

# Race, Immigration, and the Church: Clarity in an Age of Confusion

By Pastor Joseph Spurgeon Sovereign King Church

## I. Why We Need to Talk About This

I had planned to speak about the following topic over a month ago but this past week has driven home the need for the church to be truthful and clear. In recent days, the streets of Los Angeles have erupted in chaos. Rioters fly the flags of foreign nations—like Mexico—while ICE agents are attacked simply for doing their lawful duty. It's a flashpoint in a broader conflict, one rooted not just in policy but in deeper questions of identity, loyalty, and truth.

For most of its history, the United States was overwhelmingly white and European in origin. It also had because of slavery the presence of a sizable black minority. Yet America was over 85–90% White European descent until the mid-20th century. That began to change with the Hart-Celler Immigration Act of 1965. This law radically restructured our immigration system and opened the gates to mass immigration, especially from non-European countries. The goal was to remove racial and national quotas in the name of equality. The result has been a massive demographic shift.

At the same time, the Civil Rights Movement tried to address real injustices but it also ushered in new social dynamics, laws, and ideologies. We were promised a post-racial society, especially with the election of Barack Obama, the first black president. But instead of healing divisions, his presidency deepened them. His rhetoric and policies stirred racial resentment and further polarized the nation.

Following him came Donald Trump, whose presidency reawakened discussions on national identity and borders. Then came Black Lives Matter, critical race theory, and a flood of woke ideologies—not just in politics and education but in churches. Pastors began parroting phrases like “white privilege” and “systemic racism,” often without biblical warrant or theological discernment.

In response, some well-meaning conservatives tried to retreat into a “colorblind” approach—pretending race doesn't matter. But this too is inadequate. Scripture speaks plainly about nations, tribes, and peoples. And it gives us the categories to think rightly about these things—not through the lens of guilt or supremacy, but of truth and justice.

Into the vacuum left by weak or silent pulpits, various online voices—some sincere, some dangerous—have stepped in to fill the gap. They ask the hard questions:

Why is it “progress” to celebrate the decline of whites in a nation built by their forefathers?

Why is it okay to talk about black pride, Hispanic heritage, or Jewish power, but wrong to even mention white identity without being slandered?

Why are black Americans only 13% of the population, yet commit half the homicides?

Why are Jews disproportionately represented in Hollywood, finance, and government?

What do we do with all this conflict in the society and in the church?

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People are looking for answers. If the church won't give them biblical ones, someone else will fill the void—and often with dangerous ideologies that twist the truth just enough to do real harm.

Today, I am not working to promote bitterness, resentment, or vain pride. As a church, we proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all things, including over all races and nations. But we do need clarity. And We need courage. Because quite frankly this is a charged topic, and I am hesitant to jump into the fray on it.

That said,

I have two main goals in teaching this class.

**First**, I want to lay down some definitions—words like “race,” “nation,” “culture, and “natural affections.” These words carry emotional weight, historical baggage, and ideological confusion. It's a complicated topic. There are ditches on every side. Some people speak as if race is everything. Others act as if it means nothing at all. What I hope to do is bring biblical clarity to a subject that demands both truth and wisdom. And that clarity will show that this is not a topic that lends itself to bumper-sticker solutions. It's complex. There are layers—historical, theological, political, and personal. And so while we will pursue clarity, we must also have charity. That means recognizing that when it comes to civil policies on immigration or demographic questions, men of good character can disagree. There are a range of prudential views that Christians may take without being labeled racist or compromised.

In short, we need to recover the ability to talk about these matters without assuming the worst of each other. Because of the complexity, we ought to slow down, listen carefully, and give one another some freedom to work through difficult questions. Natural affection, ordered love, and a concern for one's own people are not sins. But vain pride and knee-jerk hatred are. That's the balance we're aiming for. And while recovering the ability to speak on these matters I also at the same time want to maintain that this topic requires prudence and not just flame throwers. Hot takes seeking to court controversy are not always the way.

**Second**, I want to make clear that within the church, race must never become a dividing wall of hostility. While nations may have ethnic boundaries and civil leaders may pursue a variety of approaches in stewarding the people under their care, the church of Jesus Christ is different. The church is catholic—it transcends ethnicity, geography, and bloodlines. In Christ, we are one.

This doesn't mean local churches must chase diversity quotas or manufacture multi-ethnic optics. A church in Indiana full of white Christians isn't in sin simply because of its demographics. But neither may we establish principled segregation in the church. The moment we say someone of another race isn't welcome to worship with us as a brother in Christ, we have abandoned the gospel.

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Outside the church, Christians are free to hold personal views on matters like interracial marriage. Parents can have preferences for their children. People naturally gather in nations, neighborhoods, and social groups with those like them. But in the church, those things cannot become walls of division. We must not foster animosity toward fellow believers or elevate our ethnicity as a point of pride.

