

**TAKING  
AFRICA  
FOR JESUS**



# TAKING AFRICA FOR JESUS

By  
**Joshua Schwisow  
and Kevin Swanson**



Copyright © 2023 by Generations

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America

2nd Edition, 1st Printing, 2023

ISBN: 978-1-7332304-5-2

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover Design: Justin Turley

Interior Layout Design: Sarah Lee Bryant

Published by:

Generations

19039 Plaza Drive Ste 210

Parker, Colorado 80134

[www.generations.org](http://www.generations.org)

For more information on this and other titles from Generations, visit [www.generations.org](http://www.generations.org) or call 888-389-9080.

# Contents

1. Introduction to Africa .....	9
2. Egypt (Part 1).....	21
3. Egypt (Part 2).....	31
4. Egypt (Part 3).....	39
5. Christianity Spreads to Africa .....	49
6. Church Life in North Africa.....	59
7. The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity .....	69
8. Cyprian of Carthage .....	77
9. Athanasius of Alexandria .....	85
10. Augustine of Hippo .....	97
11. The Rise of Islam .....	109
12. Raymond Lull: Missionary to the Muslims .....	119
13. The African Slave Trade .....	131
14. Exploration and Colonization of Africa .....	141
15. The Moravians in South Africa .....	151
16. Robert Moffat: Missionary to South Africa .....	161
17. The Gospel in Namibia .....	173
18. David Livingstone.....	181
19. Samuel Adjai Crowther: A Slave Boy Rescued ....	193
20. Alexander Mackay: White Man of Work .....	203
21. Mary Slessor: The Lord's Servant in Calabar.....	215
22. Samuel Zwemer: Missionary to Arabia and Egypt ...	227
23. C.T. Studd: Missionary to the Congo.....	237
24. Recent Stories from Africa.....	247
<b>LIST OF IMAGES .....</b>	<b>260</b>









MT. KILIMANJARO

# Introduction to Africa

**Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!  
For You shall judge the people righteously,  
And govern the nations on earth  
(Psalm 67:4)**

In this book, you will learn the history of one of the world's largest continents. This is the landmass we call Africa. This enormous continent is over 11 million square miles. It is the second largest continent in the world. Today, there are over 50 distinct countries in Africa. Each has its own languages, government, and people groups.

Africa has been the theater of many of God's greatest works in history. The gospel of Jesus Christ took root here after Jesus' ascension. Today, Christianity is expanding at a rapid rate throughout the continent. In Africa, Jesus is bringing all His enemies under His footstool (1 Cor. 15:25).

Yet Africa is also a continent filled with

many sad stories. The fall into sin brought terrible things into the world. Like other peoples, Africans have suffered in many ways throughout history. These sufferings include deadly plagues, natural disasters, and enslavement. Africa has also been conquered by foreign powers. But God has purpose even in the sad stories of Africa's history. This history is still a part of His ultimate plan for the world.

## THE FOUR REGIONS OF AFRICA

**And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:26-27)**

Before you learn Africa's history, let's look at Africa itself. Let's look at the geography,

## REGIONS OF AFRICA

North Africa	Mountains, deserts
West Africa	Grasslands
East Africa	Mountains, plateaus
Central and South Africa	Grasslands, rainforests, swamps, deserts



MAP OF AFRICA

climate, and animals of this continent. We will begin by studying Africa's geography.

Africa is divided into four major regions. These four regions are North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, and Central and Southern Africa. Each of these regions have different geographical features and

different climates.

North Africa contains many rocky mountains. In the southern portion of North Africa, the enormous Sahara Desert stretches across the continent. The Sahara is the world's largest desert.

West Africa is the most populated re-

## MOUNTAINS IN AFRICA

Mount Kilimanjaro	19,341 feet (5,895 meters)	Tanzania
Mount Kenya	17,058 feet (5,199 meters)	Kenya
Mount Stanley	16,762 feet (5,109 meters)	Uganda and the Congo

gion of Africa. It contains much grassland. This makes West Africa a good place for farming.

