

### **Multi-Colored Grace, Part 14: An African Adoption (Genesis 48:1-12)**

In our study through Genesis I've called Gen 12:3 God's multi-ethnic family plan. It's God's promise for all families of the earth to be blessed with Abram's family. Did you know 2 of his great-grandsons were as much African as they were Jewish? 2 of Israel's sons and tribes had a mom from the African continent in the land of On. They were ethnically from Lower Egypt (the ancient kingdom was bigger than modern Egypt, at times it approached the land of modern Sudan). Most of Jacob's 12 sons were full-blooded Hebrews from one family clan (Abraham-Sarah, half-sister; Isaac-Rebekah, cousins; Jacob-Rachel/Leah, daughters of Rebekah's brother Laban). But of Israel's original 12 sons who the 12 tribes came from, 4 might have had Arab birth mothers, or at least Gentile birth mothers (the 4 are Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali, born through the foreign servants of the family Bilhah and Zilpah)

In Gen 48 today we'll see 2 more who became tribes of Israel, born in the NE African continent, in ancient pagan Egypt, and how they became Israel. Last week was God's blessing promised for Egypt. It starts happening here, and it has beautiful implications for how we non-Jews become His family.

*Genesis 47:29 When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt,<sup>30</sup> but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said."<sup>31</sup> He said, "Swear to me." So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed.*

**48:1** *Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is sick." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him.<sup>2</sup> When it was told to Jacob, "Behold, your son Joseph has come to you," Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed.<sup>3</sup> Then Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,<sup>4</sup> and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.'<sup>5</sup> "Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are [i.e. Jacob's full-blooded firstborn sons by biology]<sup>6</sup> "But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance."<sup>7</sup> "Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land*

of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)<sup>8</sup> When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?"<sup>9</sup> Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." So he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them."<sup>10</sup> Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them.<sup>11</sup> Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well."<sup>12</sup> Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed

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### Outline:

1. This Adoption in Israel's Family
2. The Application for our Families

### **First, this Adoption in Israel's Family**

In v. 5 the language Jacob uses was the language of their day for adoption. In the Nuzi tablets from this time period in history this is how an adoption was done. Jacob says in the middle of v. 5 that these boys "*are mine*." What does he mean? In what sense are they now his? Jacob continues: "*Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are mine*." Do you see that in v. 5? These 2 boys from Egypt will now be Jacob's as much as his biological sons Reuben and Simeon, as much as Israel's first 2 sons/tribes.

Not only is this language how adoptions happened in ancient Nuzi tablets, the *Bible Background Commentary* explains: 'The adoption practice and formula here are very similar to those attested in the Code of Hammurabi.'<sup>1</sup>

And as you keep reading in v. 6, Jacob makes it even more clear. Any other children born to Joseph from here on out would belong to Joseph and would receive Joseph's family name and the inheritance from Joseph's family unit, but Ephraim and Manasseh would be called by Jacob's/Israel's name (i.e., 'sons of Jacob/Israel'), and their inheritance would be with Jacob's 12 sons. Look at v. 6 "*your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance*."

So Ephraim and Manasseh, born of a woman from NE Africa, will bear the name of Israel. The brothers will bear the family name. This isn't a foster arrangement, this is a full formal adoption where it's decreed they'll receive equal share of family inheritance with Jacob's other sons, including the land mentioned in v. 4. So by virtue of adoption, these 2 sons both become tribes

They'll later receive tribal land in the promised land of Israel. So how many tribes were there that received land? There were 12 tribal divisions in Israel. How did that work? There was no land of Joseph. His allotment was given to Ephraim and Manasseh, and Levi had no land but lived among the other 12 tribes to minister to them so there were priests in all of the 12 territories.

