

# Multiethnic Marriage in the Old Testament

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## Introduction

On January 6, 1959, trial judge Leon Maurice Bazile charged Richard and Mildred Loving with disregarding the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia by marrying across racial lines. He cited Christian teachings as the reason why the statute existed: “Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.”<sup>1</sup> Bazile’s interpretation of Scripture was not unique; numerous American Christians agree with his assessment.

In 2011, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press asked participants whether or not interracial marriage was good for society. While 16 percent of Anglo Evangelicals responded negatively to the question, only 9 percent of Americans in other brackets agreed with this statement. Mainline Anglo Protestants and Anglo Catholics disapproved of intermarriage at a rate of 13 percent and 9 percent respectively.<sup>2</sup> A percentage of Anglo evangelicals who disapprove of multiethnic marriages likely hold this view because they believe the Bible embraces this position.

Prolific author and avowed atheist Richard Dawkins cited this supposed doctrine as one of the principal reasons why he rejected Christianity:

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully. Those of us schooled from infancy in his ways can become desensitized to their horror.<sup>3</sup>

Dawkins's acerbic paragraph contains his subjective opinion rather than a research-driven analysis of the biblical material, but his estimation reflects that of numerous critics. Although each issue he addressed requires a thorough, informed response, the narrow confines of this study permits only an exploration of his claim that Scripture promotes a racist outlook. Accordingly, this paper will explore Toranic teachings regarding multiethnic marriage and analyze Old Testament examples of the practice.

## **Toranic Teachings Regarding Multiethnic Marriages**

### **Deuteronomy 7:1-6**

In Deuteronomy, Moses prepared the sons of Israel to enter the land of Canaan after they had wandered in the desert for forty years due to their disobedience. God prepared them for their next stage of existence by providing a historical review of His interactions with them and their ancestors (Deut. 1:1-4:49). Chapters 5-11 contain a treatise that reiterates the laws God gave Israel in the book of Exodus. Within this context appears Deuteronomy 7:1-6, a section that prohibits intermarriage between Israelites and the Canaanites.

In addition to charging the sons of Israel with dispossessing the seven nations of Canaan (Deut. 7:1), God warned His people not to intermingle with them: "You shall make no covenant with them or show them mercy, and you shall not intermarry with them. You shall not give your daughter to [a Canaanite's] son and you shall not take his daughter for your son" (Deut. 7:2b-3).<sup>4</sup> In the Ancient Near East, families typically arranged marriages for their children.<sup>5</sup> God warned parents that He did not permit such unions between His covenant people and the inhabitants of Canaan.

The remainder of the pericope specifies why God found this type of intermarriage particularly abhorrent: "For they will cause your son to turn aside from Me and serve other gods, and the anger of the LORD will kindle against you and He will hasten to destroy you" (Deut. 7:4). Accordingly, God directed His people to make a preemptive strike against the Canaanites' negative religious influences by destroying their sacred objects (Deut. 7:5). Because the Lord had chosen Israel as His unique possession, the people were to remain separate from other nations by devoting themselves to Him.

While some commentators accuse the Torah of expressing ethnocentric viewpoints because of passages like Deuteronomy 7:1-6,<sup>6</sup> this concern is not the intention of the text at hand. Rather than citing the Canaanites' dissimilar ethnicity as the impetus for rejecting them as spouses, verse 4 cites their aberrant worship practices. Under Moses' leadership, the Israelites had succumbed to Egyptian and Moabite idolatrous practices (cf. Exod. 32:1-6; Num. 25:1-3). They were susceptible to Canaanite religion as well. God refused to share His glory, so "competing allegiances [were] to be vigorously avoided."<sup>7</sup>

## **Deuteronomy 21:10-14**

Deuteronomy 19:1-22:8 contains a sequence of civil laws to govern Israel after the nation inhabited Canaan.<sup>8</sup> In the middle of the unit is a section that regulated the treatment of female war captives by Israelite soldiers. Deuteronomy 21:10-14 permitted these warriors to marry women of other ethnicities under certain circumstances.

