

God's Desire for Relationship and African Spirituality

Biblical, Scientific, Linguistic, and Historical Records

By Karen Sue Nyquist



It is well known that African-Americans, Africans, and people of African descent have an interest in spirituality. Some African-Americans, searching for their roots and desiring spiritual satisfaction, are turning to the LORD God. Having a personal relationship with God is so spiritually satisfying! Let's look at the Biblical, scientific, linguistic, and historical records of God's love reaching out to Africans, and to all humanity, to have a relationship with each of us.

1. God shows His love through creation. - In His Word the Bible, the LORD God tells us that He created humanity. "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). God is a spirit and made us spiritual beings. God also tells us He loves all peoples. "For God so loved the world ..." (John 3:16). God has put His love into Africans so they have special love and commitment to their relationships with their families and communities. In addition, God invites us to have a relationship with Him. "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you" (Jeremiah 31:3). Evil spirits hate God, His righteous goodness, His love for us, and hate us too. So they steer people away from God by tempting us to do wrong, to sin (2 Corinthians 11:3). They also deceive us by offering other sources of "spirituality," ensnaring us so we will do their will (2 Timothy 2:26). Their temptations cause us to substitute their desires and ours, instead of a loving relationship with God (James 1:14).

2. God reaches out to Africans through Moses and his wife ~1,200 BC - It is not clear if this was his wife, Zipporah, or if Moses later married a second wife. Either way, his sister and brother were not pleased with this marriage. "Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite (*an African*)" (Numbers 12:1 NIV). But the LORD God supported Moses' decision (Numbers 12:2-14 NIV). Moses was a prophet and had a powerful relationship with God, so God used him to present a way of walking with Him that became known as Judaism. - "Significant examples of Black Judaism include Judaism as it is practiced by Ethiopian Jews and African-American Jews. Jews who may be considered Black have existed for millennia, with Zipporah sometimes considered to be one of the first Black Jews mentioned within Jewish history" (1) "Black Judaism," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Judaism.)

3. God again reaches out to Africans through King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba ~ 1,000 BC - The Bible records that during the reign of King Solomon over Israel, the African Queen of Sheba heard of his wisdom and came to visit him (1 Kings 10:1-12). According to Ethiopian oral history, they had a son together. - "Solomonid Dynasty, also called Solomonic Dynasty, line of Ethiopian emperors who, according to tradition, were descended from Menilek I, the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Makeda)." (2) Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Solomonid Dynasty". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 26 Jan. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Solomonid-dynasty>. Accessed 8 June 2023.) This also resulted in some Ethiopians walking with God in Judaism. Science and linguistic studies also back this oral tradition. - "The Queen of Sheba's genetic legacy may live on in Ethiopia, according to new research that finds evidence of long-ago genetic mixing between Ethiopian populations and Syrian and Israeli people" ... "The Queen of Sheba, known in Ethiopia as Makeda, is mentioned in both the Bible and the Quran. ... "Tracing the genomic changes, the researchers found that the non-African and African genes first mingled about 3,000 years ago" ... "That timeline confirms what linguistic studies have suggested about links between the Middle East and Ethiopia during this time period, the researchers wrote. It also matches records and tales of the reign of the Queen of Sheba from about 1005 to 955 B.C., when trade routes were established and a royal son, perhaps, was born." (3) "Queen of Sheba's Gift? Evidence of Genetic Mixing," <https://www.nbnews.com/id/wbna47907675>.)

4. God reached out to Africans and all peoples, through His Son, Jesus Christ ~ 30 AD - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God sent Simon, an African from Cyrene (city in upper Libya), to meet Jesus to carrying the cross for Jesus on the way to His crucifixion (Mark 15:21). Simon's two sons were watching and later became Christians (Romans 16:13). On the Day of Pentecost, when God sent His Holy Spirit to live inside those who believe in Jesus, Africans from Cyrene were there witnessing the event! (Acts 2:10). Did God chose Simon then the other Cyrenians to signify the importance of Africans in carrying the Christian gospel message to the world? Yes! After hearing the gospel, we must to tell others!