East Africa contains many mountains. It also contains what are known as plateaus. A plateau is a large raised area of level land.

Central and Southern Africa is mostly flat. This region of Africa also contains many rainforests and swamps. There are also a few deserts in Central and Southern Africa. These deserts are known as the Namib and the Kalahari deserts.

## MOUNTAINS IN AFRICA

---

**Your righteousness is like the great mountains;  
Your judgments are a great deep;  
O LORD, You preserve man and beast.  
(Psalm 36:6)**

---

Mountains can be found in all four regions of Africa. The tallest mountains are mostly found in East Africa. One of the most impressive of God's creations in Africa is Mount Kilimanjaro. This mountain is the tallest in Africa, standing at 19,341 feet (5,895 meters). It is a volcano that is cur-

rently dormant. Kilimanjaro is found in the country of Tanzania. Because of its incredible height, it is very cold at its summit. The average temperature at the top is about 19 °F (-7 °C). Snowfall occurs throughout the year at the summit.

The second tallest mountain in Africa is Mount Kenya. This beautiful mountain stands at 17,058 feet (5,199 meters). It is located in the country of Kenya.

On the western border of Uganda, you will find the third tallest mountain in Africa. Mount Stanley, also known as Mount Ngaliema, is 16,762 feet tall (5,109 meters). In all, Africa contains twelve mountains that are over 10,000 feet tall.

Praise God for these examples of His glory and power!

## RIVERS IN AFRICA

---

**Let the rivers clap their hands;  
Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD,  
For He is coming to judge the earth.  
With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity.  
(Psalm 98:8-9)**

---

The four largest rivers in Africa are the Nile, the Congo, the Zambezi, and the Niger. These four major rivers are very important to the peoples of Africa. They provide water for growing crops. The fish in their waters provide a good source of food. God's merciful hand has provided these great rivers to the peoples of Africa.

The longest of these rivers is the Nile River. At over 4,000 miles in length (6,400 kilometers), the Nile River is the longest river in the world. It is over twice the length of the Mississippi River in the United States. The only real rival to the Nile River is the Amazon River in South America. The Amazon has a greater amount of water, but the Nile is the longest.

For millennia the Nile River has created fertile farmland along its banks. Even in desert-like regions such as Egypt, people were able to survive because of the Nile. Before the creation of man-made dams, the Nile would flood its banks regularly. Farmers would plant their crops to take advantage of these flood cycles. Now, with dams in place, the waters of the Nile are diverted to grow even more crops in desert regions.

The Congo River flows through the rain forests of the Republic of Congo and the Democratic People's Republic of the Congo. (These are two different countries with a similar name.) The Congo is the second longest river in Africa. It is about



## RIVERS IN AFRICA

Nile River	4,000 miles (6,400 kilometers)
Congo River	2,900 miles (4,700 kilometers)
Niger River	2,600 miles (4,180 kilometers)
Zambezi River	2,200 miles (3,540 kilometers)

2,900 miles in length (4,700 kilometers). (65 kilometers). The Congo is also the world's deepest river. In some parts of the Congo River, the water is as deep as 720 feet (220 meters).

The Niger River is the third longest river in Africa. It is 2,600 miles in length (4,180 kilometers). The Niger River begins in Guinea and empties into the Atlantic Ocean in the Niger Delta.

The fourth longest river in Africa is the Zambezi River. This river travels through six African countries. It is 2,200 miles long (3,540 kilometers). However, only a small portion of this length can be traveled by boat. The Zambezi contains many waterfalls and rapids. This makes boat travel down the river very dangerous or even impossible.

