

# Does ‘Neither Greek nor Jew’ Mean that God Ignores Ethnic Diversity?

Version 2.4

By Craig M. White

“Because he is the God of creation, we affirm the unity of the human race. Because he is the God of variety, we affirm the diversity of ethnic cultures. Because he is the God of history, we affirm his sovereignty over all nations. Because he is the God of provision, we affirm his constant and providential care of the nations. Because he is the God of redemption, we affirm that his salvation is to be offered to all peoples. Because he is the God of hope, we affirm his coming kingdom for all. And because he is the God of glory, we affirm and celebrate the vision of all nations one day worshiping at his throne!” (Ken L. Davis, “Building A Biblical Theology of Ethnicity for Global Mission”, *The Journal of Ministry & Theology*, Fall 2003, p. 106)



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Our purpose and desire is to foster Biblical, historical and related studies that strengthen the Church of God's message & mission and provides further support to its traditional doctrinal positions.

"In spite of failures which I lament, of errors which I now see and acknowledge, or of the present aspect of affairs, do I despair the future? The truth is this: **the march of Providence is so slow, our desires so impatient, the work of progress is so immense, and our means of aiding it so feeble, the life of humanity is so long, that of the individual so brief, that we often see only the ebb of the advancing wave and are thus discouraged. It is history that teaches us to hope.**"

- Robert E. Lee (1807-72. General for the Confederate Army)

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"If you love wealth better than liberty [or God's Truths], the tranquility of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom, go home from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. **Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you.** May your chains set lightly upon you and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen."

- Samuel Adams (1722-1803. Organiser of protests including the Boston Tea Party)

### **Abstract**

This article examines whether New Testament scriptures (Romans 10:12, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11) imply that God disregards ethnic, racial, or sexual differences. It argues that these verses emphasise spiritual equality of salvation "in Christ," not the erasure of physical or cultural distinctions. This author critiques modern ideologies like globalisation and political correctness, which are contrary to Biblical principles, and asserts that God values human diversity as part of His creation. The article concludes that these Scriptures promote unity and respect within the Church, not the elimination of ethnic identities or gender roles, warns against adopting worldly ideologies that undermine Biblical teachings.

## **Does God ignore physical diversity?**

Today the world is swamped by political correctness: whether it be abortions, euthanasia, radical feminism, surrogacy, partners in lieu of marriage, homosexuality and same sex marriages. Soon to follow are polygamy and such like – the seeds for these have already been sewn by the media and universities.<sup>1</sup>

Such is not the way of God!

Now, those individuals and organisations that promote the politically correct dogmas above are the same individuals that promote the weakening of national borders, rampant immigration without referenda and approval by the nation, globalisation and emphasising the importance of the United Nations as a future world government and such like.

These people are generally neo-pagan, or Fabian Socialists, or left-liberals or social Leninists. Plus a few deceived 'conservatives' that have been caught up in the media hype promoting globalisation.

NONE of them are thinking and studious Christians.

Doesn't that tell us something?

So, why then, are Christians being swept up with the idea that mass, uncontrolled immigration is fine?

Because they are allowing the media to influence them. And little is being done about it –

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<sup>1</sup> Mixed in with this is the corrupt greed of supposed capitalism – but which is actually corporate socialism and laws and systems biased toward the rich and against the poor. The latter are desperate to enjoy and participate in the wealth of the nations they live in – but are not able to. They are virtually frozen out and prevented from accumulating some little wealth unless they enter interest-laden debt or unethical practices (eg under-paying others, not providing staff with their legal benefits, cheating and illegal activities). Giving or taking a bribe in some way to better oneself. This includes wining and dining ministers for a leg up into opportunities or for ordination. Of course, giving a gift to help in a situation is not the same as giving a gift which is actually a bribe. Some ministers and members justify the *bribe* by labelling it a *gift*.

they go along with this current craze using all sorts of excuses.

The question therefore arises: “Does God advocate such mass, uncontrolled immigration? And does He want this; or couldn’t He care about such developments – which are leading to ethnic replacement or mixing that undermines the diversity that what He developed?”

Therefore, do the Scriptures found in Rom 10:12, Gal 3:28 and Col 3:11 provide ammunition to the notion that He ignores racial, national and sexual dimensions and national identity. And if so, why?