Joseph's tribal land inheritance was split into two: Ephraim and Manasseh. But these 2 from Egypt weren't half-tribes in the sense of second-class sons of Israel, v. 5 makes clear Israel considered them equal to his firstborns. It wasn't like the full-blooded sons got nice rooms in the house, while the half-Jewish kids Jacob took in got to stay in a garage. No, actually Manasseh got more land than any of the other tribes. E Manasseh had Gilead and Mount Hermon and W Manasseh was the Northern Kingdom's most important tribe

[Israel's tribes started with African blood, Arab blood...we're all one blood]

Not only were they a full part of Israel's tribes, some of Israel's heroes were from them. Gideon and Jephthah were from the tribe of Manasseh. Joshua, the leader of Israel in the conquest who has the book named after him, he's from the tribe of Ephraim. Ephraim became the biggest tribe numerically and militarily and Ephraim's tribe was leader of Israel's Northern tribes after Solomon. By the time of the prophets, Ephraim was so much a part of Israel that it became one of the names for the nation of Israel. Jacob as Israel is adopting Ephraim and Manasseh into a privileged prominent place in Israel, even giving the preeminent blessing normally given to a biological firstborn

1 Chronicles 5:1 explains "*Reuben the firstborn of Israel...was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph...*" (NIV). That's God's commentary on the status of Reuben, because of his sin of incest, God gave Reuben's firstborn rights to the sons of Joseph. Ephraim and Manasseh are treated as Jacob's firstborn

On v. 5, the 'literal Hebrew reads, "Like Reuben and Simeon they will be to me" - that is...Ephraim and Manasseh would become *not* Jacob's grandsons, but sons number one and two...Many scholars believe...a formal adoption process began in verse 8 with Jacob's question, "Who are these?"-a question that functioned in a way similar to the question that begins modern-day marriages-"Who gives this woman to be married to this man?..."Her mother and I do" is paralleled by Joseph's ceremonial response. [in v. 10] Following this, Jacob's kiss and embrace of the boys were significant gestures in the adoption process. Lastly [in v. 12], Jacob's removal of his sons from his knees [like from his loins] ... was a consummating gesture of the adoption.<sup>12</sup>

The Jewish scholar Nahum Sarna explains more on the culture and customs in his *Jewish Publication Society* series *Torah Commentary* on Genesis. The *Reformation Study Bible* has a nice summary: 'Joseph received the rights of firstborn and the double portion through Jacob's adoption and elevation of his two sons to the status of founding fathers among Israel's twelve tribes ... The adoption ritual included Jacob's statements of authority (vv. 3, 4) and intent to adopt Ephraim and Manasseh (vv. 5–7), legal gestures (vv. 8–12), and words of blessing (vv. 15–16). An ancient text from the city of Ugarit (Ras Shamra) describes a similar adoption of a grandson (c. 1500 B.C.).'<sup>3</sup>

That's from the same timeframe as when Israel was in Egypt. Did Joseph understand all this? Scholars and smart guys say the language in v. 12 of taking from the knees to another parent is OT language of adoption, and it seems Joseph realizes what's taking place when Joseph brings them to him. Verse 12 says Joseph took them from his knees to Jacob and bowed down.

Remember, Joseph dreamed in Gen 37 that one day his whole family would bow down to Joseph, including his dad. And that happened, but now as his dad adopts two African-born sons into his family, v. 12 says Joseph bows to the ground before his dad. Joseph recognizes something sacred and special is happening, and so even the 2nd most powerful ruler of Egypt is to bow as God's covenant representative Jacob is expanding God's family by adoption.

Joseph in v. 1 is the one who brings his sons to Jacob knowing his father is dying. Joseph is seeking the blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for his sons. In v. 10 Joseph brings his sons to Jacob and in v. 12 he brings his sons out from his knees, maybe symbolically also bringing them out from Egypt to Israel, as if to renounce the corporate ladder of Egypt for Jacob's ladder. He wants the blessing from heaven for his boys, not earthly Egypt's riches.

