

Kingdom Come
The Golden Years
2 Samuel 8:1-18

2 Samuel 8 provides a sketch of David's kingdom which anticipates the coming kingdom of God. The golden years of David foreshadow the golden age of Messiah.

In **chapter 7**, when Yahweh made an eternal covenant with David, he reiterated what was originally promised to Abraham—a land for his people in which to dwell—the parameters which were given by God in **Genesis 12 & 15** and **Numbers 34**. The Promised Land would extend from the River of Egypt in the south to the Euphrates River in the north, from the Great Sea in the west and out to the desert region on the east side of the Jordan. The problem with God fulfilling and Israel realizing this land promise is the enemies of God and his people inside and on every side of this land. Yet, as we read here, God gives David victory over them all. This chapter reminds us that God's enemies must be defeated for God's kingdom promises to be fulfilled and established, and God is more than able to save his king and to save his people from every enemy that threatens them.

David's Conquest (8:1-6)

- The Philistines

- The Moabites

- King Hadadezer
 - Servants to David

- Warning! **Psalm 20:7; Deuteronomy 17:14-20**

David's Court (8:7-18)

- *The wealth of the nations shall come to you (Isaiah 60:5, 11; 61:6; Haggai 2:7-9; Zechariah 14:14; Revelation 21).*

Warning! The seeds of Israel's demise are already at play, even while God is blessing David and his people.

“Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.”

- *David made a name for himself...Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went...David reigned over all Israel.*
- *David administered justice and equity (righteousness) to all his people. (Amos 4:24; cf.. 2:7; 4:1; 5:11; 8:4; cf. Isaiah 9:6)*

- *David's sons were priests (!?!)*

How could they have been, when only Levite descendants of Aaron were supposed to be priests? Was David trying to go through the “back door” and set up a priest-king dynasty?

Possible explanations:

- David’s sons were royal advisors (“priests” = chief officials; **1 Chronicles 18:17**)
- David’s sons were in charge of the priests.
- David’s sons were considered priests in the order of **Melchizedek**. (**Genesis 14:18-20**)

Jesus Christ became a priest in the order of Melchizedek as an heir to the throne of David—not through descent from the tribe of Judah as **Hebrews 7** carefully notes, reserving the hereditary priesthood for the Levites—but by way of royal succession (**Psalms 110**).

For this reason, New Testament believers are called **royal** priests: **1 Peter 2:5, 9-10; Revelation 1:5-6** (cf. **Exodus 19:6**).

Land and the Roots of African-American Poverty

Kari Leigh Merritt

March 11, 2017



Keri Leigh Merritt works as a historian and writer in Atlanta, Georgia. She received her B.A. in History and Political Science from Emory University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. (2014) in History from the University of Georgia. Her research focuses on race and class in U.S. history.

Shortly after emancipation in 1865, African Americans began fighting for the rights to the lands they had long worked – cultivated by their hands, fed by their sweat, and stained by their blood. Yet while the government stifled freedmen's demands for '40 acres and a mule' as just compensation for generations of unpaid, brutalized slave labor, they simultaneously granted free land to whites.

Indeed, when the failure of land distribution among blacks during the Reconstruction is judged within the context of the Homestead Acts, the reality of the situation is laid bare. The problem was never the radical nature of land reform. The problem was racism.

When judged comparatively with other nations' emancipatory histories, the Reconstruction experience in the United States is unique. While African Americans were the only freed slaves to be granted political rights so soon after emancipation, those rights were limited for a people without capital or job prospects. Land *would* have served as the primary source for reparations.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the original Homestead Act into law during the second year of the Civil War. Between 1868 and 1934, it granted 246 million acres of western land – an area close to the land mass of both California and Texas – to individual Americans, virtually for free. To receive 160 acres of government land, claimants had to complete a three-part process: first, file an application. Second, improve the land for five years. Third, file for the deed of ownership.

Because of the date of the Act's passage, few people from the South initially received any benefit from it. Yet given that it effectively remained in place until 1934, well over 1.5 million white families – both American-born and immigrant – eventually profited from it. And, although the process was rife with fraud, as many homesteaders sold their plots to corporations, the original claimants pocketed the income from land sales, establishing a basis of wealth and capital. By the end of the Act, more than 270 million acres of western land had been transferred to individuals, almost all of whom were white. Nearly 10 per cent of all the land in the entire US was given to homesteaders for little more than a filing fee.

Enacted in 1866 shortly after the end of the Civil War, the Southern Homestead Act (SHA) was supposed to function much like the original Act. During the first year of the SHA, unoccupied southern land was offered exclusively to African Americans and loyal whites, but after 1867 even landless former Confederates applied.

