



Taken from *The Heart of Racial Justice Bible Study* by Brenda Salter McNeil and Rick Richardson with Steve Tamayo. Copyright © 2022 by InterVarsity Press, LLC. Published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. www.ivpress.com.



JESUS CHRIST ASKS US TO SURRENDER absolutely everything, but in so doing he does not wipe out our ethnic identity. He forces us to affirm that our identity with him is the most salient. This is echoed by the apostle Paul in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Unfortunately, some people have wrongly interpreted this text to mean that culture and gender are irrelevant to our ultimate identity and relationships in the kingdom of God. We believe that in the kingdom there is no longer Jew or Greek, male or female, or any other dividing distinctions—but not because those aspects of our personhood are erased. Instead they are deepened and transcended. We become more than male and female, more than our ethnicity, culture, or nationality—never less. The future vision of the kingdom is the *fulfillment* of our race, culture, and gender, not their *erasure*.

SESSION GOAL

Commit to the lordship of Jesus Christ by pursuing a lifestyle of personal, ethnic, and racial reconciliation.

READ

Introduction and chapters one through three of *The Heart* of *Racial Justice*

12 Session One

REFLECT W

* How would you identify your race, culture, or ethnic heritage?

* What experiences have you had with people from cultures different from your own?



READ ACTS 1:1-9

¹In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Lordship 13

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

1. What do the disciples ask Jesus?

2. Why might the disciples have asked Jesus about the kingdom?

"God's kingdom was the dominant theme in Jesus' teaching.... Graeme Goldsworthy, in his book Gospel and Kingdom, helpfully presents the kingdom as the binding theme of the whole Bible... [defining] the kingdom as 'God's people in God's place under God's rule."**

3. How do the disciples betray their ethnocentric focus?

14 Session One

4. How does Jesus respond to the disciples?

5. What might the disciples have felt about the people who lived in each of the places Jesus mentions?

Jerusalem was the center of the world for Jesus'
Jewish disciples, given the location of the temple
and the history of Israel. At the same time, the
religious and political leadership in Jerusalem
had executed Jesus. Jesus' followers grew up in
Galilee, a region in Judea outside of Jerusalem.

6. How do you think the disciples might have felt about this commission?

7. Why might Jesus have mentioned "power" in this passage?

Lordship 15

Racial and ethnic reconciliation will be a distinguishing mark, maybe even *the* distinguishing mark, of this next outpouring of God's Spirit.



* What does this passage say to you about who God has called you to reach?

* Consider the spiritual communities to which you belong. In what ways has your group chosen to only care about people from your background?

* How might God be calling you to change in response to the lordship of Christ?

16 Session One

PRAY

Thank the Lord for giving you a racial, cultural, and ethnic heritage. Tell him you're ready to submit every facet of your heritage to his will. Ask him to show you how he wants you to change.

^{*}Vaughan Roberts, God's Big Picture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 21.

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