

## **Blacks, Slavery, the Bible and History**

**By Norm R. Allen Jr.**

*There is no king who has not had a slave among his ancestors. And there is no slave who has not had a king among his – Helen Keller*

Baptist Pastor Keith Gomez, who heads the Northwest Bible Baptist Church in Elgin, Illinois, has stated that slavery allowed Africans to escape their continent and become civilized. “If it wasn’t for slavery, those folks would still be in Africa with a bone in their nose...fighting lions....That ain’t a prejudice. That is factual and historical,” he claimed.

Though many Whites and brainwashed Blacks embraced this view long ago, it has been mostly laid to rest nowadays. However, there are exceptions, and deep down, many probably still believe this.

In his ironically titled tome, *The End of Racism*, since-disgraced Christian conservative Dinesh D’Souza put forth this view. Last year (2016), Pastor Steven Anderson of Faithful Word Baptist Church delivered a sermon supporting slavery. He said, “...if the Bible condones slavery, then I condone slavery. Because the Bible is always right about every subject....”

This kind of talk infuriates most conscious Black Christians. However, those Black Christians that profess to believe everything in the Bible have some explaining to do. Surely, the Bible does condone slavery. All of the rationalizations or “re-interpretations” in the world will not change that fact. Is it more likely that a perfectly loving God condoned slavery, or that fallible human beings did so in the name of God?

Some people actually believe that slavery was acceptable in the past. That raises the question: When did the immutable God change his mind on the slavery issue? Why was it fine to enslave human beings when the Bible was written, but wrong to enslave Black people in later centuries? And why didn’t a perfect God clearly and unequivocally condemn slavery with his first or second commandment? What could possibly be more important than consistently condemning slavery and genocide?

All of this foolishness about a perfectly moral God condoning slavery in the Bible is not my reason for writing this column. What infuriates me most is Gomez's contention that African inferiority is "factual and *historical*."

There are many Black people in the U.S. that try to run away from their African ancestry. However, that is especially difficult to do when people like Gomez keep reminding them of it. How do these Black people respond to slavery talk? Do they simply continue to say, "I ain't no African?" They can continue to run from their African past, but sadly, they will always be haunted by it.

To no race is knowledge of good history more important than to the Black race, because no other people's past has been so thoroughly "lost, stolen and strayed." (The quoted part is borrowed from the title of an excellent documentary by Bill Cosby several decades ago.) Indeed, the *only* way for Black people to combat people like Gomez is to be knowledgeable about deep Black history.

So, let's get this party started. When Europeans were mostly still living in caves and wallowing in barbarism, Nile Valley Africans in Egypt were organizing one of antiquity's greatest civilizations. Their Black African neighbors, the Nubians, to whom they were closely related racially, also built pyramids and had advanced gold processing technology. Many scholars believe that it was from the Nubians that the Egyptians received the idea of the pharaoh.

Ironically, according to some African historians, Africa was on the verge of another golden age before the continent was conquered and depopulated by Europeans. European explorers were not necessarily interested in speaking or writing truthfully about African people. Some of them created maps on which they replaced African towns with jungles.

However, sometimes the truth would leak out. For example, one Dutch explorer said that an African town he had visited was as clean as his native Amsterdam. Such honesty among European explorers, though, was rare.

In Zimbabwe, Africans built impressive stone structures so elaborate that many Europeans simply assumed that they had to have been created by White people. Such was the low regard with which Africans were held.

Africans were smelting iron and steel long before Europeans. The late Black historian Ivan Van Sertima did impressive research on Africans and steel production. (Van Sertima contributed an article to my first book, *African American Humanism: An Anthology*.)

Much has been written about great African history if people like Gomez care to check it out. There are numerous scholarly journals and articles showing that Black Africans have contributed greatly to world civilization. Historians such as W.E.B. Du Bois, J.A. Rogers, Cheikh Anta Diop, Martin Bernal (all featured in my first book) and numerous others have done the hard research to tell the truth about African history. There is no need for Black people to ever run from their past, for our history is as awe-inspiring as the history of any other people. *That* is “factual and historical.”