

# *Healing Racism Through Jesus Christ*

RYAN GABRIEL

In the spring of 2018, I was fortunate enough, along with a group of faculty and administrative colleagues here at BYU, to travel with a group of students to the southern United States to visit a number of famous civil rights sites. One of these sites was the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The 16th Street Baptist Church was a hub of civil rights activity in the 1950s and 1960s. It was a meeting place for civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth. Parishioners of the church marched through the streets of Birmingham with the hope that their action would integrate a deeply divided city.

Outside of the church rests a small plaque that memorializes the deaths of four young girls: Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Carol Denise McNair. On September 15, 1963, in an attempt to harm and intimidate the local Black community, four White supremacists planted approximately fifteen sticks of dynamite attached to a timing device under the stairs of

this holy house. The bomb exploded, killing these four blessed girls. As I stood outside the red brick church, tears welled up in my eyes. I mourned the loss of those four young girls. Today I feel reverence for the Christian courage of their community to continue to endure through tragedy and to press on for civil rights in the face of immense danger.

Latter-day Saints too have suffered from violent mobs. For instance, on October 30, 1838, a collection of Latter-day Saint families was attacked at Hawn's Mill in Missouri by an unauthorized militia. In this massacre, many of the Latter-day Saint men headed to the blacksmith shop to mount a defense. However, the militia members could easily fire into the building because there were large gaps in the walls. Eventually, the militia members entered the structure. They found three innocent young boys—Sardius Smith, Alma Smith, and Charles Merrick—whom they shot. Two were killed.

Many of us are aware of the tragedy of Hawn's Mill that was caused by religious prejudice. We may have little to no knowledge, however, of

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*Ryan Gabriel, BYU assistant professor of sociology, delivered this devotional address on April 6, 2021.*

events like the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church that were motivated by racial prejudice. Expanding our understanding of the suffering of others can awaken charity within us. Our hearts can connect in solidarity over our shared experience of striving for life and to “have it more abundantly.”<sup>1</sup> By contemplating challenging historical moments through the lens of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we will increase our appreciation of the beautiful healing power of the Prince of Peace. Similarly, we will uncover clues from the life of and principles taught by our Savior on how to faithfully fulfill the charge that President Russell M. Nelson has given us “to lead out in abandoning attitudes and actions of prejudice.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Historical Racial Injustice and Succor from Jesus Christ**

In the history of the United States there is much to be admired—far more than I could recount if I had all week to speak with you. One example of this praiseworthy history is the drafting of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. These documents have given us a strong foundation and, as Elder Quentin L. Cook stated in the August 2020 BYU university conference, “have blessed this country and protected people of all faiths.”<sup>3</sup> Coupled with the honorable history of our nation, there are, unfortunately, events such as the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church that have marked our nation’s history—events in which acts of racial injustice have destroyed families and their communities and have hindered hopes for unity and belonging.

To illustrate, between 1830 and 1850, the Cherokee, Muscogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, and Choctaw nations in the United States were displaced from their ancestral lands. In this forced migration known as the Trail of Tears, they encountered starvation, exposure, disease, and death. During the Great Depression, hundreds of thousands of United States citizens with Mexican heritage were forcibly expelled from or coerced to leave the country. Throughout World War II, more than 100,000 innocent Japanese Americans were incarcerated in internment camps. Certainly, learning of events like these can draw out deep

compassion for the families who have experienced such suffering and racially motivated injustice.

Instances of racial injustice extend well beyond these examples in the history of the United States, each of which are worthy of genuine consideration. In my research, I mainly focus on how acts of racial injustice have affected the African American community. The most well-known example of racial injustice traces back to what some call America’s original sin—slavery. The institution of slavery was introduced to the United States in the 1600s, when roughly 12.3 million Africans were trafficked to the Americas.<sup>4</sup> Enormous wealth was generated for those in the slave industry through the unjust toil of Africans—men, women, and children.<sup>5</sup> Daily life of enslaved Africans was punctuated by horrendous abuse. In some instances, they were branded with hot irons on the chest or face.<sup>6</sup> Slaves were whipped, forced to wear iron masks, placed in the stocks, sexually assaulted, and subjected to other forms of torture.<sup>7</sup> Besides torture, enslaved Africans’ agency was severely limited by a set of laws called slave codes. It was, for example, illegal for an enslaved person to own property, trade goods, leave an enslaver’s property without permission, learn to read and write, speak their native language, or marry. Black families had no rights under the law, which meant that children were ripped from the gentle embrace of their parents and wives were sold, never to lovingly look into their husbands’ eyes again.<sup>8</sup> Slavery was and is a sin against the family.

