credible profession of faith and submitted to circumcision (i.e. males). We also proved beyond a shadow of doubt that interracial marriages were fully acceptable as long as one married a believer. There are so many examples of godly people marrying a believer of a different race in Scripture that only someone who is completely blinded by unbiblical presuppositions could deny its lawfulness. Since the past two lectures dealt almost exclusively with Old Testament passages today we focus on evidence against kinism/racism from within the New Testament. We will see that the New Testament Scriptures support what we have been teaching against racism from every conceivable angle.

Interracial Marriage in the New Testament

In the one specific passage on who a believer is allowed to marry in the epistles, Paul says that a Christian can marry anyone they want to as long as he or she is a Christian: “A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:39).¹ If it were unlawful for Jew to marry a Greek or Roman or vice versa, then given the fact that many churches had both Jewish and Gentile members and virtually every substantial city in the Roman Empire had a Jewish community in it, we would expect Paul to forbid interracial marriage if it were wrong. But following the teaching of the Old Testament, Paul does not have a problem with it at all. For the apostle, the issue is faith. If Paul was a kinist, we would expect him to say, “You can marry anyone you want as long as they are a Christian of your own race or ethnic group.”

The kinist has an argument for this passage that goes something like this, “This passage does not contradict our position at all because Paul is only giving a brief statement here and is not giving a full exposition on who a Christian can marry. After all, the apostle says nothing about marrying one’s mother, or aunt, or sister or daughter. You surely do not believe someone can marry his blood relative as long as they are a Christian do you?” Of all the attempts of kinists

¹ The vast majority of commentators take the expression “in the Lord” as referring to someone united to Christ by faith. Paul insists that believers only marry persons who are already converted to Christ (see Matthew Poole, 3:563; Charles Hodge, 134; Christian Friedrich Kling, 164; A. R. Fausset, vol. 3, part 2, 304; Leon Morris, 122-123; James Moffet, 101; Simon J. Kistemaker, 255; W. Harold Mare, 10:237; etc.). A few commentators prefer the idea that “only in the Lord” means essentially according to the fear of God or in a Christian manner (cf. John Calvin, 1:270; John Gill, 8:655; and R. C. H. Lenski, 331). Charles Hodge notes that even if one takes the view that “in the Lord” means in a Christian manner, it would still forbid intermarrying with the heathen.

to circumvent this passage, this is their best argument. It, however, does not prove their case at all. Why is it unnecessary for Paul in this verse to stop and give a brief dissertation on the biblical prohibitions on the degrees of consanguinity? It is not needed because it is so clearly dealt with in the moral law of God (see Lev. 18). When Paul or anyone else says marry a Christian, it is assumed they are speaking of someone with a credible profession of faith and not someone living in scandalous or habitual sin. In addition, there is a very important difference between the biblical prohibitions on the degrees of consanguinity and the kinist/racist prohibitions on interracial marriage. The prohibited degrees of consanguinity are clearly set forth in Scripture while there is nothing at all forbidding the marriage of two *believers* of different ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, in our last lecture we surveyed the many godly people who married non-Hebrews (e.g., Moses who married a Cushite; the wife of Caleb; Salmon who married Rahab the harlot; Boaz who married Ruth; Joseph who married an Egyptian; Bathsheba was married to Uriah the Hittite; etc.). We also noted the law's provision for the incorporation of non-Jewish people into the covenant nation (Dt. 23:1-8). Moreover, we disproved the kinist perversion of Nehemiah 13 by pointing out that this chapter identifies the foreign women as practicing pagans not believers (Neh. 13:27). If the kinist wants to circumvent the explicit teaching of 1 Corinthians 7:39, he must have solid exegetical proof not simply racist fantasies.

Theological Considerations

There are a number of sections of Scripture in the New Testament that either imply or state in plain terms that Christ by His perfect redemption has eliminated the old divisions between Jews and Gentiles. Some of these passages deal not only with the fact that Jew and Gentile are saved in the same way (i.e. through faith in Jesus Christ *alone* apart from the works of the law), but also the result of that salvation on the body life of the church (i.e. the New Testament church is no longer associated with one nationality, but is now multinational and multiethnic). Jews and Gentiles are *part of the same local churches with full equality* and status. They all worship together, eat together, fellowship together, take the sacraments together and are all one body. No one that believes in Christ is to be excluded from the local body life of the church based on race or ethnicity. (This teaching is anticipated in Christ's statement in Matthew 21:43, "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it." The word "nation" or "people" (*ethnos*) refers to the church consisting of Jews and Gentiles. It is the great spiritual nation of all those who believe no matter what nationality. It is "the holy nation," "the peculiar people" (1 Pet. 2:9).

