**Image Of God**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday June 7, 2020

Text: Genesis 1:26-27

### Intro

1. The May 25, 2020 death of George Floyd, a 46 year old African American man, by a white police officer, Derek Chauvin, in Minneapolis, MN, sparked protests across the nation!
   1. Videos showed Officer Chauvin brutally arrest Floyd, then after he rear-restrained him (his hands cuffed behind his back) he knelt on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.
   2. He murdered him in the street! *(A judge & jury will ultimately decide)*
   3. Whatever crime he may or may not have committed or whatever was in his system (two autopsies have been performed with contradictory causes of death), it wasn’t worthy of the death sentence, and the police officer should not have been his executioner!
   4. All 4 officers involved were fired the next day, and since then all have been arrested and charged, with Chauvin charged with 2nd Degree Murder.
   5. Peaceful protests continue across the nation, but in some places rioting and looting!
   6. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html>
   7. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/timeline-impact-george-floyds-death-minneapolis/story?id=70999322>
   8. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/01/us/george-floyd-independent-autopsy/index.html>
   9. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/06/01/george-floyd-independent-autopsy-findings-released-monday/5307185002/>
   10. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/george-floyd-tested-positive-coronavirus-april-autopsy-says-n1224396>
2. This event and events since have highlighted the racial injustices and unrest in our country and deepens the divide between people.
3. Racism is wrong and is a sin!
4. Violence is wrong and is a sin!
5. While we can’t force morality on the world, as Christians, neither racism or violence belongs in our lives or hearts.
6. I want to give people who are hurting a hug! But…the hug they truly need is the healing embrace of Jesus!
   1. Jesus said the 2nd greatest commandment (next to loving God with all we are) is “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:31).
   2. Jesus also said, “Treat others the same way you want them to treat you” (Luke 6:31).
7. All of mankind, no matter their skin color or ethnicity, is made in the image of God! (Gen. 1:26-27) – Latin: *Imago Dei*
   1. We are all humans, the same race to God.
   2. Acts 17:26: All nations came from one man! (Same blood!)
   3. Racism is a man-made division! All ONE race! (Humans)
   4. Murder is condemned because man is made in the image of God (Gen. 9:6).
   5. We have all been created with intrinsic self-worth as image bearers of God Almighty!
8. The world can heal and be a better place if people treat one another as they want to be treated and recognize all people everywhere are made in the image of God!

#### Jews & Gentiles

* 1. The Jews were chosen as God’s special people (Deut. 7:6; 14:2)
  2. As such, they adopted a superiority attitude towards all other nations.
  3. In the time of Jesus there were really only two “races”: Jews & Gentiles (Greeks)
     1. There were Samaritans too, but they were generally cast into the same lot as Gentiles! (Greeks was another way to identify Gentiles)
     2. Gentile in Hebrew and Greek means a foreigner, specifically, a non-Jewish foreign national. Gentile is mentioned 91 times in the N.T. and 1 time in O.T.
     3. Matthew 10:5-6: The disciples were sent to preach to the Jews (the lost sheep of the house of Israel) and were not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans at that time – *Later they were sent into the whole world to all the nations – Mt.28:18-20; Acts 1:8).*
  4. Racism existed in the minds of the Jews, God’s people, and Jesus came to change that!

#### Jesus Came to Bless Both Jews & Gentiles

* 1. The O.T. (Old Testament) contains clues that one day the Gentiles will be blessed by God
     1. The widow of Sidon blessed by God during the famine – I Kings 17:10-24
     2. Naaman the Leper of Syria healed by God – II Kings 5
     3. Jesus used both these examples to show the Israelites that God had blessed Gentiles before and that history was about to repeat itself! (Luke 4:24-27)
        1. The Jews placed women, Gentiles, and lepers at the bottom of the social scale.
        2. But here the Lord pointedly placed all three above unbelieving Jews!
        3. What He was saying was that O.T. history was about to repeat itself.
        4. In spite of His miracles, Jesus would be rejected not only by the city of Nazareth but by the nation of Israel.
        5. He would then turn to the Gentiles, just as Elijah and Elisha had done!
     4. God’s compassion on Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria – Book of Jonah
     5. Isaiah’s prophecy was that all nations will hear the word of God proclaimed from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-2; Acts 2)
  2. Jesus said He came to both Jews (first) and to the Gentiles
     1. Luke 2:29-32: Simeon said Jesus would fulfill prophecy to bring salvation to both Gentiles and the Jews! *(From Isaiah 42:6 & 49:6)*
     2. Mt. 12:15-21: Jesus came in fulfillment of Isaiah 42:1-4 to give the Gentiles hope! *(Luke 4:24-27)*
     3. John 10:16: Jesus spoke of bringing in another flock to the Jewish flock to make “one flock with one shepherd.”
     4. Eph. 2:11-22: Jews & Gentiles were reconciled together and to God in Christ’s blood, and made into “one new man” in peace and were made citizens of the kingdom together and are both members of God’s household!
  3. There is NO division in Jesus and His church, but “one new man!”