This topic is being talked about everywhere right now—online, in politics, in private conversations. Some of that is because truths have been forbidden for so long. But as we open up these conversations, we must remember to keep them in balance. Scripture is our guide. While we are talking about this today, this is not to become our only talking point. And while you are free to have opinions on policies (as long as they are not against the law of God), not every truth needs to be spoken in every setting. A truthful word spoken out of season can still be sin. Don't let your opinions and preferences be used to harm your brothers in Christ.

So we need to speak with boldness but with discipline. We seek to think clearly—and walk humbly. And above all, we seek to preserve the unity of the church without sacrificing the truth.

## II. Definitions

**A Race:** Before we can speak truthfully about race and immigration, we have to define what we mean by the word *race*. This is where the complexity hits immediately. The term *race* is used in multiple ways across Scripture, theology, and the modern world. And because it carries different meanings depending on context, people often equivocate—using it one way in one breath and another way in the next. That leads to confusion, error, and even manipulation.

So let's be clear. There are at least four ways people use the word *race*, and each has its own context and use:

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### 1. The Human Race

This is the most basic use: *race* as the entire human species. The Bible teaches on “the race of Adam. (As old theologians used to say)” We all come from one man. We are one blood, one humanity, made in the image of God. In this sense, every man and woman—regardless of ethnicity or geography—is a descendant of Adam and Eve. This is foundational to Christian theology: Adam represents all mankind in the covenant of works; Christ, the Second Adam, redeems a people from all nations.

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### 2. Race as Lineage or Line of Descent

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Theologians have used the word race to describe how the Bible also speaks in terms of family lines or descent. For example, the early genealogies in Genesis trace the lines of Cain and Seth. After the flood, all people descend from Noah and his three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. These lineages are real and significant.

One debated passage here is the so-called “curse of Ham.” After Noah’s drunkenness, his son Ham dishonored him. But if we read the text, Genesis 9, carefully, it is not Ham who is cursed—it is Ham’s son *Canaan*. The curse falls on a particular line, not on all of Ham’s descendants. Later Scripture tells us exactly how this curse is fulfilled: the wickedness of the Canaanites leads to their being dispossessed and, in some cases, enslaved by Israel. Other descendants of Ham—such as Cush (Ethiopia) and Mizraim (Egypt)—are not included in that curse, and Scripture even speaks positively of them at times.

Isaiah 19:21-22 & 24-25 Thus the Lord will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to the Lord and perform it. 22 The Lord will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the Lord, and He will respond to them and will heal them.... 24 In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, 25 whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”

Psalm 68:31 Envoys will come out of Egypt; Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God.

Therefore while this passage shouldn’t be abused to speak of a curse of Ham as to say that Ham’s descendents aka black people are cursed, it is a helpful passage in recognizing how race is sometimes used by theologians in church history.

So in this sense, *race* refers to large family branches that spread across time and geography, The race of Ham, the race of Japheth, the race of Shem. and it's a legitimate biblical way of understanding people groups.

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### 3. Race as Nation or Ethnicity

As those family lines develop, they become what the Bible calls *nations*. Genesis 10, the Table of Nations, shows the spreading out of these peoples into distinct tribes, tongues, and territories. This is where *race* overlaps with *ethnicity*. It’s common to speak of the “French race,” the “Ethiopian race,” or the “English race.” In these uses, *race* simply refers to a people—a nation—with shared ancestry and characteristics. This was common in older English usage and even in translations like the NIV. In this sense, race and ethnicity are often interchangeable.

This is the most common use of race found in Christian writings before common times.

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## 4. Race as Modern Biological Taxonomy

Finally, in the modern world, race has often been used as a taxonomical term—especially in scientific, medical, and sociological contexts. Historically, this gave rise to broad racial groupings such as Caucasoid, Negroid, and Mongoloid. Later models expanded this to five or more categories, adding groups like Australoid and Capoid. Today, people typically speak in simplified terms: white, black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American. These modern labels reflect real physical and genetic differences—differences in bone structure, skin tone, disease susceptibility, and ancestral markers—but they are broader than nations and often blur over cultural distinctions and national identities.

Some reject this use entirely, saying it's unbiblical. Others go further and claim race isn't real at all. But that's simplistic. Just because Scripture doesn't use modern taxonomical terms doesn't mean those categories are invalid. The Bible doesn't mention "oxygen" either, but you still breathe it. Race, in this taxonomical sense, is an observable reality. It can be abused—but it is not imaginary.

Compare this to our second definition:

Biblical lineage categories (Shem, Ham, Japheth) describe the source of broad people groups. Taxonomical race categories (Caucasoid, Mongoloid, Negroid, etc.) describe the outward results of those lineages—how God's providence through geography, isolation, and history led to observable physical distinctions among groups descended from Noah's sons.