Another form of racial injustice called convict leasing was perpetrated upon African Americans after the Civil War. Lasting until the early 1940s, convict leasing was a system of legal slavery in which southern states leased prisoners to private companies such as mines and farms. The legal basis of convict leasing was found in the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude but exempted those convicted of a crime. To take advantage of this amendment, southern states passed Black codes. These laws pertained only to African Americans and subjected them to criminal prosecution for the most trivial offenses—acts that

many of us have committed before, such as standing around without an apparent purpose or breaking curfew. These laws effectively placed Black people, including children, under a new form of slavery in which they encountered terrifying work conditions that frequently ended in death.<sup>9</sup>

Besides convict leasing, the lynching of Black people was common after the Civil War. From 1877 to 1950, there were roughly 4,400 documented lynchings consisting largely of African Americans. Lynchings were brutal events of public torture and mutilation that were known to draw crowds ranging in the thousands. Lynchings were predominantly done by Whites to terrorize Black communities into a state of fear and servitude, and lynching events were often permitted by state and federal officials.<sup>10</sup> To illustrate the savage injustice of lynching, let us turn to Mary Turner. In 1918, Mrs. Turner, a Black woman who was eight months pregnant, was lynched at Folsom's Bridge in Georgia by a mob of White men. The reasoning given by the mob for the lynching was that Mrs. Turner spoke out against the lynching of her husband.<sup>11</sup>

It is exceedingly painful to imagine this type of treatment of our sisters and brothers. We can find peace, however, in the fact that our Savior knows and has wholly felt the exact pain of each African slave, of the Black children who died in dark mines, of Mary Turner—full with child—hanging in agony from Folsom's Bridge, and of little Sardi, Alma, and Charles at Hawn's Mill. He suffered their experiences so that they might come under His tender care. This sublime characteristic of the Redeemer is highlighted by the prophet Alma, who stated that Jesus Christ

*will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.*<sup>12</sup>

Knowledge that Christ suffers with us can provide solace to our hearts and minds while reflecting on the injustices done to our brothers and sisters.

### **The Creation of Race and Finding Peace in Jesus Christ**

The development of our modern conception of race, in which groups are defined by their physical features, was established through a complex history of colonialism, emerging economic systems and nations, and early, misguided attempts to understand human behavioral differences through science. For instance, scientists in the eighteenth century began to categorize the physical world, such as plants and animals, and this extended to groups of individuals with similar physical traits. Eventually this line of thinking led to now-debunked systems of racial categorization that attempted to attribute intelligence and behavioral traits to the physical features of various racial groups. Early scientists who created racial categories conceived that Whites were naturally superior, which contributed to justifying the evils of African slavery and subsequent systems of racial oppression in America.

In his recent devotional, Dallin H. Oaks, first counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, used this definition of racism: “involving the idea that one's own race is superior [to others] and has the right to rule [over them].”<sup>13</sup> In other words, racism is an idea that a racial hierarchy exists in which certain groups are superior to others. In the context of the United States, the racial hierarchy places Whites at the top and African Americans and other people of color at the bottom.

The justification for the racial hierarchy in the early history of the United States happened by numerous means. In addition to the misguided scientific justifications for racial differences I have mentioned, distorted interpretations of holy scripture were used to argue that individuals with African ancestry were destined for servitude or were somehow lesser children of God. Rationalizations such as these absolved individuals of the dominant group from their racist thoughts and actions and policies that they had developed to maintain their ruling position. Consequently, many who had social advantages because of their race possessed the view that their advantages and society's poor treatment of darker-skinned groups were approved by nature and by God. This perspective

imbued them with the belief that their position at the top of the racial hierarchy was “right” and not racist, leading some to think that the oppression of African Americans was warranted.