Although the SHA ostensibly offered a solution to several pressing Reconstruction-era issues, in reality, a large percentage of the land offered was un-farmable, being either heavily wooded or covered with swamps. Furthermore, it was hard to administratively arrange homesteading, as many southern states had only one land office. Depending on

where the office was located, it could take several weeks to simply make the trip, meaning the bureaucratic duties cost far more than the filing fees for the actual land.

Furthermore, the recently emancipated owned no cash and had no experience in dealing with the government, rendering the process even more difficult. But perhaps the biggest hurdle for freed people involved the year-long labor contracts they had been cajoled or forced into signing shortly after slavery was outlawed. Leaving a job before the end date of a contract frequently resulted in virtual re-enslavement on a chain gang. Indeed, blacks had been locked into these contracts until the very date (1 January 1867) that they stopped receiving special homesteading benefits.

By the end of the SHA 10 years later, nearly 28,000 individuals had been awarded land. Combined with the claimants of the original Homestead Act, then, more than 1.6 million white families – both native-born and immigrant – succeeded in becoming landowners during the next several decades. Conversely, only 4,000 to 5,500 African-American claimants ever received final land patents from the SHA.

The Homestead Acts were unquestionably the most extensive, radical, redistributive governmental policy in US history. The number of adult descendants of the original Homestead Act recipients living in the year 2000 was estimated to be around *46 million people, about a quarter of the US adult population*. If that many white Americans can trace their legacy of wealth and property ownership to a single entitlement program, then the perpetuation of black poverty must also be linked to national policy. Indeed, the Homestead Acts excluded African Americans not in letter, but in practice – a template that the government would propagate for the next century and a half.

With the advent of emancipation, therefore, blacks became the only race in the US ever to start out, as an entire people, with close to zero capital. Having nothing else upon which to build or generate wealth, the majority of freedmen had little real chance of breaking the cycles of poverty created by slavery, and perpetuated by federal policy. The stain of slavery, it seems, is much more widespread and lasting than many Americans have admitted. Yet it is the legacy of the Reconstruction – particularly the failure of land redistribution – that so closely coupled poverty and race in the US.

Recommended Resources:

[Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America](#) by Emerson and Smith

NBC Interview with Martin Luther King:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzBaXZI-IWM>

The US Government Policy of Redlining
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/03/28/red-lining-was-banned-50-years-ago-its-still-hurting-minorities-today/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.944d712e05a0

Oregon Public Broadcasting – *Oregon's Black Pioneers*
<https://www.opb.org/television/programs/oregonexperience/segment/oregon-black-pioneers-documentary/#.XHcjZcay07A.mailto>

Eugene's Tent City
<https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/2858>

The Dirty Secret of Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1921
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivCODTY7fmQ&feature=youtu.be>

The Racial Segregation of American Cities Was Anything But Accidental

By Katie Nodjimbadem
May 30, 2017



Katie was formerly the staff reporter for *Smithsonian* magazine. The following is her interview of Richard Rothstein, author of *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*

"Rothstein has presented what I consider to be the most forceful argument ever published on how federal, state, and local governments gave rise to and reinforced neighborhood segregation."

—William Julius Wilson

It's not surprising to anyone who has lived in or visited a major American metropolitan region that the nation's cities tend to be organized in their own particular racial pattern. In Chicago, it's a north/south divide. In Austin, it's west/east. In some cities, it's a division based around infrastructure, as with Detroit's 8 Mile Road. In other cities, nature—such as Washington, D.C.'s Anacostia River—is the barrier. Sometimes these divisions are man-made, sometimes natural, but none are coincidental.

A narrative of racially discriminatory landlords and bankers—all independent actors—has long served as an explanation for the isolation of African-Americans in certain neighborhoods in large cities. But this pervasive assumption rationalizing residential segregation in the United States ignores the long history of federal, state and local policies that generated the residential segregation found across the country today.

In *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, Richard Rothstein, a research associate at the Economic Policy Institute, aims to flip the assumption that the state of racial organization in American cities is simply a result of individual prejudices. He untangles a century's worth of policies that built the segregated American city of today. From the first segregated public housing projects of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, to the 1949 Housing Act that encouraged white movement to the suburbs, to unconstitutional racial zoning ordinances enacted by city governments, Rothstein substantiates the argument that the current state of the American city is the direct result of unconstitutional, state-sanctioned racial discrimination.

Smithsonian.com spoke with Rothstein about his findings and his suggestions for change.

Your book aims to turn over misconceptions on how American cities came to be racially segregated. What are some of the biggest misconceptions people have, and how did they influence your research and writing of this book?