Kent Hughes explains: 'In giving his two sons to Jacob, he was virtually consenting to their being rejected in respect to a future and position in Egypt. By identifying his sons with the despised shepherding people, Joseph sealed them off ... there is no record of any of his children attaining rank ... by faith, Joseph lived without currying the favor of Egypt.'<sup>4</sup>

Heb 11:24 *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, <sup>26</sup> considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt ...*

Joseph by faith was also "*looking to the reward*," not the riches of Pharaoh. His dream for his boys was not the Egyptian dream, and our goals for our kids are not to be the American dream. We need a biblical vision for our family like the vision Jacob received for his family and for the nations in v. 3-4, a multi-generational vision for children and grandchildren in the faith. Some families may apply it through adoption from other nations, or others may pray their children will become missionaries to other nations, or for others it might mean in this nation foregoing worldly pleasures to seek the pleasure of God. But there's application for all of us here: let Christ's value drive your values ... better to be a servant of Christ than a king of the world.

## **The rest of our time will be on point #2: Applications for Our Families**

### 1st application: Let Christ's value drive your values

#### 2nd application: Meditate on God's grace to Joseph's sons in this story.

I draw that application right out of Ps 77 which draws it right out the story of Genesis 48. The context is depression or despair or deep discouragement, feeling rejected, as if God's love and grace ceased. Ps 77:15 says God redeemed these sons of Joseph. *'Your power redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.'* [some think Selah meant "meditate"]

<sup>7</sup> *Will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favorable again?* <sup>8</sup> *Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever?* <sup>9</sup> *Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? ...* [look at v. 11] *I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; Surely **I will remember Your wonders of old.*** <sup>12</sup> ***I will meditate** on all Your work And muse on Your deeds.* <sup>13</sup> *Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God?* <sup>14</sup> *You are the God who works wonders; **You have made known Your strength among the peoples.*** <sup>15</sup> *You have by Your power redeemed **Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.***

[meditating on God's power redeeming Joseph's sons is to give us hope]

#### Application: Meditate on God's heart for Egypt and the rest of Africa and us

[CLICK HERE](#) for Powerpoint slides used

It's no exaggeration to say meditating on this changed my life/family. It may not impact you like it did me, but I hope it impacts your heart/thinking. It's a joy of my heart to talk about God's heart and family with my family here. My parents and my sisters are here. We were blessed to grow up on the mission field, which opened our eyes to Christ's family among the nations.

We're blessed to have had a great-grandpa who was a missionary to Congo in the end of the 1800s and start of 1900s. Dr. Edwin Layton knew of God's heart for Africa, probably from his dad Perry Layton who had freed slaves and was the only one in the Kentucky house of representatives supporting Lincoln's emancipation proclamation. Edwin grew up in racist Kentucky but God gave him a heart to risk his life ministering to black Africans in Congo.

One of the first converts in God's providence in his ministry was Joseph, a young crippled boy I've told you about before who God used to reach many in their tribe of Congo and beyond. One of their early evangelists to their own people was named Mark, and our first son we adopted from the land our great grandpa lived in, we named Mark Joseph. In God's providence he had his life cut short, but our family experienced God's multi-colored grace through that, and we've been blessed with a second African son from there.

Church tradition says in the time of the NT, Mark the Evangelist went to Africa and established a Christian community there. Mark and Joseph are names with a long history of God's people on the continent of Africa. And so this chapter will always be special to me where the original Joseph sees two African-born sons adopted in God's family. In God's providence Joseph couldn't always make sense of what happened in his life, but by God's grace it expanded his influence and expanded God's family, and it has in my life.

As I think of Mark Joseph and how God has expanded our family and how I view my family in Christ here and overseas, or as I think of another Joseph in our family history 110 years ago when God expanded His family among a Congolese tribe, I can look back even farther to my spiritual family in Gen 48, the OT Joseph, because this text is my spiritual forefathers and family. I can also look back to a NT Joseph, son of a Jacob in Nazareth. He married someone named Miriam in Hebrew, or Mary in Greek. Her special son was not biologically Joseph's, but by marriage laws Joseph legally adopted Jesus as his son and therefore Jesus could legally rightfully be David's descendant

So both the first book of the OT and the first book of the NT have adoption as a critical part with a man named Joseph. Both families moved to Africa for a time in Egypt (Matthew 2 describes the later family with Joseph there) and in both cases God uses His special son to expand His family of nations. Last week I talked about how God's promise to bless Egypt I think fulfills Gen 12:3 and is rooted in Gen 47 and ties in with prophecies till end times. Other prophecies go beyond Egypt in NE Africa to the rest of the continent:

