

Christianity Through an Afrocentric Lens



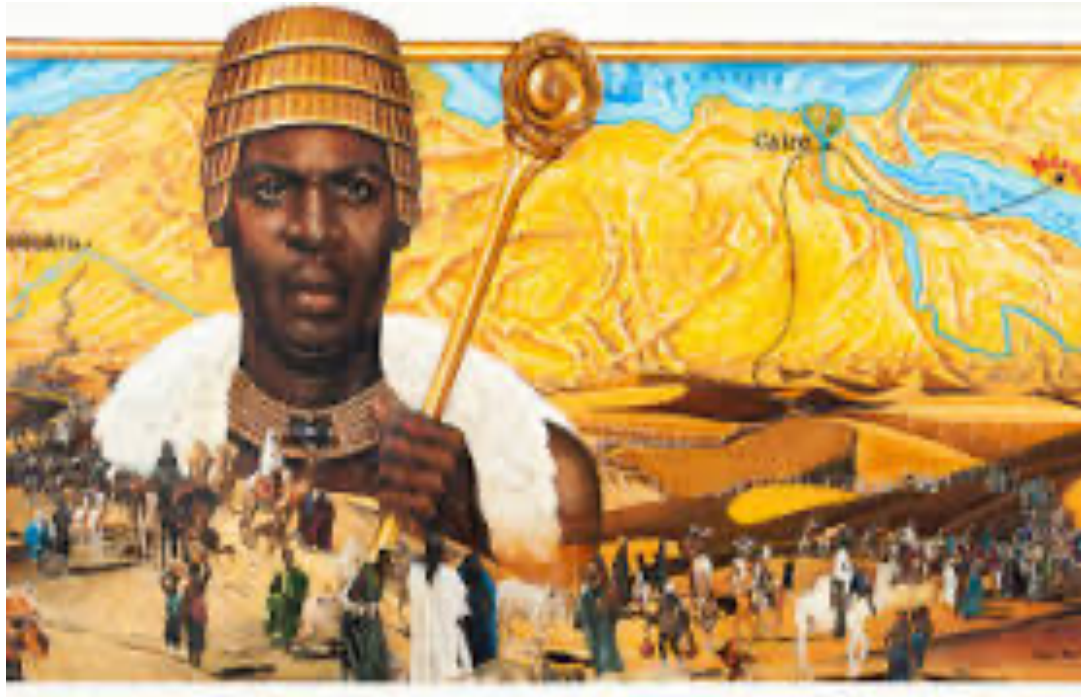
Brief Recap of Our Three Previous Lessons

- ▶ Garden of Eden To show we were involved from the very beginning
- ▶ African Presence in OT To show we are not in the scriptures but we play a major role.
- ▶ African Presence in NT To show that God used an African to write the 1st Gospels. (We explored one way Christianity arrived in Africa).

