

# The Ethiopian Tewahedo Bible

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The Ethiopian Tewahedo Bible is one of the world's oldest bibles written in Ge'ez and Amharic. It includes 81 books, and the broader canon also adds 9 more books on top of that. Their language is often rendered as one of the eldest's written languages and a possible candidate for the original language spoken by Adam along with the hieroglyphs and pre-hieratic languages of ancient Egypt. Ethiopia is considered the heart of Africa by many and is a prominent center for Orthodoxy and Christianity. The Holy See of Tekle Haymanot is considered representative of the kingship or restoration of the Solomonic dynasty. The love story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba holds high significance to them, as Sheba could be an ancient Ethiopian city. The Ethiopian Tewahedo Bible is difficult to find an authentic copy of online (especially when not written in Amharic) due to copies including the non-canonical version of Enoch over its canonical version or heterodox Rastafarian copies that are heretical to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. There have been some efforts in modern scholarship and pop culture to promote the usage of the Ethiopian Tewahedo Bible or bibles like the Monastic Coptic Bible (which include the Septuagint or Canonical Greek to Coptic translations). These efforts may include advocating for their usage(s) over the protestant KJV bible. The KJV may have been favored due the Gutenberg Press and the Gutenberg Bible leading to the KJV bible winning in popularity. Outside of the political ramifications, accessibility or largely scaled printing was a race in which these ancient translations didn't win for mass adoption.

Keywords: Ethiopia ; Bible ; Egypt ; Amharic ; Coptic

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## History

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Bible has been written in vullum, animal skins, stone tablets, etc. and is perhaps one of the world's oldest bibles. Their bible was written in Ge'ez and the later Amharic<sup>[1]</sup>. Through the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Bible, the canonical authenticity is broader. The narrower canon includes the traditional Hebrew Protocanon, the catholic Deuterocanon, the prayer of Manasseh, 3rd and 4th Ezra, the Paralipomena of Jeremiah, the Jubilees, Enoch, the books of Meqabyan, Lamentations, Jeremiah, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah and all of 4 Baruch<sup>[2]</sup>. The 27 New Testament books that are established are the New Testament canon. The broader canon includes: Josippon, the books of Sinodos, the Books of Covenant, the Ethiopic Clement and the Didascalia. There are also non-canonical or quasi-canonical books that are considered heterodox or an external reference to Ethiopian Christians. This includes perhaps non-canonical variations or fabrications of Enoch or books like the *Book of the Cock or Rooster*<sup>[3]</sup>. Likewise, Gnostic books do exist within Christianity and some Bibles in general. This perhaps includes debate on the authenticity of the Gospel of Thomas which is of Alexandrian Origin and not considered canonical by Copts, Ethiopians or Oriental Orthodoxy. Origen<sup>[4]</sup> condemned the Gospel of Thomas and given the prevalence of popularity among Mani<sup>[5]</sup> (a heretic within Orthodoxy who parallels Arius), likely the Gospel of Thomas could be an Arian fabrication.

## Language

Ge'ez is one of the oldest written languages inscribed by men and an early semitic language. The pictorial and hieroglyphic language timeline versus the written language timeline discrepancies is very broad. This is where you might include a tree model of Protolanguages<sup>[6]</sup>. Protolanguage tree mapping is very hereditary in the sense that mapping languages can be reminiscent of a linguist acting like a geneticist. Amharic is a subgroup that follows the Ge'ez script<sup>[7]</sup>. These languages are probably considered the same languages that may have been spoken by the ancient Cushites or during the reign of King Solomon who fell in love with Sheba, whom he is considered to have seduced<sup>[8]</sup>. This led to him having a son and the continuation of his dynasty in Ethiopia which ended at the time of Haile Selassie I. Efforts have been made to attempt to reestablish the Solomonic dynasty including by the Stark Global Initiative<sup>[9]</sup> and the Crown Council of Ethiopia<sup>[10]</sup>.