There's one overall misconception. And that is that the reason that neighborhoods in every metropolitan area in the country are segregated by race is because of a series of accidents driving prejudice and personal choices.

Income differences, private discrimination of real estate agents, banks and all of these come under the category of what the Supreme Court called, and what is now generally known as, *de facto* segregation, something that just happened by accident or by individual choices. And that myth, which is widespread across the political spectrum, hobbles our ability to remedy segregation and eliminate the enormous harm that it does to this country.

The truth is that segregation in every metropolitan area was imposed by racially explicit federal, state and local policy, without which private actions of prejudice or discrimination would not have been very effective. And if we understand that our segregation is a governmentally sponsored system, which of course we'd call *de jure* segregation, only then can we begin to remedy it. Because if it

happened by individual choice, it's hard to imagine how to remedy it. If it happened by government action, then we should be able to develop equally effective government actions to reverse it.

Why do you think there is this national amnesia about the history of these policies?

When we desegregated the buses, people could sit anywhere on the bus they wanted. When we desegregated restaurants, people could sit anywhere in the restaurant that they wanted. Even when we desegregated schools, if the ruling was enforced, the next day, children could go to the school in their neighborhood. But residential segregation is a much more difficult thing to do. If we prohibit the effects of residential segregation, it's not as though the next day people can up and move to suburbs that once excluded them by federal policy.

So given how difficult it is and how disruptive it would be to the existing residential patterns in the country, people avoid thinking about it, rather than having to confront something that's very difficult. And once people start to avoid thinking about it, then fewer and fewer people, as time goes on, remember the history at all.

How did the Great Depression contribute to the problem?

In the Great Depression, many lower-middle class and working-class families lost their home. They couldn't keep up with their payments. So the Public Works Administration (WPA) constructed the first civilian public housing ever in this country. Initially, it was primarily for white families in segregated white projects, but at some point, a few projects were built for African-Americans in segregated African-American projects. This practice often segregated neighborhoods that hadn't previously been that way.

In Langston Hughes' autobiography, he describes how he lived in an integrated neighborhood in Cleveland. His best friend in high school was Polish. He dated a Jewish girl. That neighborhood in Cleveland was razed by the WPA, which built two segregated [ones], one for African-Americans, one for whites. The Depression gave the stimulus for the first civilian public housing to be built. Were it not for that policy, many of these cities might have developed with a different residential pattern.

How did the Roosevelt administration justify these New Deal policies, like the WPA, if segregation wasn't constitutional?

The main justification they used was that segregation was necessary because if African-Americans lived in those neighborhoods, the property values of those neighborhoods would decline. But, in fact, the FHA had no evidence of this claim. Indeed, the opposite was the case. The FHA had research that demonstrated that property values rose when African-Americans moved into white neighborhoods, but it ignored its own research.

African-Americans had fewer options for housing. African-Americans were willing to pay more to purchase homes than whites were for identical homes, so when African-Americans moved into a white neighborhood, property values generally rose. Only after an organized effort by the real estate industry to create all-black suburbs and overcrowd them and turn them into slums did property values decline. But that was the rationale and it persisted for at least three decades, perhaps more.

How did the Housing Act of 1949 contribute to the issue of segregation?

President Harry Truman proposed the act because of an enormous civilian housing shortage. At the end of World War II, veterans returned home, they formed families; they needed places to live. The federal government had restricted the use of building materials for defense purposes only, so there was no private housing industry operating at that time.

Conservatives in Congress in 1949 were opposed to any public housing, not for racial reasons, because most housing was for whites. But they opposed any government involvement in the

private housing market, even though the sector wasn't taking care of the housing needs of the population.

So they decided to try to defeat the public housing bill by proposing a "poison pill amendment" to make the entire bill unpalatable. It said from now on that public housing could not discriminate, understanding that if northern liberals joined conservatives in passing that amendment, southern Democrats would abandon the public housing program and along with conservative Republicans, defeat the bill entirely.

So liberals in Congress fought against the integration amendment led by civil rights opponents [resulting in a] 1949 housing program that permitted segregation. When the civilian housing industry picked up in the 1950s, the federal government subsidized mass production builders to create suburbs on conditions that those homes in the suburbs be sold only to whites. No African-Americans were permitted to buy them and the FHA often added an additional condition requiring that every deed in a home in those subdivisions prohibit resale to African-Americans.

Eventually, we had a situation everywhere in the country where there were large numbers of vacancies in the white projects and long waiting lists for the black projects. The situation became so conspicuous that the government and local housing agencies had to open up all projects to African-Americans. So these two policies, the segregation of public housing in urban areas and the subsidization of white families to leave urban areas and to the suburbs, created the kind of racial patterns that we're familiar with today.

