

AUSTELL GRANDVIEW SDA CHURCH PRESENTS

# HERITAGE

A BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION



# PART I

## BLACKS & THE BIBLE | EXILES OF EDEN

BASED ON ACTS CHAPTER 17:24-31

RICHARD MCNEIL

**Black History Month** is not intended to make us angry or depressed about our past but to inform us of the beauty in our **HERITAGE** and to help us establish a sense of pride in that we are children of God and not a subhuman derivative or amalgamation of man with beast.

Our **HERITAGE** as a people is often interrupted with pain, disturbed with suffering and with systematic oppression yet that is NOT who we are.

Our **HERITAGE** is far greater!

**If the HISTORY you are taught starts with your oppression,  
then your educator is oppressing you.**

**Black is beautiful - Song of Solomon 1:5**

**"I am black and beautiful,**

O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon." - NRSV

This is not speaking against black skin but actually a poetic reference to being hot, black and attractive because of it.

**BLACKNIFICENT** - Adjective that means elaborately infused with melanin, extravagantly dripping in striking black beauty, elaborately bathed in chocolate.

[the Sun]

HERITAGE

Our **HERITAGE** is of divine origin

[ SCRIPTURE OF FOCUS ]

Acts 17:24-31

Our **HERITAGE** is in **Genesis**

Our **HERITAGE** is in **ADAM**

## **BACK TO GENESIS**

### **THE CURSE OF HAM**

Genesis 9:25 Another even more alarming error is that the black race had its origin in Ham, one of the three sons of Noah.

The question is was Ham was cursed and made a servant?"

Genesis 9:25 says that after Noah awoke, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

"No other verse in the Bible has been so distorted and so disastrously used down through the centuries for the exploitation of African and African Americans as Genesis 9:25." -- Africa and the Bible, Edwin M. Yamauchi

Even political leader in Cuba Fidel Castro says

"I was taught that one of Noah's sons was punished by having black descendants. Somebody should check to see if this is being taught today and if it's really proper for religion to teach that being black is a punishment of God." -- Fidel and Religion, 108 cited in Wittenberg, "Let Canaan Be His Slave," p. 46.

**HERITAGE**

## [ WHITE CHRISTIANITY ]

### **Is Christianity a White man's religion?**

No, Biblical Christianity is of African Origin

False Christianity, based on elevating European ideals and White supremacy; that is White-washed Christianity.

### **Biblical Christianity celebrates Blackness as part of the divine image of God**

"The Bible IS Black History!" – Dr. Theron D. Williams

#### **Africans are all throughout the Bible:** From the beginning

Adam (or Ahdahm) in Hebrew is defined as swarthy, dusky, reddish-brown soil, dark-skinned like a shadow. Aphar: The soil from which Adham was made, meaning: dust, clay, always very black or very dark brown in color. (The Biblical History of Black Mankind by C. McGhee Livers)

#### **FURTHER DETAILS ON THE QUESTION**

Is Christianity a White man's religion?

No. The Gospel is God's message of freedom from sin and death and is available to all people, regardless of their race. The Body of Christ, is made up of people from all backgrounds who have been saved by grace through faith in the Messiah. (Revelation 14:6)

In Amos 9:7 the Lord asks, "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel?" Cushites (or Nubians), who lived south of Egypt, were considered to be living at the end of the world. All peoples are under God's providential care. Yahweh reveals to Israel that, despite Israel's election as His chosen people, He still cares for all people.

HERITAGE



## **QUOTES**

"God cares no less for the souls of the African race that may be won to serve Him than He cared for Israel." Christian Service, p. 218.

## **SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND EARLY AFRICAN RELIGIONS**

Africans believe God is supreme, all powerful, and creator.

Africans believe that God is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent

Africans also had oral stories depicting the fall of man from a state of innocence

Africans believed in the Virgin Birth!

The Akan people of Ghana revered the goddess called NYAME (meaning except for God or only God), who gave birth without a male companion.

Early Africans even believed that there would be a coming Judgment Day, when evil doers will be punished.

Early Africans believed highly in prayer as a part of worship and a God who answers prayers without being appeased with gifts and offerings.

## **AFRICANS IN THE BIBLE**

You won't read the terms black or African in the Bible (those are modern terms) but you will read the terms Ethiopians, Cushites, Egyptians, Hebrews, or other tribal terms.

The two oldest civilizations of EGYPT and ETHIOPIA are mentioned all throughout the bible.

Ethiopia is mentioned 45 times in the Bible; add this to the number of times Egypt is mentioned, and Africa is mentioned more than any other landmass in the Bible. It should also be noted that the "Middle East," including the Holy Land was connected to Africa until 1859

Egypt is mentioned in Scripture 611 times;

Moses was born and educated in Africa

Abraham married Hagar (Genesis 16:3-4)

Joseph married Asenath (Gen 41:45-Gen 41:50, Gen 46:20)

Haile Selassie, traces his roots back to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Song of Solomon 1:5-6)

The Prophet Zephaniah (1:1)(Zephaniah may have been of African descent, because he was the son of Cush, a code name for a descendant of Cush, son of Ham.)

