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## Teacher' s Script: Jesus and Africa in the Bible

### **(Opening)**

“Today, we’re going to uncover an important—yet often overlooked—part of biblical history: the deep and meaningful connections between Jesus and Africa. Many people assume the Scriptures only highlight Europe or the Middle East, but when we look closely, we find Africa woven directly into the life, ministry, ancestry, and destiny of Jesus Christ.”

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### 1. The African Wise Man Who Visited Jesus

“When Jesus was born, wise men—also called Magi—traveled from the East to worship Him (Matthew 2:1–2). Most of us picture three men on camels, but history and Scripture give us far more context. Ancient African kingdoms, especially those in regions such as Kush and Punt, were known for astronomy, long-distance travel, and elaborate diplomatic missions.

One of these wise men is traditionally understood in early church tradition to have been from the region of Africa. Wise men didn’t travel alone; they came with attendants, soldiers, gift-bearers, animals, and scribes. Their entourage would have been large enough to attract attention—think of a royal caravan arriving in Jerusalem. Their gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—were products often traded along African routes, underscoring Africa’s economic and religious significance.

So, the very first people outside Jesus’ immediate family to acknowledge Him as King were connected to Africa. God ensured Africa was there at the cradle.”

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### 2. The Journey to Egypt to Protect the Christ Child

“Shortly after Jesus was born, Joseph was warned in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod’s attempt to kill the child (Matthew 2:13–15). Egypt, of course, is in Africa. This was not a minor detail—God intentionally chose Africa as the safe place to protect His Son.

Think about the symbolism: the same land that once held Israel in bondage now sheltered Israel’s Messiah. Jesus spent part of His childhood on African soil; His earliest years were shaped in a land rich in African culture, history, and civilization”

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### 3. Jesus' Ministry to African Jews

“During His ministry, Jesus encountered Jews from Africa who had come to Jerusalem for worship and festivals. One of the clearest examples is found in Acts 2:10, where Jews from Egypt and Libya were present on the day of Pentecost.

But Jesus didn't just preach near Africa—He ministered to African people and included them in His spiritual mission. Remember the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26–39? He was already a worshiper of the God of Israel. Africa wasn't spiritually distant; African Jews were part of the faith long before Christianity spread across Europe. Jesus' message was global from the beginning, and Africa was not a footnote—it was part of the plan.”

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### 4. The African Who Carried Jesus' Cross

“As Jesus approached His crucifixion, the Roman soldiers forced a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross (Mark 15:21). Cyrene was a major city in North Africa—modern-day Libya. That means the man who physically stepped into Jesus' suffering was African.

Think of the power in that moment: while others fled, an African man literally carried the instrument of salvation.

In a symbolic way, Africa helped bear the burden of the world's redemption.”

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### 5. The Two Descendants of Ham in Jesus' Bloodline

“Jesus' earthly genealogy includes descendants of **Ham**, one of Noah's sons, whose lineage spread into Africa (Genesis 10:6).

Two key figures in Jesus' bloodline with Hamitic or African ancestry are:

**Tamar** (Genesis 38), connected to Canaanite heritage

**Bathsheba**, the wife of King David, whose family ties trace into Hamitic lineage

Through these women, Africa is literally in the bloodstream of the Messiah.

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## Conclusion

“So, from the moment Jesus entered the world to the moment He took up the cross, Africa was present. Africa welcomed Him, sheltered Him, worshiped Him, supported His ministry, and helped carry His burden, and Africa lives in His lineage.

This isn't a side story—it's central to the Bible's message: God's plan always included Africa. When our students understand this, they don't just see themselves in Scripture—they see that they were *always meant* to be part of God's story.”

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## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Core Lesson Review

These questions ensure students recall key facts and details:

**Who were the wise men, and why is it significant that one is traditionally understood to have connections to Africa?**

*(Matthew 2:1–2)*

**Why did Joseph take Mary and Jesus to Egypt, and what does this tell us about Africa's role in Jesus' early life?**

*(Matthew 2:13–15)*

**Name one example of African Jews present during Jesus' lifetime or early ministry. What does this reveal about Africa's spiritual connection to Israel?**

*(Acts 2:10; Acts 8:26–39)*

**Who carried Jesus' cross, and why is his African heritage important to the story of the crucifixion?**

*(Mark 15:21)*

**Which two descendants of Ham are found in Jesus' genealogy, and what does their presence in His bloodline demonstrate about God's plan for redemption?**

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### Deeper Understanding / Interpretation

These questions encourage students to think critically:

**What do Jesus' connections to Africa suggest about God's view of different nations and cultures?**

**Why do you think these African connections are rarely emphasized in traditional Bible teaching? What impact might that have on people's identity and faith?**

**How does knowing that Jesus lived in Africa for part of His childhood affect how we understand His humanity and cultural experience?**

**What symbolic meaning might be found in an African man helping carry the cross at the moment of Jesus' suffering?**

**How does seeing African ancestry in Jesus' lineage challenge common assumptions about biblical history and racial identity?**

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## Personal Reflection / Application

These questions help students internalize the material:

**How does seeing Africa in the story of Jesus change the way you view your own heritage or the heritage of others?**

**Why is representation important in faith communities, and how does this lesson help address that need?**

**What might God be teaching us by ensuring that Africa appears at multiple turning points in Jesus' life?**

**How can this understanding influence the way we teach, preach, or reflect on the life of Christ today?**

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## Extension Activities (Optional)

Choose one:

**Research Assignment:**

Students select one biblical African location (Egypt, Cyrene, Ethiopia, Cush, or Libya) and explain its importance in Scripture.

**Genealogy Map:**

Students create a visual lineage chart highlighting Tamar and Bathsheba's connection to Jesus.