Case in point, in 1955, on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a White man. Rosa Parks was arrested. During that time, African Americans were relegated to sit at the back of the bus. If the bus was full and a White person entered and wanted to sit, an African American individual would have to stand. Shortly after her arrest, Black church leaders, exemplifying wisdom and bravery, started a boycott of the bus system to encourage more just public transportation policies. Scores of individuals in the Black community chose to walk and carpool instead of ride the bus. This action had major economic consequences on the bus line because African Americans represented 75 percent of their customers.<sup>14</sup>

In response to the collective action of the Black community, two leaders of the boycott—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Reverend Ralph Abernathy—had their homes firebombed. A White Lutheran reverend named Robert Graetz, who served a Black congregation in Montgomery and who strongly supported the bus boycott, also had his home firebombed. Moreover, the city sued Martin Luther King Jr. and eighty-nine others in state court on the grounds that it was illegal to boycott the busing system.<sup>15</sup> Dr. King was found guilty. Shortly after his guilty verdict, in 1956, 381 days after the start of the boycott, the United States Supreme Court upheld a district court’s ruling that Alabama’s racial segregation laws for buses were unconstitutional. The next day, Rosa Parks rode an integrated bus.

It took faith for boycotters to endure these daily indignities, to walk resolutely in peaceful Christian protest, and to still find joy. I imagine some of these deeply Christian individuals who stood for what was right, both Black and White, reflected in moments of peaceful solitude on our Savior’s words:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.  
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>16</sup>*

These blessed words likely comforted their souls, as they do mine. They give hope for those who hunger for a more just world. In these words, Christ provides glorious promises to those who yearn for peaceful communities. He is also keenly aware of the persecution and resistance that will surely come to those who labor to build fairer societies, and with that He imparts a vision of hope and magnificent spiritual abundance for those devoted to such a cause.

To use our own Latter-day Saint phrasing, many of these individuals, Black and White, who strove for fairer societies, mourned with those that mourned, provided comfort to those who stood in need of comfort, and stood as witnesses of God, even until death.<sup>17</sup> The most famous martyr of the freedom cause was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but there were other, less well-known individuals who died to extend greater liberty to African Americans and, thereby, all Americans. For example, Reverend James Reeb was a White minister from Boston who was killed by a White mob in Selma, Alabama. Viola Liuzzo was a White housewife and mother from Detroit who drove to Selma to ferry voting rights marchers between Selma and Montgomery. She was tragically shot and killed by a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Surely, “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Pride, Greed, and Racism**

Because of the humble and holy sacrifices of previous generations of all races and ethnicities, we have made strides in the United States concerning racial equality. As an example, the recently elected 117th U.S. Congress is the most diverse in our country’s history, in which around “a quarter of voting members . . . are racial or ethnic minorities.”<sup>19</sup> In

spite of the progress we have made, racism remains a destructive force in our society. Racism is enticing because it provides individuals a feeling of pride. The feeling of pride is frequently justified by continued notions of biological superiority, misinterpretations of scripture, and myopic knowledge of the accomplishments of various racial and ethnic groups. The adversary uses pride, intrinsic to racism, to attempt to distort a foundational tenet of the plan of salvation—that we are all equal spirit children of heavenly parents. He twists this foundational tenet with racism to falsely claim that racial groups are inherently different and that certain racial groups are better than others.

Despite the relative simplicity of this strategy, it can be highly effective. Undoubtedly, the poisonous perfume of pride can lure innocent individuals who are searching for a sense of purpose and destiny to the philosophy of racial supremacy. However, the fruit of the philosophy of racial supremacy is hatred—hatred toward one’s brothers and sisters, which is ultimately hatred toward God. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has made it clear that this way of thinking does not befit a disciple of Christ. For instance, in 2017, following a violent White supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, the Church released the following statement:

*White supremacist attitudes are morally wrong and sinful, and we condemn them. Church members who promote or pursue a “white culture” or white supremacy agenda are not in harmony with the teachings of the Church.*<sup>20</sup>

Without question, it is a sin to believe that the color of one’s skin or cultural heritage makes one inherently better than another.

Pride as it relates to race and racism can manifest with great subtlety, making it difficult to root out. As I mentioned before, being White is not simply another racial category; in our society, White individuals are at the top of the racial hierarchy, making them the default group that other racial groups are compared against. Because of this, it is not surprising that some major skin care companies sell skin-lightening lotion specifically targeted to people of color. These products

imply that looking lighter and whiter is better. The root of this scheme is found in the adversary. In contrast, I invite you to not only come to know but to feel that you are a child of loving heavenly parents who created you to look just as you do. As President Russell M. Nelson stated, “Each of us has a divine potential because each is a child of God. Each is equal in His eyes. . . . God does not love one race more than another.”<sup>21</sup> Hence, no matter what the world tells us, there is no need for us to look like anyone else for us to be worthy of love and respect. Our skin tones are as they should be, and they are beautiful.

