

Ethnicity, Race, and the Bible

Part VII

How did we come to this?

- Current state of affairs
- Lack of civility
- Heightened racial tensions
- What happened to post-_____America?

Goals of this study

- Look at passages in scripture that deal with race and ethnicity
- We are looking at passages that are of particular interest to people of color
- Dealing with the topic through a particular lens

Who are we?

- Americans
- Majority people of color
- These very terms are specific to our context
- Our identity and context shapes the way we read scripture

- Scripture has been used in US history to justify oppression
- Religion has been complicit in slavery, segregation, inequality, mass incarceration, etc.

- Some of us enter the discussion wounded
- In search of validation and healing
- Clarification – what does scripture really say?
- Recovery
- Place in the narrative
- Affirmation

Two things...

1. Set the record straight around biblical interpretation
 - Gain an understanding about the geographical, social, ethnic world from which the Bible comes

2. Look at story of Israel and its construction of identity so that we can understand what is going on in scripture and what is going on in our context

- Scripture means on multiple levels
 - Adam and Eve blaming
 - Family dysfunction in Jacob's family

Identity as construct

- Biblical narrative
- Universal History
- 1 common ancestor
- Flood
- Noah – 3 sons
- Segmented genealogy...nations

- Segmented genealogy and story of Babel sets us up for story of Abram and Israel
- Characters mean on more than one level
- Jacob=Israel
- Esau=Edom

God's promise to Abram

- Genesis 12:1
- Great nation
- Land
- Blessing

Israel's identity is based on...

- Covenant
 - chosen
- Territory
- Collective History
- Kinship

- Israel's story is one of increasing separation and boundaries
- Informed by exile and experience as an underdog

Who is chosen?

- Abraham
- Isaac – 2nd born
- Jacob – 2nd born
- Joseph - #11/12

Why?

- Theological question...
- How does Israel answer it in the ancestral narratives?

Jacob and Esau

- Genesis 25:19-34
- Genesis 27:1-28:5
- Genesis 33

Jacob and Esau

- Genesis 25:19-34
- Genesis 27:1-28:5
- Genesis 33

Two Questions...

- Who is the other?
- What do we do with her/him?
- How we respond has everything to do with our understanding of God's economy – scarcity or grace?