

Race & Religion

Week 4: God Has A Dream

Weekly Summary: The Bible ends with revealed God's plan for our diverse world, namely, to gather a massive church from every tribe, nation, race, and people.

◆ Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech (8/28/63)

- Less than 8% of churches are racially diverse.
- Are we not obligated to live out this dream?

◆ God Has a Dream:

- Revelation 7:9-17 - After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." ¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" ¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. ¹⁶ 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,' nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"
- "It's all right to talk about 'long white robes over yonder,' in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here! It's all right to talk about 'streets flowing with milk and honey,' but God

has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day. It's all right to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee. This is what we have to do" (*"I've Been to the Mountaintop"* speech by Martin Luther King Jr, 4/3/68, one day before he was assassinated.)

◆ 3 Things to Live the Dream:

- We need to **dream** like God and not **wait**.
- We need to be **intentional** and as **individuals** reach out to diverse groups, not waiting for the church.
- We need to overcome **racism** with **love** and never become defensive or justify a hint of injustice.

- ◆ God's dream is fulfilled ever-increasingly when we live our lives according to the very **gospel** which saved us.

Points to Ponder

1. Discuss: We all can strive all the more to put away racist actions, words, and thoughts to the glory of God who in Christ unites people of all backgrounds.
2. Discuss: We all can do a better job of having compassion on and showing mercy and forgiveness to those who are deluded in their racist ways - whether overt or subtle. This is something our culture seems hardly capable of.
3. Discuss: Though racism will never end until Jesus returns, Christians can attract many people to Jesus for eternity when they eradicate racism among themselves.

Homework For Next Week: Psalm 1 (Our Mission Vision Series)