Can’t we just accept that:

“The various tribes created by God, in general, manifest a variety of characteristics, some immutable (such as physical characteristics, including skin color) and some mutable (particularly spiritual and religious inclinations). Each of these people groups is better at some skills than others. Some ethnicities are more inclined to different sins than others. But everyone, no matter his ethnicity, can experience redemption to the fullest degree—not only the pardon of sins (via justification based upon imputation), but also sanctification.

In the Old Testament era, the twelve tribes of Israel, during the time of the sojourn in the wilderness, camped around the tabernacle of God’s presence. The church militant during that period, these saints were united in their faith and worship, and yet also displayed the unique pennant of each tribe. Now imagine an incredibly large group of people—millions and even billions of them—spread out over a great plain. What you are seeing is the gathering of an innumerable company of believers from all the nations, each group with its own unique flag, yet united under the blood-stained banner of King Jesus.” (Frank Smith, *Race, Church and Society*, pp. 196-97)

We shall explore this important issue below.

## **Primary New Testament Scriptures**

The primary scriptures used to advocate the notion by some that God does not care about racial or sexual differences are as follows:

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” (Rom 10:12, KJV)

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28, KJV)

“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” (Col 3:11, KJV)

Some take the above to mean that prior to the writings of Paul, the Old Testament promoted

discrimination. But that since Paul, God ignored racial and sexual differences to the extent that a world melting pot and women elders were permitted.

But notice carefully what is being said in context: there cannot be distinctions “in Christ” – in the saving relationship that He has with us. So, no matter whom we are or what our background, we all inherit salvation. Therefore, we should be acknowledged, honoured and respected within the Body of Christ.

In dissecting Colossians 3:11 we find the following:

- Jew [Judahite] and Greek: the former possessing covenant privilege, while others lack it and are regarded as unclean latecomers.
- Circumcised and uncircumcised: those who adhere to all the customs of the privileged community – Israelites and converts; and those who show no signs of that privilege.
- Barbarians: other ethnic groups - deemed uncultured and foolish by both Greek and Jewish standards, speaking foreign languages.
- Scythian: the remote tribes from the north of the Black Sea (different peoples were designated by that name), representing the lack of refinement and brutality. Josephus remarked, "Now, as to the Scythians, they take a pleasure in killing men, and differ little from brute beasts; yet do they think it reasonable to have their institutions observed. They also slew Anacharsis a person greatly admired for his wisdom among the Greeks, when he returned to them, because he appeared to come fraught with Grecian customs; One may also find many to have been punished among the Persians, on the very same account." (*Against Apion*, 2.269)
- Slave (bond) and free: the contrasting extremes of society.

However, God values His creation and human diversity reflects His creative capacity and therefore glorifies Him. We will also see that the point of these verses is not that racial, ethnic and sex differences hold no significance to Him – they indeed do. Nor have they magically disappeared.

	MAINLY PERSONAL		MAINLY DOCTRINAL		MAINLY PRACTICAL	MAINLY PERSONAL	
	OPNING BENEDICTION 1:1 1:3 We give thanks We pray		Explanation of life Person and work of Christ 2:4 Escaping of heresies 1. legalism (Judaistic) 2:11-17 2. worship of human mind 2:8 3. angel worship 2:18 4. asceticism 2:20-23 3:5 Exchanges in Christian's conduct PUT OFF / PUT ON 1. in personal life 3:5-17 2. in domestic life 3:18-4:1 3. in relation to the world 4:2,6		NOTES AND SALUTATIONS fellow bond slave 4:7 fellow-prisoner 4:10 fellow-worker 4:11 4:18b		CLOSING BENEDICTION
Tone	personal	doctrinal	polemical	hortatory	personal		
Theme	CHRIST YOUR INHERITANCE 1:12	CHRIST YOUR INDWELLER 1:27	CHRIST YOUR SUFFICIENCY 2:10	CHRIST YOUR MOTIVATION 3:17	CHRIST YOUR MASTER 4:7		
Topic	true doctrine		false doctrine	Christian living	Christian fellowship		

Key Verse: 3:11b  
 Key Words: mystery, knowledge, wisdom, fullness, perfect, all (16 times in chap. 1), faith, body, love, prayer

Graphic source: <https://www.preceptaustin.org/sites/default/files/images/col.png>

This graphic is most useful as it shows Col 3:11 in context and there is absolutely NOTHING that indicates that national and sexual differences are obliterated, subsumed or ignored. They are still as biologically real as ever. After all, God created them. But what must now be considered is that we are all a part of the Body and equally share in salvation with Christ as our Head.