Although pride is highly effective at drawing individuals to racism and justifying its application, greed often motivates it. The adversary offers the destructive force of racism as a dangerous tool to justify greed—greed that manifests in the oppression of others for material gain, power, and control. Greed, as it relates to racism toward African Americans, can be seen with stark clarity in the history of slavery that I outlined earlier but also in the modern day. Researchers studying the Great Recession found that predatory lending agencies—all for the sake of profit—targeted predominantly Black communities and channeled them into high-cost, high-risk mortgage loans. This left Black families vulnerable to defaulting on their loans, having their homes repossessed, and losing much of their wealth.<sup>22</sup> In the end, these two unholy traits—pride and greed—are mutually supportive and endow racism with colossal destructive force.

### **Healing Racism Through Jesus Christ’s Great Commandment**

To counter racism and the pride and greed that are associated with it, the King of Kings invites each of us in love and magnanimity to “come unto me all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price.”<sup>23</sup> The Savior invites all of us to share in His abundant gifts of love and redemption, in which racial and economic status are inconsequential, in which each of us can partake of His nourishing word, and in which we are inherently equal. Jesus Christ taught us that we too should be loving and generous. When Jesus was asked,

*Which is the greatest commandment in the law?*

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

*This is the first and great commandment.*

*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

*On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.<sup>24</sup>*

These powerful statements by our Savior clearly identify who we should love—*God and each other*—and how much—*with all we have*.

Yet the adversary attempts to distort the great commandment through pernicious forms of racism. He attempts to convince us that if we want a world in which race is no longer a contributing factor to how various groups are treated, then we need to stop focusing on race. This perspective might work if we lived in an ideal society without a history of slavery, convict leasing, and lynching. Nevertheless, we live in a fallen world, a world that has historical sins that reverberate into today. For example, social scientists have observed that historical slave concentrations in the southern United States are related to contemporary patterns of racial inequality in that same region of the country.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, to pretend that race is unimportant by saying, “I don’t see race,” or to falsely diminish the impacts of racism on the lives of Heavenly Father’s children does nothing to stop racism that occurs in education, in the criminal justice system, and in housing and employment—all of which affect the opportunities of families and have their roots in a past beset by deep and far-reaching racial injustice. To pretend that race is not important does not show compassion for the experiences of others who, by virtue of their experiences with racism, know that it is. Christ Himself asks us to remember and know His suffering—to touch the scars on His hands and feet.<sup>26</sup> He does not ask us to deny another’s pain but to know it and touch it. To deny the genuine pain of another is to deny the very suffering Christ felt for them privately in the Garden of Gethsemane and publicly upon the cross at Calvary.

It is easy, and largely innocent, to attempt to not see race with the hope that it will help us treat

individuals fairly and view them as children of God, full of divine potential. Recognizing an individual’s divine identity is holy, but denying their racial identity can lead to negative consequences. Of course, the goal remains to create a society in which individuals are judged by the content of their character, but we cannot get there by ignoring the color of their skin. Attempting to not see race masks from our view the many ways that individuals are given or denied opportunities in society solely because of their race. For example, researchers have sent fictitious résumés to help-wanted ads, with the résumés randomly assigned to individuals with African American–sounding names like Rasheed or Jamal and White-sounding names like Brett or Todd, only to observe that résumés with White-sounding names were much more likely to receive a callback.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, attempting to not see race lessens our ability to see the distinctive challenges of our sisters and brothers and limits our capacity to serve them in ways that are most beneficial.

What are we to do then? How are we to move toward a Zion community in which the love of God dwells within our hearts? We can focus on the great commandment. One way to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind is to express gratitude for the abundance of gifts He has provided for us. The expression of our gratitude, which is a form of love, can be more than mere mental thought; it can be a profound soul-enriching experience in which we concentrate on *feeling* thankfulness in our hearts, allowing that *feeling* to emanate throughout our entire beings. Gratitude that is felt is gratitude that transforms. And given that the root of racism is often justified by pride and motivated by greed, feeling expansive gratitude for the gifts that we receive from God can provide us a humble understanding that we are totally reliant upon Him for all that we have, both temporal and spiritual, and that no one is greater than another.