One of the most astounding of God's creations in Africa is Victoria Falls. At one point in its journey, the Zambezi River plunges into a canyon. We call this part of the river Victoria Falls. It is one of the largest waterfalls in the world. The spray and mist from the falling water is so enormous that it can be seen as far as 40 miles away

## VEGETATION REGIONS IN AFRICA

---

**And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food." (Genesis 1:29)**

---

The different climates of Africa create varying landscapes. There are three major vegetation regions in Africa. These three are Tropical Rain Forests, Tropical Savannas, and Deserts.

Tropical rain forests are regions where rain falls all year long. There are numerous rain forests in Africa. They are mostly in West and Central Africa. The rain forests in Africa make up about 20% of the continent. This collection of water and greenery supports a lot of wildlife. Animals such as chimpanzees, hippos, and gorillas live in these regions. The forests are so dense here that people have to clear trees to construct their villages.

Tropical savannas are the most com-

mon regions in Africa. These regions have tall grass, bushes, and some trees. They do not receive as much rainfall as the rainforests. For this reason, they are sometimes drier. The tropical savannas have two seasons: dry and wet. During the dry season, farming stops. But once the wet season begins, farmers give their attention to planting crops. Common animals here include zebras, lions, elephants, and African buffalo.

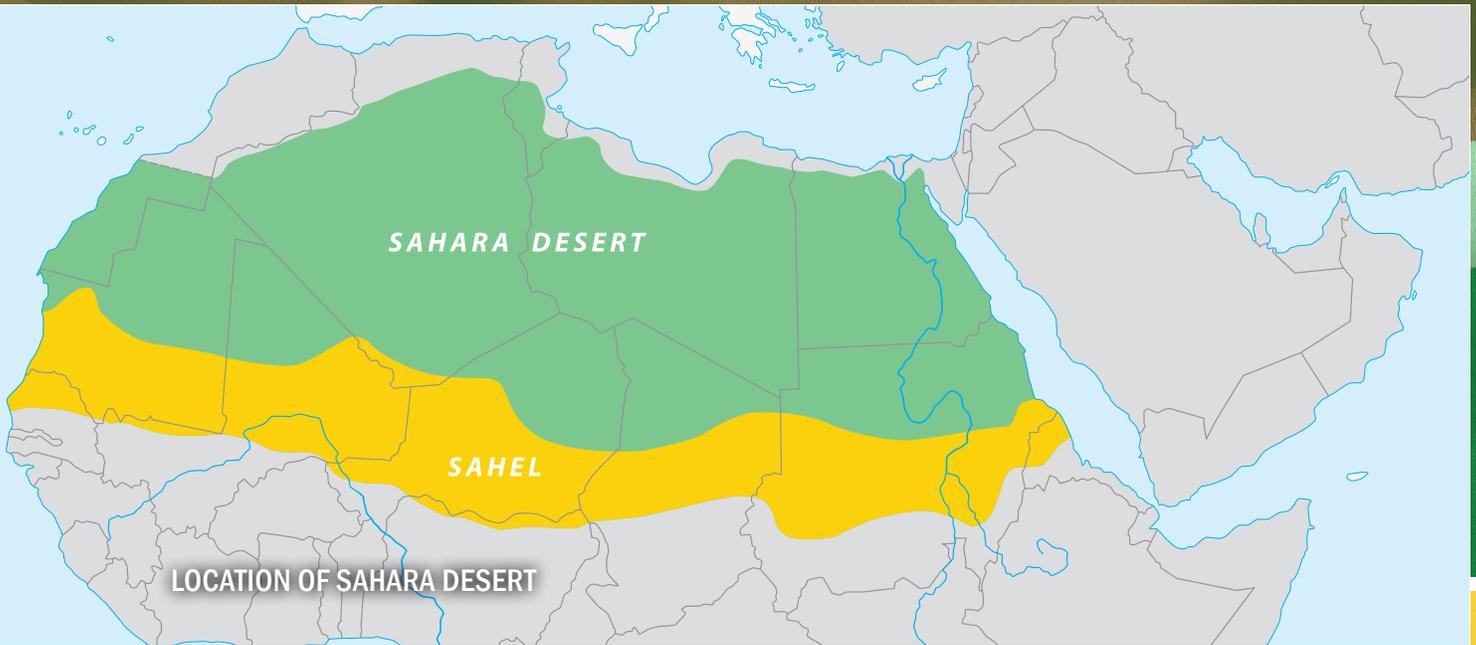
Africa contains the largest amount of desert land in the world. The world's largest desert is the Sahara Desert. The Sahara Desert is about the size of the United States or China. Most of the Sahara Desert receives no rainfall at all. The southern edge of the Sahara connects to a savanna region called the "Sahel." This region is very hot