In the kinist/racist paradigm, there is equality when it comes to salvation, and there may even be a kind of equality between churches of different ethnic groups, but (in their view) God intended for all races to worship separately in their own black or Mexican or Asian churches. They turn ethnic and cultural differences into existential absolutes that must be maintained. (This comes from their perverted understanding of the phrase "according to one's kind" in Genesis 1:21, 24, 25 and their bizarre understanding of the Tower of Babel incident.) In this section we will look at some of the best passages against racism and kinist "separate but equal" ideas.

Acts 2:5-11

A section of Scripture that speaks tangentially to the kinist doctrine is Acts 2:5-11, where God filled the disciples with the Holy Spirit and they were enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak in

foreign languages that they themselves did not know. The account notes that diaspora Jews and proselytes from virtually every nation or ethnic group within the civilized world heard the apostles speaking their own language. This incident implies that the work of Christ applied in history will, in a certain sense, eventually counter the division of mankind at the Tower of Babel. This does not mean that different languages or nations will be abolished but that the enmities, diverse worldviews and hatreds will be eliminated by the Spirit's application of the death and resurrection of Christ to the world. The middle wall of partition has been broken down at the cross and thus we are to consider people of other races, nations and languages who are Bible-believing Christians to be our brothers. They are one with us in Christ and our relationship to them is far more intimate, precious and important than even our closest heathen blood relatives. We are all citizens of heaven while they [our heathen relatives] are children of hell.

Ephesians 2:11-22

All of this is set forth specifically in Ephesians 2:11-22:

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

At one time the Gentiles were strangers or aliens from Israel. The Gentiles were in a very low, unprivileged position. They were “Christless, stateless, friendless, hopeless, and Godless.”² They were strangers from the covenant made with Israel. But through the sacrificial death of Christ, Gentiles have been made fellow citizens with all the Jewish saints. “In any part of the Christian church all national distinctions are swept away, and we are no more foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens of the saints and of the household of God.... God has leveled up the outcast and despised Gentiles and has admitted us to all the privileges of his ancient covenant, making us heirs of Abraham.... He has given us all the blessings which belong to Abraham's seed, because we too possess like precious faith as the father of the faithful himself had”³

² William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 129.

³ C. H. Spurgeon, as quoted in Gordon H. Clark, *Ephesians* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1985), 90.

1 Corinthians 12:12-25

Paul says that the Gentiles are no longer aliens or strangers from the covenant nation. The middle wall of partition (the ceremonial law) that separated the two peoples is gone. The two are now *one new man*. They are now *one body*. They are all part of *one temple* that is growing in history. One man, one body, one temple—all signifying the organic unity of the church of Christ. The apostle emphasizes this point in 1 Corinthians: “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit” (12:12-13). Paul goes on to explain how each person has a particular function in the body for the greater good of all and that no one should have a negative view of any part of the body no matter how seemingly insignificant; and then says, “that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another” (12:25).

Jesus Christ brings a unity and harmony between different racial groups by His Spirit. There are distinctions in gifts, callings and functions in the one body, but there are no ethnic or racial distinctions where believers are separated from each other. They can all serve as church officers, all receive the sacraments together, all eat the love feast together, all fellowship and pray with each other and all sit together to hear the preached Word. Their spiritual unity in Christ has overcome ethnic animosities and segregationism. Paul specifically mentions Jews and Greeks because these groups were not friendly to each other in the ancient world. The Jews would not allow a Gentile to even enter their home. They would not eat with a Gentile. The Jews regarded themselves as a superior race or people; the Gentiles were considered to be on a lower level.

