

Africa

Through the pages of the Bible



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Forward

There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that one race is superior to another race.

We do however know that God chose the descendants of Abraham to be his chosen. Through this line came Jesus Christ.

The color of the skin makes no difference to God. Man looks on the outward appearance. God looks on the heart.

Moses married a black woman according to Numbers 12:1.

When the sister and brother of Moses criticized Moses for this marriage, God was displeased and sent judgment upon them.

Some believe that the wife of Joseph may have been a dark skinned Egyptian.

Many people of African origin trace their heritage back to Abraham, and are now settling in Israel.

You may be delighted to find many Bible references to the African countries and people.

Prophecy

Given to Harold Bollinger

This is not a time of closure, but a time of birth.

The church is God's instrument of birth. He has given the church a time of gestation, and the time is near.

God has not placed a time in which man can bring God's plan into closure, but into birth.

This is a time when the Holy Spirit is poured out in God's fullness. Let this be your time to identify and become a part of his redemption.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit will come with such great power, individually and collectively to bring the church into a love for the prodigal, the rebellious and for the lost.

Prepare now for this Holy Ghost event. You are God's instrument.

Chapter 1



Christ's message goes to Africa

Acts 8:26-27

As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he did, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship.

Philip was having a successful preaching ministry to great crowds in Samaria (Acts 8:5-8), but he obediently left that ministry to travel on a desert road. Because Philip went where God sent him, Ethiopia was opened up to the gospel. Follow God's leading, even if it seems like a demotion. At first you may not understand his plans, but the results will prove that God's way is right.

Ethiopia was located in Africa south of Egypt. The eunuch was obviously very dedicated to God because he had traveled such a long distance to worship in Jerusalem.

The Jews had contact with Ethiopia (known as Cush) in ancient days (Psalm 68:31; Jeremiah 38:7), so this man may have been a Gentile

convert to Judaism. Because he was in charge of the treasury of Ethiopia, this man's conversion brought Christianity into the power structures of another government. This is the beginning of the witness "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). See the prophecy in Isaiah 56:3-5 for words about foreigners and eunuchs.

Jeremiah 38:7-8

But Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, an important palace official, heard that Jeremiah was in the cistern. At that time the king was holding court at the Benjamin Gate, [8] so Ebed-melech rushed from the palace to speak with him.

The Benjamin Gate was one of Jerusalem's city gates where legal matters were handled. A palace official, Ebed-Melech, had access to the king. When Ebed-Melech heard of Jeremiah's plight, he went immediately to deal with the injustice.

Acts 1:8

But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Power from the Holy Spirit is not limited to strength beyond the ordinary—that power also involves courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority. The disciples would need all these gifts to fulfill their mission. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you can experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Jesus promised the disciples that they would receive power to witness after they received the Holy Spirit. Notice the progression: (1) they would receive the Holy Spirit, (2) he would give them power, and (3)

they would witness with extraordinary results. Often we try to reverse the order and witness by our own power and authority. Witnessing is not showing what we can do for God. It is showing and telling what God has done for us.

Jesus had instructed his disciples to witness to people of all nations about him (Matthew 28:19-20). But they were told to wait first for the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49). God has important work for you to do for him, but you must do it by the power of the Holy Spirit. We often like to get on with the job, even if it means running ahead of God. But waiting is sometimes part of God's plan. Are you waiting and listening for God's complete instructions, or are you running ahead of his plans? We need God's timing and power to be truly effective.

This verse describes a series of ever-widening circles. The gospel was to spread, geographically, from Jerusalem, into Judea and Samaria, and finally to the whole world. It would begin with the devout Jews in Jerusalem and Samaria, spread to the mixed race in Samaria, and finally be offered to the Gentiles in the uttermost parts of the earth. God's gospel has not reached its final destination if someone in your family, your workplace, your school, or your community hasn't heard about Jesus Christ. Make sure that you are contributing in some way to the ever-widening circle of God's loving message.

Isaiah 56:3-5

"And my blessings are for Gentiles, too, when they commit themselves to the Lord. Do not let them think that I consider them second-class citizens. And my blessings are also for the eunuchs. They are as much mine as anyone else.

For I say this to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbath days holy, who choose to do what pleases me and commit their lives to me: I will give them—in my house, within my walls—a memorial and a name far greater than the honor they would have received by having sons and daughters. For the name I give them is an everlasting one. It will never disappear!

