

## Black History Month

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October is Black History Month, a time, according to [blackhistorymonth.org.uk](http://blackhistorymonth.org.uk), to “shine a light on our shared British history and ... tell stories from the perspective of all people – not just the rich white men in power.”

The idea that history is always selective in its retelling of past events is increasingly difficult to ignore. We can never have a history that includes every piece of data. It always comes from a particular editorial perspective.

The same is true of biblical history. Contrary to popular belief, the Bible is not primarily a devotional handbook or even a moral guide. It's the historical retelling of God's dealings with humanity and, like all historical retellings, it's necessarily selective.

This is seen in the fact that many of the events that we call “world history” never get so much as a mention. Instead, the focus is on one tiny nation state in the Near Middle East. Other events happening on the world stage are only deemed relevant to the extent that they impact on what God is doing with the family of Israel.

There's something else, too. Biblical history is not “white man's history”. Jesus, it must be remembered, was born to a peasant family in a nation under foreign occupation. He was dark-haired and olive-skinned. He lived his whole life within a few square miles of what we today call Israel and Palestine. He never spoke a word of English. Like all his people, he knew what it felt like to go through life being pushed around by those in power. Eventually those people got exactly what they wanted: they sentenced Jesus to die like a worthless slave.

This is emphatically not history told from the perspective of those in power. It comes from the perspective of the underlings.

And here comes the most startling idea of all: it's also history told from the perspective of God. In the great moral and historical struggle between oppressors and oppressed, God takes the side of those who are suffering from injustice.

Postscript: Cornwall Council has recently launched a listening exercise called Building Bridges “to tackle all forms of racism in Cornwall.” Why not have your say at [letstalkcornwall.gov.uk](http://letstalkcornwall.gov.uk)?

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