For instance, we can be full of gratitude toward God for the astounding diversity of people, their distinctive talents and gifts, and their unique cultural histories; each of them contributes to the mosaic that is the human family. We can appreciate that the Lord invites “all to come unto him

and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.”<sup>28</sup> We can praise God for commanding us to forgive all,<sup>29</sup> including those who committed acts of racial violence in the past and those who continue to espouse racist rhetoric today. Forgiveness for these individuals is fostered by understanding that many of them, both past and present, have followed the flawed traditions of their fathers, flaws that were nurtured by the author of all sin, the adversary. To be clear, forgiving these individuals does not mean that we condone such behavior. Indeed, we cannot rob justice. Forgiveness means that we see these individuals as children of God and that our hearts are loving and pure toward them. Also, in our silent prayers we can give gratitude for our brave brothers and sisters who have sacrificed their lives so that we might live in a more racially just society.

With the second component of the great commandment, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. If we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, we are to recognize their needs, their pains, and their hopes and dreams. We are helped by knowing their cultural heritage, but if we have not had the privilege of learning their cultural history, we can rest assured that their people have experienced wonderful triumphs and encountered profound suffering. This way of viewing others leads us to see them as being as full, dynamic, and real as we are. We can support this perspective through a holy testimony, borne through study and prayer, that our spirits consist of the same divine material, coming from the same heavenly parents.

Achieving the second commandment also takes thoughtful questioning of our assumptions about those who look different from us. For instance, do you believe that the main reason economic poverty is higher in some racial and ethnic groups compared to others is because of the notion that economically poorer groups do not value hard work? If so, I humbly invite you to notice where that line of thinking takes you. It might lead you to feel that the poor in these groups are not worthy of service because you perceive that they solely brought

their economic condition upon themselves. Will you find joy in that belief? Will it lead you to love your neighbor as yourself? Does that perspective embody the commandment of the Lord that we “love one another, as [He has] loved [us]”?<sup>30</sup>

We can also look to Christ as the paragon for how to love our neighbors. Through the Atonement, He selflessly took upon Himself the sins, transgressions, pains, and sorrows of His sisters and brothers. We can work to follow His sublime example to help heal racism within our communities and to build belonging. To help illustrate this, I will adapt an analogy from Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson. She stated that the relationship we have to social problems is similar to individuals who have inherited an old home. The home is on beautiful grounds and has a sturdy foundation, but it has warped walls, rusted pipes, and faulty wiring. Despite not being originally responsible for these problems, we are the inherited owners of what is right and wrong with the home.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, individuals can rightly assert that they had nothing to do with the sins of the past, such as slavery and lynching, yet we are living *in* the legacies of past generations.

Fortunately, we have been blessed with the power to act and change our world; thus, in this very moment, we can decide to act in a way that is truly charitable. As representatives of Christ, we can work hard to heal the painful legacies of racism that we have inherited, legacies that manifest in new and pernicious ways. Taking this action will help us alleviate the suffering of others. This is what the Savior did for each and every one of us. He took upon Himself sin for which He was not responsible. He did so because He loves us; we can do so because we love Him.

My dear sisters and brothers, we have all thought, spoken, or behaved in a prejudiced manner at some point in our lives. The good news is that we can turn to the fountain of living waters—Jesus Christ and His Atonement—for our healing and redemption. His death and triumphant Resurrection not only provide us the ability to reconcile our relationship with Heavenly Father but to reconcile our relationships with each other. We can apologize when we have hurt someone, ask for forgiveness from God, and endeavor

every day to love more fully and completely by improving our capacity to personify the great commandment. Through applying the Atonement personally with the intention to live the great commandment, we are collectively contributing to the creation of Zion—a community of “the pure in heart.”<sup>32</sup>

We can also help develop this united Zion community by study and by faith. We can learn about cultures that are different from our own. For instance, we can read works from writers who we might not normally engage with, such as Maya Angelou, who received more than 50 honorary degrees, and Toni Morrison, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. We might study the amazing life of Frederick Douglass<sup>33</sup> and the powerful women who contributed to civil rights, such as Ida B. Wells<sup>34</sup> and Fannie Lou Hamer.<sup>35</sup> We can develop authentic, loving friendships with individuals of different races, ethnicities, and backgrounds and humbly listen to and learn from their real-life experiences. In building friendships across lines of difference, it is key to recognize our commonalities. Uniting around our commonalities will go a long way in building bridges of cooperation and lasting friendship. We might offer consistent, heartfelt prayers to have charity for those whose cultural histories are different from ours. In His own way and through His infinite intelligence, Heavenly Father will answer our prayers to be filled with charity. It is my earnest prayer that each of us might have hearts abounding with love for God and for each other, and I do so in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### Notes

1. John 10:10.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Let God Prevail,” *Ensign*, November 2020.
3. Quentin L. Cook, “Be Not Weary in Well-Doing,” BYU university conference address, 24 August 2020.
4. The number 12.3 million represents the estimate of African slaves trafficked to the Americas from 1501 to 1875. See Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade—Estimates, *SlaveVoyages*, [slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates](http://slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates).