and dry, but it does receive a small amount of rainfall each year (about 4 to 8 inches). The Sahara Desert is one of the hottest places in the world. The average temperature is over 100 °F (38 °C). In some cases, the temperature has reached 116 °F (47 °C). The only place in the world that has a hotter temperature on record is Death Valley, California. These are the average air temperatures. But the sand is much, much hotter. Sand in the Sahara Desert can reach 176 °F (72 °C)! If you have ever been to the beach on a hot day, you know that the sand can be so hot it will burn the bottom of your feet. Much of the sand in the Sahara would melt your shoes!

The Namib and Kalahari Deserts are quite large. But they are not nearly as big as the Sahara Desert. They are both located



AFRICAN ELEPHANTS



in the southern portion of Africa.

## THE ECONOMY OF AFRICA

Many African nations began as colonial projects. Foreign empires and nations founded and ruled these areas. For centu-

ries these African countries were dependent on an outside power. But, in recent years, a major move towards independence has occurred in Africa. Now that African countries are independent, they have to stand on





MUD HUT IN SUDAN

their own. They face numerous economic challenges today. First, many of the countries still rely on foreign aid. This means that many Africans are dependent on other nations. They are not building their own economies. Billions of dollars in foreign aid has not been helpful to Africa. Instead, it has harmed many African nations.

Also, many African nations experience high levels of corruption. Rulers and officials lie and steal to gain money and power for themselves. This corruption affects people at every level of society. Imagine what would happen if you couldn't trust any of the police officers in your own town. What if you knew that a judge in the courtroom would only rule justly if you slipped him a \$100 bill before the trial? This is the kind of thing many Africans experience. Clearly,

the nations of Africa are still in much need of Jesus' saving work. They need His power to deliver them from the sins of envy, pride, and the love of money.

Many Africans experience higher levels of disease than nations in Europe and America. Malaria is a very common disease. Though it is not always deadly, it does take many lives. HIV/AIDS is also a common disease that kills many at a young age. When disease is common and people die at a younger age, this hampers the growth of an economy.

The majority of Africans live on small plots of lands. They farm their own food and live on anything they can grow. This means that many Africans never become wealthy. They don't develop businesses or large family economies. They are busy just

trying to feed and clothe their families. Africa's national structure is also poorly-developed compared to Western nations. Its energy, roads, communication, and transportation are often not very developed. Travel is much slower and more dangerous than in other countries. For example, an American can drive from Washington DC to New York City in about 4 hours (a distance of some 220 miles). But to drive the same distance in Africa can take up to 8 hours.

Sectors of Africa are also experiencing military conflicts. The devastation of war brings much suffering with it. War displaces families from their homes. It destroys towns. It disrupts trade and production.

African nations that experience high levels of conflict have struggling economies.

As Christians, we should pray for the peace of Christ to come to these nations. We should also pray that the nations would be blessed with fruitful lands and families as a result of the gospel. Healthy economies can only exist when people follow the ways of the Lord.