So while Scripture doesn't use modern racial taxonomy, it does affirm the reality of broad human family divisions that correspond roughly with what modern taxonomy tries to describe:

Caucasoid may include descendants of Japheth (Europeans) and parts of Shem (Middle Easterners).

Negroid may reflect much of Ham's line (Cush, Put).

Mongoloid may align with far eastern branches from the sons of Japheth or beyond.

We should also be clear that rejecting Darwinism doesn't mean rejecting biology. Darwin wrongly taught that the races of men evolved separately and were locked in a struggle for dominance. That's a lie. But acknowledging that God created real group distinctions—through providence, migration, and genetic variation—is not Darwinism. It's realism. We can recognize these differences without embracing evolutionary racism.

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## Putting It All Together

Because *race* can be used in all four of these ways—humanity, descent, nation, and taxonomy—we must be disciplined in how we use the word. Much confusion comes from switching definitions mid-argument.

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A helpful way to think of race is in concentric circles:

- At the center, you are an individual.
- Around that, your family.
- Then your extended family or clan.
- Then your tribe or local people.
- Then your nation. Which can also be called race.
- Then your what is more modernly called race—those who share broader common ancestry, characteristics, and history.
- And finally, the human race as a whole.

This structure helps us understand how someone can speak of belonging to the “white race,” the “American race,” and still be one race in Adam—and, more importantly, one with all believers in Christ.

This complexity is why we must define terms carefully before we engage emotionally charged issues like immigration, cultural identity, and national policy. Getting definitions right won’t solve everything—but getting them wrong guarantees confusion.

## B. Defining the Word “Nation”

Once we define race, the next word we must define is **nation**. And again, this word comes with its own set of complexities. In many ways, *nation* overlaps with *race*, especially when we're referring to a people descended from a common lineage. The Greek word *ethnos*—used in Scripture—can mean nation, people, or Gentiles, and it's the root of our word *ethnicity*. So when people today talk about an "ethno-nation," they're really using a redundant phrase. Historically and biblically, a nation is an ethnic group—a people.

### Genesis 10:5

“From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.”

– This verse from the Table of Nations shows that nations are defined by a combination of family lineage, language, and land—exactly the categories we’re describing.

But in modern usage, especially after the rise of the nation-state, *nation* often gets equated with *country*. That’s not wrong, but it’s not precise either. A nation is more than just a set of borders or a government structure. Biblically and historically, a nation is a people bound together by several key elements:

- **Common lineage** — Descent from a shared ancestry
- **Common land** — A place they call home and have cultivated over time
- **Common history** — Shared struggles, victories, defeats, and stories
- **Common laws** — A system of governance and justice

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- **Common liturgy or worship** — Whether true or false, a shared religious framework often undergirds the identity of a people

### **Deuteronomy 4:6-8**

“So keep and do [the statutes], for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples... what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law?”

– God gave Israel laws that were to set them apart as a *great nation*, distinguished by moral and civil excellence.

This is why Israel is called a *nation*. They had a shared ancestry, a promised land, a unique history, divine laws, and a God who made covenant with them. And while their national identity was rooted in descent, it wasn’t exclusively biological. Outsiders could be grafted in through assimilation and faithfulness to Israel’s God.

### **Exodus 19:5-6**

“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples... and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

– God’s covenant with Israel defined them as a *nation* not only by ancestry but by loyalty to His law and worship.

Think of Ruth. She was a Moabitess, ethnically foreign to Israel. Yet she left her people, joined herself to Naomi, and declared, “Your people will be my people, and your God my God” (**Ruth 1:16**). By her faith and obedience, she was welcomed into the nation—and her descendant would be King David, and ultimately Christ.

But that full assimilation didn’t happen instantly. The law specified that full covenant privileges took time—multiple generations of faithfulness (cf. **Deuteronomy 23:3**). This shows that nations are not merely biological categories. They are people shaped over time by faith, loyalty, land, law, and culture.

So yes, we can speak of a race of people, but when we talk about a nation, we are talking about more than DNA. A nation includes what a people has built together. Nations are not static—they grow, decay, split, assimilate, and reform. That’s part of **God’s providence over history**.

### **Job 12:23**

He makes the nations great, then destroys them; He enlarges the nations, then leads them away.

– God is the one who created the nations, set their boundaries, and appointed their seasons in history. This is not merely sociological. It’s theological.

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## C. Defining the Word “Culture”

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Now, let's define *culture*. This is another term people toss around—often as a way to avoid talking about race. You'll hear people say, "It's not race, it's culture," as if the two are completely separate. But this is far too simplistic.