5. See Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

6. See Frederick Douglass, “Farewell Speech to the British People,” London, England, 30 March 1847, in *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*, ed. Philip S. Foner and abr. Yuval Taylor (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999), 59.

7. See Thomas Branagan, *The Penitential Tyrant; or, Slave Trader Reformed: A Pathetic Poem, in Four Cantos* (New York: Samuel Wood, 1807), 270–71; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1976), 64; and Deborah Gray White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999).

8. See Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, *Race in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2020), 55.

9. See “Convict Leasing,” Equal Justice Initiative, 1 November 2013, [eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-convict-leasing](http://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-convict-leasing); also Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009).

10. See Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror*, 3rd ed. (2017), [eji.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/lynching-in-america-3d-ed-091620.pdf](http://eji.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/lynching-in-america-3d-ed-091620.pdf).

11. See Equal Justice Initiative, “On This Day—May 19, 1918: Mary Turner, Pregnant, Lynched in Georgia for Publicly Criticizing Husband’s Lynching,” *A History of Racial Injustice*, [calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/may/19](http://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/may/19).

12. Alma 7:12.

13. *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, unabridged edition, 1973, s.v. “racism,” 1184; quoted in Dallin H. Oaks, “Racism and Other Challenges,” BYU devotional address, 27 October 2020.

14. See Emily Hess, s.v. “Montgomery Bus Boycott,” in Charles A. Gallagher and Cameron D. Lippard, eds., *Race and Racism in the United States: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic*, 4 vols. (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 2:807.

15. See *Martin Luther King Jr. Encyclopedia*, s.v. “State of Alabama v. M. L. King, Jr., Nos. 7399 and 9593,” Martin Luther King, Jr. Research



and Education Institute, Stanford University, [kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/state-alabama-v-m-l-king-jr-nos-7399-and-9593](http://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/state-alabama-v-m-l-king-jr-nos-7399-and-9593).

16. Matthew 5:3–10.

17. See Mosiah 18:9.

18. John 15:13.

19. Katherine Schaeffer, “Racial, Ethnic Diversity Increases Yet Again with the 117th Congress,” Fact Tank: News in the Numbers, Pew Research Center, 28 January 2021, [pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/01/28/racial-ethnic-diversity-increases-yet-again-with-the-117th-congress](http://pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/01/28/racial-ethnic-diversity-increases-yet-again-with-the-117th-congress).

20. “Church Releases Statement Condemning White Supremacist Attitudes,” *Church News*, Church of Jesus Christ, 15 August 2017, [churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/church-releases-statement-condemning-white-supremacist-attitudes?lang=eng](http://churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/church-releases-statement-condemning-white-supremacist-attitudes?lang=eng).

21. Nelson, “Let God Prevail.”

22. See Douglas S. Massey, Jacob S. Rugh, Justin P. Steil, and Len Albright, “Riding the Stagecoach to Hell: A Qualitative Analysis of Racial Discrimination in Mortgage Lending,” *City and Community* 15, no. 2 (June 2016): 118–36.

23. 2 Nephi 26:25.

24. Matthew 22:36–40.

25. See Heather A. O’Connell, “The Impact of Slavery on Racial Inequality in Poverty in the Contemporary U.S. South,” *Social Forces* 90, no. 3 (March 2012): 713–34.

26. See 3 Nephi 11:14.

27. See Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, “Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination,” *American Economic Review* 94, no. 4 (September 2004): 991–1013. For a more recent analysis, see S. Michael Gaddis, “Discrimination in the Credential Society: An Audit Study of Race and College Selectivity in the Labor Market,” *Social Forces* 93, no. 4 (June 2015): 1451–79.

28. 2 Nephi 26:33.

29. See Matthew 18:21–22.

30. John 15:12.

31. See Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* (New York: Random House, 2020), 16.

32. D&C 97:21.

33. See David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018).

34. See Ida B. Wells, *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, ed. Alfreda M. Duster (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

35. See Maegan Parker Brooks, *Fannie Lou Hamer: America’s Freedom Fighting Woman* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020).