How did the Supreme Court decision in *Buchanan v. Warley* set the U.S. on a path of racial housing segregation?

In the early 20th century, a number of cities, particularly border cities like Baltimore, St. Louis, and Louisville, Kentucky, passed zoning ordinances that prohibited African-Americans from moving onto a block that was majority white. In 1917, the Supreme Court found in *Buchanan v. Warley* that such ordinances were unconstitutional, but not for racial reasons. The Court found it unconstitutional because such ordinances interfered with the rights of property owners.

As a result, planners around the country who were attempting to segregate their metropolitan areas had to come up with another device to do so. In the 1920s, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover organized an advisory committee on zoning, whose job was to persuade every jurisdiction to adopt the ordinance that would keep low-income families out of middle-class neighborhoods. The Supreme Court couldn't explicitly mention race, but the evidence is clear that the [Commerce Department's] motivation was racial. Jurisdictions began to adopt zoning ordinances that were exclusive on economics, but the true purpose was, in part, to exclude African-Americans. So they developed ordinances that for example, prohibited apartment buildings from being built in suburbs that had single-family homes. Or they required single-family homes to have large setbacks and be set on multiple acres, all as an attempt to make the suburb racially exclusive.

Even though the Buchanan decision was handed down in 1917, many cities continued to have racial ordinances in flagrant violation of the decision. Richmond, Virginia, passed an ordinance that said people couldn't move on to a block where they were prohibited from marrying the majority of people on that block. And since Virginia had an anti-miscegenation law that prohibited blacks and whites from marrying, the state claimed that this provision didn't violate the Buchanan decision. Many of these devices were used to evade the Court's decision. Some cities adopted ordinances that prohibited African-Americans from *living* on a block that was majority white. So the Buchanan decision wasn't totally effective, but it did stimulate the drive for economic zoning to keep African-Americans out of white neighborhoods.

People say that housing segregation happens because African-Americans simply can't afford to live in middle class neighborhoods, but you argue that this is overly simplistic.

For one thing, when these practices of public segregation were most virulent, many African-Americans *could* afford to live in white suburbs. Large subdivisions developed with FHA support like Levittown, New York, were built on conditions that they be all white. The homes in those places sold, in today's dollars, about \$100,000 apiece. They cost twice the national median income and were easily affordable to African-Americans as well as whites, but only working-class whites were permitted to buy into those homes.

In the next several generations, those homes sell for seven-to-eight times the median national income – unaffordable to working-class families. So the segregation that took place when the homes were first built created a permanent system that locked African-Americans out of it as appreciation grew. White families gained in home equity, in wealth, from the appreciation of their homes. African-Americans who were forced to live in apartments and not be homeowners gained none of that appreciation.

The result is that today African-American average incomes are about 60 percent of white incomes, but African-Americans' average wealth is about 5 percent of white wealth. That enormous difference is almost entirely attributable to unconstitutional federal housing policy in the mid-20th century.

How did reverse-redlining impact the African-American community in the financial crisis of 2008?

Reverse-redlining is a term used to describe the targeting by banks and mortgage lenders of minority communities for exploitative loans, called subprime loans. They were typically loans designed to induce African-American and Latino homeowners to refinance their homes at a low-interest rate that then exploded into a very high rate once they're locked into the mortgage. In many cases, these subprime loans were issued to African-American families who qualified for conventional loans, but they were denied those mortgages. The result was that foreclosure [rates] in minority communities far-exceeded that in white communities. Federal regulators were certainly aware of the fact that banks they supervised were targeting African-American communities with these loans. This was their job. So the federal government was complicit in this reverse-redlining in the period leading up to 2008. The result was devastation of middle-class and lower-middle-class African-American communities.

If the federal government was complicit in this, what is the obligation of the federal government now as the nation continues to recover from that crisis and the legacy of residential discrimination?

The obligation is under our constitution. If it's a constitutional violation, it's the obligation of our government to fashion a remedy. It's not as though simply saying "we're no longer segregating" creates a situation where segregated families can pick up and move to integrated neighborhoods. But there is an obligation to remedy segregation.

That's the reason why learning this history is important. If people believe that this all happened without government direction, then there is no constitutional obligation to desegregate. It might be a good policy, but there's no obligation.

There are many remedies. For example, Congress could prohibit the use of exclusionary zoning ordinances in suburbs that were segregated and prohibit those ordinances from being enforced until such time the suburb became diverse. That would permit developers to create townhouses and modest apartment buildings or single-family homes in all-white suburbs that currently prohibit all of those things. There are many policies we could follow, but we're not likely to have the political support to develop them without understanding the role of government in creating the segregation in the first place.