Isaiah clearly proclaims the radical message that God's blessings are for *all* people, even foreigners and eunuchs, who were often excluded from worship and not even considered citizens in Israel. Whatever your race, social position, work, or financial situation, God's blessings are as much for you as for anyone else. No one must exclude in any way those God chooses to include.

The destruction of war

Ezekiel 30:5

Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, and Arabia, with all their other allies, will be destroyed in that war.

This is a lament for Egypt and its allies. Because of the Egyptians' pride and idolatry, they would be brought down.

Egypt's pharaohs claimed that they had made the Nile—the river on which the entire nation depended. If God dried up the Nile, the nation would be doomed.

The list of cities to be destroyed shows the breadth of the destruction;

the drying up of the Nile (Ezekiel 30:12) shows its depth. Egypt would be completely incapacitated. This was a clear message to Judah not to trust Egypt for help against the Babylonians.

Chapter 2



God sends messengers to the nations

Isaiah 66:19

I will perform a sign among them. And I will send those who survive to be messengers to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (who are famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to all the lands beyond the sea that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. There they will declare my glory to the nations.

God's people will go out as missionaries to all parts of the earth—to Tarshish (Spain), to the Libyans in northern Africa, to the Lydians in western Asia Minor, to northeastern Asia Minor (Tubal), and to Greece.

Help in time of battle

2 Chron. 12:3

He came with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and a countless army of foot soldiers, including Libyans, Sukkites, and Ethiopians.

Here “Israel” refers to Judah, the southern kingdom. During his first three years on the throne, Rehoboam made an attempt to obey God, and as a result Judah prospered. But then, at his peak of popularity and power, he abandoned God.

The result was destruction because God allowed Judah to be conquered by Egypt. How could this happen? Often it is more difficult to be a believer in good times than in bad.

Tough times push us toward God; but easy times can make us feel self-sufficient and self-satisfied. When everything is going right, guard your faith closely.

A record of this invasion has been found on an Egyptian stone that says Shishak’s army penetrated as far north as the Sea of Galilee, in the northern kingdom.

Egypt was not the world power it had once been, and Shishak wanted to restore his nation to its former greatness. He was not strong enough to conquer both Israel and Judah, but he managed to destroy key cities in Judah in an effort to regain control of the trade routes and create dissension among the people.

God eased his judgment when Israel's leaders confessed their sins, humbled themselves, and recognized God's justice in punishing them. It's never too late to repent, even in the midst of punishment. Regardless of what we have done, God is willing to receive us back into fellowship.

Are you struggling and alone because sin has broken your fellowship with God? Confession and humility will open the door to receiving God's mercy.

“Serving the kings of other lands” was the price Judah had to pay for disobeying God. The nation's leaders thought they could succeed in their own strength, but they were wrong. When we rebel against God, we always pay for it. When we leave God out of our lives, we lose more spiritually than we ever gain financially.

A time to remember

2 Chron. 16:8

Don't you remember what happened to the Ethiopians and Libyans and their vast army, with all of their chariots and horsemen? At that time you relied on the Lord, and he handed them all over to you.

Judah and Israel never learned! Although God had delivered them even when they were outnumbered (2 Chron. 13:3ff; 2 Chron. 14:9ff), they repeatedly sought help from pagan nations rather than from God.

That Asa sought help from Aram was evidence of national spiritual decline. With help from God alone, Asa had defeated the Cushites in open battle.

But his confidence in God had slipped, and now he sought only a human

solution to his problem.

When confronted by the prophet Hanani, Asa threw him in prison, revealing the true condition of his heart.

It is not sin to use human means to solve our problems, but it is sin to trust them more than God, to think they are better than God's ways, or to leave God completely out of the problem-solving process.

The Land of Cush

Genesis 2:13

The second branch is the Gihon, which flows around the entire land of Cush.

Ethiopia battles against Israel

2 Kings 19:9

Soon afterward King Sennacherib received word that King Tirhakah of Ethiopia was leading an army to fight against him. Before leaving to meet the attack, he sent this message back to Hezekiah in Jerusalem:

Although Hezekiah came boldly to God, he did not take God for granted or approach him flippantly. Instead, Hezekiah acknowledged God's sovereignty and Judah's total dependence on him. Hezekiah's prayer provides a good model for us. We should not be afraid to approach God with our prayers, but we must come to him with respect for who he is and what he can do.

Providences stretch from India to Ethiopia

Esther 1:1

This happened in the days of King Xerxes, who reigned over 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia.

Jews lived in all the provinces.