The first use in the Bible of the word "queen" refers to a Black woman (1 Kings 10:1). Her name is alleged to be Makeda, but the Scriptures refer to her as the Queen of Sheba or the Queen of the South.

Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible, married an Ethiopian woman, Zipporah, and was persecuted for it. He and his family almost lost their lives because she was African and because of her Ethiopic religious roots. "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman." (Numbers 12:1)

He was from a line of kings that predated any nation of Europe. They are known as Pharaohs, which means Sun Kings and they ruled the land Ham known as Egypt (Psalm 105:27). Pharaoh was the king of North Africa who said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?"

Nimrod was Ham's grandson, and he was the first ruler of human government, according to the Scripture. The Bible indicates Nimrod was the first king in human history and he ruled mankind from the tower of Babel, after the flood of Noah (Genesis 10:10).



Hagar - This Black woman from Africa is reported in Scripture as bearing a child to Abraham, as she was his servant. Abraham is the father of the Arab and Jewish people. Abraham impregnated his wife's African enslaved worker, who she obtained from Pharaoh, the greatest king in Africa.

Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, waged war against Sennacherib during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah (2 Kings 19:9; Isaiah 37:9) and drove him from his intention of destroying Jerusalem and deporting its inhabitants. God used this African king to protect the Jews, his chosen people.

Many of the Hebrew patriarchs married or had children with women from African tribes. Abraham had children with Hagar and Keturah both from African (Hamitic) tribes. Moses married Zippora, who was Ethiopian. Jacob had children with two handmaidens from African tribes, and these children became the patriarchs of two tribes of Israel.

## **AFRICA IN THE BIBLE**

Africa was a place of refuge and protection for God's beloved son Jesus As a fulfillment of bible prophecy (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15; (Matthew 2:13, 19-21).

Abraham took refuge in Africa from famine several times (Genesis 12:10).

Many of us forget that EGYPT is in AFRICA.

Egypt was the breadbasket for a hungry world. Palestine, Canaan and many other cities all depended economically on Egypt during the days of Abraham, Jacob and Joseph.

Christianity took some strong roots on the African mainland during the first century. Christianity spread during the time of the apostles first to Egypt and then from Egypt down into Ethiopia, where the oldest Christian African church was established.

Simon of Cyrene

This episode of a black man carrying the Cross was so important that three of the four Gospels mention it. (Matthew 27:32; Luke 23:26; Mark 15:21)

The Ethiopian treasurer (eunuch) who was baptized by Philip.

At this time Ethiopia was ruled by a dynasty of Queens with their Capital in Meroe and it was one of the World's greatest empires.

The queen was converted by the Ethiopian eunuch and establish the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

### **AFRICANS & THE SABBATH**

This Ethiopian Church for centuries observed the Seventh-day as God's holy Sabbath day. The history of the churches in Ethiopia and Abyssinia is very significant because while everyone suffered through the Dark Ages, the Christians in central Africa were forgotten by the World and for centuries they enjoyed freedom in the exercise of their faith.

While the Church in Rome tried to change the Sabbath and went into apostasy for nearly a 1,000 years the churches in Africa, did not share in Rome's apostasy.

Among the Yorubas of Nigeria, the seventh day of the week has been a day when no work, no marriage, no festivities, would be performed.

There is no record at any time in the history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that they have officially given up the Sabbath. Another group of Ethiopians, the Falasha, or "Black Jews," hold to a form of Old Testament religion that was dominant in Solomon's days.



## **What Should Churches Do to Recognize the Black Presence in the Bible?**

If you use Biblical images, make sure they are historically accurate.

Utilize the African Heritage Study Bible, edited by Dr. Cain Hope Felder of Howard Divinity School, which includes essays and maps to aid your Bible study. Each passage of Scripture related to Africa is highlighted.

Read *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity* (InterVarsity Press) by Thomas C. Oden, who dedicated his life to uncovering of the buried treasure of African Christianity.

Read *Africa's Roots in God* by Rev. Dr. Sed Yankson, Pastor of East New York SDA Church & Akan Royalty.

Read *The Black Presence in the Bible: Discovering the Black and African Identity of Biblical Persons and Nations* by Dr. Walter A. McCray, President of The National Black Evangelical Association.

Visit *Prophetic Whirlwind*: an organization dedicated to uncovering the Black presence in the Bible via workshops, lectures, Bible study and devotional materials.

Read, Jan Nederveen Pieterse - *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*.

Read, *Africa and the Bible*, Edwin M. Yamauchi

Read, *Fidel and Religion*, 108 cited in Wittenberg, "Let Canaan Be His Slave,"

Read, *The Biblical History of Black Mankind* by C. McGhee Livers

Read, *Eden: The Biblical Garden Discovered in East Africa* by Gert Muller

Read, Keenan West, *Identity Theft: Uncovering the Truth about Black History in the Bible*



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