



**Pastor Calvin D. Williams**

**2/4/2026**

**Introduction:**

- One of the greatest misunderstandings is that Black history starts with oppression. Biblically, Black history begins with **creation, dignity, and divine purpose**.
- Black history and the Bible are far more connected than people are often taught. Especially in Western classrooms and churches.
- Black History and the Bible intersect in History, identity, theology, and liberation, and who's telling the story, the emphasis can look different.

## 1. Black History Begins in the Bible, Not in Slavery

Why is Africa and the Bible often overlooked?

 **Humanity Began in Africa (Africa was in the Bible from the beginning)**

**Genesis 2:7** – God formed man from the dust of the ground.

- The Garden of Eden is described near rivers connected to Africa and the Middle East.

**Genesis 2:13** mentions the land of **Cush**, widely recognized as ancient **Ethiopia/Sudan**.

👉 This shows that early biblical civilization included African regions.

---

## 2. Black Identity in the Bible

The Bible doesn't use modern racial categories, but it does describe people with Dark skin:

**Song of Songs 1:5**- "I am black and beautiful."

**Jeremiah 13:23**- "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?"

**Lamentations 4:8**- describes skin growing dark.

**Ethiopian** (Hebrew Cushi) refers to dark-skinned people.

## 3. Key Black/Africans figures in Scripture

### Africans (Cushite/Ethiopians) Are Present Throughout Scripture

**Hagar**- Egyptian women (African) whose suffering God respond to; she's the first person in the Bible to name God.

**Zipporah**

### Moses Married an African Woman

**Numbers 12:1**

- Moses married a Cushite woman.
- God defended Moses and judged those who spoke against this marriage, showing God's rejection of racial prejudice.

---

## The Ethiopian Eunuch Was One of the First African Converts

Acts 8:26–39

### The Ethiopian official:

- Was wealthy and educated.
- Was seeking God.
- Was baptized and carried Christianity into Africa.

👉 Africa was among the first regions to receive the Gospel.

---

## Simon of Cyrene Helped Carry Jesus' Cross

Mark 15:21

- Cyrene was in North Africa (**modern Libya**).
- An African man helped carry the cross of Christ.

Christianity spread through Africa before it spread through Europe.

---

## 4. God Created All People in His Image

Genesis 1:27

- God created mankind in His own image.

### This establishes:

- *Equal value.*
- *Equal dignity.*
- *Equal purpose.*

Skin color never determined worth in God's kingdom.

---

## 5. Slavery and Misinterpretations

This is where Black history and the Bible collide.

### Misuse of the Bible:

- Enslavers used passages (**Especially the so-called “Curse of Ham**) to justify slavery.

Ham’s descendants were cursed and became Black Africans, destined for slavery.

### What the Bibel actually says:

- Ham is NOT cursed.
- Canaan, Ham’s son is cursed (**Gen 9:25**)
- Cush (Linked to Africa) is never cursed.
- The text says nothing about skin color.

### Why this story falls apart:

- The Canaanites lived in the Levant, not Sub-Saharan Africa.
- The curse is about land conflict, not race.
- This interpretation appears centuries later to justify slavery.
- This myth is historically invented, not biblical.

- This interpretation is not supported by scripture but was created for political and economic power.
- Enslaved Africans were often given edited Bibles that removed the stories of Liberation. (**Like Exodus**)

## 6. Jesus and Representation

### Historically:

- Jesus was a Middle Eastern Jew, not European.
- He would have had brown skin, dark hair, and dark eyes.
- The white European Jesus image became dominant through colonization, not history or scripture.
- Reclaiming accurate representation is a big part of Black history month.

**Myths: “Jesus and biblical people were white”**

### What people assume:

**Europeans' features=holiness**

**Historical facts:**

- Jesus was a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Middle Eastern Jew.

**(Rev 1:15)** Describe his skin "Like burnished bronze and hair like wool, not European.

- Ancient Jews, Egyptians, and Ethiopians were brown to dark skinned peoples.
- Whiteness is a later Artistic invention, not scripture.

## **7. The Bible Condemns Oppression and Injustice**

Throughout Scripture, God consistently stands against oppression.

**Exodus 3:7-** I have seen the suffering of my people... I am concerned about their suffering.

**God:**

- *Hears cries of the oppressed.*
- *Raises deliverers.*
- *Brings justice.*

This speaks powerfully to African American history and struggles.

**Myths:** The bible supports Race-based slavery

**What people argue:**

**Slavery in the Bible=approval of American slavery.**

**Key differences:**

- Biblical slavery was not race-based.
- Kidnapping people to enslave them was punishable by death. **(Exodus 21:16)**

**(Exodus 21:16) Anyone who kidnaps someone is to be put to death, whether the victim has been sold or is still in the kidnapper's possession.**

**The Bible:**

- God liberates slaves. (Exodus)

Jesus identifies with the oppressed. (Luke 4:18)

**(Luke 4:18)** “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.

Using the Bible to defend slavery is a gross misuse of Scripture.

---

## **8. God Uses Seasons of Suffering to Produce Deliverance and Purpose**

Many biblical heroes experienced bondage before breakthrough.

### **Joseph**

- Sold into slavery.
- Rose to leadership.
- Saved nations.

**Genesis 50:20** - What was meant for evil, God used for good.

---

### **Israelites in Egypt**

- Experienced slavery.
  - God raised Moses.
  - Led them to freedom and promise.
- 

## **9. The Bible Celebrates Diversity in God’s Kingdom**

### **Revelation 7:9**

- A great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language.
  - Heaven is multicultural.
  - God never intended segregation, he designed unity in diversity.
- 

## **10. Biblical Themes That Connect to Black History**

### **Deliverance**

God delivers His people from bondage.

## Identity

Black identity is rooted in being created in God's image.

## Resilience

Scripture shows God strengthening people through hardship.

## Worship Through Struggle

Much like spirituals and gospel music, the Bible shows worship during suffering ([Psalms](#), [Paul and Silas](#)).

---

## 11. African Contributions to Early Christianity

This part is often erased:

- Africa produced some of Christianity's greatest Theologians.
- Early African church leaders helped shape Christian theology:
- Augustine of Hippo ([North Africa](#))
- Tertullian
- Athanasius

Christianity has deep African roots.

- Ethiopia became officially Christian in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, making it one of the oldest Christian nations in the world.
  - African Christians shaped the core doctrines still used today.
  - Black people weren't latecomers to Christianity, they were architects of it.
- 

## 12. Key Spiritual Lessons from Black History Through the Bible

### 1. God Sees Every Struggle

[\(Psalm 34:18\)](#) The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

### 2. Oppression Never Stops God's Purpose

**(Romans 8:28)** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

### **3. Identity Comes from God, Not Society**

**(1 Peter 2:9)** But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

### **4. God Raises Leaders from Difficult Places**

**(Jeremiah 1:5)** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew<sup>h</sup> you, before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

---

### **Conclusion:**

Black history from a biblical perspective is not just a story of struggle, it is a story :

- Creation
  - Calling
  - Courage
  - Deliverance
  - Victory through Christ
- 
- Black history is not a footnote in the Bible.
  - Africa is foundational to the biblical world.
  - Black people are present throughout scripture.
  - Christianity has deep African roots.
  - The Bible has been both misused for oppression and reclaimed for freedom.