

The Presence of Blacks in the Bible

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Quick Quiz: Black Presence in the Bible

- 1. WHAT COLOR OR RACE WAS ADAM? _____
- 2. WHICH BOOK OF THE BIBLE IS SOLELY DEDICATED TO A BLACK WOMAN? _____
- 3. WHAT BLACK WOMAN WAS THE FIRST SURROGATE MOTHER IN THE BIBLE? _____
- 4. WHO WAS THE FOUNDER OF THE BLACK RACES ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE? _____
- 5. WHAT JEWISH MAN WAS RAISED IN A BLACK FAMILY. _____
- 6. WHO WAS THE FIRST NON-JEWISH CONVERT TO CHRISTIANITY? _____
- 7. WHAT COUNTRY DID JESUS PARENT'S HIDE HIM IN FROM KING HEROD? _____
- 10. JEWS AND ARABS ARE FIGHTING OVER THE PROPERTY, CALLED ISRAEL TODAY THAT ORIGINALLY BELONGED TO A BLACK MAN. WHAT IS HIS NAME? _____
- 11. WHO WAS THE BLACK MAN IN THE BIBLE WHO SAID, "WHO IS THE LORD THAT I SHOULD OBEY HIM?" _____
- 12. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN PRIOR TO THE EUROPEANS RENAMING IT? _____

Setting the Scene

Full Humanity of All People

- All humanity derived from one race and share in the image of God
- Each person shares common biological heritage
- Not just back to Adam- but back to Noah
- All of humanity carry within them the basic genetic marker which differentiate humanity for all of the rest of the created order
- The distinction among races is between minor genetic markers

God Imaged Createdness

Then God said, "Let Us make humankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Gen 1:26-28 (NASB)

- Each person also shares a common ontological or spiritual heritage
- The Bible is clear that all of humankind was
 - Created in the image of God
 - And carries that indelible image with their very nature
- Yet this description is not related only to ethnicity or race
 - Men and women
 - Able-bodied and physically disabled
 - Intellectually gifted and intellectually limited
 - Spiritually attuned and spiritually alienated
- All carry within them the image of God

Africa in the Bible

- Much of Sub-Saharan African was largely unknown to central characters of Scripture
 - As was the majority of the rest of the world
 - North and South America
 - Mainland Europe and Asia
 - The Poles
- What is primarily depicted in Scripture is Saharan African.
- The Name Africa is of African originates from the Egyptian Word "Afru-ika" or 'Motherland.'

Common Home Place



- All of humanity shares a common homeland
 - The Fertile Crescent
 - Known as the Cradle of Civilization
 - Region in the Middle East traditionally associated in the Judeo-Christian tradition with the location of the Garden of Eden
 - The region includes the northernmost portion of **Africa**

Old Testaments Depictions of Blacks

Race in the Bible

- Contrary to the claims of some, the Bible makes no direct claims about the origin of the races. In fact, the Bible is remarkably silent on this issue.
- Indeed, race is rarely mentioned in the Bible
 - The first mention of race occurs many thousands of years after the flood, in the book of Numbers, in describing Moses' Cushite wife (the Cushites were black)
 - One of Solomon's wives is described as a black woman
 - The book of Jeremiah describes the Ethiopians as dark-skinned peoples, but not how they got that way.
- Yet the Bible is entirely silent about when and how the races originated.

Adam



- Adam was not Black – or white
 - Or even yellow or red for that matter
- In Adam, the genetic disposition and DNA for all races (ethnic groups) of humanity could be found

Noah

- Noah was not Black – or white
 - Or even yellow or red for that matter
- The ethnic/racial distinctions had not become defined
- Like Adam, the genetic disposition and DNA for all races (ethnic groups) of humanity could be found in Noah and the members of his family



Post-Flood Dispersion



- Post-flood groups spread throughout the known world
- Moving into various climatic and environmental conditions
- They adapted themselves in to their environments in ways that more clearly delineated specific ethnic characteristics