According to this passage, if a warrior found among the captives a beautiful woman that he desired, he must respond appropriately rather than taking advantage of her vulnerable status by sexually mistreating her.<sup>9</sup> The enamored man must: 1) take her as his wife rather than regard her as a slave; 2) bring her to his home; 3) shave her head; 4) trim her nails; and 5) allow her to mourn her parents for an entire month (Deut. 21:11b-13). This procedure served the dual purpose of “cutting off all ties to the [woman’s] former life,”<sup>10</sup> including any idolatrous religious associations, as well as allowing the foreign woman time to acclimate to her new cultural context. After the marriage, her value was identical to the wife who was a descendant of Abraham, and, by extension, she became a beneficiary of Yahweh’s covenant with the patriarch (cf. Deut. 24:1-4).

## **Implications**

Several observations are worth noting. First, Deuteronomy 21:10-14 clarifies the marital restrictions of Deuteronomy 7:1-6. Because Israelite soldiers could marry the non-Israelite women who lived in distant cities, the Torah did not forbid all multiethnic marriages. In other words, the prohibition against marrying Canaanite women was not racial in nature.<sup>11</sup>

Second, the problem with Canaanite women, as outlined in Deuteronomy 7:4, was that they would entice the Israelites to forsake the true Lord by venerating false gods. The concern of the Torah was not the ethnic disparity of Israelites and Canaanites, but their religious differences. As covenant people, the nation of Israel could not have other gods or worship carved images (Deut. 6:7-8) because the Lord is a jealous God Who refuses to share His glory (cf. Deut. 4:23-24).

Third, the foreign brides of Israelite men enjoyed the same marital status as native Israelite wives. Rather than possessing the status of slaves or concubines, they received the same treatment as Israelite women.<sup>12</sup> For all intents and purposes, the Torah depicted multiethnic spouses as equally yoked, provided that neither one of the partners worshiped false gods.

## **Negative Examples of Multiethnic Marriage**

Although in certain contexts Israelites could marry non-Israelites, the Old Testament condemns a number of cross-cultural pairings. These examples span from the patriarchal period to the post-exilic period. In this section, the writer examines the reasons why Scripture denounces each particular marriage.

## **Abram and Hagar**

After the Lord had sworn to give Abram descendants as plenteous as the stars, the elderly, childless man believed God, “and He accounted it to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:5-6). When the ensuing years brought no son, Abram’s wife Sarai began to despair. In an attempt to bring the prophecy to completion through human means, Sarai gave her Egyptian maid Hagar to her husband in order to bear children vicariously (Gen. 16:1-3). According to ancient Near Eastern documents, this convention was commonplace when one’s wife could bear no offspring.<sup>13</sup>

Even though Abram and Sarai acquiesced to a culturally acceptable practice in order to secure progeny, David Cotter noticed a striking difference between chapters 15 and 16, along with other portions of the book of Genesis:

In the preceding chapter, God had been relatively talkative with Abram. In this chapter, God is silent, except for the extended dialogue with Hagar. When had God been silent before? When humanity acts... contrary to God’s will, e.g., in Genesis 3, when the Man and the Woman transgressed God’s command, and in Genesis 4, when Cain brought his brother into the field. In this way, our author sets a scene that renders what follows as both unnecessary and unwilling by God.<sup>14</sup>

To put it another way, the Lord’s muteness regarding Abram’s decision implies He was displeased with the resultant marriage to Hagar.

Furthermore, the Lord’s response to Abram (Abraham) in Genesis 17 clearly portrays his union with Hagar as erroneous: “And Abraham said to God, ‘O that Ishmael might live before Your presence.’ But God said, ‘No. Rather, Sarah your wife will bear for you a son and you will call his name Isaac. And I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him’” (Gen. 17:18-19). The inference is that Sarai’s strategy for circumventing her barrenness by providing her husband with an additional spouse was unacceptable. Accordingly, in Galatians 4:21-31, Paul continues to develop this theme by drawing a clear distinction between the offspring of Hagar and Sarah.<sup>15</sup>

Undoubtedly, Genesis 16:1-3 depicts Abram’s marriage to Hagar in a negative light, but not because of its multiethnic nature. While verses 1 and 3 note Hagar’s Egyptian roots, these references are descriptive identifiers rather than pejorative in nature. God promised that her son Ishmael would be the ancestor of countless descendants (Gen. 16:10). Too, the Lord acknowledged the affliction that Hagar had received at the hand of Sarai (Gen. 16:11). These elements indicate that she was the innocent party and that her ethnicity was not a cause for concern. Rather, God found fault with Abram and Sarai because they manipulated and abused Hagar due to their faithlessness.<sup>16</sup>