Culture is the fruit of a people. It is what emerges from shared lineage, land, laws, history, and worship. It includes things like:

- Music
- Art
- Language
- Customs
- Clothing
- Food
- Architecture
- Heroes and stories
- Values and norms

Culture doesn't drop from the sky. It's not random. It's shaped by the people who make it—and that includes both nurture and nature. Geography matters. Climate matters. Family lineage matters. The songs of the Scots and the tools of the Germans are not accidental. Neither is the food of the Filipinos or the music of the Appalachians. These are the outputs of distinct peoples who lived through shared history in shared places, under shared conditions, and passed down shared blood.

That's why even among people of the same broader race, culture can diverge. For example, the Spurgeons of West Virginia share ancestry with the Spurgeons of England—but the hills, hardships, and habits of Appalachia formed a distinct culture over time.

So culture isn't race *alone*, but it isn't *separate* from race either. The two are intertwined. To say "it's just culture" ignores the deeper foundations that shape that culture. To say "it's just race" ignores the real-world shaping forces of geography, law, worship, and shared struggle.

Acts 17:26–27

"And He made from one man every nation of mankind... having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God."

—God not only appoints nations, but places them in times and spaces that shape how they live, worship, and seek Him. That shaping—by land, time, and people—is culture.

Furthermore, Even in eternity, God will not erase the diversity of the nations. Revelation 21 says that the glory and honor of the nations will be brought into the New Jerusalem. Isaiah 60 describes the kings of the earth bringing the wealth of the nations before the Lord. That means culture matters. What a people builds—their art, their architecture, their worship, their food, their customs—can be redeemed and offered to God as glory. Culture is not discarded in the kingdom; it's refined, purified, and laid at His feet.



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### Summary: A Complex Interplay

These definitions show us that the issues of race, nation, and culture are deeply connected. And they are not simple.

- Race includes biology and descent.
- Nation includes descent, but also law, land, and worship.
- Culture flows out of a people's lived reality—who they are, where they've been, what they believe, and how they live.

So when people argue online or in politics saying “it's not race, it's culture,” or “it's not culture, it's race,” they are usually just looking for a shortcut. But there are no shortcuts here. These things are complex. They are real. And they matter.

### D. Defining Natural Affection

Now that we've laid out the complexity of race, nation, and culture, we need to ask: *What should we do with these categories?* What do they require of us? How do we rightly order our love and loyalty in a world this tangled?

This brings us to the concept of **natural affection**.

At its root, *natural* means “from nature”—something arising from what God has built into creation. *Affection* refers to love, warmth, compassion, and preference. So natural affection is love that flows instinctively from how God made us. It's not something that has to be taught or commanded. It should just *be there*.

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### Biblical Foundations

The Bible mentions "natural affection" explicitly in two places—Romans 1:31 and 2 Timothy 3:3—and both times it's in the negative: people are condemned for lacking it. When men reject God, they are given over to dishonorable passions, unnatural sexual desires, and—yes—a *lack of natural affection*. This includes parents turning against their own children, families breaking down, and people abandoning loyalty to kin and nation.

You shouldn't have to be told to love your child. That kind of love is assumed in Scripture—just as Jesus says, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There's no command to love yourself, because it's taken for granted. Now pastors like William Gouge when speaking about these passages did teach people to have a biblical form of self-love but they always kept this in balance. It's just

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not something we should have to see a command for. God hardwired it into us. We all love ourselves. The hard part is loving others.

The same goes for parental love, familial bonds, and even love for one's own people.

In a rightly ordered world, you don't need a commandment to love your parents, your siblings, your children, your cousins, your people. That affection is *natural*. But we live in a world that has systematically eroded it.

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## The War Against Natural Affection

Modern society has made war against the natural order. Globalism has sought to erase borders and homogenize cultures. The family has been dismantled. Mass immigration policies have uprooted communities and fractured shared identity. People are increasingly isolated, rootless, disconnected from any real ties to land, lineage, or loyalty.

But this rootlessness is not a virtue. It's a judgment.

Natural affection is a gift from God—and its loss is a curse. To lack it is not neutral; it is rebellion. It is unnatural *not* to care if your family continues. It is unnatural *not* to want your children to look like you, speak your tongue, worship your God, and inherit your name.

That doesn't mean natural affection is the only kind of love, or the highest kind. It must be ordered. And that's where the classical Christian idea of *ordo amoris*—the order of loves—comes in.

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## Ordered Loves and Duties

I was speaking with a pastor friend the other day, and he suggested a better title for this would be natural obligations than natural affections. That is we must realize the point of God giving us these affections is so because we have duties. We have duties to love others. Augustine and the Puritans alike understood that our affections and obligations must be properly ordered. You love everyone, but not in the same way or to the same degree. There are concentric circles of obligation:

- You love your children more than your neighbor's children.
- You love your neighbor more than a stranger across the globe.
- You love your family, your people, and your nation with a stronger, more immediate loyalty than those outside of them.