## RELIGIONS IN AFRICA

---

**For all the gods of the peoples are idols,  
But the LORD made the heavens. (Psalm 96:5)**

---

The two largest religions in Africa are Christianity and Islam. At this time,



CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN RURAL KENYA

## RELIGION IN AFRICA

Christianity	49%
Islam	42%
Tribal Religions	8%
Other/None	1%

Christians outnumber the Muslim population by about 6%. These religions are generally divided by regions. Most Muslims reside in North Africa. The majority of Christians live below the Sahara Desert. (This area is called sub-Saharan Africa). Both Christianity and Islam are growing. This is due mainly to a higher number of births than countries in the West. A large portion of Africa still fol-

lows traditional tribal religion. Those who claim “no religion” in Africa are only a tiny fraction of the population (about 1%). In certain African nations, Christians face severe persecution. Some of the most dangerous places to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus include Libya, Sudan, Egypt, Somalia, Nigeria, and Eritrea. Much of this persecution comes from radical Muslim groups. ■



LEMURS FROM MADAGASCAR



PYRAMID OF GIZA

# Egypt (Part 1)

**T**he earliest African records of human history come mainly from Egypt. In the next few chapters, we will examine the history of this ancient culture.

Egyptian records offer us many conflicting lists of rulers and pharaohs. Many historians do not accept biblical revelation. They want to date the history of Egypt back into 3200 BC. Yet the Egyptian records do not give us a clear timeline. It is best for us to look to the chronology of Holy Scripture. We know that we can trust this because it is God's perfect Word.

## EARLY EGYPTIAN HISTORY

Around 2300 BC, the pharaohs of Egypt began building pyramids. Djoser was the first pharaoh to begin building these massive structures.

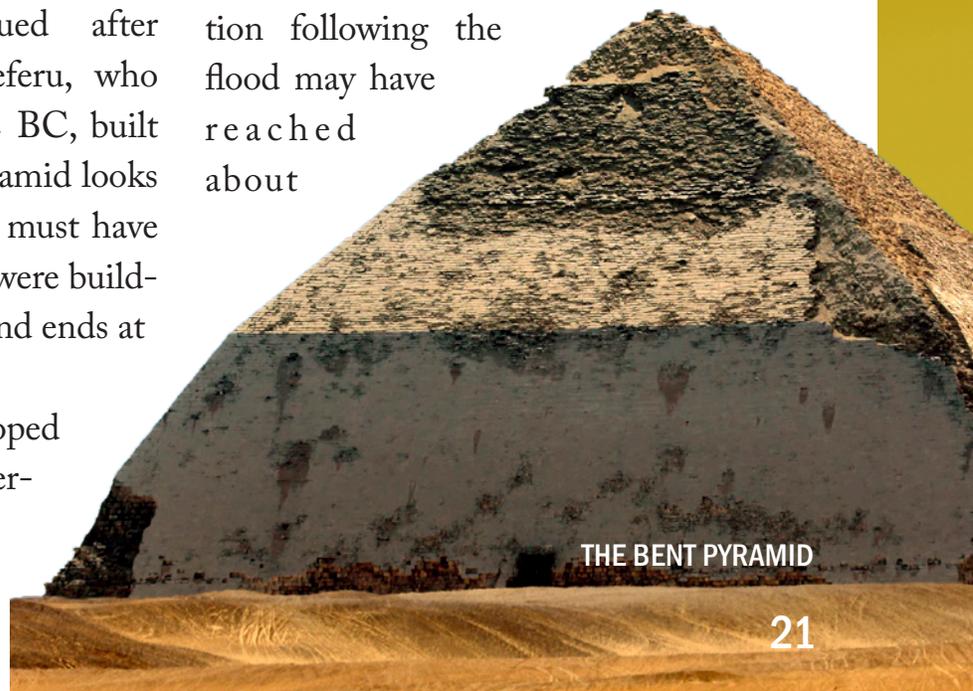
Pyramid-building continued after Djoser's reign. Pharaoh Seneferu, who ruled somewhere around 2282 BC, built his own pyramid. His Bent Pyramid looks a little lopsided. His architects must have changed the design while they were building it. The angle begins at 55° and ends at 43° towards the upper levels.