## **Esau and His Hittite Wives**

When Jacob was ready to take a wife, his father Isaac commanded him not to consider Canaanite women as potential brides. Instead, he was to make the long voyage to his grandfather's ancestral homeland and choose one of his maternal uncle's daughters as a spouse. After Esau heard the instructions his father gave his twin brother, he realized his two Hittite wives displeased Isaac. In an attempt to gratify his father, Esau sought to emulate the directive Isaac had given Jacob by marrying Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter. Because Ishmael was Isaac's half-brother, Esau reasoned that selecting a relative as a bride might soften Isaac's discontentment with him due to his two existing marriages (Gen. 28:6-9; cf. 26:34).

Although some modern commentators sympathize with Esau's plight because they perceive him to be a pitiable outcast,<sup>17</sup> the juxtaposition of Jacob's attainment of an acceptable bride and Esau's failure to do so until he obtained a third wife demonstrates his culpability. The implication of Genesis 28:1-9 is that Canaanite women were not suitable wives for the heirs of the Abrahamic covenant.

Esau's offense stemmed in part from his disregard for the ancient Near Eastern practice of allowing parents to arrange one's marriage (cf. Gen. 26:34-35).<sup>18</sup> More importantly, he had ignored God's promise to his grandfather Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to the covenant people because of the inhabitants' iniquitous practices (Gen. 15:12-16). In other words, the idolatry of the Canaanites was the primary reason Esau's marriage to Hittite women was immoral. One of the key themes of the book of Genesis is the exclusivity of the worship of Yahweh according to His standards, so He strictly forbade idolatry and syncretism.<sup>19</sup> Esau breached this demand of complete commitment by betrothing himself to women who did not worship Yahweh.

## **Solomon and His Foreign Wives**

First Kings 11:1-2a reveals that Solomon's polygamous conquests included more than Israelite women: "And Solomon the king loved many foreign women in addition to the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, Hittite, from the nations that the LORD said to the sons of Israel, 'You shall not associate with them, nor they with you. They will turn your hearts after other gods.'" In spite of this prohibition, Solomon eventually accumulated seven hundred royal wives and three hundred concubines (1 Kgs. 11:3).

Subject and rival nations evaluated ancient Near Eastern kings in part by the size of their harems and the number of political alliances they negotiated.<sup>20</sup> Rulers paired these criteria together by offering their daughters to each other as tangible symbols of their peace treaties. Wayne Brindle argued Solomon's participation in these commonly practiced activities can only mean that he "wanted to be a king like all the other nations that he so admired. For this reason he amassed enormous wealth, a large number of wives, and built several fortress cities."<sup>21</sup>

In his old age, Solomon's wives convinced him to worship their idols. Jerome Walsh vividly described the effect Solomon's polytheist undertakings had upon his relationship with God: "In verse 4, Solomon's heart 'was not true' to Yahweh. The Hebrew word for 'true' here is *šālēm*, a pun on Solomon's name (*šēlōmōh*). In turning away after other gods, Solomon leaves behind not only the example of David but his own deepest identity as well."<sup>22</sup> This devastating breach resulted not only in the Lord dividing the kingdom in two as a sign of His judgment (1 Kgs. 11:9-13), but also in a pervading spiritual darkness that led His people to commit the twin offenses of polytheism and syncretism. As God had prophesied, intermarriage with nonbelievers led to religious apostasy (Deut. 7:4).

Like previously examined texts in this section, the focus of 1 Kings 11:1-13 is not the wholesale condemnation of all non-Israelites or a polemic against multiethnic marriage. Rather, the common denominator of each of Solomon's foreign wives was that they worshiped idols instead of the God of Israel. Consequently, failure to recognize Yahweh as the only true Lord is the emphasis of this passage.