**Creative Project:**

Write a short dramatic monologue from the perspective of Simon of Cyrene reflecting on the moment he carried the cross.

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**Exit Ticket Questions (Quick Assessment)**

Provide these at the end of class:

**Where did Jesus go for safety as a child, and what continent is that located on?**

**Who is the African man connected to Jesus' crucifixion?**

**Name one descendant of Ham found in Jesus' bloodline.**

**Why is it significant that Africa appears multiple times in Jesus' life story?**

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# Student Worksheet

## *Jesus and Africa in the Bible*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson #:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Part 1 — Reading Review

Answer each question in complete sentences using what you learned in today's lesson.

**Who were the wise men, and why does the lesson say that one of them may have had an African connection?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the reason Jesus' family traveled to Egypt. Why is this journey important to understanding Africa's place in Jesus' early life?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Name one example of African Jews or African believers mentioned in the Bible. What does this show about Africa's relationship to Israel and early Christianity?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Who carried Jesus' cross, and where was he from? Why is his role significant?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Identify the two descendants of Ham found in Jesus' genealogy. What does this teach us about the diversity in Jesus' earthly bloodline?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2 — Think Deeper

Respond thoughtfully. Use examples or evidence when possible.

**Why might these African connections be overlooked in traditional Bible teaching? How might knowing this information affect someone's identity or faith?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the symbolic importance of an African man helping carry Jesus' cross? What message could this send to people today?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Part 3 — Personal Reflection

**How does learning about Africa's presence in Jesus' story change the way you view the Bible?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Why is it meaningful to see your culture or heritage represented in Scripture?**

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Part 4 — Quick Check (Exit Ticket)

Circle or write the correct answer.

Jesus' family fled to **Egypt** to protect Him from  
**a)** the Romans   **b)** Herod's threat   **c)** a famine

Simon of Cyrene, who carried Jesus' cross, was from  
**a)** Europe   **b)** South America   **c)** Africa

A descendant of Ham in Jesus' bloodline is  
**Tamar / Bathsheba / Both**

Africa appears multiple times in Jesus' story because

- a) God ignored Africa
- b) It was part of God's plan from the beginning
- c) It was accidental

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### Bonus Challenge

Choose ONE of the following:

Draw a map showing where Egypt and Cyrene are located in Africa.

Write a short journal entry as Simon of Cyrene describing how you felt carrying Jesus' cross.

Illustrate the wise man's entourage arriving to visit the newborn Jesus.

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Teacher Signature (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

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# Teacher Answer Key

## *Jesus and Africa in the Bible*

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### Part 1 — Reading Review (Model Answers)

1.

**Who were the wise men, and why does the lesson say that one of them may have had an African connection?**

*The wise men (Magi) were scholars and travelers who came to worship the newborn Jesus (Matthew 2:1–2). Tradition and historical context suggest that one may have come from an African region, and their gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—were traded along African routes, highlighting Africa’s presence at Jesus’ birth.*

**Describe the reason Jesus’ family traveled to Egypt. Why is this journey important to understanding Africa’s place in Jesus’ early life?**

*They fled to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill Jesus (Matthew 2:13–15). This shows that Africa served as God’s chosen place of protection for the Messiah, meaning Jesus spent part of His childhood in Africa.*

**Name one example of African Jews or African believers mentioned in the Bible. What does this show about Africa’s relationship to Israel and early Christianity?**

*Examples include Jews from Egypt and Libya present at Pentecost (Acts 2:10), or the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–39). This shows Africa was spiritually connected to Israel long before Christianity spread elsewhere.*

**Who carried Jesus’ cross, and where was he from? Why is his role significant?**

*Simon of Cyrene carried Jesus’ cross (Mark 15:21). He was from Cyrene in North Africa. His role is significant because an African man physically helped bear the burden of the world’s salvation.*

**Identify the two descendants of Ham found in Jesus' genealogy. What does this teach us about the diversity in Jesus' earthly bloodline?**

*Tamar and Bathsheba. Their presence shows Jesus' ancestry included African/Hamitic lineage, demonstrating God's inclusive plan and racial diversity in the Messiah's family line.*

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## Part 2 — Think Deeper (Sample Responses)

*Accept well-reasoned answers. These are examples, not strict wording.*

**What do Jesus' connections to Africa tell us about God's attitude toward different nations and cultures?**

*God values all cultures and includes every nation in His plan. Africa was not an afterthought but involved from the beginning.*

**Why might these African connections be overlooked in traditional Bible teaching? How might knowing this information affect someone's identity or faith?**

*Some traditions focus on European imagery or ignore Africa's role in Scripture. Learning this can give people a stronger sense of belonging, identity, and representation in God's story.*

**What is the symbolic importance of an African man helping carry Jesus' cross?**

*It symbolizes Africa's participation in redemption and shows that African people are part of God's saving work, not outsiders.*

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## Part 3 — Personal Reflection (Answers Will Vary)

**How does learning about Africa's presence in Jesus' story change the way you view the Bible?**

*Look for evidence of thoughtful engagement.*

**Why is it meaningful to see your culture or heritage represented in Scripture?**

*Look for answers about identity, validation, connection, or relevance.*

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**Part 4 — Quick Check (Exit Ticket)**

**b)** Herod's threat

**c)** Africa

**b)** It was part of God's plan from the beginning.

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**Bonus Challenge (Teacher Notes)**

Accept creativity, effort, and scriptural relevance.

Map should place **Egypt** in northeast Africa and **Cyrene** in modern-day Libya.

Journal entry should reflect emotion and empathy.

Illustration should show a large, royal entourage visiting Jesus.

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### ✓ Teacher Tip

Encourage students not just to *recall facts*, but to understand **why Africa's presence matters** in the biblical narrative. The purpose is not trivia—it's identity, history, and the restoration of overlooked truth.

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