

Resources for Biblical Justice — Understanding Issues of Race and Ethnicity

June 2020

Don't know where to begin? Start here:

[Beyond Color Blind](#), by Sarah Shin to help you get a handle on the question of ethnic identity and the kingdom of God.

Then read: [Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II](#), Douglas A. Blackmon, to help you understand how our history has shaped our present life.

Thirdly, read, [Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation](#), Latasha Morrison To help shape a plan for how you can participate in ongoing conversations on reconciliation.

Fourthly, read [Just Mercy](#) by Bryan Stevenson, a book that will help you understand the impact of racial injustice in our country through the story of one young attorney's fight for justice for people wrongly imprisoned because of race.

Finally, keep reading through this list to grow in your awareness of our history and biblical identity.

History

[Dark Bargain: Slavery, Profits, and the Struggle for the Constitution](#), Lawrence Goldstone
On September 17, 1787, at the State House in Philadelphia, thirty-nine men from twelve states, after months of often bitter debate, signed America's Constitution. No issue was of greater concern to the delegates than that of slavery: it resounded through debates on the definition of treason, the disposition of the rich lands west of the Alleghenies and the admission of new states, representation and taxation, the need for a national census, and the very make-up of the legislative and executive branches of the new government. As Lawrence Goldstone provocatively makes clear in *Dark Bargain*, "to a significant and disquieting degree, America's most sacred document was molded and shaped by the most notorious institution in its history." Goldstone chronicles the forging of the Constitution through the prism of the crucial compromises made by men consumed with the needs of the slave economy.

[David Walker's Appeal](#), David Walker

David Walker was an outspoken African-American abolitionist and anti-slavery activist. In 1829, while living in Boston, Massachusetts, he first published his famous "Appeal", a call for black

unity and self-help in the fight against oppression and injustice. The work brought attention to the abuses and inequities of slavery and the obligation of individuals to act responsibly for racial equality, according to religious and political tenets. At the time, some people were outraged and fearful of the reaction that the pamphlet would have

Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom, David W Blight

Douglass was not only an astonishing man of words, but a thinker steeped in Biblical story and theology. This definitive, dramatic biography of the most important African American of the 19th century: Frederick Douglass, the escaped slave who became the greatest orator of his day and one of the leading abolitionists and writers of the era.

Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63, Taylor Branch

In volume one of his *America in the King Years*, Pulitzer Prize winner Taylor Branch gives a masterly account of the American civil rights movement. He provides an unsurpassed portrait of King's rise to greatness and illuminates the stunning courage and private conflict, the deals, maneuvers, betrayals, and rivalries that determined history behind closed doors, at boycotts and sit-ins, on bloody freedom rides, and through siege and murder.

Rough Crossings: Britain, The Slaves, and the American Revolution, Simon Schama

Rough Crossings turns on a single huge question: if you were black in America at the start of the Revolutionary War, who would you want to win? With powerfully vivid storytelling, often in the voices of the slaves themselves and the white abolitionists who became their emancipators and protectors, Schama details the odyssey of the escaped blacks through the fires of war and the terror of potential recapture at the war's end, into inhospitable Nova Scotia, where thousands who had served the Crown were betrayed and, in a little-known hejira of the slave epic, sent across the broad, stormy ocean to Sierra Leone

Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II, Douglas A Blackmon

A Pulitzer Prize-winning account of the "Age of Neoslavery," the American period following the Emancipation Proclamation in which convicts, mostly black men, were "leased" through forced labor camps operated by state and federal governments. Using a vast record of original documents and personal narratives, Douglas A. Blackmon unearths the lost stories of slaves and their descendants who journeyed into freedom after the Emancipation Proclamation and then back into the shadow of involuntary servitude shortly thereafter. This unprecedented account reveals the stories of those who fought unsuccessfully against the re-emergence of human labor trafficking, the companies that profited most from neoslavery, and the insidious legacy of racism that reverberates today.

The Color of Compromise: the truth about the American church's complicity in Racism, Jemar Tisby.