Ham



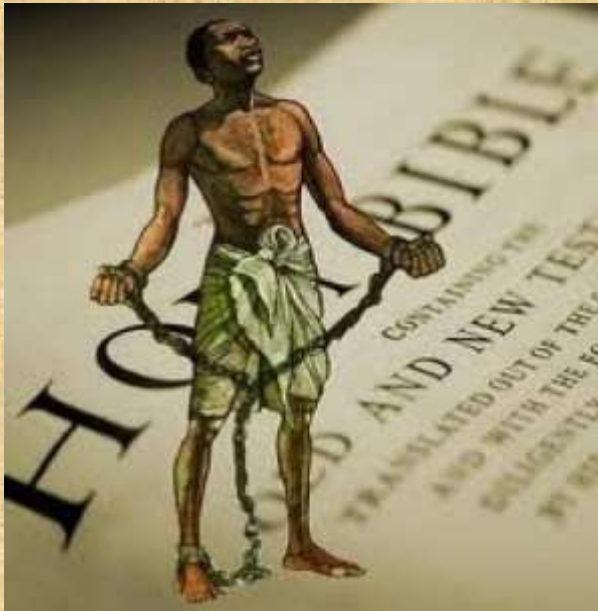
- One of the three sons of Noah
- Along with his brothers
 - Shem
 - Japheth
- Most noted in Scripture for dishonoring his father by uncovering Noah's nakedness while his father was drunk
- Father of several nations including Egyptians, Ethiopians, Abyssinians, and related groups in Africa and the Middle East

Hamitic Curse Myth

When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said,

“Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants. He shall be to his brothers.” He also said, “Blessed be the Lord, The God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.

Gen 9:24-26



Though the myth has been used for centuries to provide a “biblical” rationale for the subjugation and mistreatment of African People. It has been used to justify a number of evils including racism, slavery and lack of support for poor African nations.

- This racist theory was widely held during the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, but it has been largely abandoned since the mid-twentieth century by even the most conservative theologians.

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- In actually, in the Scripture event
- Though it was Ham that dishonored his father, Noah
- Noah spoke the curse on Ham's youngest son, Canaan father of the Canaanites

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More, importantly..

The curse was spoken forth by Noah and not by God and there is not evidence in Scripture that Noah had the godly authority to impose such a curse

- If there were any merit to it, all such curses from the Old Testaments were broken at the cross
- Still In actually, may black people have believed the myth and conduct their lives if it were true, such that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy

The Sons of Ham

The sons of Ham were **Cush** and **Mizraim** and **Put** and **Canaan**. The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord."

Cushites

- Descendants of Cush, the eldest son of Ham and the father of the Biblical character Nimrod
- The Cushites, who were obviously black, are mentioned fifty-four times in the Scriptures
- scholars use several terms -- Nubia, Wawat, Cush, Meroe, and Ethiopia – to refer to the Cushite civilization that stretched along the banks of the Nile, south of Egypt, in what is now Sudan

Cush



- Egypt Exodus 12:34-35
- The Old Testament also re-enforces the reality that Egypt was a wealthy area

Nimrod

Genesis 10



- Noah's grandson and the son of Cush
- First king mentioned in Scripture
- Founded a civilization in Mesopotamia.

Mizraim

The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim ... [who] became the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, Pathrus, Casluh, from which the Philistines came, and Caphtor. Gen 10:6, 13

- One of the sons of Ham, and the grandson of Noah
- The Hebrew and Aramaic name for the land of Egypt

Put (Phut)

The sons of Ham were.... Put

Gen 19:

- In the listing of the Sons of Ham and the descendants of his sons, Puts descendants are not listed
- The few mentions of Phut Bible indicate that he and his descendants inhabited an African country in or near modern day Libya (Ezek. 27:10)
- His descendants became hired servants of the Syrians (Nah. 3:9).

Canaan

Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren.

Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and **Heth** and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad.