5. God again reached out to Africans through a prominent Ethiopian - 1st Century AD Soon after the Holy Spirit was given, God does 4 miracles to reach Ethiopia and Africa. **1st)** God sends an angel to speak to Phillip the Evangelist, one of the leaders of the church, and tells him to go to a certain road in the desert. **2nd)** He arrives just in time to meet the Treasurer of an Ethiopian queen, a convert to Judaism, who is returning from worshipping the LORD God



in Jerusalem. (God says, “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart”)(Jeremiah 29:13). **3rd)** The Ethiopian is reading the Bible, Isaiah 53:7-8, which is a prophecy about Jesus Christ the Savior! After Phillip tells him about Jesus Christ, the Ethiopian believes in Jesus is baptized. **4th)** Then God miraculously makes Phillip disappear, transporting him away. Being fully convinced that this was a divine appointment, the Ethiopian returns home rejoicing where he shared the gospel with others (Acts 8:26-39)! This Ethiopian was “the treasurer of the Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians.” (4) “Ethiopian Eunuch,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_eunuch.) God saw the spiritual hunger of this man who already knew Him as his Creator and now reveals Jesus His Son, as His Savior. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). Now the Ethiopian could walk with the Lord as a Christian.

6. God immediately reached out in love to Africans using some of Jesus’ first disciples - 1st century AD - “Socrates of Constantinople includes Ethiopia in his list as one of the regions reached by Matthew the Apostle, where a specific mention of ‘Ethiopia south of the Caspian Sea’ can be confirmed in some traditions such as the Roman Catholic Church among others. Ethiopian Church tradition tells that Bartholomew accompanied Matthew in a mission...” (5) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_Orthodox_Tewahedo_Church.) “The Ethiopian Empire was the only region of Africa to survive as a Christian state after the expansion of Islam. Therefore, the Ethiopian church community is globally unique in that it wasn't Christianized through European missionaries, but was highly independent and itself spread missionaries throughout the rest of Africa prior to European Christians contact with the continent. (6) “Christianity in Africa,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Africa.) “Intriguingly, new evidence supports the idea that many Africans in the Diaspora were not only well acquainted with Christianity in places like Portuguese Kongo and Angola, but also knew about the black Christians of Ethiopia and Egypt and therefore **thought of Christianity as an indigenous faith ...**” (“Christianity in Atlantic Africa before 1800,” <https://d2r6h7ytneza1l.cloudfront.net/title/9046d7b2-d201-4458-b48f-d8a41286b9d4/catronexcerpt.pdf>).

7. The devil and his evil spirits have long tried to separate Africans (and all peoples) from God by using sin, deceptive doctrines, false spirituality, and some mistaken traditions. - God knows the spiritual nature of African people, He placed it in them. Wicked people have twisted the Bible’s words to condone evil - slavery and racism - which don’t come from God, but from evil spirits. “God is love” (John 4:8). Africans have a history of withstanding great persecution, even in Africa. - “The Ethiopian Empire was the only region of Africa to survive as a Christian state after the expansion of Islam. Therefore, the Ethiopian church community is globally unique in that it wasn't Christianized through European missionaries, but was highly independent and itself spread missionaries throughout the rest of Africa prior to European Christian contact with the continent. (6) “Christianity in Africa,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Africa.) Satan fights against Christianity spreading to Africans! Why? Could it be that God has powerful plans for Africans, African-Americans, and those of African descent? Yes! According to data for 2021, Africa has the most Christians in the world, nearly 685 million! Now, God’s using them as missionaries to Europe, North America, and the USA! Can God use you to tell others of His love and salvation?

8. African-Americans, seek to satisfy your spiritual longings by turning to the LORD God and His Son, Jesus Christ. - If you have never really had a personal encounter with Jesus, you don’t know what you are missing! In seeking your roots and your identity, be careful when turning to African Spirituality and some of the traditional practices. Speak with African-American Christians who’ve come from Africa or those who live in parts of America where African spiritual traditions are followed. They’ll tell you there’s power in the traditions, but you don’t always know the source of the power. Satan, a false “angel of light”(2 Corinthians 11:24), and his demons can impersonate ancestral spirits or spiritual guides and feel so warm and loving, but are deceptive! They can torment you mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, financially, refusing to leave you. They believe your activities or those of your family give them legal right over you! But Jesus said, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved... The thief (*the devil or an evil spirit*) does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:9-10). Jesus is the only door that God allows for us to enter the spiritual world. All others are deception. In love, God’s Word warns, even forbids, any occultic activities: witchcraft, contacting of spirits, magic, spells, etc. (Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Isaiah 44:25; Jeremiah 27:9; 2 Kings 21:6; 23:24). Jesus said to ask the Father for His Holy Spirit then God and the Bible will guide you in the ways you need to go (Luke 11:13, John 16:13). Come visit us. We can teach you, even deliver you from demonic harassment!

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