The kinist cannot circumvent this passage because when Paul talks about gifts, he makes it quite clear that the diversity existing in unity must take place at the local church level. Thus the kinist contention for “equal but separate” is clearly unscriptural. Kistemaker writes, “Here Paul stresses the unity of the church in its diverse forms. He notes the racial, cultural, and social differences that existed in the Corinthian church: there were Jews and Greeks, slaves and free. Regardless of their status and position in life, these people came together to worship God in one church. If the church should practice discrimination, it would be in direct conflict with the law of love. All people who are spiritually renewed in Christ are equal to one another.”⁴ Charles Hodge concurs: “*Unto one body* means *so as to constitute one body (eis, unto, expressing the result)*. No matter how great may have been the previous difference, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, by this baptism of the Spirit, all who experience it are merged into one body; they are all intimately and organically united as partaking of the same life.... And this internal spiritual union manifests itself in the profession of the same faith, and in all acts of Christian fellowship.”⁵

This profound theological discussion leads Paul to the logical conclusion “that there should be no schism [or division] in the body” (12:25). The different ethnic groups and social classes that make up the local congregation must express their Christian love and concern for each other by avoiding disruption and disunion. The kinist apologist is advocating a position that is diametrically opposed to the explicit teaching of Paul. The kinist’s racist paradigm places a no admittance sign on the “white” congregation’s door to blacks, Mexicans, Asians, Indians, etc...

⁴ Simon J. Kistemaker, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 430.

⁵ Charles Hodge, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 254-255.

The kinist definition of peace and unity is radically unbiblical and unloving because it is subordinated to segregationism. The idea of love as service, law-keeping, fellowship and mutual aid is replaced by, “You are a Christian; a child of God saved by grace alone. Just make sure you keep yourself, your children and your kind far away from us white Christians.” The kinist has so perverted Christian theology that he lives in an Orwellian world where love is hate and hate is love; where God saves people of different nationalities in order to segregate them from each other as though different cultures carry a contagious disease to each other. Paul emphatically rejects such nonsense. Schism means division and division within local congregations is sinful and results in alienation of feelings. The kinist speaks of love and equality while treating other racial groups with contempt. How they justify this view when many churches during the apostolic period in the Greco-Roman world consisted of Jew and Gentiles of various ethnic backgrounds is puzzling. (Note, for example, Paul’s greeting of the saints in Rome, [Rom. 16:2-16], where he uses Greek, Roman, Latin names and where he specifically mentions Jews [e.g., “Herodian, my kinsman,” v. 11]. While we cannot be completely sure about ethnic background from names because various ethnic groups would often use more than one name [in addition, people would adopt names to fit in better with the Greco-Roman culture]; nevertheless, the list demonstrates that churches in the apostolic era consisted of a varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The kinist could respond by saying that Europeans, Jews and Romans are all white so this argument is irrelevant. If they do, then they have exposed themselves as racists who base their views primarily on skin color. Moreover, according to tradition, Rufus [v. 13] was one of the sons of Simon the Cyrene, a citizen of North Africa. The greeting indicates a fully integrated church community with Europeans, Jews and Greeks all working and fellowshiping together. In the greeting we see that at least five house churches are addressed [vs. 5, 10, 11, 14 and 15]. Both the churches and what we would call a presbytery were fully integrated racially.) The kinist is simply taking a *pagan, white-racist, southern-cracker* concept of culture and imposing it on society and the church. They are the white versions of Malcolm X on this issue.

Galatians 3:28

Another passage that speaks to the issue of how different racial groups should be viewed by the church is Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Note that this statement comes after a section where the law as a tutor (the Mosaic administration of the covenant of grace) is said to be abolished with the coming of Christ. The law with its ceremonies and strict rules of separation has been done away because the kingdom has been removed from the nation of Israel and given to the multinational church. We are all sons of God through faith and the moral laws that are the standard of our sanctification are the same for all peoples. The proof of this is that men of every nation have been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ. What is important is not one’s nationality but whether one is clothed with Christ and His righteousness. For the purpose of this study we will only consider the division of ethnicity or nationality.

Paul’s statement is structured both negatively and positively. The first half speaks negatively of boundaries that divided people in the ancient world. There are three contrasts of inequality. These three pairs of opposites are intended to cover the three main divisions of human life: one’s ethnicity or nationality; one’s economic status; and one’s gender. The second half speaks positively of the new redemptive reality that all believers participate in because all are one in Christ Jesus. Let us consider each of these categories in turn.

