

Analyze

For this essay I watched Joel Webbon's opening statement in a debate regarding the normativity of interracial marriage. Joel Webbon and his cohosts opposed that normativity, while Ruslan and GodLogic thought such arrangements were normative.

In his statement, Webbon commits the ahistorical fallacy. The ahistorical fallacy means that someone treats racial groupings as separate from any historical development. Instead, they are treated as intrinsic and normative for all history. Racism today must look like racism then to be valid racism, and vice versa. He does this by mapping modern notions of race onto the nations and people groups found in the Bible, saying that because they didn't intermarry and God forbade the Israelites from intermarrying, then it must be normative to marry only within your own people group. This idea flattens the ancient view of tribal and kinship identities with modern sociopolitical ideas of race into one category, ignoring any historical movement or difference between the two. He attempts to say that it can't be racist because he isn't looking at modern racial categories but then continues to give modern racial categories as part of his examples, invalidating his point.

The argument distorts the development of racial categories and distorts what true normative design is. A covenantal relationship is what ultimately determines one's "people group". Israel was discouraged from marrying outside of Israel not because Israel was a nation, but because Israel was a covenant people. They were forbidden to marry outside the covenant, not outside the nation. Today Christians are discouraged from being unequally yoked and marrying outside the covenant, that is, the church, not outside their people group or racial category. Paul talks about how in Christ categories such as ethnicity and culture are not relevant to the strength of one's relationship to the body. We are one in Christ and joined together as part of his one body. That is what Webbon distorts.

ACT

When looking at race in the Bible, we must be careful to not let modern notions of race map onto biblical instances; we should let scripture define its terms and categories. God's people are ultimately defined by participating in the body of Christ and membership in the covenant rather than mere racial lineage. While Israel was a covenant nation, it was not the fact that they were a nation that made them part of the covenant, but the fact that they were part of the covenant that made them a nation and people group. I would encourage you to look at how the early church is laid out, especially in Acts and more generally in early church history. The church is not limited to one people group, and while diverse, it is still united in Christ. I urge you to conform yourself to Christ, and not attempt to conform Christ to your current state.