### **Jewish Men and Their Foreign Wives**

Ezra 10:1-4 is one of the most controversial passages in the Old Testament. After Ezra led the second group of exiles back from the Captivity (ca. 458 BC), he learned of a social problem that threatened Israel's existence and future as God's covenant people.<sup>23</sup> Many of the Jews had disobeyed God's admonition not to marry the inhabitants of the surrounding nations (cf. Deut. 7:2-4). Rather than enforcing this command, Israel's priests and Levites had been foremost in practicing this forbidden mingling (Ezra 9:2).

The problem with the mixed marriages of Ezra's time was that a number of Jewish men had joined themselves to women who worshiped false gods and were spiritual adulterers (Ezra 9:1).

In an attempt to preserve the spiritual integrity of the covenant people "at any cost,"<sup>24</sup> Shecaniah the priest impelled the men to make a covenant with God to put away their foreign wives and children (Ezra 10:3). Chapter 10 lists Shecaniah's father Jehiel as one of the transgressors (10:26), which may indicate that he had divorced his Israelite wife so that he could marry a pagan woman.<sup>25</sup> After hearing Shecaniah's message, the offenders recognized their wrongdoing and divorced their idolatrous foreign wives.

Two observations are in order. First, one should note that each Jew was ordered to divorce his unbelieving wife "according to the Law" (Ezra 10:3). This reference to the Law is an allusion to the injunction not to intermarry with other nations (Deut. 7:3). The Jewish offenders were guilty of intentionally disregarding God's edict for selecting appropriate wives. Ezra, in agreement with Shecaniah, required them to separate from the pagan women according to the regulations of the Mosaic Law.

Second, in no other biblical period does one find the explicit command to divorce a spouse. The reason for this unique circumstance was Israel's vulnerability in the early post-exilic era. During this stage of Israelite history the nation's population was dangerously low, hence the repeated usages of the term *remnant* in the book of Ezra.<sup>26</sup>

Given the number of offenders (cf. Ezra 10:18-44), cohabitation with unbelievers was perilous. After the Assyrian conquest of 722 BC, the residents of the northern kingdom intermarried with pagans and produced the syncretistic Samaritans. Thus, in the southern kingdom "the survival of the Jewish faith seemed at risk. Drastic measures were necessary to purify the community from a growing corruption."<sup>27</sup> In other words, desperate times required desperate measures because so many Jewish men had married women who worshiped false gods.

### **Implications**

This analysis of Old Testament passages that portray certain multiethnic marriages in a negative light reveals several things. First, in each of the above cases, the unions violated God's injunction against intermarrying with representatives of the seven nations of Canaan (Gen. 15:12-16; Deut. 7:1-6). One instance (Esau) alludes to the spouses' non-covenantal standing before God, while two cases (Solomon and post-exilic Jewish men) explicitly highlight the religious apostasy that resulted from marrying people who worshiped false gods.

Second, one of the examples (Abram) emphasizes disobedience. Since God had promised an heir to Abram, his marriage to Hagar was unnecessary and indicated a lack of faith. In essence, he deliberately snubbed God's express will in order to pursue his selfish desires.

To summarize, none of these examples have as their concern the complete prevention of the commingling of distinct people groups. Rather, the motivation in most of the above cases was Israel's religious purity. God required the absolute and unwavering devotion of His covenant people, so He refused to share His glory with any idol (Exod. 20:4-5). The Lord also expected His people to trust Him and abide by His directives regarding morality (Exod. 20:14; cf. Heb. 11:6). Disobeying His commands amounted to spiritual rebellion. In short, God required the Israelites to honor Him in every aspect of their lives, including their selection of marriage partners.

### **Positive Examples of Multiethnic Marriage**

In addition to negative examples of multiethnic marriage, the Old Testament also contains several positive instances of the practice. This list is different than the sampling of negative matrimonial unions in that all cases originate from before the pre-monarchal period (prior to ca. 1050 BC) rather than the entire scope of Israel's

history. In this section, the writer will examine the reasons why Scripture approves of each particular marriage.