Esther's story begins in 483 B.C., 103 years after Nebuchadnezzar had taken the Jews into captivity (2 Kings 25), 54 years after Zerubbabel led the first group of exiles back to Jerusalem (Ezra 1-2), and 25 years before Ezra led the second group to Jerusalem (Ezra 7).

Esther lived in the kingdom of Persia, the dominant kingdom in the Middle East after Babylon's fall in 539 B.C. Esther's parents must have been among those exiles who chose not to return to Jerusalem, even though Cyrus, the Persian king, had issued a decree allowing them to do so.

The Jewish exiles had great freedom in Persia, and many remained because they had established themselves there or were fearful of the dangerous journey back to their homeland.

Xerxes the Great was Persia's fifth king (486-465 B.C.). He was proud and impulsive, as we see from the events in Esther 1. His winter palace was in Susa, where he held the banquet described in Esther 1:3-7.

Persian kings often held great banquets before going to war. In 481, Xerxes launched an attack against Greece. After his fleet won a great victory at Thermopylae, he was defeated at Salamis in 480 and had to return to Persia. Esther became queen in 479

Chapter 3



All Jews summoned for battle

Esther 8:9

So on June 25 the king's secretaries were summoned. As Mordecai dictated, they wrote a decree to the Jews and to the princes, governors, and local officials of all the 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia. The decree was written in the scripts and languages of all the peoples of the empire, including the Jews.

While we should not expect earthly rewards for being faithful to God, they often come. Esther and Mordecai were faithful, even to the point of risking their lives to save others. When they were willing to give up everything, God gave them a reward in proportion to their all-out commitment.

Haman's message had been sealed with the king's signet ring and could not be reversed, even by the king. It was part of the famed "law of the Medes and Persians." Now the king gave permission for whatever other decree Mordecai could devise that would offset the first, without actually canceling it.

Almost everyone wants to be a hero and receive praise, honor, and

wealth. But few are willing to pay the price. Mordecai served the government faithfully for years, bore Haman's hatred and oppression, and risked his life for his people.

The price to be paid by God's heroes is long-term commitment. Are we ready and willing to pay the price?

Topaz from Ethiopia

Job 28:19

Topaz from Ethiopia cannot be exchanged for it. Its value is greater than the purest gold.

The riches of Ethiopia were well known.

Job stated that wisdom couldn't be found among the living. It is natural for people who do not understand the importance of God's Word to seek wisdom here on earth.

They look to philosophers and other leaders to give them direction for living.

Yet Job said that wisdom is not found there. No leader or group of leaders can produce enough knowledge or insight to explain the totality of human experience.

The ultimate interpretation of life, of who we are and where we are going, must come from outside and above our mortal life.

When looking for guidance, seek God's wisdom as revealed in the Bible. To be lifted above and beyond the boundaries of life, we must know and trust the Lord of life.

Ethiopia bows in submission to God

Psalm 68:31

Let Egypt come with gifts of precious metals; let Ethiopia bow in submission to God.

All are citizens of Jerusalem

Psalm 87:4

I will record Egypt and Babylon among those who know me—also Philistia and Tyre, and even distant Ethiopia. They have all become citizens of Jerus

The Jews had contact with Ethiopia (known as Cush) in ancient days (Psalm 68:31; Jeremiah 38:7), so this man may have been a Gentile convert to Judaism. Because he was in charge of the treasury of Ethiopia, this man's conversion brought Christianity into the power structures of another government. This is the beginning of the witness "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). See the prophecy in Isaiah 56:3-5 for words about foreigners and eunuchsalem!

Destruction is certain

Isaiah 18:1

Destruction is certain for the land of Ethiopia, which lies at the headwaters of the Nile. Its winged sailboats glide along the river.

Terrible trouble will come

Isaiah 20:3

Then the Lord said, "My servant Isaiah has been walking around naked and barefoot for the last three years. This is a sign—a symbol of the terrible troubles I will bring upon Egypt and Ethiopia.

Chapter 4



Preparing for conflict

Isaiah 37:9

Soon afterward King Sennacherib received word that King Tirhakah of Ethiopia was leading an army to fight against him. Before leaving to meet the attack, he sent this message back to Hezekiah in Jerusalem:

A ransom for freedom

Isaiah 43:3

For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I gave Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba as a ransom for your freedom.