The context for all of this is obvious. In “putting on Christ” there is no difference. Again, the context is about becoming like Christ – putting on the Divine nature:

“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, and have **put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a renewal in which there is no *distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.***

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of

unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.” (Col 3:5-15, ESV)

There is no neo-Marxism or globalisation here!

Therefore, being “in Christ” does not invalidate national differences and sexual roles. Why should it? How can it? For these are expressions of God’s creative capacity. Christian freedom is not freedom to become like the world and to disobey the Law. It is freedom to obey the Law because we have been liberated from sin and this world (Rom 6:13-15; Gal 5:13-14).

So there is no advantage with respect to nationality or race when it comes to salvation. One does not have the edge over the other or is more saveable than the other. This is true also of males and females – anyone for that matter who is a Christian.

Cronyism, discrimination and bias based on wealth and relationships are what Paul is getting at as well – for these sins are also addressed elsewhere in the Bible. Galatians 6:15 explains it:

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (KJV)

That is what Paul is getting at – it is a matter of salvation – not that God has views that are communist, liberal or politically correct/woke. Church beliefs and philosophies must not be reinterpreted based on current Satan-inspired ideologies.

Christians are not to be absorbed into this world’s ways. Just as true Christians resisted Pharisaism, paganism and such like over the centuries, so today, it **MUST** resist globalisation and politically correct liberalism. This is our enemy and a cancer within. Christians are in philosophical and ideological war with the world.

Wrongly interpreting the verse "there is neither male nor female" results in aligning oneself and the Church to the world. The liberal-left position is contrary to God’s Word and undermines His structure for human relationships, the family and offices within the Church.

This false interpretation also leads into the false doctrine of “replacement theology” – that the Church replaces Israel. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, those that wish to undermine God’s Word on a number of fronts have labelled this Scripture as useful in women's liberation.



*The Church includes peoples from many nations*

To support my point, here are two other translations of the phrase:

John Phillips *New Testament in Modern English*:

“In this new man of God's design there is no distinction between Greek and Hebrew, Jew or Gentile, foreigner or savage, slave or free man. Christ is all that matters for Christ lives in them all.”

*The Wuest New Testament: An Expanded Translation*:

“... in which state there cannot be Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free man, but Christ is all things and in all things.”

Notice also Joseph Lightfoot's explanation in *The Epistles of St Paul*:

“Christ is all things and in all things. Christ has dispossessed and obliterated all distinctions of religious prerogative and intellectual preeminence and **social caste** [such as cliques and bias]; Christ has substituted Himself for all these; Christ occupies the whole sphere of human life and permeates all its developments ... Not only does the distinction not exist, but it cannot exist. It is a mundane distinction, and therefore has disappeared.” (III.11)

Renowned researcher and author, Christopher Wright in his *Old Testament Ethics of the People of God*, provides a comment that would normally be considered 'obvious':

“Paul takes for granted the diversity of nations within the unity of humanity, and attributes it to the Creator ... [Wright goes on to quote Acts 17:26 and Deut 32:8] ... Furthermore we can see that ethnic and cultural diversity is part of God's creative intention for humanity from the eschatological vision of redeemed humanity in the new creation. The inhabitants of the new creation are not portrayed as a homogenized mass or as a single global culture. (pp. 214-15)

So, it is in spiritual salvation that there is no advantage, for we are all born with different ethnic, physical and mental attributes. Or opportunities. Or financial situations.

But “in Christ”, there is no advantage or bias. We are of equal value and all have a direct relationship with the Father through and with Christ – for there are no human priests today. But there are servant leaders (the elders and pastors) who occupy positions or offices in service to the Church of God to nurture spiritual gifts and to show gratitude for such – to thank God for the members.

In the first century, Greeks and Jews had very little to do with each other: the Greeks were often aristocrats of the Roman Empire looking down upon others as barbarians. In turn the

Jews would generally not enter into a gentile's house or even buy meat prepared by gentile butchers. The walls or barriers between them were steep and virtually insurmountable. But Paul is saying it should not be so amongst us.