This isn't sin.

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That's why it's right and good to:

- Prefer your own children to others.
- Desire for your family line to continue.
- Love your nation and want it to endure.
- Be thankful for your culture and ethnicity.
- Hope that your descendants will preserve what you've built.

And yes, it is good to say, "It's good to be white." Just as it's good for a black man to rejoice in his people or a Filipino to cherish her heritage. God made the nations. He established their boundaries. He made the diversity, and He called it *good*. To love your own is to honor His providence.

Robert Dabney in talking about Patriotism, drove this point home:

The duties of patriotism are not prominently urged in sacred Scripture. This we account for, not by supposing, with a certain sickly school of moralists, that this sentiment is selfish, narrow or inconsistent with the broadest philanthropy; but by the facts, that the obligations of the citizen are not directly religious, and that they are so natural as to require little inculcation. The Hebrew Scriptures do indeed say enough, as in the text, to justify an intense love of native land and its institutions. Civil government is God's ordinance, and if it be just, one of his greatest temporal blessings. The diversity of tongues, characters, races and interests among mankind forbids their union in one universal commonwealth.

The aggregation of men into separate nations is therefore necessary; and the authority of the governments instituted over them, to maintain internal order and external defence against aggression, is of divine appointment. Hence, to sustain our government with heart and hand is not only made by God our privilege, but our duty. Our best way to advance the well-being of the [human] race is to advance that of the portion of our [human] race associated with us in the same society. He who extends his philanthropy so broadly as to refuse a special attachment to the interests of his own people, will probably make it so thin as to be of no account to any people. I therefore believe that there is nothing opposed to an enlightened Christianity in a warm patriotism for our particular country. This feeling is made up of several elements: a legitimate regard for our own welfare and worldly estate, interest in that of our families, and a wider benevolence towards our fellow citizens; together with an honest pride in the glories of our history, and in the justice of our institutions, with the attachments of local affection to the very scenery and soil of our native land. . . ."

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## Who Are "My People"?

When we speak of natural affection—of loving one's own—we inevitably reach a very human question: *Who are my people?*

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It's a question that demands an answer. And Scripture does give us categories to answer it—but the answer is not always simplistic. There are at least two clear biblical categories that shape how we understand “our people”:

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### 1. Our Natural People

This refers to those we are bound to by blood, geography, language, shared history, and lived experience. These include our family, our kin, our tribe, our region, and yes—often our race or ethnic identity.

This is the category Paul references in Romans 9:3 when he writes,

“For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my **kinsmen according to the flesh.**”

Paul's affection for his people—the Jews—was so strong that he expressed willingness to suffer eternal separation if it could mean their salvation. That's natural affection. And it's not just permitted—it's honored in the text.

Paul's identity was spiritual, yes, but he didn't erase his natural identity. He *loved* his people. He wept for them. He grieved their unbelief.

And yet notice: his “people” were not defined strictly by DNA. The Jews shared his ancestry, but also his culture, religion, history, land, and language. These natural ties matter. They shape us. And God uses them.

Now, let's bring that principle forward: For many of us, our people may include those who share our blood and ethnicity. But for others, our “natural people” may be shaped more by neighborhood, shared upbringing, common experiences, and relational ties. A man raised in a Mexican neighborhood in Texas may have more real natural affection for his Hispanic neighbors than for some anonymous group of white people who live two states away.

So we must be careful not to reduce “my people” to race alone. That's too simplistic. Natural affection is shaped by providence—by where God placed you, who you were raised with, who you lived among, and who you loved and were loved by.

That's part of why this topic is so complex. And why it requires wisdom.

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### 2. Our Spiritual People

The second category is our **spiritual family**—the household of faith. These are those who have been united to Christ through the gospel. They are our brothers and sisters *in the Spirit*, regardless of their bloodline, nation, or ethnicity.

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As Paul says in Galatians 6:10:

“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

Our spiritual people transcend borders. This is the universal church—one body, many nations, one Lord. This family does not nullify our natural affections or obligations, but it rightly orders them. In cases of conflict, Christ comes first. But that doesn't mean you stop loving your kin.

A man who neglects his household is worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim. 5:8), even if he's an elder in the church. So too, a Christian's love for his nation, culture, and heritage isn't erased by his membership in Christ—it's disciplined by it. It's brought under lordship, not annihilated.

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## Putting It Together

So who are your people?

- Your *natural people* are those you share bonds of blood, history, culture, and locality with.
- Your *spiritual people* are those united to you by the Spirit of God.

Both matter. Both require love. Both carry obligations.

