

Lesson 31

One Race: The Human Race

We are all one race—the human race.

Overview

Lesson Focus

Although we all look different, the Bible tells us we are all of one blood, one race, the human race—descended from Adam and Eve. We are all created in God’s image, and we are all sinners in need of a Savior.

Key Passages

Acts 17:26; Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23

Memory Verse

Genesis 12:1–2 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go . . . to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

Where did the “races” come from? The Bible refers to all of us as being from one man (Acts 17:26). God makes it abundantly clear that all humans are related, descendants of the first man, Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), who was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27). After the judgment of the flood, about 4,300 years ago, only Noah and his family remained, and the Bible tells us that from Noah’s three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—the world was repopulated (Genesis 9:18–19). But due to man’s disobedience, God’s judgment came once again at the Tower of Babel where he confused their language and caused them to disperse (Genesis 11:7–8).

According to God’s Word, we are all related (Acts 17:26), we are all created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26), and we are all sinners in need of salvation (Romans 3:23). This should convince us that God’s plan was to promote unity among the human race—not an attitude of prejudice or racism, which a belief in many races might support.

Jesus instructed us to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39), and God tells us that “the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Love is indeed God’s intention. We should avoid judging others because of their outward appearance, their ethnic features, or their disabilities. This is a biblical principle we must model and teach to our children from an early age. We are all

one race—the human race. Our recognition of this fact will help to eliminate the prejudice and racism that permeates much of our culture today.

Historical/Apologetics Background

It is because of what happened at Babel that the world doesn't have a common language. We know of over 6,900 spoken languages in the world today. Yet it is likely that fewer than 100 languages emerged from the Tower of Babel when God instantaneously confused the language. The languages that resulted from Babel are what we call "root" languages, or language families. These root languages would have changed rapidly as they borrowed from other languages, developed new terms and phrases, and lost words. The biblical account of Babel occurred just as it is recorded. People of one common language developed into people of thousands of languages—because of their disobedience and pride.

The most controversy surrounding the Tower of Babel arises around the idea that we are all one race—the human race. Because major differences in appearance—such as skin color, hair, and eye shape—exist among the different people groups, many people refuse to believe the biblical truth that we are all one race.

Since skin color is such an obvious difference, let's look at that. The truth is, we all have the same basic skin pigment, melanin, just more or less of it. Lots of pigment is called "black," and a little pigment is called "white." We are all merely a combination of these two pigments—black and white—creating differing shades of one basic color, brown.

The study of DNA and genetic makeup conducted by the Human Genome Project supports the biblical teaching that there is only one biological race of humans. The study determined that the differences in us that we perceive as so dramatic are a result of only a small fraction of our genes. In other words, we are all extremely similar in our genetic makeup. And what about those things that make us look different? They are very insignificant when put into perspective. Again, the biblical principle is to love our neighbor as ourselves and to follow the Lord's example of disregarding the outward appearance and instead looking at the heart.

Let's take a look at some of the historical significance of the Tower of Babel. First of all, we know according to Scripture that the flood was about 4,300 years ago—in about 2350 BC—and that everything on the face of the earth was destroyed. The dispersion of the people at the Tower of Babel marked the beginning of the spreading of civilization over the entire world, beginning around 2240 BC (when people scattered from Babel). Consequently, when we study ancient history, we need to remember that evidences of civilization that are found have to be dated after 2240 BC.

Another historical consideration in our discussion of God's judgment and dispersion of the people at Babel centers on what we hear about "primitive cavemen." These cavemen are often presented as animal-like by evolutionists to legitimize the ape-to-man development theory. They are often described as having lived thousands of years before civilizations like Egypt or Babylon.

However, we know according to Scripture that they were the people God dispersed from Babel. They were not primitive but extremely skilled—skilled enough to be building cities (Genesis 4:17), raising and caring for livestock (Genesis 4:20), playing musical instruments (Genesis 4:21), and working in various metals (Genesis 4:22), even before the flood.

Although as a community they were skilled in many areas, once they were scattered, their survival depended on their individual skills alone. This may have resulted in some of the groups resorting to more primitive ways of surviving—they just didn't have all the skills they needed. And the fact that they made their homes in caves proved their intelligence, as caves would provide protection and shelter from the weather, animals, or enemies. These so-called "primitive cavemen" were no such thing. They were intelligent people making up intelligent families. They were not subhuman, but descendants of Adam and Eve just as we are, created in God's image.

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