Pyramid-building developed quickly within a few short generations. When Seneferu's son

Cheops took the throne of Egypt, the empire was ready to build the biggest pyramid of all. It was constructed at Giza. The builders used 2.3 million blocks weighing an average of seven tons each. At 450 feet (137 meters) high, Cheops' pyramid was one attempt to make a tower to "reach the heavens." In history, sinful people try again and again to prove that they are as great as God is.

The pyramid at Giza was the largest pyramid of all. It was also the most accurately built pyramid in Egypt's history. It was completed only seventy-five years after pyramid-building began. It probably took 40,000 men to build the Great Pyramid. When it was being built, the population of Egypt was probably somewhere around 2,000,000.

The world population following the flood may have reached about



THE BENT PYRAMID



THE SPHINX

4,000,000 by the year 2258 BC. Therefore it is possible that the Great Pyramid was built somewhere around 2258 BC. This is about 160 years after the Tower of Babel. It is possible that these pharaohs borrowed their ideas for a tower “that would reach to the heavens” from the Tower of Babel.

Noah’s son Ham had a son after the Flood named Mizraim. Mizraim would have been born around 2478 BC. It is quite possible that he began to settle what would become the country of Egypt around 2450 BC. The Great Pyramid at Giza would be built about 200 years later.

The oldest piece of writing found in Egypt comes from this same era. In AD 2013, archeologists uncovered an ancient

papyrus in a cave near the Red Sea. The papyrus was a logbook or diary kept by an inspector. The inspector was working on shipping huge limestone blocks down the Nile for the Great Pyramid of Giza. The logbook lists payments for food and labor. The author, Merer, wrote about Ankhhaef, who was Pharaoh Cheops’ half-brother. Merer wrote that Ankhhaef was “chief for all the works of the king.”

We can learn several important things from this record. First, ancient man was just as intelligent as modern man. He used writing, accounting, and technology like we do. We should never doubt that Adam and Eve were able to communicate through writing. Second, the oldest known writings date from the 23rd century. We can

assume that the worldwide flood occurred shortly before this time. It would have destroyed all earlier written records. That is probably why we find no written records from before this time.

Pharaoh Cheops' sons Djedefre and Khafre followed him. Khafre built the tremendous Sphinx and the Pyramid of Khafra. This was the end of the grandest pyramid-building period in history. This period all took place around Giza and probably ended around 2150 BC. This is about the same time Abram of the Bible was born (Gen. 11:26). In God's providential plan, Egypt began experiencing internal strife and discord. This turmoil would continue for the next 200 years. The Upper Kingdom and Lower Kingdom of Egypt were divided against each other. The priests and the political leaders also fought among themselves. This conflict would hinder further cultural progress.

### ABRAM VISITS EGYPT – 2076 BC

During this period of brokenness, the Lord brought His chosen man Abram to Egypt. Abram's influence seemed to strike the fear of God in the heart of Pharaoh during his visit. In Genesis 12, Abram moved into Egypt for a time because of a famine in the land of Canaan. While he was there, Pharaoh Makdea tried to take Abram's wife Sarai. He prepared to add the woman to his harem. But the Lord sent "great plagues" to his house (Gen. 12:17). Pharaoh decided it would be best to send Abram away from

Egypt. When he left, Abram received gifts of oxen, donkeys, camels, and servants.

Shortly afterward, Abram met another important figure in the history of the world. This figure was Melchizedek, king of Salem. This man was also a priest, and Abram gave him a tithe. Melchizedek blessed Abram with these words:

---

**Blessed be Abram of God Most High,  
Possessor of heaven and earth,  
And blessed be God Most High,  
Who has delivered your enemies into your  
hand. (Genesis 14:19-20)**

---

In a world of war, a symbol of peace came from the King of Salem (which means peace). In a world of evil kings, Abram saw a glimmer of hope that a good King would arise. In a world of sin, we need a priest, a perfect Priest. We need a priest who will atone for the sins of the world. A prophet represents God to man by bringing God's message to man. However, man also needs a priest. He needs someone who will stand before God and represent him to God.

