

A Statement on Black Lives Matter, Right to Protest, and Bible as Prop

The Council of the Society of Biblical Literature and Executive Staff of SBL issue the following statement:

We are appalled at the murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 by police. We grieve the murder of Breonna Taylor and many others who have died because of anti-Blackness.

We are committed to the clear and unequivocal assertion that Black Lives Matter.

We applaud the spirit of protest that has emerged around the world as a result of that heinous act, while lamenting the violence that has also broken out in pockets of that otherwise peaceful and necessary protest.

Black Lives Matter.

The Bible matters.

We protest the actions by the president of the United States, who, on the evening of 1 June 2020, called for military action against US residents on US soil, had peaceful protesters tear-gassed out of his way, stood uninvited before an Episcopal parish, and waved a Bible.

We call out the president for abusing what is for many a treasured spiritual resource and symbol, and we deplore his violation of sacred space.

We call out political leaders who use the Bible to engage it in thoughtful and responsible ways. The Bible should not be brandished as a weapon to attack humanity or to violate the dignity of the human spirit. We commit to the work of studying and exposing how the Bible has been and continues to be used in this way.

Black Lives Matter.

The 2017 *JBL* Forum on Black Lives Matter for Critical Biblical Scholarship is available for free download here, beginning on page 203:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.15699/jbibllite.136.issue-1>

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