- Isaiah 19 seems to describe Egypt's cities or nation trusting in Christ
- Isaiah 18 speaks of a land beyond the rivers of Cush (Sudan), people known for their height and skin, who will come to worship the Lord
- Isaiah 11:11 says Christ will draw His people from Egypt and Cush
- Amos 9:7 seems to say God loves black Cushites just like Israelites
- Ps 68:31 promises a day Ethiopia will stretch out hands in worship
- Zephaniah 3 prophesies a day when God will gather nations beyond the rivers of Ethiopia [i.e., into central Africa] and they will serve the Lord shoulder to shoulder and will be His worshippers (v. 8-10)

The OT prophesied African nations coming to Christ. In the last 100 years more people in Africa have come to Christ than there are human beings in the United States. Maybe the greatest growth of Christianity in history is taking place on that continent ... God's family first started there in Genesis:

1. Abraham's firstborn son was born of an African slave from Egypt Hagar
2. Ishmael also married an African from Egypt but lived in Arabia (21:21)
3. His African mother in Genesis became one of a few people in Scripture who were blessed with a personal appearance from Yahweh (Gen 16, 21). She apparently not only believed God but received His promises, and she is also one of a few privileged to give the Lord a name, El-Roi
4. Most of Israel's first 500 years were spent in the NE part of the African continent, where they had interactions with many other African peoples from farther south, some came to faith in God and were part of a mixed multitude of Egyptians and other Africans who joined Israel (Ex 12:38)
5. Israel's great leader Moses is adopted by an African-Egyptian princess and Moses later married a black Cushite with God's blessing (Num 12)
6. It appears one of Israel's most blessed priests was part black African<sup>5</sup>
7. Some Cushites were close with Hezekiah and fought to defend Israel. Did you know African armies also sent out a large army to relieve a siege against Jews in Jerusalem, that both 2 Kings and Isaiah records?<sup>6</sup>
8. Did you know an Ethiopian man helped Jeremiah and had true saving faith in God at a time when many Jews didn't (Jer. 38:7-13, 39:16-18)?
9. Did you know an African helped Jesus carry His cross, a man named Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21, Cyrene was a country in North Africa)?
10. Did you know at Pentecost, multiple African countries are mentioned as being part of the crowd and converts (Cyrene, Libya, Egypt, Acts 2:10)?
11. Did you know Ethiopians got saved before Romans/Samaritans in Acts?
12. Did you know some of the first and most fruitful evangelists to non-Jews in the book of Acts were Africans from the nation of Cyrene in N Africa, and they saw great blessings and conversions (Acts 11:19-24)?

13. Did you know in the place where believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26), the first church leaders include a man from Africa (13:1; Lucius of Cyrene) and Simeon, apparently known for his black skin?<sup>7</sup>
14. Did you know a man Acts calls a most powerful preacher was a native of a prominent city in Africa (Apollos of Alexandria, Acts 18:24-28)?

You probably already knew all that, huh? But in case you didn't also know: 'Africa played a decisive role in the formation of Christian culture. Decisive intellectual achievements of Christianity were explored and understood first in Africa before they were recognized in Europe, and [1000+ years] before they found their way to North America...[one scholar writes] Cut Africa out of the Bible and Christian memory and you have misplaced many pivotal scenes of salvation history. It's the story of the children of Abraham...Joseph in Africa; Moses in Africa; Mary, Joseph and Jesus in Africa; and shortly thereafter Mark and Perpetua and Athanasius and Augustine...[and Cyprian and Tertullian, the writings of many early church fathers, church councils] ... from Pentecost on, Africa would always have Christians...[they] have continued without cessation all the way to the living testimony of African witnesses today. No African century...has lacked Christian presence.' That's from *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Civilization*, a book by Thomas Oden that I'm reading.<sup>8</sup>