An acclaimed, timely narrative of how people of faith have historically—up to the present day—worked against racial justice. And a call for urgent action by all Christians today in response.

The Color of Compromise is not a call to shame or a platform to blame white evangelical Christians. It is a call from a place of love and desire to fight for a more racially unified church that no longer compromises what the Bible teaches about human dignity and equality.

The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism, Edward Baptist

A groundbreaking, must-read history demonstrating that America's economic supremacy was built on the backs of slaves. Americans tend to cast slavery as a pre-modern institution — the nation's original sin, perhaps, but isolated in time and divorced from America's later success. But to do so robs the millions who suffered in bondage of their full legacy. As historian Edward E. Baptist reveals in the prizewinning *The Half Has Never Been Told*, the expansion of slavery in the first eight decades after American independence drove the evolution and modernization of the United States.

The Hemingses of Monticello: an American Family, Annette Gordon-Reed

This epic work—named a best book of the year by the *Washington Post*, *Time*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Amazon*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and a notable book by the *New York Times*—tells the story of the Hemingses, whose close blood ties to our third president had been systematically expunged from American history until very recently. Now, historian and legal scholar Annette Gordon-Reed traces the Hemings family from its origins in Virginia in the 1700s to the family's dispersal after Jefferson's death in 1826.

W.E.B. Du Bois (2 Volumes). David Levering Lewis

Vol 1 is the definitive biography of the African-American author and scholar describes Du Bois's formative years, the evolution of his philosophy, and his roles as a founder of the NAACP and architect of the American civil rights movement. Vol 2 His second volume begins with the triumphal return from WWI of African American veterans to the shattering reality of racism and lynching even as America discovers the New Negro of literature and art. In stunning detail, Lewis chronicles the little-known political agenda behind the Harlem Renaissance and Du Bois's relentless fight for equality and justice, including his steadfast refusal to allow whites to interpret the aspirations of black America. Seared by the rejection of terrified liberals and the black bourgeoisie during the Communist witch-hunts, Du Bois ended his days in uncompromising exile in newly independent Ghana. In re-creating the turbulent times in which he lived and fought, Lewis restores the inspiring and famed Du Bois to his central place in American history.

Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement, John Lewis

The award-winning national bestseller, *Walking with the Wind*, is one of our most important records of the American civil rights movement. Told by John Lewis, who Cornel West calls a “national treasure,” this is a gripping first-hand account of the fight for civil rights and the courage it takes to change a nation. Lewis traces his role in the pivotal Selma marches, Bloody Sunday, and the Freedom Rides. Inspired by his mentor, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Lewis’s vision and perseverance altered history.

Sociology

Between the World and Me, Ta-Nehisi Coates

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation’s history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of “race,” a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

Between the World and Me clearly illuminates the past, bravely confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward.

Chokehold: Policing Black Men, Paul Butler

Cops, politicians, and ordinary people are afraid of black men. The result is the Chokehold: laws and practices that treat every African American man like a thug. In this explosive new book, an African American former federal prosecutor shows that the system is working exactly the way it’s supposed to. Black men are always under watch, and police violence is widespread—all with the support of judges and politicians. *Chokehold* powerfully demonstrates why current efforts to reform law enforcement will not create lasting change. Butler’s controversial recommendations about how to crash the system, are sure to be game changers in the national debate about policing, criminal justice, and race relations.

God and Race in American Politics, Mark Noll

Religion has been a powerful political force throughout American history. When race enters the mix the results have been some of our greatest triumphs as a nation—and some of our most shameful failures. In this important book, Mark Noll, one of the most influential historians of American religion writing today, traces the explosive political effects of the religious intermingling with race.