### **Moses and His Cushite Wife**

Numbers 12:1-15 reveals that during the time of Israel's desert wanderings, Moses married a Cushite woman. Scholars often identify the region of Cush as modern Ethiopia, which signifies she was of African extraction.<sup>28</sup> The woman likely was part of the mixed multitude who escaped Egypt alongside the sons of Israel (Exod. 12:38). Her non-Israelite background prompted Moses' siblings, Miriam and Aaron, to speak out against him (Num. 12:1). The double reference to the woman's Cushite origins (Num. 12:1) leads the reader to conclude that Miriam's concern was that the woman was not an Israelite by birth. In essence, her impetus for questioning Moses' authority stemmed from a racist denunciation of his wife.<sup>29</sup>

When Miriam and Aaron jealously objected that the Lord had spoken through them as well, God ordered the three to gather before Him in Israel's tent of meeting (Num. 12:2, 4). He chastised Moses' siblings and declared that their brother had a special relationship with Him. Only Moses had beheld "the form of Yahweh" (Num. 12:8). As punishment for her presumptuous arrogance, God struck Miriam with leprosy so her skin became "as white as snow" (Num. 12:10). Only Moses' pleadings to heal Miriam prompted God to heal her seven days later (Num. 12:13-15).

If Moses' marriage to the Cushite woman had been a legitimate cause for concern, one would expect Numbers 12 to expose his error. Instead, the Lord expressed His wholehearted approval of His servant while, at the same time, He denounced Moses' siblings for daring to bring a false accusation against Israel's leader. In other words, Moses' multiethnic marriage was well within the bounds of what God considered acceptable behavior.

### **Salmon and Rahab**

During the period of the Conquest, Israel's spies received assistance from an unexpected source when Rahab the harlot hid them among the stalks of flax that were drying on her roof (Josh. 2). She convinced Jericho's search party that the two spies already had escaped and were headed toward the Jordan River (Josh. 2:3-7). Rahab's confession that God rules both Heaven and earth (Josh. 2:9-11) amounted to a rejection of her Canaanite idols and an unwavering commitment to the God of Israel.<sup>30</sup> The result of Rahab's courageous actions and her newfound faith formed a treaty with the covenant people that saved her and her family from the Israelite extermination of Jericho's population (Josh. 2:12-14, 17-20).

After their deliverance, Rahab and her relatives resided "outside the camp of Israel" for a time (Josh. 6:23b), but assimilation into the covenant people soon occurred.

Their conversion from paganism to the worship of Yahweh wove them into the fabric of Israelite society. While in a genetic sense Rahab remained a Gentile, Salmon was free to marry her because in a religious sense she was an Israelite. For this reason the book of Joshua does not condemn the spies' treaty with her as it does in the case of the nation's spurious associations with the pagan Gibeonites (cf. Josh. 9:1-27).<sup>31</sup> The New Testament's favorable portrayal of Rahab (Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25) also serves to demonstrate that Scripture depicts her multiethnic marriage to an Israelite in a positive manner.

### **Boaz and Ruth**

Perhaps the most familiar Old Testament case of multiethnic marriage is Ruth's betrothal to Boaz. Because of a severe drought in the land of Israel, an Israelite named Elimelech sojourned in the land of Moab with his wife Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. While living there, the sons married Moabite women who worshiped idols. When Naomi's husband and sons died within a short period of time, she decided to return to Israel. Ruth, one of her daughters-in-law, accompanied her (Ruth 1:1-14): "For wherever you go, I will go. And in the place you abide, I will abide. Your people are my people, and your God is my God." (Ruth 1:16b). In essence, Ruth forsook her pagan religion in order to join herself to the people of Israel, subsequently embracing their God as hers.<sup>32</sup>

In Naomi's hometown of Bethlehem, Ruth labored in Boaz's field so she could provide for her mother-in-law (Ruth 2:1-2). Providentially, Boaz was one of two close kinsmen of Ruth's father-in-law, Elimelech. When the other relative forfeited his legal right to redeem Elimelech's inheritance, Boaz accepted the obligation and married Ruth. (Ruth 4:1-10; cf. Gen. 38:8; Deut. 25:5-6). Three generations later, this union led to the birth of King David (Ruth 4:18-22). Centuries later, the lineage's most important descendant was Jesus Christ, who was born a millennium later (cf. Matt. 1:1-17).