But only one is eternal.

This is what keeps us grounded. You are allowed—*commanded*, even—to love your natural people. That includes your family, your extended kin, your community, and yes, your nation. It's good to desire their preservation, their blessing, and their repentance. It is not sinful to say “my people” and mean *your people*.

But as a Christian, you are also required to love beyond those boundaries. In fact, we ought to be careful spending too inordinate amount of time talking about natural affections. They ought to be natural. And in some ways they don't require a lot of supernatural work in us to maintain them. The real supernatural work is needed in us to help us to have supernatural affections. That is to let our love flow out beyond us to even our enemies. That is what separates Christians from others.

That said, we do have to recover much in our day and this leads us to Immigration

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### III. Immigration

Having defined race, nation, culture, and natural affection, we now turn to immigration. And here, we put everything together.

#### **Borders and the Biblical Nation**

A nation, by definition, has *borders*. Scripture tells us in Acts 17:26 that God “made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation.”

This alone demolishes the modern libertarian fiction that people are just atomized individuals free to float from place to place. You are not just an individual. You belong to a family, a people, a nation. And God governs not just souls, but boundaries and histories.

Proverbs 22:28

“Do not move the ancient boundary which your fathers have set.”

Nations have gates. They have limits. They are not arbitrary constructs. They are built on real lineage, land, law, and loyalty. That means not everyone has a natural right to enter.

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#### **The Biblical Case from Israel**

To understand how a godly nation should view immigration, we can look to God’s governance over Israel. Israel was unique as God’s covenant people. They were both an ecclesiastical people, the church, and also a civil nation. Therefore, they serve both as the model for the church but also as a model for applying God’s moral law to civil government. God gave them specific laws designed for them as a people. These laws were applications of His moral law for all people. We are not necessarily obligated to have the exact civil laws of Israel but we are obligated to obey the moral law of God. Our nation is obligated to make laws that are inline with the moral principles found in this Old Testament law. Therefore, we can learn much. And what we know is Israel had:

- Borders.
- Legal codes.
- Cultural expectations.
- A process for integrating outsiders.

Foreigners were permitted in under certain conditions. The law uses distinct terms: **strangers**, **sojourners**, **aliens**. These weren’t synonyms—they indicated different kinds of outsiders. Some were short-term visitors (like merchants or travelers). Others were long-term sojourners, allowed to stay and eventually assimilate into the life of the nation.

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But assimilation wasn't immediate. It required:

- **Obedience to Israel's laws.** (Exodus 12:49 – “There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger...”)
- **Religious alignment**, including circumcision and abandonment of pagan worship.
- **Generational faithfulness** before full covenant inclusion. (Deuteronomy 23:3 – Ammonites and Moabites were restricted until the 10th generation)

Even then, distinctions were made. Those closer in lineage and kinship were often permitted to assimilate more quickly. Others—like certain enemy nations—were excluded entirely or for several generations (Edomites). This wasn't about arbitrary discrimination. It was about preserving the moral, religious, and cultural fabric of the nation God had ordained.

Leviticus 19:34 “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

God commanded fair and just treatment of sojourners. But He did not command open borders. He did not command civil suicide.

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## Principles for Civil Government Today

We are not ancient Israel. But the moral principles remain:

- Borders are good.
- Nations have a right and duty to determine who may enter.
- Civil magistrates have a primary obligation to their *own people*. (Deuteronomy 17:15 – “...you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves...”)
- Immigration policy must consider the good of the nation—not just the desires of the immigrant.

That includes cultural compatibility, assimilation potential, moral character, and yes, even ethnic and religious proximity.

This is not about hate. It's about love—ordered love. Love for one's own. Natural affection rightly applied in public policy. When rulers bring in floods of foreign people to displace their own—whether for cheap labor or political gain—they are not being compassionate. They are being unjust. They are betraying their people.

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**As an aside regarding assimilation. This was often done by marriage.**

Scripture never forbids interracial marriage but rather forbade marrying with idolaters.

### **Numbers 12:1–8**

Moses married a Cushite (black African) woman. Miriam and Aaron opposed the marriage, and God struck Miriam with leprosy. He vindicated Moses and condemned her.

### **Ruth 1:16; Matthew 1:5**

Ruth, a Moabitess, married Boaz and became an ancestor of Christ. She was ethnically foreign, yet welcomed into Israel because of her faith and loyalty.

Joseph married an Egyptian woman and His two mixed race sons were elevated both to tribal leadership and promises among the 12 tribes of Judah.

So while a parent may, by natural affection, prefer their child marry within their people, **no one may claim interracial marriage is inherently sinful**. The only biblical prohibition is against marrying outside the covenant—*not* outside one's race (Deuteronomy 7:3–4). One should exercise wisdom. There are a host of issues that may arise because of cultural differences but we must not make a moral law where God has not.