The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, **as far as Gaza**; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

- Father of the **Canaanites**
- The son of Ham and grandson of Noah

Heth

Canaan became the father of ... Heth

Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth; even of all who went in at the gate of his city
Gen 2

- Noah's great grandson
- Ancestor of the Hittites who occupied land in the vicinity of Hebron
- Heth's name means "terror" or "dread"

Hagar



Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, "... the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her.

- Egyptian handmaid of Sarai and concubine of Abraham
- Bore Abraham's first son, Ishmael
- On becoming pregnant, she became despised by Abraham's wife and fled
- Had a visitation from the Angel of the Lord and returned to Abraham's house
- After the birth of the child, they was continued turmoil
- She permanently fled into the desert where she had a second visitation from the Angel of the Lord

Asenath

Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, as his wife.. Gen



- Daughter of Potiphera, priest of On (Heliopolis)
- Wife of Joseph
- Bore Joseph to Sons
 - Ephraim
 - Manasseh

Zipporah



Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. Ex 2: 21

Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me."

- One of the seven daughters of Jethro
- Egyptian wife of Moses
- Mother of his two sons Gershom and Eliezer
- She saved Moses life by intervening and circumcising their eldest son which was required by the Lord

Jethro



- Also called Reuel
- Father of Moses wife, Zipporah
- Priest of Midian (the mountain of God)
- Presided at a meal where Aaron and the elders of Israel were guests
- Jethro instructed Moses in the governance of the newly liberated Israelites

Uriah

A soldier in King David's army

He was described as a Hittite – a descendant of Heth



Queen of Sheba



- Considered one of the wisest and wealthiest women of her day
- She came from a land whose location has often been disputed
- She gave Solomon a gift that amounted to more than any other ruler had given him
 - a hundred and twenty talents of gold
 - Abundance spices
 - Precious stones

I am black and lovely, o daughters of Jerusalem

Solomon's Beloved



Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take thirty men from here under your authority and bring up Jeremiah the prophet from the cistern before he dies." Jer 38:10

Ebed-Melech



- A Cushite or Egyptian Eunuch
- an official in the royal palace of king Zedekiah of Judah during the Siege of Jerusalem.
- Saved the prophet Jeremiah's life by rescuing him from the cistern into which he had been put to die
- Later, Jeremiah prophesized to him that during the Fall of city to the Babylonians, his life would be spared

Zephaniah

The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah
son of Cushi... Zep 1:1



- One of the minor prophets
- Descendant of the Cushites or Ethiopians
- A contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah

- Jeremiah 13:23 “Can the Ethiopian change his skin...