Who was this mysterious Melchizedek? Some believe he was an angel. Some believe that he was Shem, because Shem outlived Abraham. The Book of Hebrews speaks of Melchizedek as having no beginning, at least in this world. We do not know where Melchizedek came from or when he died, or if he died. But we do know that he was a type of the Christ who was to come.

Melchizedek was very similar to Jesus in many ways. First, both Melchizedek and Jesus are the King of Salem. Jesus Christ was declared to be the King of the Jews. He is also the King that rules from the New Jerusalem to this day. The Book of Hebrews explains:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of

all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 10:22-25)

Secondly, both Melchizedek and Jesus serve in the offices of king and priest. In ancient Israel, the kingly line came from the tribe of Judah. The priestly line came from the tribe of Levi. Therefore it was impossible for anyone to be both a priest and a king.

Thirdly, it was God Himself who made



ABRAHAM MEETS MELCHIZEDEK

both Melchizedek and Jesus priests.

Fourthly, both Melchizedek and Jesus come from a second line of priests. Neither of them came from the line of Levi. Instead, they came from the mysterious line having “no beginning.”

Fifthly, both Melchizedek and Jesus had a higher authority than Abram. Abram paid his tithes to Melchizedek. He did this because he submitted to the priest’s authority. Levi was Abram’s great-grandson. Therefore Levi’s priesthood had less honor than the priestly line of Melchizedek.

---

**For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi,**



KING TUT'S GOLDEN MASK

**who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. (Hebrews 7:1-10)**

---

## WRONG-HEADED CIVILIZATION

**Why do the nations rage,  
And the people plot a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the Lord and against His  
Anointed, saying,  
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces  
And cast away Their cords from us.”**

**He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;  
The Lord shall hold them in derision.  
(Psalm 2:1-4)**

---

Fallen man continues to build bigger empires and kingdoms in history. He continues to live in rebellion against God. The pyramids themselves are a picture of man's vain egotism and pride. The pyramids were useless buildings. Nobody lived in them. Nobody worked in them. Nobody even stored anything useful in them. They were built on a wrong worldview. The builders foolishly thought that the pharaohs would become gods in the afterlife. Somehow they thought that all the things they buried with the corpses

would help the dead in the next life.

Instead of leaving their resources to living people, they wasted them on building worthless pyramids. They buried their treasures with dead bodies. It wasn't long before thieves figured out they could rob the pyramids. Soon the Egyptians began hiding the graves of their pharaohs. When Pharaoh Tutankhamen died in 1325 BC, he was buried in a hidden grave. It would take over three thousand years before Howard Carter discovered the hidden tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

Egypt was the first empire to perfect the art of big government. Egyptian dynasties had very big governments with lots of employees. These employees were usu-



EGYPTIAN ART DEPICTING SLAVES

ally given ridiculous projects. Tasks like pyramid-building required a large number of accountants, taxmen, and census clerks. The vizier (or prime minister) was put in charge of the government. This included the treasury and the bureaucracy. Egyptians typically used grain, yeast, cattle, or beer as money.

Slavery was common in Egypt. For example, it took 800 slave rowers in 27 boats to transport large obelisks down the Nile. During his reign, Rameses III sent 113,000 slaves to work in the temples. Slaves were killed and buried with the pharaohs in their tombs.

The pharaoh was treated like a god. Twenty people were in charge of his hair, makeup, and dress. One person was assigned to carry his sandals. Another person was called “the overseer of the cosmetic box.” With such luxury, the pharaohs usually became self-centered and pleasure-loving. Incest was common with these rulers. One vizier described his pharaoh like this: “What is the king of Upper and Lower Egypt? He is a god by whose dealings one lives, the father and mother of all men, alone by himself without an equal.”

