

**SERMON: TELL IT LIKE IT WAS**  
**(A Black History Sermon)**

**Ecclesiastes 9: 14-16**

**(14) There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: (15) Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; and no man remembered that same poor man. (16) Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.**

**Matthew 28:11-15**

**(11) Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priest all the things that were done. (12) And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, (13) Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. (14) And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. (15) So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.**

**Introduction**

There are a few facts about the recording of history which are very important, but often overlooked. History is always recorded from the perspective of the eye witnesses. Very few, if any, eye witnesses are totally objective. This is why historians of a later era have to come in and see everything from a more distant and objective position. There are always omissions and emphasis which can easily give a distorted view of the events. Sometimes the eye witnesses can have a blind spot or have "above-average" biases and prejudices. In many cases, the eye witnesses were "involved observers." Sometimes one important point can be emphasized to the exclusion of other important points. One generation of eye witnesses may see no need to include or emphasize something because it is so well known to them and their contemporaries. This produces a "historical void" because the succeeding generations are not aware of it. Therefore, what is so obvious to one generation may be obscure or unknown to the succeeding generations.

Now let's not beat around the bush anymore. When it comes to Blacks, Native American, and other people of color, most of the omissions and distortions were deliberate. They were not inadvertent. They were employed to protect and perpetuate a "desired narrative." This narrative gave privilege, power, and a sense of superiority to

certain groups. Facts that did not support this narrative were omitted, distorted, denied, ignored, or trivialized.

Distortions and omissions are not new. There is nothing new under the sun. Our texts, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, prove this. In the first text, a man saved a city, but history did not record it and his efforts were forgotten. Look at all of the contributions Blacks have made to civilization that are not widely known. In the second text, there was a deliberate attempt to disseminate disinformation that would deny the reality of the resurrection. They literally paid people to lie about the resurrection. If that is not fake news, I don't know what is.

Because of distortions and bad hermeneutics, there are some Blacks and Native Americans who will not accept the Biblical message. They see it as the White man's religion. "Why accept the religion of the oppressor?" It is not the religion of the oppressor. We may have gotten our distorted version from the oppressor, but the true version came from God, Himself.

I will spend the rest of this month, Black history month, giving Biblical teaching and church history with emphasis on things that may not be known well. A lot of this was and is taught at Historical Black Colleges and Universities.

Black history just adds what was originally omitted and corrects the distortions. Its intent is to "tell it like it was." I must admit that computers have made it much easier to connect the historical dots and verify what has been taught for years at HBCUs.

I also admit that this may be more of a lecture than a sermon. Please bear with me as I recite our ABCs: Africa, the Bible, and Christianity.

## **Exposition**

### **1. There Is a Significant African Presence in the Entire Bible**

(Egypt, Ethiopia, Cush, Nubia, Ophir)  
(It Starts In Genesis 2:13)  
(Psalm 68:31)

### **2. Africa and the Holy Land Are Located In the Same Geographic Region-The Same Tectonic Plate**

(There Was Considerable Travel Between The Two Lands)  
(Genesis 42:1-3; Acts 2:10-Egypt, Libya, Cyrene; Acts 8:27-39)

### **3. The Second Book of the Bible, Exodus, Is a Book of Liberation**

(Africans Were The Oppressors at That Time)

#### **4. It was an African, Ebedmelech, who saved Jeremiah's life**

(Jeremiah 38:6-13)

(This is just one of many examples of Blacks in the Bible)

#### **5. The Church at Antioch Was Led By People of African Descent**

(It Became More Influential Than the Church at Jerusalem)

(Rufus, the Son of the Man Who Carried Jesus' Cross, Was At Antioch, He Then Moved to Rome to Help Establish That Church)

(Mark 15:21; Romans 16:13)

#### **Closing Thoughts**

Let's go back to our text in Matthew. In spite of all of the efforts to deny the resurrection of Jesus, the truth prevailed. He was seen many times by his followers. He was seen at one time by more than five hundred individuals. This gives us hope. Truth crushed to the ground will rise again. Significant historical omissions will find a way to make themselves known. "Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on." Give God Glory! Give God All the Glory!

#### **End Notes**

1. In the ancient world, nationality or tribal/group affiliation was more important than race or physical features. Therefore, the individual's race was not mentioned. Race as we know it, began around 1400 A.D. with the European expansion.

2. Linguistic scholars are now looking at the Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible that have traditionally been translated as "eunuch." Some believe they should be translated as civil servant, governmental official, ambassador, or courtier. Some believe the translators may have been biased; they used it more often when referring to people of African descent.

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