Rabbinical commentators often found Boaz's marriage to Ruth to be an embarrassment because of the Toranic prohibition against permitting Moabites into Israel's assembly "even to the tenth generation" (Deut. 23:3-4).<sup>33</sup> However, no concern is necessary for two reasons. First, the injunction forbidding Moabites from entering the assembly of Yahweh in Deuteronomy 23:3-4 does not apply to Ruth. Because Boaz functioned as a kinsman redeemer, his son Obed counted as Elimelech's heir rather than as a Moabite. This arrangement circumvented Deuteronomy 23:3-4 and explains why the Davidic lineage legitimately could sit upon the throne of Israel although Moabite blood flowed through their veins.

Second, Ruth's rejection of Moab's national deities and her subsequent commitment to Yahweh made her a suitable bride for Boaz. Accordingly, E. John Hamlin put it well when he wrote, "The book of Ruth is a bold challenge to readers in every age to open themselves to different evaluations of a foreign people usually

considered as evil, even to the possibility that God could use a foreigner like Ruth in his plan for all nations!”<sup>34</sup>

### **Implications**

This survey of Old Testament multiethnic weddings helps to define the contours of what makes a marriage between people of two ethnicities acceptable. Although Yahweh made a special covenant with Abraham and his descendants, people of foreign descent who forsook the gods of their nations in order to serve Him could find acceptance in the Israelite community.

As God-fearers, these Gentiles participated in the religious life of Israel and enjoyed the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. Furthermore, they could reside within Israel without any stigma attached to them (e.g., Rahab) and become Israelites in every sense of the word (e.g., Ruth). Moreover, Yahweh defended Moses’ Cushite wife when Miriam despised her because of her foreign ancestry. In summary, multiethnic marriages between Israelites and non-Israelites were just as valid as Israelite-Israelite unions under the proper circumstances.

### **Conclusion**

The preceding investigation provides Christians with a biblically centered means by which to evaluate the practice of multiethnic marriage. First, contrary to the opinions of some commentators (such as Dawkins), the God of Israel did not express xenophobic tendencies in the Old Testament era. Undoubtedly, He warned the Israelites about associating with the people groups that surrounded them, but not because of their racial makeup.

Yahweh rejected certain ethnic groups because they worshiped false gods. He commanded His followers not to make treaties with these nations or intermarry with them. In instances in which Israelites ignored this decree, Scripture portrays the resulting multiethnic marriages negatively.

Second, foreigners who recognized the error of worshiping graven images could become followers of Yahweh. God welcomed these religious immigrants warmly and encouraged His people to do so as well. The prophet Isaiah recorded Yahweh’s invitation for the Gentiles to acknowledge Him as the only true God:

And the sons of the foreigner who is joined to Yahweh, to serve Him and to love the name of Yahweh, to become His servants, all who keep from profaning the Sabbath and hold firmly to My covenant, even them will I cause to come to My holy mountain, and cause them to rejoice in My house of prayer. Their whole burnt offerings and their sacrifices will obtain favor on My altar, for My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples. The utterance of the Lord GOD who gathers the outcasts of Israel: “Yet I will gather unto him those who are to be gathered to him.” (Isa. 56:6-8)

In other words, Yahweh desired people from all ethnic backgrounds to become God-fearers.

Scripture portrays marriages between Israelite and Gentile believers positively as opposed to unions in which His covenant people took pagans as spouses. While God issued an unequivocal mandate to avoid interfaith unions, no such command existed for believers who derived from disparate ethnic backgrounds. The implication is that God was not as concerned that spouses have a similar racial heritage, but that they share a mutual commitment to Him.

In summary, multiethnic couples who exhibit an authentic Christian faith are suitable candidates for premarital counseling because their marriage is scripturally permissible. However, multiethnic couples who do not have the same relationship with Christ are incompatible marriage partners. Under these circumstances, multiethnic marriage is not permissible.