The division between the Jews and Gentiles is placed first. This was the main issue affecting the Galatian churches and Paul places it in the forefront. The apostle uses the word *ellen* which “in the NT always means a Greek of Gentile origin.”⁶ “Greek is here put, as usual, for Gentile, and one department for the whole class.”⁷ The Judaizers following the doctrine of the Pharisees had perverted the promise to Abraham and his seed into a doctrine of redemption partially because of one’s race instead of faith in the Seed (singular) *alone*. Thus, they saw a fundamental inequality spiritually between themselves and the Gentiles that was intrinsic to their ethnic groups. This confidence and pride in their descent from Abraham, as a reason why God was somehow obligated to save them, contributed to the Jews’ rejection of Christ alone received by faith alone. In addition, “neither Jew nor Gentile,” speaks to the Old Testament ceremonial laws interposition as a wall of separation that kept the Jews separated and distinct from the surrounding heathen nations. With the coming of the Messiah the middle wall of separation has been abolished, *the church is now a truly multinational organization and the two have been made into one new man in Christ* (read Eph. 2:14-22).

With this one brief statement Paul essentially reiterates everything he has said up to this point about faith being the sole instrument which appropriates Christ and His perfect redemption. If both Jews and Gentiles are saved by faith alone apart from the works of the law, then neither has an intrinsic advantage. Also, the ceremonial system that kept both Jews and Gentiles apart (unless a Gentile was circumcised, joined himself to the Jewish nation and essentially became a Jew) was in effect only until Jesus came and died on the cross. With this change from the Mosaic administration to the New Covenant era the Jews have no advantage whatsoever over the Gentiles. Consequently, the Judaizers’ attempt *to separate the two groups and impose the Mosaic system* is an explicit contradiction of what Jesus has accomplished by His death and resurrection and by the sending of the Holy Spirit. Since all who believe are clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ, the attempt to make Gentile believers into Jews is wrong and unnecessary and foolish.

By way of application, note that Christ is presented as the one genuine solution to racism and idolatrous nationalism. The modern “solution” to the problem of racism and national and cultural differences is sought in pluralism, relativism and so-called “multiculturalism.” The general underlying idea behind secular humanism is that all religions, viewpoints and cultural expressions are equally true, but also equally false. Thus, *true unity for man is sought in statism*. The state imposes unity upon disorder by bureaucratic law. The basic presupposition behind such statism is that unity under the messianic state is much more important than anyone’s own particular worldview. (Ancient Rome was similar in that all religious groups and cultures were tolerated as long as the supreme Lordship of Caesar over everything was acknowledged.) Consequently, in modern post-Christian America the prevailing thought about Christianity and the Word of God is that such things are fine as long as they are kept behind the four walls of a church building or in a prayer closet.

Although statist legislation has discouraged blatant discrimination and hardcore racism is not near as prevalent as it once was, today there is not a true unity and harmony between racial groups. Segregation, mistrust and enmity are engaged in by both sides. The sins of the past have not been forgotten or forgiven and racial groups have only a shallow surface peace. But Christ, by His redemptive work, brings a true unity to men. A unity not imposed from the outside by the bayonet and barrel of a gun but by the Holy Spirit. What is important is not one’s birth or

⁶ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 157.

⁷ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians*, 112.

nationality or skin color, but one's *rebirth*. The European, African, Asian and American who has faith are all clothed with Christ and united into one body by faith. This kind of unity from the heart is sincere and cannot be contrived. The Holy Spirit raises our dead hearts, imparts the gift of faith and links all of us with Christ and thereby links us with one another. Thus we can see that racism in any form in the church is a grievous contradiction to our profession and who we are in Christ. "For a Jew to confess himself to be a Christian, and then to refuse to eat with Christians from the Gentiles, or to regard himself as being in any way superior to them in moral worth, is an abomination to the Lord."⁸ Likewise, the segregation of African-Americans from whites or vice versa in the church is exceptionally wicked. It is an implicit denial of Christ's work and the unity of His body. It is to say that being clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ is not enough for fellowship.