That said marriage was often one of the quickest ways for someone to be assimilated into a nation.

## **Application to the Church and the Christian**

So what do *you* do with all this?

You are not a policymaker. But you are a Christian. And Christians are called to think clearly, love truth, and live justly.

Some practical takeaways:

- **You are free to have opinions** about immigration and policy. You may favor stricter or looser laws. You are not a racist for caring about your culture, your neighborhood, your people.
- **You may prefer your children to marry within your people**—and that is not sin. That is natural affection.
- **You may love your race, your heritage, your nation**—and give thanks to God for them.
- **You may want to see your people continue and flourish**—and that is not supremacy. That is godly desire rooted in creation.

But your love must be disciplined. It must be just. And it must not blind you to the second truth:



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**God has brought immigrants and foreigners into our midst. Many of them are here because of unjust policy. But they are here.**

So while we oppose lawlessness, we do not hate individuals. We can evangelize them. We treat them lawfully.

You can oppose illegal immigration—and still love your immigrant neighbor. You can advocate for national integrity—while showing kindness and mercy to those God has placed around you.

Remember that natural affections is the beginning. Jesus said this in Matthew 5: 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

And this leads me to our final point.

## IV. The Church and Race

This leads us to our final point: the Church. So far, we've been dealing primarily with nature—your family ties, natural affections, and the providential order of peoples and nations. But now we must speak about grace. We must move from nature to the supernatural.

Let's begin by asking why God created the nations and established them. At Babel, God scattered mankind and confused their languages (Genesis 11:8-9). Some have interpreted this as God giving the nations over to judgment. And to a degree, they are right. Deuteronomy 32:8-9 tells us that when God divided the nations, He “fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God,” but that “the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob His allotted inheritance.”

So yes, the nations were scattered in judgment, but God also chose one nation—Israel—to be His own. But why? Why did He choose Abraham? Because of grace. And the promise to Abraham was not narrow. It was expansive: “In you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). Abraham was to be the father of many nations (Genesis 17:4-5). The purpose of creating nations was always so that all the nations of the earth would ultimately glorify God.

From the beginning, God's command was, “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). God's plan was not global sameness but global fullness—different families and nations filling the earth with His praise.

We live in an individualistic age, but God deals not only with individuals. He deals with families and with nations. Throughout Scripture, God interacts with people groups. Nations can be blessed or judged. They have collective histories, patterns, and even sinful proclivities. For example, when Paul sent Titus to Crete, he quoted one of their own prophets: “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” Then Paul says, “This testimony is true. For this reason, reprove them severely” (Titus 1:12-13).

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Different groups have different strengths and weaknesses. God sometimes raises up nations to greatness and later tears them down. He grants different gifts to different peoples. One group may have high linguistic ability, another musical strength, another a tradition of craftsmanship or military skill. All of this is part of God's sovereign design (Exodus 35:30-35; Acts 17:26).

But above all, this variety exists for God's glory. His plan from the beginning was to glorify His name through Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, who came to save sinners from all nations. Israel was chosen not because they were great, but so that the nations would look at them and ask, "What great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God?" (Deuteronomy 4:6-8). Israel was a light to the nations (Isaiah 49:6), but the people grew proud—not with a healthy patriotism, but with a self-righteous ethnic pride.

Jesus came first to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24), but His mission extended beyond. He would be "a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:32). His salvation was always for the nations. This is why Paul urges prayers "for all men... for kings and all who are in authority" because "God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

The Church is not an afterthought. It is the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham. The New Covenant expands the kingdom to include all nations. As it is written, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne" (Revelation 7:9).

This Church is one and yet many. It is a body composed of many parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), and yet one Bride. The things that separate people in the world—ethnic distinction, national history, or former animosities—are not to divide the Body of Christ. In the Church, those barriers are broken down: "For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall" (Ephesians 2:14).

This does not mean all distinctions vanish. Galatians 3:28 does not say that Jews stop being Jews or that women stop being women. It says that in Christ, those categories no longer define one's status or access to God. They are real but subordinate to the higher unity we have in Christ.

Why then are there so many commands to love one another in the New Testament? Because the Church brings together people who would not naturally love each other. It's easy to love those just like you. It is supernatural to love those who are different—different cultures, backgrounds, personalities. But that's the power of the Holy Spirit at work.

This is why churches must resist the temptation to segregate along ethnic lines. Peter was rebuked by Paul for drawing back from eating with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-14). John rebuked a man who refused to welcome fellow believers (3 John 9-10). The early Church wrestled with integrating Gentiles and Jews (Acts 15), and they did not eliminate all cultural distinctions. But they were united in Christ and called to love one another.