Making Whiteness: the culture of segregation in the South 1890-1940, Grace Elizabeth Hale

Making Whiteness is a profoundly important work that explains how and why whiteness came to be such a crucial, embattled—and distorting—component of twentieth-century American

identity. In intricately textured detail and with passionately mastered analysis, Grace Elizabeth Hale shows how, when faced with the active citizenship of their ex-slaves after the Civil War, white southerners re-established their dominance through a cultural system based on violence and physical separation. And in a bold and transformative analysis of the meaning of segregation for the nation as a whole, she explains how white southerners' creation of modern "whiteness" was, beginning in the 1920s, taken up by the rest of the nation as a way of enforcing a new social hierarchy while at the same time creating the illusion of a national, egalitarian, consumerist democracy.

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, Michelle Alexander
The New Jim Crow (2010) unveils an appalling system of discrimination in the United States that has led to the unprecedented mass incarceration of African-Americans. The so-called War on Drugs, under the jurisdiction of an ostensibly colorblind justice system, has only perpetuated the problem through unconscious racial bias in judgments and sentencing.

Whistling Vivaldi: how stereotypes affect us and what we can do, Claude Steele
Claude M. Steele offers a vivid first-person account of the research that supports his groundbreaking conclusions on stereotypes and identity. He sheds new light on American social phenomena from racial and gender gaps in test scores to the belief in the superior athletic prowess of black men and lays out a plan for mitigating these "stereotype threats" and reshaping American identities.

Racial/Ethnic Identity

Beyond Colorblind, Sarah Shin

For a generation or so, society has tried to be colorblind. But in our broken world, ethnicity and racial identity are often points of pain and injustice. We can't ignore that God created us with our ethnic identities. We bring all of who we are, including our ethnicity and cultural background, to our identity and work as God's ambassadors. Ethnicity and evangelism specialist Sarah Shin reveals how our brokenness around ethnicity can be restored and redeemed, for our own wholeness and also for the good of others. When we experience internal transformation in our ethnic journeys, God propels us outward in a reconciling witness to the world. Ethnic healing can demonstrate God's power and goodness and bring good news to others. Showing us how to make space for God's healing of our ethnic stories, Shin helps us grow in our cross-cultural skills, manage cross-cultural conflict, pursue reconciliation and justice, and share the gospel as ethnicity-aware Christians. Jesus offers hope for healing, both for ourselves and for society. Discover how your ethnic story can be transformed for compelling witness and mission.

White Awake, Daniel Hill

Daniel Hill will never forget the day he heard these words: "*Daniel, you may be white, but don't let that lull you into thinking you have no culture. White culture is very real. In fact, when*

white culture comes in contact with other cultures, it almost always wins. So it would be a really good idea for you to learn about your culture." Confused and unsettled by this encounter, Hill began a journey of understanding his own white identity. Today he is an active participant in addressing and confronting racial and systemic injustices. And in this compelling and timely book, he shows you the seven stages to expect on your own path to cultural awakening. It's crucial to understand both personal and social realities in the areas of race, culture, and identity. This book will give you a new perspective on being white and also empower you to be an agent of reconciliation in our increasingly diverse and divided world.

White Fragility: Why it's so hard for White People to talk about Racism, Robin DiAngelo

In this "vital, necessary, and beautiful book" (Michael Eric Dyson), antiracist educator Robin DiAngelo deftly illuminates the phenomenon of white fragility and "allows us to understand racism as a practice not restricted to 'bad people' (Claudia Rankine). Referring to the defensive moves that white people make when challenged racially, white fragility is characterized by emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and by behaviors including argumentation and silence. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium and prevent any meaningful cross-racial dialogue. In this in-depth exploration, DiAngelo examines how white fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality, and what we can do to engage more constructively.

The Church and Ethnicity, Race and Justice

A Credible Witness: Reflections on Power, Evangelism and Race, Brenda Salter McNeil

Evangelist and teacher Brenda Salter McNeil thinks evangelism that only introduces people to Jesus is incomplete. The picture is much larger than that. Christ's death and resurrection reconcile us to God *and* to each other across gender, race and social lines. Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, introduced here as Brenda's friend Sam, gives you the full picture of gospel reconciliation to God and to each other. In her powerful, prophetic way, Brenda expounds their interaction recorded in John 4 and shares her own story of coming to Christ and learning to relate to other Christians.

Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation, Latasha Morrison

With racial tensions as high within the church as outside the church, it is time for Christians to become the leaders in the conversation on racial reconciliation. This power-packed guide helps readers deepen their understanding of historical factors and present realities, equipping them to participate in the ongoing dialogue and to serve as catalysts for righteousness, justice, healing, transformation, and reconciliation.

Good News About Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World, Gary A. Haugen

The good news about injustice is that God is against it. God is in the business of using the unlikely to accomplish justice and mercy. In this tenth-anniversary edition of Gary Haugen's

challenging and encouraging book he offers stories of courageous Christians who have stood up for justice in the face of human trafficking, forced prostitution, racial and religious persecution, and torture. This expanded edition brings up to date his work in calling for the body of Christ to act. Throughout, he provides concrete guidance on how ordinary Christians can rise up to seek justice throughout the world.

Jesus and the Disinherited, Howard Thurman

This important book, by one of the 20th century's most prominent black theologians, explains how the Gospel of Jesus is really good news to those who have been marginalized by society. Over a half-century after it was written, it still stands as essential reading for anyone who cares about justice.

Just Mercy: a Story of Justice and Redemption, Bryan Stevenson

Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever. *Just Mercy* is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.

Race Matters, Cornel West

Cornel West is one of the most prophetic voices in American culture today, and *Race Matters* is his most significant work. This classic treatise on race contains Dr. West's most incisive essays on the issues relevant to black Americans, including the crisis in leadership in the Black community, Black conservatism, Black-Jewish relations, myths about Black sexuality, and the legacy of Malcolm X. The insights Dr. West brings to these complex problems remain relevant, provocative, creative, and compassionate.

Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope, Esau McCaulley

Reading While Black is a personal and scholarly testament to the power and hope of Black biblical interpretation. At a time in which some within the African American community are questioning the place of the Christian faith in the struggle for justice, New Testament scholar McCaulley argues that reading Scripture from the perspective of Black church tradition is invaluable for connecting with a rich faith history and addressing the urgent issues of our times. He advocates for a model of interpretation that involves an ongoing conversation between the collective Black experience and the Bible, in which the particular questions coming out of Black communities are given pride of place and the Bible is given space to respond by affirming, challenging, and, at times, reshaping Black concerns. McCaulley demonstrates this model with studies on how Scripture speaks to topics often overlooked by white interpreters, such as ethnicity, political protest, policing, and slavery.

Reconciling All Things: A Christian Vision for Justice, Peace and Healing, Emmanuel Katongole, Chris Rice

Our world is broken and cries out for reconciliation. But mere conflict resolution and peacemaking are not enough. Secular models of peacemaking are insufficient, and the church has not always fulfilled its call to be agents of reconciliation in the world. In *Reconciling All Things* Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice, codirectors of the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School, cast a comprehensive vision for reconciliation that is biblical, transformative, holistic and global. They draw on the resources of the Christian story, including their own individual experiences in Uganda and Mississippi, to bring solid, theological reflection to bear on the work of reconciling individuals, groups and societies. They recover distinctively Christian practices that will help the church be both a sign and an agent of God's reconciling love in the fragmented world of the twenty-first century.

Woke Church: An Urgent Call for Christians in America to Confront Racism and Injustice, Eric Mason

Like the Old Testament prophets, and more recent prophetic voices like Frederick Douglass, Dr. Eric Mason calls the evangelical church to a much-needed reckoning. In a time when many feel confused, complacent, or even angry, he challenges the church to: Be Aware – to understand that the issue of justice is not a black issue, it's a kingdom issue. To learn how the history of racism in America and in the church has tainted our witness to a watching world. Be Redemptive – to grieve and lament what we have lost and to regain our prophetic voice, calling the church to remember our gospel imperative to promote justice and mercy. Be Active – to move beyond polite, safe conversations about reconciliation and begin to set things aright for our soon-coming King, who will be looking for a WOKE CHURCH.