It is important to note that the statement "there is neither Jew nor Greek" relates to our redemption in Christ and does not mean that national borders and cultural differences are swept aside by the coming of the kingdom. The various musical styles, clothing, architecture, foods, languages and customs that are not sinful will remain. The Christian church is not a melting pot that merges all cultures and nationalities into one. Instead, it takes all these unique and rich cultures and purges them of idolatry and anything that is contrary to God's holy law. All men who believe are saved before God and are brothers in Christ. Thus, no one is to lord it over others as if their nationality was superior. The association of Christianity with Europeans and colonialism is unfortunate and erroneous.

The kinist has developed a concept of race and culture that is completely at odds with Scripture, logic and history. Most ethnic or cultural distinctions such as the kind of foods people eat, clothing styles, musical instruments, kinds of gardening, boat construction, particular weapons of warfare and so on are not *specifically* regulated by the moral law of God. Therefore, they (generally speaking) are things indifferent (*adiaphora*) and fall under the general teachings of Scripture. If people who are Irish or German want to eat Chinese food or African cuisine they can, as long as they do not steal the food or commit gluttony. If a Scottish woman wants to wear a Japanese dress or an African scarf there is nothing unlawful about it at all. Nationalities and cultures have never been unchanging air-tight categories, but have been changing and borrowing from each other from the beginning.

The Romans borrowed heavily from Greek culture and the Romans adopted virtually every military innovation they could get their hands on. Europeans took Chinese technology and developed modern guns and artillery. The Romans adapted clothing styles of the Celts for colder climates. In America many things that we eat and use came from African culture: peanuts, peanut butter, watermelons. Coffee, tomatoes and potatoes come from the indigenous peoples of South America.

⁸ William Hendriksen, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 150. The penetration of racism in the church is exhibited by the following excerpt from a nineteenth-century southern Presbyterian sermon: "You slaves will go to heaven if you are good, but don't think that you will ever be close to your mistress and master. No! No! There will be a wall between you; but there will be holes in it that will permit you to look out and see your mistress when she passes by" (Cited in John B. Cade, "Out of the Mouths of Ex-Slaves," *Journal of Negro History* 20 [July 1935]; see Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, 150). The statement reveals not only a very strong bigotry, but also the placing of economic interests over the gospel. The preacher sets forth legalism to keep the slaves in line (e.g., "you slaves will go to heaven if you are good"). Men do not go to heaven by being good, but by believing in Christ. Racism is very common today in many "black" churches where it is acceptable to make general statements about bigotry and inferiority of whites. One minister even repeatedly referred to Europeans as white devils, etc..

In fact, the whole concept of race, or ethnic identity, is really only a general, changing category itself. The modern Jew from Europe has little to no Semitic blood. Most African-Americans in America are a *mixture* of European and African blood. Many have *more white* ancestors than black. Which nationality are they obligated to identify with? Mexico and Central America has a people of Spanish and Indian background. In Brazil there is a mix of Portuguese, Indian and black. In the Caribbean, we have Spanish, French, Scottish, black and Indian mixed together. In the United States, we have virtually every conceivable mix under the sun. It is simply impossible to divide people up according to race and segregate them without being totally arbitrary and inconsistent. Would a kinist allow a dark-skinned American believer who is only *one-third* African and two-thirds Aryan worship in his white church or would they set up some new mulatto churches? What about a Christian who was mostly African with some white ancestors that looks white? There are such people. Would they also be excluded from a “white” church? The Nazis in Germany in the 1930s tried to answer these kinds of questions “scientifically” and produced a maze of absurd, arbitrary laws and regulations. The Bible does not deal with these kinds of questions because in Scripture the issue is *faith*, not race. Timothy had a Greek father and a Jewish mother and Paul did not care. Titus was a Gentile and Paul had him as a partner in the work of the ministry. It is perhaps for these reasons that kinist literature is so general and non-specific in particular applications. The main issue for kinists is not careful exegesis or analysis but simply: “Keep those dark-skinned people away from us white people.” It is a justification for racism that is so poorly thought out and so lacking in exegesis that it depends on slogans and *ad hominem* attacks on their opponents. The church of Christ must respond to this blatant racism by teaching the truth and disciplining those who do not repent. We must not allow racism to gain a foothold in our churches. We must not serve the holy supper to bigots.

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[HOME PAGE](#)