

Faces at the Bottom of the Well

“The resurgence of white supremacy is one the greatest threats to Black people, America, and the Kingdom of God.”

Dr. Frank Thomas

Ethnicity, Race, and the Bible

When you examine most of the atrocities in the history of humanity, especially in the Western World, scripture was used to justify them

Misuses of the Bible

- ✓ Crusades
- ✓ Manifest Destiny
- ✓ Holocaust
- ✓ Salem Witch Trials
- ✓ Corporal Punishment
- ✓ Discrimination against LGBTQIA
- ✓ Persecution of Jews
- ✓ Capital Punishment
- ✓ Inquisition
- ✓ Subjugation of Women
- ✓ Rape

Race and the Bible

- Myth of White Superiority
- Fallacy of Black Inferiority
 - Slavery
 - Legalized Racism

The Bible is one of the only books passed down
through generations

How and why does our interpretation of scripture change in succeeding generations?

Scripture, not the Bible, was first transmitted to Blacks in America by and in the interest of slave owners in an attempt to sanctify slavery and preserve free labor

Slave Owners & The Bible

- Passages in favor of slaveholders
- Taught that Blacks had no heritage in the Word
- Blacks were not human and were inherently inferior
 - Connect Black to bestiality
 - God foreordained Blacks to servitude
 - Slavery was not a violation of God's law

The Bible and Race

1. There are profound differences in the concept and attitude of race in the Bible versus Eurocentric interpretation
2. Biblical authors were color conscious but not as a basis of enslavement, oppression, or demeaning identity

The very category of race – denoting primarily skin color – was first employed as a means of classifying human bodies by Francois Bernier, a French physician, in 1684. The first authoritative racial division of humankind is found in the influential *Natural System* (1735) by Carolus Linnaeus

Cornel West

The Bible and Race

3. There is a very prevalent presence of Blacks in the Bible that we are unaware of because...
 - Detached northern Africa from Africa
 - Biblical writers identified nationality and language not color
 - Trivialized or ignored by dominant interpretation
 - Afro-Asiatic are assumed by and transformed into Anglo-Saxon

Agenda

- ✓ Black presence in the Bible – some surprising people of color
 - ✓ Doctrine of Election in OT – it's not ethnic
 - ✓ Depictions of Africa in the Bible
 - ✓ Problem with Paul
- ✓ Passages typically assumed to deal with race:

Some Biblical Passages About Race:

Cain's Punishment – Gen 4

Curse of Ham – Gen 9

Genealogy of Gen 10,11

Hagar – Gen 16, 21

Moses' wife – Exodus 18, Num 12

Philemon

Jesus & Race