Local churches are visible outposts of the universal Church. According to the Westminster Confession, "The visible Church... consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true

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religion, together with their children” (WCF 25.2). Wherever you find true believers, you find the Church. And any true believer should be welcomed in any faithful local church.

That doesn’t mean every local church will be demographically diverse. Geography matters. A church in rural Iowa may be mostly white. A church in Chinatown may be mostly Chinese. There’s nothing wrong with that. People naturally cluster around language, food, and customs. What is wrong is when we allow those preferences to harden into principles of exclusion.

Our congregation may be mostly white. But our unity is not in our whiteness. It is in Christ. If someone of another race or nationality joins our church, we welcome them as family. Because that’s what they are.

The Church is a supernatural nation. It transcends borders. It does not abolish the nations, but redeems them. And at the end of the age, when the Lord gathers His people, it will be from “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9). The kings of the earth will bring their cultural treasures into the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:24-26), and God will be glorified not in spite of their distinctions, but through them.

## **Conclusion:**

Brothers and sisters, as we come to a close, let me emphasize a critical point: the Church is the Bride of Christ. It is not to be divided. One of the great sins in the Church is heresy, and the word “heresy” comes from the Greek word “hairesis,” meaning “to divide.” There are countless ways the Church can be divided—false teaching is the primary way we see division happen. Heresy divides the Body of Christ, and this is a grave sin.

We must not, we cannot, be the source of divisions in the Church. There are far too many divisions as it is. And one of the ways that we can be a source of division is to make the issue of race and ethnicity central to everything. As I’ve spoken about this topic, I’ve tried to do so biblically and truthfully, acknowledging that race and ethnicity are real things with real implications. Yet, these implications are not absolute or unchangeable. I hope I have shown that these are complex issues and require real thinking and real charity with each other on civil policies and preferences in family life.

We also need to recognize the practical implications of these issues in the civil realm. There are debates to be had about immigration, race, and other matters that affect society. But let me be clear: for most of us, our primary work is not in the civil realm but in our homes and families. Our obligations are to care for our families, our extended families, and our church families. Our obligations are to our neighbors. And so while I don’t want to discourage you from discussing these matters or advocating for policies that align with God’s moral law. It’s okay to be involved in these discussions and to work toward policies that promote justice and righteousness. But we must also be cautious. Advocating for policies that promote murder or encourage unjust practices—those things are sinful. We must act within the bounds of God’s moral law, which includes loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39) and seeking justice and peace (Romans 12:18).

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I worry that in having this conversation, we may begin to overemphasize these issues. This shouldn't be the thing that dominates our thoughts or discussions. These truths are important—they undergird our understanding and guide us in identifying right from wrong. But we want to be careful that we do not become bio determinists who think that a man's genetic background would keep him from being justified and sanctified.

In a world where people are increasingly disconnected and rootless, there is a temptation to latch onto people who talk incessantly about these topics. There are many false teachers out there, and their main purpose is to stir up anger, bitterness, and resentment. These teachers will often take the things I've said here—truths that are biblical—and push them beyond what Scripture actually says. They may stir you up emotionally, but they are leading you down a path of division and hatred. One such example is the "Stone Choir Podcast," which I mention only to warn you. Their teachings may sound convincing, but they are not rooted in love.

If anyone teaches on these issues in a way that does not stir up love, you should be very careful. The purpose of our teaching is to cultivate love. Love for your people, love for your country, love for your family, and love for the Church. We should be able to talk about immigration, race, and other issues. And there is a righteous anger a man can and probably should have about what is being done in our nation. But we want that anger to be righteous. We also want to continue to walk in faith and obedience to God.

As your pastor, I do not want to see false teaching enter the Church and cause division. I don't want young men to think of themselves as embittered victims, always blaming someone else for problems often brought on by their own sins. Even when they truly are victims, I want them to grow in holiness and dependence upon God. The point is: do not let these external issues distract you from what God has called you to do. Your primary concern should be loving your neighbor, building your family, working diligently, voting wisely, and making your voice heard in ways that honor God.

We have the freedom to speak, and social media is a tool we can use. But God wants us to be wise with our words. We must protect the peace of the Church and guard against those who come to disturb it. I, along with the elders, will not tolerate vain and ungodly racial hatred or divisiveness within the Body of Christ. We will not tolerate any efforts to sow division or promote racial animosity. These things are sinful and will not be tolerated.

So, as you navigate these discussions, remember: you are a Christian first. We are called to love, to build, and to protect our families. We are called to work for justice, but in doing so, we must avoid being consumed by these issues. We must focus on what we can do in the realm where God has placed us: loving our families, loving the Church, and working for the peace and prosperity of our communities. Let us not be distracted by anger or division. Let us love one another, and in doing so, fulfill the law of Christ.