Egyptians studied medicine very diligently. Their doctors specialized in various medical fields such as childbirth or eye problems. A 1600 BC medical papyri lists 48 forms of surgery that Egyptian doctors used. They treated skull fractures, spinal injuries, and other serious problems. The first medical manual comes from ancient

Egypt (the Kahun Papyrus, about 1825 BC). Not surprisingly, this early medical science includes ways to prevent pregnancy. Sinful people are usually quick to find ways to destroy life, even unborn life.

The Lord God warned the Israelites not to practice these sins. He declared:

---

**When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you. (Deuteronomy 18:9-14)**

---

These abominable activities were common among the Egyptians. These people were especially enslaved to the devil through the use of witchcraft. They scrawled magic spells in hieroglyphics on the walls of their pharaohs' tombs. In the 16th century BC, they assembled a “Book of the Dead.” It included 192 spells. This magic was supposed to help the dead control their future in the afterlife. It was also supposed to manipulate the gods.

RITUAL ILLUSTRATION FROM *THE BOOK OF DEAD*

The Egyptians believed that if the dead knew the mystical names of certain gods or demons, they would have control over them. Sinful mankind is often still attracted to these mystery religions from Egypt. However, Christians understand that Egyptian religions were perverse, deceptive, and enslaving. These beliefs were a way that the devil deceived the nations. By them he distracted people from knowing the true and living God. This was another way to “suppress the truth” of God in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:19).

Man is always eagerly searching for super-human powers, a godlike position, and secret knowledge. This is why he is interested in demonism, spiritism, occultism, and secret societies. Demonic power

is especially exciting for people in rebellion against the true and living God. They are captivated by it. They honor the witchdoctors who cast spells or perform wonders.

The magicians of Egypt who battled with Moses were well aware of what was at stake. Their very position was threatened by the true and living God. The all-sovereign Lord allowed them to have a little power. Moses’ serpent consumed theirs. Then they duplicated two of the plagues. But the magicians had to admit defeat in the end. The demonic powers of Egypt were useless against Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on

man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said. (Exodus 8:18-19)

## EGYPTIAN RELIGION

Two things marked the basic worldview of the Egyptians. These two things are a picture of the way sinful man still thinks. First, they believed in evolution. Secondly, they did not believe in a God who ruled over all. Nor did they believe that God was entirely separate by nature from His creation.

Egyptian religious texts quote the god Neb-er-tcher. He declares: “I evolved the evolving of evolutions. I evolved myself under the form of the evolutions of the god Keeper, which were evolved at the beginning of all time . . . I developed myself out of the primeval matter. My name is Osiris, the germ of primeval matter.”

The Egyptians believed that men and gods were made of the same nature. They thought that the gods were just a little further up the pyramid of being. Since the priests were considered to be of the same nature as the gods, they thought they could manipulate the gods. The miracles that Moses brought about came by the command of God. But the miracles that the demons performed for the Egyptians came by the command of the priests. *The*

*Book of the Dead* was simply a collection of magic spells. Man thought he could use these spells to manipulate the gods. This, of course, is the type of god that sinful man prefers. He doesn’t want to think that he is subject to an all-powerful, sovereign God, especially when he finds that he has sinned against this God. Man’s pride will not let him submit to the concept of a God who is truly God and who is above all and sovereign over all.

*The Book of the Dead* was intended to provide a “way” in the afterlife. Just in case someone might forget what to say to the gods (or “God”), this manual was supposed to offer adequate preparation. Chapter 125 of *The Book of the Dead* reveals a self-justification and a fatal lie:

- I have not committed evil against men.
- I have not mistreated cattle.
- I have not committed sin in the place of truth.
- I have not seen evil.
- I have not killed.
- I have not caused anyone suffering.

Sadly, such vain and lying testimonies will not help anyone who stands before the great Judge of the earth on judgment day. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But the good news is that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23). ■



THE PYRAMIDS OF GIZA