

Let's Discuss...Jesus

PART 3_Why Does Jesus' Ethnicity Matter?



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Scriptures mentioned:

He was despised and rejected — a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.
Isaiah 53:3 NLT

Summary

What was Jesus' race and why does it matter? We discuss what Jesus may have looked like, why it's important to acknowledge that Jesus was not white, and how misrepresentations of Him have had harmful effects.

Let's Discuss...

- How has the portrayal of Jesus as a light skinned or white man impacted you personally? (I.e. maybe positively, if you found that easy to relate to, or negatively if it was associated with oppression, etc?)
- What has been the historical impact of Jesus having been portrayed as a white man? Why is it important to acknowledge that this was not the case?
- If Jesus were living on the earth today, how do you think the world would respond to Him as a middle eastern man? How would the cultural perspective through which He sees the world today be different from our own?
- How can rightly portraying the ethnicity of Jesus contribute to healing the racial divide that we find even in the Church today?
- The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) are full of stories that show Jesus drawing close to the marginalised, those who the society of His time would've alienated. For example, first century Jewish culture would've looked down on women, children, the sick, the poor, sinners, and Samaritans, but Jesus welcomed and ministered to them with open arms...

Women: Matthew 28:1-10, Luke 8:1-3, Luke 8:43-48, Luke 10:38-42

Children: Matthew 19:13-14, Luke 8:40-56

Sick: Matthew 4:23-24, Mark 1:40-42, Luke 5:17-26, Luke 6:6-11

Poor: Luke 4:18, Luke 6:20-21, Luke 14:15-24

Sinners: Matthew 9:10-13, Luke 7:34-50, Luke 19:1-10

Samaritans: John 4:4-42, Luke 10:25-37

Choose just a few of the passages above to read. What are some of the common threads that you see in the way Jesus interacted with others?

- Can you see ways in which certain groups of people continue to be marginalised - even by religious people today? How can we better respond to them in a way that reflects the heart of Christ?

Let's Pray...

But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image.

2 Corinthians 3:16-18 NLT

- Let's pray that as we reflect on the ethnicity of Jesus, that even this clearer understanding of His lived experience will increase our understanding of Him, draw

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us closer to Him, and help us better reflect His glory and His heart of deep love for all of humanity. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to remove any veils that have caused us to misunderstand this aspect of Jesus. May we go forward with an increased awareness of how our mindsets, attitudes, and actions impact the world around us, and may we be used to draw others closer to God as we become more like Him.

Let's Go Deeper...

- **The Passion of the Christ** directed by Mel Gibson [film]
- **Were Modern Depictions of Jesus Based on Cesare Borgia?** by Carl Seaver [article]
- **How Many Prophecies Did Jesus Fulfill?** by gotquestions.org [article]
- **351 Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled In Jesus Christ** by newtestamentchristians.com [article]
- **The Forgotten Jesus** by Robby Gallaty [book]
- **Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church** by Soong-Chan Rah [book]
- **Radical Reconciliation** by Allan Boesak & Curtis DeYoung [book]
- **How to Heal Our Racial Divide** by Derwin L. Gray [book]
- **God is Not a White Man** by Chine McDonald [book]
- **Building a Multiethnic Church** by Derwin L. Gray [book]