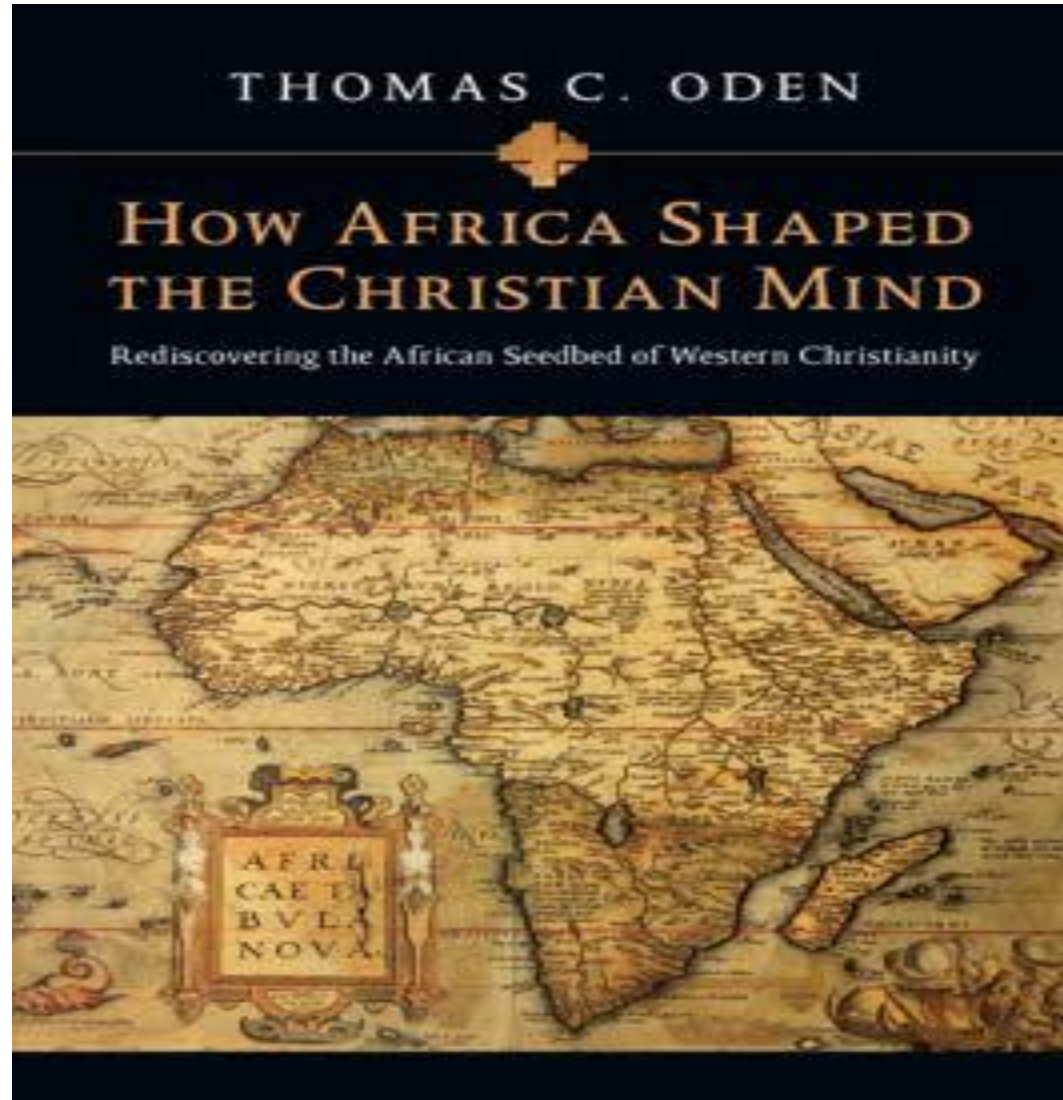
Tonight

TOPIC: Africans Contributions to Early Christianity

Focus of the Lesson: 7 ways Early African's Shaped the Christian Mind



The Source for Tonight's Lesson



Flowed from the South to the North

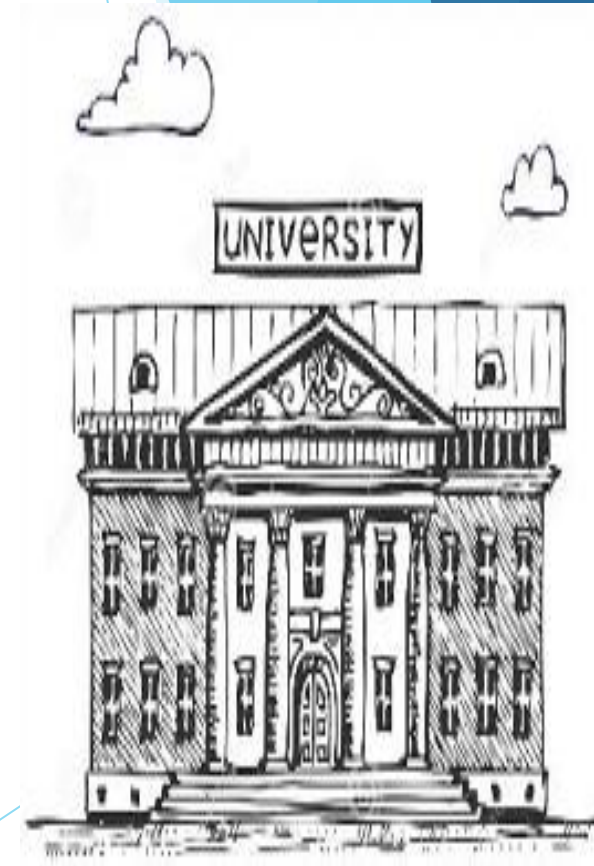


(1st) The birth of European university was anticipated within African Christianity

The academic models which later transformed into what's known today as university first began in the community that surrounded Alexandria's library.

During the third century the learning community of Alexandria's philosophers, scientists, writers, artist and educators provided the example for universities of Europe.

Famous universities such as Oxford University of England followed the methods of tests, examinations and curricular refined by Clement of Alexandria during the second century





The library of Alexandria was the model for university libraries all over Europe.

The library of Alexandria was the very best library available for the first five centuries. Christian scholarship began in Alexandria, which was the leading academic center of the ancient world, then it was exported to Rome.

Christian Scholarship was born in the leading academic center of the ancient world



(2nd) The Christian historical and spiritual exegesis of Scripture first matured in Africa.