#### The New Race

* 1. The One Flock: The New Race
  2. There is an anonymous A.D. 2nd c. writer that wrote to explain the Christian life to a pagan named Diognetus and in his introduction stated,
     1. “You would also like to know the source of the loving affection that they have for each other. You wonder, too, why this new race or way of life has appeared on earth now and not earlier.” (Epistle to Diognetus, 1.1)
     2. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0101.htm>
  3. “This New Race” is how the early Christians identified themselves!
     1. That is how the early Christians described themselves living in a time and place filled with racial tensions of ethnicity and social class.
     2. Many people think it came from I Corinthians 10:32:
        1. “Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God.”
     3. “This new race”:
        1. For Paul, there were three “races”: Jews, Gentiles, and Christians.
        2. Those in Christ form a new or third race, with an identity that is constituted not by race, gender, or social class, but by union with Christ, “who is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:11).
        3. The same gospel that reconciles us to God in Christ also reconciles us to one another in Christ (Ephesians 2:13-16).
     4. One flock, one new man, one body in Christ!
        1. Gal. 3:26-29 (emphasis on 3:28): In Christ there is no difference of degree in racial or social status, just oneness! “This new race”
        2. The world is filled with hate, fear and distrust revolving around race and ethnicity.
        3. God calls us to be different from the world, and indeed to transform it!
        4. <https://www.facebook.com/shane.scott.777/notes?lst=709224676%3A1378873380%3A1591298166>
        5. <https://www.facebook.com/shane.scott.777/posts/10222223770888071>
     5. Something “New”
        1. II Cor. 5:17: In Christ one is a “new creature.”
        2. Gal. 6:15: “For neither is circumcision *(Jews)* anything, nor uncircumcision *(Gentiles/Greeks),* but a new creation *(this new race)*.”
        3. Heb. 10:20: Called to “a new and living way.”
  4. As part of this new race saints are called to a new and living way, to be different from the world, and for our priorities to be Christ and the gospel!

## Conclusion

1. Something “new” and “one in Christ” means prejudices and racism, and all the emotions that go with those things: fear and hate, don’t belong in the saint’s heart!
   1. Acts 10:34-35: The light bulb moment for Peter was in the house of Cornelius, when he stated, “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him!”
   2. Romans 2:11: Paul wrote, “For there is no partiality with God.”
   3. James 2:9: James wrote, “But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”
2. Racism and violence are sin and here’s a reminder of how to combat such things:
   1. Love your neighbor as yourself! *(Mark 12:31)*
   2. Treat others the same way you want to be treated! *(Luke 6:31)*
   3. Listen & empathize to those who are hurting! *(Romans 12:15; James 1:19)*
   4. Be the change you want to see in others, the country, and the world! *(II Corinthians 5:17)*
3. We need to have the mindset that all people matter to God and are worthy of our time, love and concern *(II Timothy 2:24-26)* because all men and women are created in the image of God! *(Genesis 1:26-27)*
   1. Our country and countries across the world throughout time have used racism to cause division, fear and hatred, and to demean people’s self-worth.
   2. Unfortunately, the church has been plagued with racism in the past, and all manner of evils have been justified in the name of God.
   3. To be something “new” we need to come out of the world fully, to be separate and apart not only in our behaviors but even in our thinking towards our fellow man, who are made in the image of God!
   4. All of humanity needs the gospel! It can transform hearts and minds into what Jesus Christ wants them to be: Loving and kind! (Col. 3:12-14)
4. Let us in humility of mind think of others as more important than ourselves *(Phil. 2:3-4)* and labor for the kingdom in love and concern for others, teaching them to obey the gospel and be forgiven of their sins, and become “a new creature” that is part of “this new race!”
5. If not obeyed Christ yet, repent, be baptized, and hold fast to His word!
6. If a Christian, let your life show it – live *for* Him now so you may ever live *with* Him!
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!