This is how a barbarian was understood:

"Barbarian ... properly meant one whose speech is rude, or harsh; the word is onomatopoeic, indicating in the sound the uncouth character represented by the repeated syllable bar-bar and hence, in the mouth of a Greek it meant anything that was not Greek, language, people or customs. With the spread of Greek language and culture, it came to be used generally for all that was non-Greek. In time it acquired the additional meaning of rude or uncivilized. Used pejoratively, 'barbarian' demeaned those lacking Hellenistic culture as crude, coarse, boorish, savage, or bestial." (*Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*)

Vincent in his *Word Studies in the New Testament* explains:

"More barbarous than the barbarians" (Bengel). Hippocrates describes them as widely different from the rest of mankind, and like to nothing but themselves, and gives an absurd description of their physical peculiarities. Herodotus describes them as living in wagons, offering human sacrifices, scalping and sometimes flaying slain enemies, drinking their blood, and using their skulls for drinking-cups. When a king dies, one of his concubines is strangled and buried with him, and, at the close of a year, fifty of his attendants are strangled, disemboweled, mounted on dead horses, and left in a circle round his tomb." (Vol. 3, p. 504)

What of the twenty-first century? How does this apply to God's people in principle and practice today?

Today we might think that there is no such sin in the Church because we do not hate others. But we do have class barriers, cliques, people who 'run after' the ministry and people with the various means to form such barriers. Yet we must have no such barriers in Christ. We must work to eliminate these walls and build bridges instead. It will take ministerial support to do this.

Why?

"But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to

those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father." (Eph 2:13-18, KJV)

In the *Believer's Bible Commentary*, MacDonald and Farstad explain:

"For the Christian these worldly distinctions are no longer of importance. It is Christ who really counts. He is everything to the believer and in everything. He represents the center and circumference of the Christian's life." (*Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*)

Hendriksen and Kistemaker provide further insight:

"Christ, as the all-sufficient Lord and Savior, is all that matters. His Spirit-mediated indwelling in all believers, of whatever racial-religious, cultural, or social background they be, guarantees the creation and gradual perfection in each and in all of "the new man, who is being renewed for full knowledge according to the image of him who created him." Thus, most appropriately, the very theme of the entire letter, namely, "Christ, the Pre-eminent One, the Only and All-Sufficient Savior," climaxes this passage." (*New Testament Commentary Set*)

Consider also this - the immediate context demonstrates that Christians must have a good, clean heart toward one another, regardless of one's social or ethnic background:

"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.  
Do not lie to one another, since **you have put off the old man** with his deeds,  
and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,  
where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.  
Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on tender mercies**, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;  
**bearing with one another, and forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.  
But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.  
And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were **called in one body**; and be thankful." (Col 3:8-15, KJV)

From the above context we can see that there is nothing here about eschewing who you are. You don't suddenly become raceless or sexless. Nations still have obvious physical and cultural differences. Undermining diversity is not something of choice. And you are still male or female. Nor should one blind oneself to those physical differences.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "Paul's extended analogy in Romans 11 of the cultivated and wild olive trees, which represent Jews and Gentiles, respectively, confirms his essentialist understanding of ethnicity. In or out of the tree, Jews remain

God has not changed His creation so that ethnic differences are no longer in existence, a mere social construct or not important. In fact there will be diversity even in the eternal Kingdom:

“... the eschatological unity in the worship of God will not mean the dissolving of diverse national identities. Rather, the glory of the future reign of God will be the influx of the rich variety of all peoples.” (*Old Testament Ethics of the People of God*, p. 251)<sup>3</sup>

But He does expect us to be respectful and to be kind toward one another. This is dealt with in other places such as Rom 10:12; 1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28 and Eph 2:11-16.

Similarly, both Gal 3:28 and Col 3:11 are not open doors to church offices. For they are for those called and trained. They are not there for anyone to choose to join. Nor are they places for cronyism or nepotism or abuse.

Christians, however, have spiritual gifts. These work with or match our natural talents and abilities.

## Conclusions

Finally, in the New Testament Gal 3:28 and Col 3:11 do not obliterate race and national characteristics; or male-female roles.

We don't magically merge into a communist utopia where there are few differences.

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Jews- cultivated olive tree branches. And even grafted into the cultivated tree. Gentiles remain Gentiles – wild olive branches.

“... Such ethnic stereotyping strikes most modern readers as distasteful, but it was the norm in the Greco-Roman world, and even someone as saintly as Paul participated in the practice.” (Matthew Thiessen, *The Construction of Gentiles in the Letter to the Ephesians in The Early Reception of Paul the Second Temple Jew*, p. 15).