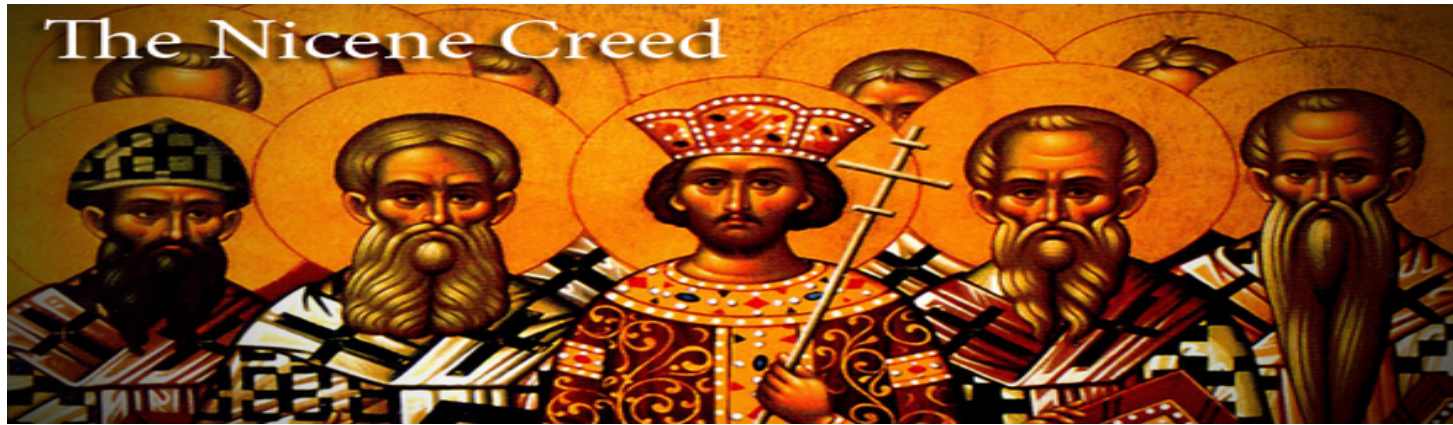
- ▶ Next, the rules and methods for exegesis of Scripture were created by four of Africa's great thinkers, Origen, Didymus the Blind, Tyconius and of course Augustine of Hippo.
- ▶ It still surprising, scholars today are not aware of the significant contributions of Africans during early Christianity. The author states on page 45 how the twenty-eight volumes of Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture at Drew University were astonished to find such a large percentage of the text from Africa or influenced by African writers.



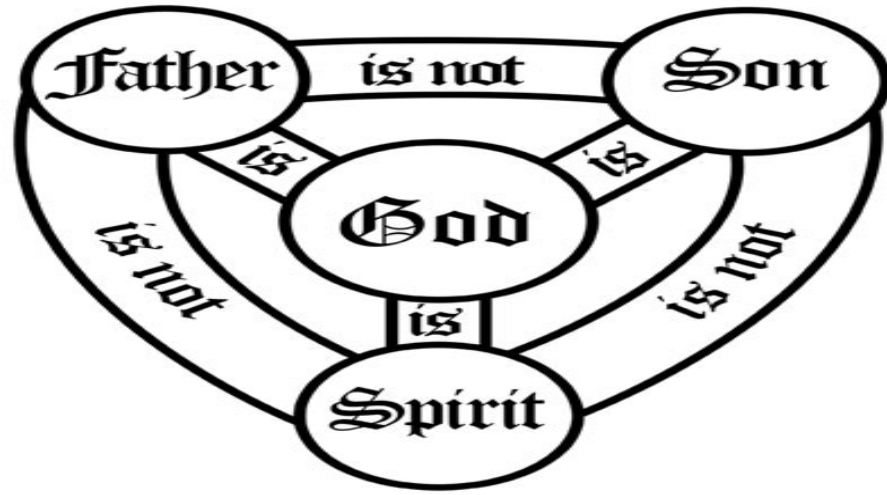


Hebrew language text—Column 1	Transliteration Column 2	Aquila Column 3	Symmachus Column 4	Septuagint Column 5	Theodotion Column 6
וַיִּשְׁמָע	u-sh-ma'	ἠκούσε	ἠκούσας	ἠκούσε	ἠκούσε
כָּל	kal	φωνῆς	τῆς φωνῆς	τῆς φωνῆς	τῆς φωνῆς
וַיִּשְׁמָע	u-sh-ma'	δεήσεώς μου.	τῆς ἰκεσίᾳς μου.	τῆς δεήσεώς μου.	τῆς δεήσεώς μου.
וַיִּשְׁמָע	u-sh-ma'	ἰσχύς μου	ἰσχύς μου	βοηθός μου	βοηθός μου
וַיִּשְׁמָע	u-sh-ma'	(καὶ) θυρεός μου	καὶ ὑπερασπιστής μου	καὶ <ὕ>περασπιστής μου	(καὶ) ὑπερασπιστής μου
וַיִּשְׁמָע	u-sh-ma'	ἐν αὐτῷ	αὐτῷ	ἐν αὐτῷ	ἐν αὐτῷ
וַיִּשְׁמָע	u-sh-ma'	ἐπεποιήσεν	ἐπεποιήσεν	ἤλπισεν	ἤλπισεν

(3rd) African thinkers shaped the very core of the most basic early Christian dogma.