100 years after the NT was written it was translated to Latin first in Africa before Europe. 100 years later there were many churches on the continent. The kingdom of Ethiopia adopted Christianity in 328 AD and sent out its own missionaries, over 1,500 years before any Western missionaries came to Africa. Athanasius ministered as far south as Sudan by 328 AD. In 356 AD, an African King Ezana and his brother Sazana convert to Christianity. The greatest impact of early Christianity was Augustine of North Africa.<sup>9</sup>

It all started, though, in Genesis with a boy in a coat of many colors. Joseph is the first great witness there. Jacob adopts African sons there into Israel. God has been blessing His family in Egypt and beyond almost 4,000 years but praise the Lord He started blessing western peoples in recent centuries, too. America may not have prophecies like Africa does, but God had people like us in mind, too, even though we're a little later to the party. Gen 12:3 is a promise for all nations of the earth to be blessed in Israel through its Messiah

Application: we should rejoice at diversity in families and church families



From the beginning in Genesis 1 God created variety, diversity, and colors to display His glory. Some geneticists argue in order for Adam and Eve's descendants to produce all the diversity of the human race today, their skin must have been different shades of brown.<sup>10</sup> Is God opposed to people with different skin color getting married? No, God made and married like that! In Song of Songs, a marriage celebrated by the inspiration of God, the husband is light and ruddy but the bride says her skin is black like Kedar's dark tents.

Moses in Numbers 12, apparently after his first wife dies, Moses marries a black woman from Cush (OT land of modern Sudan/Ethiopia). They were known for their very dark skin (Jer 13:23 *'can the Cushite/Ethiopian change his skin?'*). Miriam in Numbers 12 challenged Moses and persecuted him for marrying a black woman and God strikes Miriam white as snow in leprosy as judgment. And God there defends and commends that marriage. God's plan has always been for a diversity of His people in the same family, by marriage, missions, and adoption as He brings in every color/culture, Rev 7. From Genesis to Revelation, God reveals His glory and multi-ethnic family.

Even though most of us in this room have lighter skin than most of the folks in the land of Gen 48, our middle Eastern Messiah has the exact same color blood as all of us on this planet, so it can redeem all who trust in His blood. Acts 17 says we're all of one blood. There's even deeper unity in Christ's.

There's only one race in Scripture and only one way of grace in the Lord. In Gen 9 God's grace for the human race is seen in His multi-color rainbow for all. Gen 10 then lists all the nations God spread all over the earth in Gen 11, but His plan is revealed to bring them back together in one family. Gen 12:3 then is God's promise to bless all the families of the earth with the family of Abraham. In Gen 37 Abraham's grandson Jacob gives one of his sons a coat of many colors, to show favoritism to one of his sons, but God uses that son Joseph in the mightiest kingdom of Africa to show God's multi-color grace to many nations, and even to us who have lighter skin than most in the story  
[there's more in Gen 48 on adoption and God's adoption for next time]

Application: pray for our African brothers and sisters in Sudan, Nigeria, etc.  
Pray for our missionaries the Clarks in Cameroon (Moses, Miriam, Karissa) and for their translation project and colleague's girls kidnapped in Nigeria. They're our POM you can give to and also pray for them this month as your families pray together or do your devotions (missionary pics at back table). If you'd like to get the monthly missionary prayer requests, just let us know. We need to also pray for DRC to let adopted kids to come to their families.

There's 6 with Didier waiting to come home, 12 more still orphans refugees who don't have adoptive parents or sponsors yet. C4C took them in but don't have enough resources (\$150 a month), that you could sponsor temporarily.

[this would be temporary support till future parents begin to adopt them]

As we sit here comfortably in AC meditating on Moses marrying a believer from Cush/Sudan, we need to pray for another believing wife in Sudan right now who has not only been persecuted but was sentenced to die for her faith on May 15th. Her name is also Miriam, and her family name is Ibrahim (the way they spell Abraham). Her name is right out of these stories and CNN ran her story which seems right out of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. They gave her till Thursday to renounce her faith in Christ. The reports say during her trial and sentencing a Muslim cleric urged the judge to consider converting from Islam to Christianity and 'how dangerous it is to Islam and the Islamic community.' Miriam replied 'I am a Christian, and a Christian I will remain!'