## NOTES

1. “Judge Leon M[aurice] Brazile, Indictment for Felony,” Library of Virginia, <http://lva.omeka.net/items/show/54> (accessed August 31, 2017).
2. Tobin Grant, “Opposition to Interracial Marriage Lingers among Evangelicals,” *Christianity Today*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2011/june/opposition-to-interracial-marriage-lingers-among.html> (accessed August 16, 2014).
3. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Mariner Books, 2008), 51.
4. Unless otherwise noted, each biblical quotation is the author’s translation.
5. Robert G. Bratcher and Howard A Hatton, *A Handbook on Deuteronomy*, in the UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 152.
6. Louis Stulman, “Encroachment in Deuteronomy: An Analysis of the Social World of the D Code,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109.4 (Winter 1990): 613-32; Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, “Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity,” *Critical Inquiry* 19.4 (Summer 1993): 709-13.
7. Douglas S. Earl, “The Christian Significance of Deuteronomy 7,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 3.1 (March 2009): 49.
8. Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, vol. 4 in *The New American Commentary*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, et al. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 19.
9. James A. Diamond, “The Deuteronomic ‘Pretty Woman’ Law: Prefiguring Feminism and Freud in Nahmanides,” *Jewish Social Studies* 14.2 (Winter 2008): 62-63.
10. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 291.
11. Christopher J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, in the *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 238.
12. Benjamin Goodnick, “She Shall Mourn,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 32.3 (July 2004): 200-1.
13. Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, in *The New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, ed. Ben Witherington III, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 163.
14. David W. Cotter, *Genesis*, in *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry*, ed. David W. Cotter, et al. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 102-3.

15. In Gal. 4, Hagar represents the concept of bondage, while Sarah embodies the idea of freedom.

16. Thomas B. Dozeman, "The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Story," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117.1 (Spring 1998): 28-29.

17. Jed D. Abraham, "Esau's Wives," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 24.5 (October-December 1997): 258; Cotter, *Genesis*, 206; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50*:26, 441.

18. Terry J. Prewitt, "Kinship Structures and the Genesis Genealogies," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40.2 (April 1981): 93.

19. Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, ed. James Luther Mays, et al. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 238.

20. John W. Olley, *The Message of Kings: God is Present*, in *The Bible Speaks Today*, ed. J. A. Motyer, et al. (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2011), 115.

21. Wayne A. Brindle, "The Causes of the Division of Israel's Kingdom," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141 (July-September 1984): 229.

22. Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings*, in *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry*, ed. David W. Cotter, et al. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 135.

23. Phillip A. Brown II, "The Problem of Mixed Marriages in Ezra 9-10," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162.4 (October-December 2005): 438.

24. Derek Kidner, *Ezra and Nehemiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, in the *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1979), 70.

25. Mark A. Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, ed. James Luther Mays, et al. (Louisville: John Knox, 1991), 57. Another possible explanation is that Jehiel remained married to Shecaniah's mother while taking a second wife from the surrounding nations. Polygamy was a common practice before the Exile, and may have been a concern in the post-exilic era as well. In either case, Jehiel sinned against God's law because he had married a woman who worshiped false gods.

26. The word *remnant* appears four times in the immediate context of Ezra 10:1-4 (cf. Ezra 9:8,13,14,15). Apart from Jer. 44 (cf. vv. 7,12,14,28), Ezra 9 contains the highest concentration of remnant language in the entire Old Testament.

27. Knute Larson and Kathy Dahlen, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, vol. 9 in the *Holman Old Testament Commentary*, ed. Max Anders (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2005), 119.

28. *Ibid.*, 226.

29. Sherwood, *Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, 155; Ronald B. Allen, *Numbers*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien and Richard P. Polcyn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 798.

30. David M. Howard Jr., "Rahab's Faith: An Exposition of Joshua 2:1-14," *Review & Expositor* 95.2 (Spring: 1998): 276. Howard rightly noted that the spies' treaty with Rahab was not sinful because she had rejected the religion of the Canaanites.

31. Rahab typifies the grafting of Gentile believers (represented as wild branches) into the olive tree that symbolizes Israel (cf. Rom. 11:1-36).

32. Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *The Book of Ruth*, in *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, ed. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 117. Hubbard's claim that Ruth "renounced her ethnic... roots" is flawed because the book repeatedly calls her a Moabitess (Ruth 2:2, 21; 4:5, 10).

33. The context of this prohibition was the Moabite attempt to snare Israel first by hiring Balaam the son of Beor to curse the people (Num. 22:1-24:22) and then by successfully enticing them to become sexually involved with Moabite women and serve Baal (Num. 25:1-16).

34. John Hamlin, *Ruth: Surely There is a Future*, in the International Theological Commentary, ed. George A. F. Knight and Fredrick Carlson Holmgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 10.