- ▶ Not only did Africa create the rules for exegesis of Scripture, but based on those methods and teaching resulted in the definitions regarding Christology and the Trinity.
- ▶ Our history clearly shows these important dogmas of Christianity were shaped in Africa by Tertullian, Athanasius, Augustine, Cyprian and Cyril. On page 47 the author states the major battles with heresy such as Gnosticism were thoroughly argued as problems of biblical interpretation in Africa long before they were discussed in Rome.



- ▶ Old Testament Deuteronomy 6:4 “God is One”
- ▶ New Testament God consist of three person Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- ▶ The trinitarian God we separate the terms essence and person, they are not the same.
- ▶ “Essence is what makes God
- ▶ “Person” defines the distinctions within the one essence.
- ▶ “Function” or “Economy of God”

Early ecumenical decisions followed African counselor's patterns.

- ▶ Since the great thinkers of the time were in Africa, the early African councils created the actual model for ecumenical debates and resolutions.
- ▶ The debates in Carthage, Alexandria and Hippo developed and defined the method and structure for achieving ecumenical agreements and consensus elsewhere.
- ▶ Major decisions regarding the faith were made in North Africa under their leadership and the bishops of North Africa. Africa was the first area to foster and assemble the method for seeking wider ecumenical consent on contested points of biblical interpretation



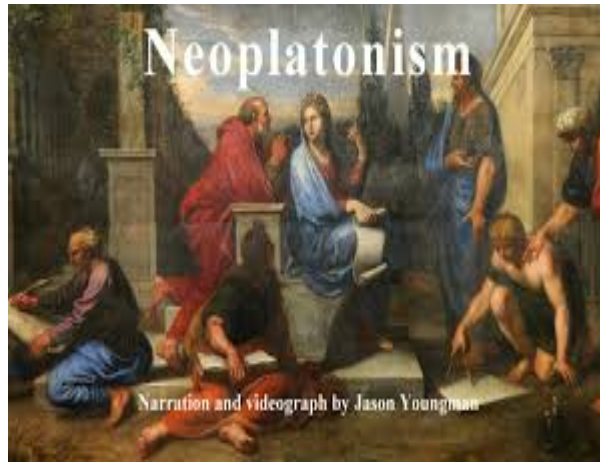
African Western forms of spiritual formation through monastic discipline.



fa11576421 freeart ©

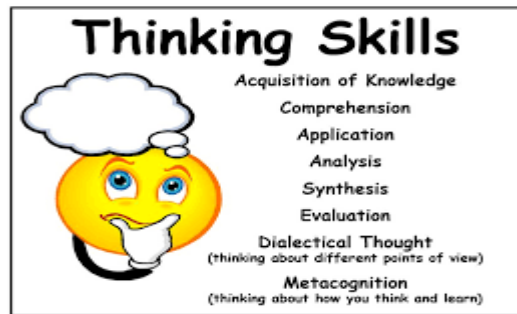
- ▶ As a result of their devotion to scripture Africans sought to move into the deserts of Africa and commit to long hours of prayer and study.
- ▶ Thus this began the monastic movement and it was on-going long before the time of Benedict of Nursia, who many credit as the father of the monastic movement.
- ▶ The monastic communal life was firmly built upon the exegesis and worship traditions which began in Africa long before Basil or Benedict set up their scholarly community in southern Italy.

Neoplatonic philosophy of late antiquity moved from Africa to Europe.



- ▶ In addition, the earliest philosophical literature of Neo-Platonism did not begin in either Greece or Rome, but it began in Africa.
- ▶ The central players in Neo-Platonism were all African people such as Philo, Ammonias, Saccas, and Plotinus.
- ▶ In time, the ideas and thoughts moved north to Rome and Athens. Clement the bishop of Alexandria was among the first to address and make the connection between philosophy and theology

Influential literary and dialectical skills were refined in Africa.



- ▶ Finally, the rhetorical and dialectical skills honed in Africa by people such as Augustine and others who later moved from Africa to Rome to teach Europeans.
- ▶ By moving to Rome the Africans introduced the Europeans to the richness of the African communication talents, literary passion and dialectical skills

Conclusion

- ▶ In closing, the Euro-American theology has overlooked, distorted and ignored the richness of the African Christian contribution to Europe and its part in the formation of the Christian Mind.
- ▶ In this day and age it is really appalling that institutions of higher learning still teach the lie, that everything of intellectual importance happen in the Mediterranean and still do not recognize its true African origins.
- ▶ Even though some of the achievements of Terullian and Augustine are acknowledged, what's never mentioned is these achievements were made by Africans