<sup>3</sup> It is natural that the world is aligned into several civilisational zones. In his 1996 publication, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington posits that future global disputes will arise not from ideological or economic disparities but from confrontations between civilizations, which are defined by cultural and religious identities. He contends that the post-Cold War landscape is segmented into significant civilizations, including Western, Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and potentially African, each characterized by a common culture, religion, and historical background. Conflicts are anticipated to emerge along the fault lines where these civilisations intersect, as they vie for power and influence. Individuals are increasingly aligning themselves with their cultural heritage rather than with nation-states or ideologies such as communism versus capitalism, which shapes their alliances and hostilities. Wars are predicted to occur between factions from different civilizations, such as Western against Islamic or Confucian against Western, frequently at borders like the Balkans or the Middle East. Each civilisation is represented by a leading state, such as the United States for the West or China for the Confucian realm, which unites others and impacts global power relations. The dominance of the West is challenged by the emergence of rising civilizations, particularly Islamic and Confucian, leading to tensions regarding values such as democracy and individualism. Non-Western societies are modernizing yet rejecting Western values, opting instead to embrace their own cultural identities, as evidenced by the Islamic resurgence. Huntington cautions against the possibility of large-scale conflicts unless civilisations learn to coexist through mutual respect, advising the West to bolster its unity and refrain from meddling in the affairs of other civilisations. Even during the Millennium, there will be several clear cultures and sub-cultures under the Messiah.

Creation is of God, and it is complex and wonderful

Rather, they are the essence of unity in Christ with the elimination of cliques and bias. For Christ Himself prayed about it in John 17:21; and Paul speaks of a unified Church in Eph 4:3 and 1 Cor 1:10.

In context, Paul is denouncing the earthly desires that Christians should shun. (Col 3:5-9). However, he concludes by highlighting the unity shared by all believers in Christ. The city of Colossae likely encompassed all the various groups that Paul refers to in this verse. It would have included both Greeks and Jews, with Greeks typically being labelled as "uncircumcised" and Jews as "circumcised."

Colossae was likely home to many "barbarian" individuals, a term that most Greeks used to describe those who were unable to speak the Greek language. Consequently, they were perceived as uneducated and gained a reputation for being rough and at times brutal. Scythians were those who resided along the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. During the first century, Greeks regarded Scythians as the most barbaric of all.

In Paul's era, slaves, referred to as "bondservants", were prevalent. He will provide spiritual guidance for Christian slaves towards the conclusion of this chapter. Conversely, "free" individuals were those who were not beholden to others; they were seen as more privileged in society, although they were not necessarily wealthy.

All these groups are regarded as equal in the eyes of Christ. Christ is sufficient for all needs, including the capacity to foster unity among the diverse individuals who have been renewed in Him.

And all enjoy salvation. There is NOTHING in this or the other verses that indicates that God is a globalist or that He is woke.

As we have seen in this study, the views of the world and academic majority are clearly and dogmatically incorrect. It is up to us to follow the Truth and not allow ourselves to be affected by globalisation, the media, university professors and school teachers.

And to stop the politically correct/woke drift of the Church to REVERSE its current impact which cannot be pleasing to God.

If these Leftist political trends – the poison of a new apostasy – are not addressed, they will fester and grow stronger with the result that the Churches will end up as people that attend Church services, but whom are in reality neo-Marxist without even realising it.

We are to accept and forgive one another, not eliminate ethnic diversity, or ordain/appoint women to eldership, or form power cliques. Somehow ignoring or pretending there are no differences is absolutely not what Paul was getting at. Rather:

“So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified.” (Rom 15:7, NLT)

So much of the Bible is common sense; rational; and makes sense using deductive reasoning. Understanding its historical background and meaning in the original language value adds to of this. Using God's spirit aids even further in this quest.

Finally, one wise author explains:

“Though this present world and its glory are fading away, God’s people in their diversity will remain. They are the image and glory of God and with them reside the gifts of the nations which will be cultivated in eternity with ever-increasing and unfading glory.

A theocentric view of diversity recognizes that ethnic and cultural distinctions among men are ultimately from God, through God, and to God. He created mankind with the potential for great diversity. When God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, He mandated the expression of that potential diversity in the nations. According to His sovereign purpose to glorify Himself in His people, “He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place” (Acts 17:26). These are among God’s works of creation and providence, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions, steering all toward the end He has decreed.” (Anna Anderson, *An Eschatology of Diversity with an Application to Missions*, p. 6)

'Destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved.'

William Jennings Bryan (1860 - 1925)

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***Does 'Neither Greek nor Jew' Mean that God Ignores  
Ethnic Diversity?***

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