Black People in the New Testament

Balthasar

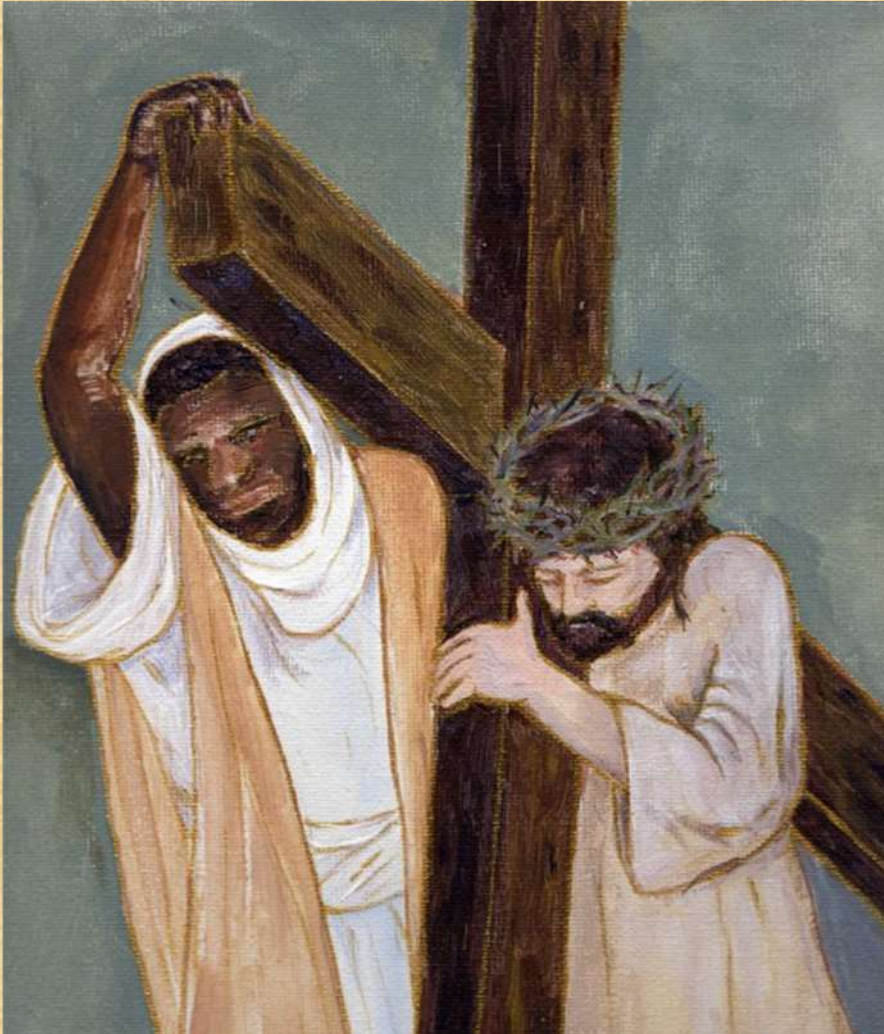


"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, 'where is he that is that is born King of the Jews ? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.'" Matt 2:1-2

- Legend depicts one of the three wise men to bring gifts to Jesus at his birth as black
- He is often represented as a king of Arabia
- the Bible depiction of the event in Matthew's account of the magi's visit (which is the only reference in the Bible) makes no reference to the color or race of the wise men
- Balthazar was described in the 8th century by Saint Bede as being "[of] black complexion, with [a] heavy beard"

Simon of Cyrene

When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus. Luke 23:26



Ethiopian Eunuch



- Prior to the Crucifixion, he had been a God-fearer
 - A Follower of Jehovah God
- One of the first Gentiles – and the first African to be baptized
- After his conversion, it is believed he was among the first to take the Gospel back to Africa

Simon surnamed Zelotes

And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James ... and Simon the Zealot... Mark 3:16-18



- Simon was a Jew, not a person of color
- Importantly however, according to writings of early Church Fathers, this apostle preached the Gospel in northern and sub-Saharan Africa, as well in Britain where he was crucified in A.D. 74.

Simeon

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: ...Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. Acts 13: 1



- Called Niger, the Latin nickname means "black", and refers to a person with a dark complexion and/or of African descent
- One of the chief leader who was praying at Antioch
- Considered a prophet and teachers

Lucias



*Now there were at Antioch, in the church
that was there, prophets and teachers:
...Lucius of Cyrene... Acts 13:1*

- From Cyrene, in North Africa in present day eastern Libya
- a geographical location of black or dark skinned people
- Believed to be one of the ..."men of Cyrene" who, being "scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen," went to Antioch preaching the Lord Jesus.

In Conclusion

Africa was not an Afterthought with God

- From the beginning people of color were included in the unfolding of salvation history
- The earliest church certainly included converts from Northern Africa
- There is biblical and extra-biblical evidence that the Gospel got to black Africa within a decade of the Crucifixion

Full Humanity of All Races Restored in Christ

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man... for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

No Justification for Contemporary Slavery/Racism

- Slavery in the Bible was very different from American Slavery
 - Not related to rights
 - Slaves of right to human dignity
 - Slavery was not perpetual
 - Did not through generations
 - Not related to race
 - Joseph (a Jew) was a slave to the Egyptians (an African people)