

**David G. Horrell**  
***Ethnicity and Inclusion:  
Religion, Race, and Whiteness in  
Constructions of Jewish and Christian Identities***

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David G. Horrell shows in *Ethnicity and Race* how a reckoning with the racialized formation of the modern historical critical study of the New Testament is a necessary element for the future of this discipline. Horrell argues it is essential to investigate the links between Christian identity formation vis-à-vis early Judaism and the resulting epistemological foundations for the construction of race in modern Western European Christian cultures. Horrell engages in this task in three parts. He first lays out in three chapters the methodological parameters for this study. Following that are five chapters of specific thematic studies around elements of Jewish and Christian identity formation. A final chapter forms the concluding section in which Horrell argues for the implications of his findings for the field of New Testament studies.

In chapter one, Horrell focuses the reader's attention on the ways that New Testament scholarship has often engendered a "structural dichotomy between an ethnically particular or 'exclusive' Judaism and an open all-embracing 'inclusive' Christianity" (21). Tracing this dichotomy across the development of New Testament studies, Horrell illustrates how this structural dichotomy is deployed to portray Judaism as particular, exclusive, or ethnic in contrast to an (implicitly) superior Christianity that is universal, inclusive, or trans-ethnic. In chapter two, Horrell surveys how Judaism has been defined as a race or ethnicity in recent New Testament scholarship and then examines the scholarly debate over race and ethnicity in the ancient world. Finally, he discusses recent research that challenges the categorization of early Christianity as non-ethnic. For scholars of Jewish-Christian relations, Horrell's review of this debate over how best to translate *Ioudaios* as Jew or Judean will prove useful. In this chapter, Horrell also reviews current research on ethnic and racial markers in early Christian identity formation, noting how ethnicity was a fluid category in this era, permitting multiple uses even within a given community. In chapter three, Horrell attends to how the social-scientific approach

in New Testament studies has dealt with issues of ethnicity, race, and religion. Using these insights, Horrell lays out his preference for an exploration of ethnic over racial identity. Racial constructions of identity focus on (putative) physiological traits and often are constructed by outsiders, while ethnicity is more typically considered to be one part of a multivalent insider construction of identity.

In chapters four through nine, Horrell takes up a comparative analysis of key elements of identity formation in early Jewish and Christian contexts. These consist of shared descent, common ways of life, ideas of homeland, notions of peoplehood, and practices of mission and conversion. Crucially, Horrell argues that the structural dichotomy of Judaism as ethnically exclusive and Christianity as universal, trans-ethnic, or inclusive cannot be sustained. Thus, in chapter five, on the construction of a common way of life, Horrell shows that Christian and Jewish sources illustrate practices that mix the religious with the ethnic, making it difficult to describe one tradition as more particular or universal than the other. Horrell's sixth chapter on ideas of homeland will speak to those interested in the current status of the category of the land in contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue. Horrell shows that while Jews and Christians had different approaches to the land of Israel, it is not a simple case of a worldly versus a spiritualized orientation. Rather, Second Temple Jews also created eschatological and spiritual visions of the land, especially in diaspora contexts. In turn, early Christian literature illustrates a surprising attachment to Jerusalem and the land, including its physical reality.

The inherent instability of this supposed structural dichotomy between Judaism and Christianity serves as Horrell's point of departure for his concluding chapter. Beginning with an overview of the major findings of the previous chapters, Horrell turns to the field of whiteness studies as a means of engaging with "the religiously and racially particular location of the discipline of New Testament studies" (299). Horrell postulates that the construction of Judaism as an exclusivist tradition and Christianity as an inclusivist one is due to the development of New Testament studies within conditions of Christian religious and European racial identities. While early Christianity might have crossed ethnic or religious boundaries, its universalist impulses co-existed with theologically exclusivist claims. Drawing on the insights of whiteness studies, Horrell argues that modern representations of Christianity as superior because it is universal, inclusive or trans-ethnic depend upon a set of religious assumptions that are similar to how the cultural assumptions about the superiority of whiteness operate. Moreover, Horrell argues that the overlap between cultures of whiteness among New Testament scholars and a Christian worldview enables the conditions for the creation of the structural dichotomy between an exclusivist Judaism and an inclusivist Christianity. This move obscures what is exclusive or particular about Christianity and thus has a distorting effect on the study of early Christianity itself. Thus, New Testament scholars, especially white male Christian ones, must consistently ask how their own identity influences their interpretations. To pretend as if this identity, including a racial one, is not a factor is no longer tenable, according to Horrell.

Horrell's book both provides new insights into how ethnicity and identity operated in early Judaism and early Christianity and opens new lines of analysis

concerning the discipline of New Testament studies. These new lines of analysis are also relevant for the field of Jewish-Christian relations. Perhaps now is the time to ask how categories like whiteness have been an unremarked upon influence in the development of this field. How is it that, at least in a North American context, so few people of color are engaged in the study of Jewish-Christian relations? How have the discourses of Jewish-Christian relations been structured and for what purposes? Horrell's book is both an invitation and challenge to the field of Jewish-Christian relations to engage in deeper reflection on these and related questions.