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Adam's family maze

Find your way through this maze and you will trace the history of the human race.

We're all different

Sometimes people use the differences between us (skin colour, hair colour, etc.) as an excuse to do terrible things to other people: tease them, call them names, fight with them—even hurt or kill them. Wars have been fought because of the idea that some people groups are better than others—because their bodies aren't as hairy or their arms aren't as long. One time, a man was put on display in the Bronx Zoo's monkey house simply because he was a pygmy from Africa, and he was thought to be 'less evolved' than the zookeepers! And the Australian Aborigines were once thought to be the 'missing link' between apes and human beings.

Terrible crimes were committed because people chose not to regard the biblical teaching that we're really all much the same—all people are amazingly closely related.



We're all the same

We all have the same skin-colouring pigment (just more or less of it); we all have eyes, noses, mouths, hair (well, most of us do). And the Bible teaches that we all come from the same two people (Adam and Eve—Acts 17:26), and we all have the same Creator God (Acts 17:24, 25).

It also tells us that we all have the same problem—sin—that separates each of us from God (Romans 3:23), and we therefore all have the same need for a Saviour (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

The real reason people don't get along with each other all the time is not that we're all different, but that we're all sinners.

We all have the same choice

No matter what colour our skin, where we live, or how we talk, we are all faced with the same choice: where we will spend eternity.

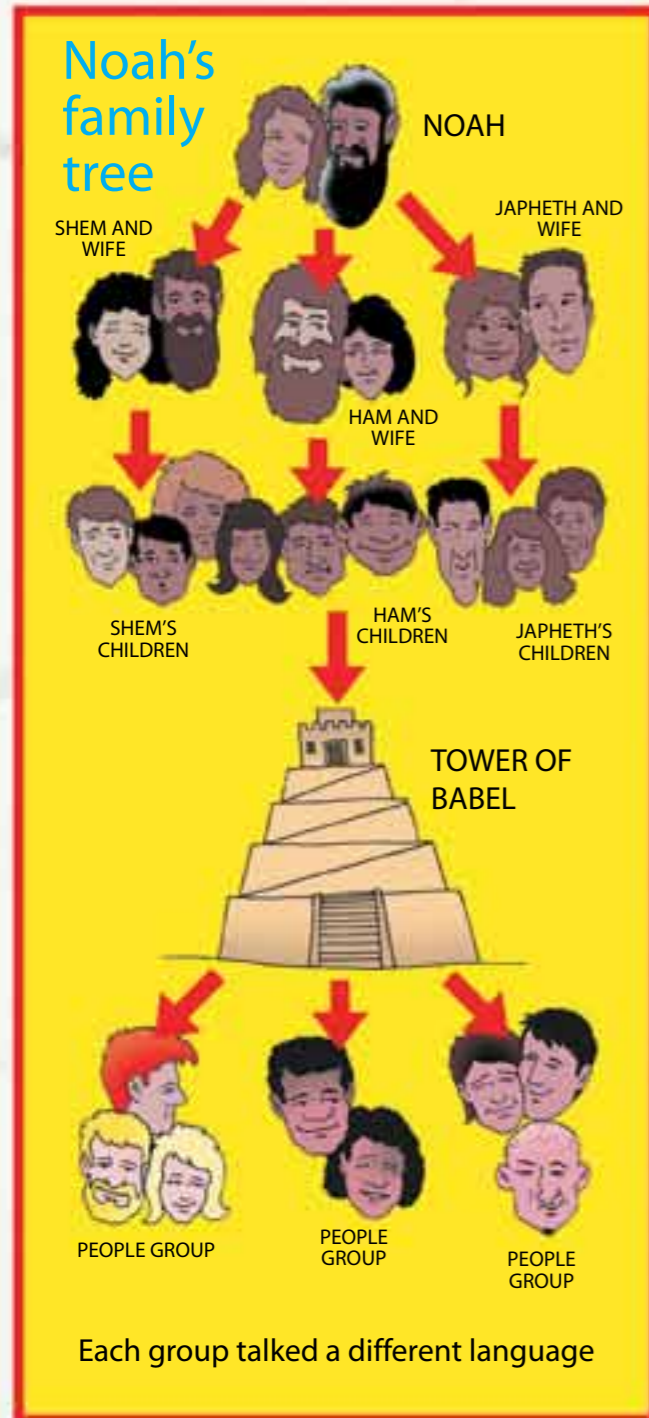


Those who refuse this gift will spend forever in a horrible place. What will you choose?

Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sin by dying on a cross and rising again three days later (1 Corinthians 1–4). To all who believe this, the Creator God gives eternal life with Him (John 3:16–18).

ONE BIG FAMILY!

HAVE YOU EVER noticed how different the people in your street look? You may have a thin body with black hair and very dark skin, but your next-door neighbour may have a round body, red hair and very light-coloured skin. On the outside you look very different. When we have some differences from someone else, like different skin colour, differently shaped eyes, and soon, we are said to come from a different 'race'. Many people think that because they look so different from people from another 'race' they could never be related.



In the Bible, God tells us that everybody is related! In the book of Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, God tells us about the family of Noah. In Noah's day, people were very bad, which made God very sad. They just would not listen to Him—all except for Noah, who obeyed God. Because of this, God said He would flood the whole earth but save Noah and his family.

Noah did as God asked and built a special boat, called an Ark. He went on board with his wife and sons and their wives, and two of each kind of land animal and bird (seven of a few of them). The Flood came and destroyed every living thing on the land that was not on the Ark.

When the water went down and the Ark landed, Noah and his family started again. They built places to live, and had many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren and so on, until there were many people again.

Though the number of people increased, they disobeyed God's command to spread out across the earth. Instead, they built a big tower that stretched high into the sky, possibly as high as a tall skyscraper.

God acted to put a stop to their disobedience. Instead of destroying them, God suddenly gave them new languages. All at once they could not understand each other! Imagine one day finding that your best friend is talking to you in another language, and you couldn't understand him or her! It was so confusing and frustrating that the people had no choice but to go off together with others they could understand.

These small groups went in many directions; some towards Asia, and then to North and South America, some towards Europe and others went down to Africa. In each of these groups many people had the same colouring, but many had different shapes, colours and sizes, too.

More than one group of people might have reached the hot, sunny parts of Africa. If one of those groups had very light-coloured skin, they would very easily have become sunburnt and tired. They did not have enough melanin in their skin. When a person gets sunburnt often, they will more easily get skin cancer. Skin cancer makes



people very sick and they may eventually die. If we get skin cancer today, our doctors can usually take it out for us so we get better. When the people moved to Africa, they did not know about cancer. This meant that many light-coloured people in sunny places died or were too sick to have children. So eventually there would have been only people with dark-coloured skin left in those places!

Some of the people who went to Europe went to places in the north that were very cold and cloudy. These places had less sunlight. Those who had dark skin needed more sunlight and became sick because they did not get enough. Over time these people died and there were none left! Now only people with light skin lived in most of the colder and cloudier places.

Just because you are lighter or darker than someone else does not mean you are not related. In fact, we are all related because we all come from Adam and Eve, and after that from Noah's family!

Reference

Ham, K. et al., One Blood: The Biblical Answer to Racism, Masterbooks, Arkansas, USA, 2002.

Melanin

is the brownish pigment in a person's skin. People with dark skin have lots of melanin. People with olive skin have a medium amount of melanin in their skin, and people with light skin have the smallest amount.

Melanin acts a bit like sunscreen; the more you have, the less sunburnt you get. That doesn't mean you can't get sunburnt if you have dark skin. It means that you can be in the sun for longer without getting burnt.

Everybody needs to have sun on the skin for a short time every day to help 'feed' their bodies by making a vitamin. People with light skin only need a little bit of sunlight to keep them healthy. People with dark skin need more sunlight because their darker skin stops some of the sun coming through, a bit like the way sunscreen stops the sun's rays.

Activity

Make your own feature family tree. On a large sheet of paper or card, start at the bottom with you and your siblings. Write your names and draw a picture of your faces with the colour of your hair. Then draw your parents, and then your grandparents, as far as you can (you may need Grandma's help), including everyone's hair colour. Look and see where your hair colour might have come from!