Ethiopia will bless Israel

Isaiah 45:14

This is what the Lord says: "The Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans will be subject to you. They will come to you with all their merchandise,

and it will all be yours. They will follow you as prisoners in chains. They will fall to their knees in front of you and say, 'God is with you, and he is the only God.' "

Ezekiel 29:10

I am now the enemy of both you and your river. I will utterly destroy the land of Egypt, from Migdol to Aswan, as far south as the border of Ethiopia.

Land will be ravished

Ezekiel 30:4-9

A sword will come against Egypt, and those who are slaughtered will cover the ground. Their wealth will be carried away and their foundations destroyed. The land of Ethiopia will be ravished. [5] Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, and Arabia, with all their other allies, will be destroyed in that war.

"For this is what the Lord says: All of Egypt's allies will fall, and the pride of their power will end. From Migdol to Aswan the sword will slaughter them, says the Sovereign Lord.

Egypt will be desolate, surrounded by desolate nations, and its cities will be in ruins, surrounded by other ruined cities.

And the people of Egypt will know that I am the Lord when I have set Egypt on fire and destroyed all their allies.

At that time I will send swift messengers in ships to terrify the complacent Ethiopians. Great panic will come upon them on that day of Egypt's certain destruction.

The Lord defeats Ethiopia

2 Chron. 14:9-15

Once an Ethiopian named Zerah attacked Judah with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots.

They advanced to the city of Mareshah, so Asa deployed his armies for
Battle in the valley north of Mareshah.

Then Asa cried out to the Lord his God, "O Lord, no one but you can help the powerless against the mighty! Help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in you alone. It is in your name that we have come against this vast horde.

O Lord, you are our God; do not let mere men prevail against you!"

So the Lord defeated the Ethiopians in the presence of Asa and the army of Judah, and the enemy fled. Asa and his army pursued them as far as Gerar, and so many Ethiopians fell that they were unable to rally.

The Lord and his army destroyed them, and the army of Judah carried off vast quantities of plunder.

While they were at Gerar, they attacked all the towns in that area, and terror from the Lord came upon the people there. As a result, vast quantities of plunder were taken from these towns, too.

Chapter 5



Gold will be controlled

Daniel 11:43

He will gain control over the gold, silver, and treasures of Egypt, and the Libyans and Ethiopians will be his servants.

Isaiah 20:1-6

In the year when King Sargon of Assyria captured the Philistine city of Ashdod, the Lord told Isaiah son of Amoz, "Take off all your clothes, including your sandals." Isaiah did as he was told and walked around naked and barefoot.

Then the Lord said, "My servant Isaiah has been walking around naked and barefoot for the last three years. This is a sign—a symbol of the terrible troubles I will bring upon Egypt and Ethiopia.

For the king of Assyria will take away the Egyptians and Ethiopians as prisoners. He will make them walk naked and barefoot, both young and

old, their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

How dismayed will be the Philistines, who counted on the power of Ethiopia and boasted of their allies in Egypt!

They will say, 'If this can happen to Egypt, what chance do we have? For we counted on Egypt to protect us from the king of Assyria.' "

Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

Psalm 68:31

Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

The head of the enemies shall be crushed

Psalm 68:21

But God will smash the heads of his enemies, crushing the skulls of those who love their guilty ways.

The Jews had contact with Ethiopia (known as Cush) in ancient days (Psalm 68:31; Jeremiah 38:7), so this man may have been a Gentile convert to Judaism. Because he was in charge of the treasury of Ethiopia, this man's conversion brought Christianity into the power structures of another government. This is the beginning of the witness "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). See the prophecy in Isaiah 56:3-5 for words about foreigners and eunuchs

Chapter 5



Breaking Generational Curses and Releasing Generational Blessings

Do you sometimes feel that your background or ancestors may have brought a curse upon you, and you have little hope. You can receive the Lord's DNA when you are born again.

You can also claim ancestors' blessings into your life. Why not do that now as you pray this prayer:

Dear Lord, in Jesus' name, I confess the sins and iniquities of my parents, grandparents and all other ancestors.

In the name of Jesus and by the power of His blood, I now renounce,

break and sever all cords of iniquity and sever all unholy soul ties formed between myself and my parents, grandparents and all other ancestors.

In the name of Jesus, I now loose myself and my future generations from any bonds passed down to me from my ancestors. I command any evil spirits that have taken advantage of these cords of iniquity, generational curses and unholy soul ties to leave me now in the name of Jesus.

I now receive my ancestors' blessings into my life. May the blessings of these talents, faith, hope and security come upon me.

I claim them now and for all future generations in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print