She was sentenced first to 100 lashes, but her attorney says her faith 'is very strong and very firm. She is very clear that she is a Christian...' Pray for her and her 20-month old in prison with her. She is also 8 months pregnant and has her legs shackled and swollen, according to her husband. Her husband is also a Christian and confined to a wheelchair and doesn't have custody of his son because the boy is considered Muslim and can't be raised Christian. Miriam's alleged crime is being born Muslim but converting to Christianity.

Final application: how can you be sure you're a part of the family of Christ?

Are you a follower of Christ? Are you committed to follow Him as Lord no matter what? The cost may not be as high here but it is rising and your faith will be tested more and more. Is God your Father who you know and love?

- 1 Jn 1:9 says a way you know you're forgiven is continual repenting
- 1 Jn 2:3 says God's true children obey their Father as a life pattern
- v. 9-11 says if you don't love your brethren you're not in the family
- v. 15 says if you love this sinful world the Father's love isn't in you

**3:10** *By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother [again not in total perfection, your life's direction] ...<sup>24</sup> The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*

**5:13** *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. [do you today?]*

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ge 48:6.

<sup>2</sup> Kent Hughes, *Genesis*, p. 542-43.

<sup>3</sup> *Reformation Study Bible*, edited by R.C. Sproul.

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, p. 546-47.

<sup>5</sup> At least 9 scholars have documented how the name Phinehas (Numbers 25) in this era and area 'connotes either a person with unusually dark skin or a true African' and in Egypt where he was likely born it clearly meant 'the Negro' or 'the Nubian' or 'the Cushite.' Daniel Hays documents and develops these points further in his book *From Every Tribe and Tongue: A Biblical Theology of Race*, p. 81-86: 'Yahweh bestows the priesthood on Phinehas and all his descendants ... Phinehas' zealous defence of Yahweh becomes a model for subsequent generations ... as Psalm 106 reflects back over Israel's stormy history, it places Phinehas (106:30-31) along-side Moses (23, 32-33) as the two great intercessors of the wilderness time. [Psalm 106 says] "Phinehas stood up and intervened ... This was credited to him as righteousness for endless generations ..." The phrase referring to the crediting (hasab) something to someone as righteousness (se'daqa) only occurs in one other place. In Genesis 15:6, Abraham believes God and God credits to him as righteousness ... In Galatians 3, Paul uses this phrase (from Genesis 15:6) to prove that Gentiles are justified by faith and thus to be accepted into the church as equal to Jews. It is therefore, rather interesting to note that this phrase is used of Phinehas ... [who] might very well have had a Cushite mother and therefore might have looked like a Cushite at birth, thus receiving the name 'the Negro' [which in the land they grew up in meant a black person] ... Imagine the different route American Christianity might have travelled if the translators of the King James Bible had known Egyptian and had thus translated 'Phinehas' as 'the Negro'. The early Americans would have read that God made an eternal covenant with 'the Negro', that all legitimate Israelite priests are descended from 'the Negro', and that God credited righteousness to 'the Negro' ... it would have been extremely difficult to defend slavery or to maintain any type of superior-inferiority racial views.

While the meaning of Phinehas' name is absolutely clear, the significance of this meaning is admittedly not quite as certain. However ... it is extremely probable that Phinehas was at least half Black. When combined with the 'mixed multitude' of Exodus 12:38 and the Cushite wife of Moses, Phinehas reveals to us that there was a significant presence of Cushites among the early Israelites ... at its beginning, the highest level of Israelite priesthood apparently had Black ethnic elements with it ... As God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 (blessing to all peoples) unfolds, numerous different ethnicities are melded into the people of God in fulfilment of this promise.'

<sup>6</sup> This point is further detailed in above excellent scholarly work by Daniel Hays. <sup>7</sup> *NET Bible* notes says his nickname ("black" in Latin) refers to his black complexion, and most modern commentators on Acts agree this church leader was black in his appearance.

<sup>8</sup> p. 9, 14, 16 (InterVarsity Press, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, appendix.

<sup>10</sup> *ESV Study Bible* article on Race.