There also have been efforts to remove the Sigil of Baphomet or Moloch's Seal from the Flag of Ethiopia<sup>[11]</sup>. The extensive history surrounding the symbolism is mysterious<sup>[12]</sup>, and the idea of David having a star is questionable. Nonetheless, Moloch was one of the foreign deities that were worshipped by some of Solomon's lust, and this was

something that angered God, as Moloch was considered a deity of child sacrifice<sup>[13]</sup>. These were among others and was worshipped among a Sidonian goddess<sup>[14]</sup>.

Nonetheless, Solomon is known to have repented, and the Cushites referenced in Psalm 68:31, among the Egyptians were the nobility of worshipping God. A bridge was also to be made between Egypt, Assyria, and Israel. Many Egyptians and Ethiopians share E1b1, specifically the Coptic Egyptians<sup>[15]</sup>, meaning that through a certain emperor's lust for foreign women, many of them may share a common grandfather from the tribe of Judah. This overlap is rare, and the root of this linkage resembles the time of King Solomon's reign. Likewise, there are projects that aim to be *building a global incubation hub and bridge within the countries of Egypt, Syria and Israel*<sup>[16]</sup> or connect the unconnected<sup>[17]</sup>. If you look at the hereditary perspective, Christ being from the Tribe of Judah<sup>[18]</sup>, or the nations of the Cushites and the Egyptians worshipping God, or the linkage between Egypt, Syria and Israel from an ancestry perspective, this bridge may have likely already been developed. This goes beyond religious, non-profit, or secular efforts, but the linguistics, genetics, imagery, and parallels all play a role in establishing the Ethiopian narratives as one of the oldest canonical collections or works within Christianity itself.

### **The Rastafarian Controversy**

Many of the hereditary links, and the history of the Solomonic dynasty led way to a counterculture movement that mistakenly thought Haile Selassie I was the Christ. The Rastafarians were visited by Haile. He gave the tribal leaders gold medallions and didn't publicly condemn their ideology, instead saying, "he felt like he had to respect their beliefs". He opted to denying being Christ within external interviews. Giving these leaders gold medallions or gifting them some land in Ethiopia was used by Rastafari scholars as evidence of him supporting his divinity.<sup>[19]</sup> Ironically, one such scholar, Dr. Ikael Tafari had no Ethiopian or Jamaican lineage. He considered himself Pan-African.<sup>[20]</sup> Rastafari leaders also have been known to call themselves the African Orthodox Church (who were excommunicated)<sup>[21]</sup> and established churches such as the Church of the Black Madonna<sup>[22]</sup>.

Rastafarians make their own Rastafarian variations of the Ethiopian Orthodox Bible. They also misleadingly claim to be Ethiopian or Coptic. In reality, they aren't adherents of any such creed. This includes one of the most popular sellers online of the Ethiopian Orthodox Bible calling themselves the Ethiopian Orthodox Church through independent publishing on Amazon<sup>[23]</sup>. That seller is not the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and this form of cultural appropriation<sup>[24]</sup> is likely allowed due to the looseness of intellectual property or namesake rights which would enable creating such a misleading title.

The unfortunate reality is that many Rastafarian views take elements of Western Christianity<sup>[25]</sup> or modernist European Churches as core to their theology. This is due to the fact that though many no longer have the Christological view of a late emperor, other secular ideologies<sup>[26]</sup> blemish the authenticity of the Ethiopian church they want to emulate. They copy the title but adhere to different theology. The church they are trying to emulate is the true African church, and this is the accidental whitewashing of the authenticity of the Oriental Orthodoxy of the Ethiopians. This whitewashing has been done in the West due to the Third Great Awakening<sup>[27]</sup> and rise of the occultic (dualistic/neo-paganist) Myal faith.

Even after the rise of the autonomy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Ethiopia who is considered protected by its patron St. George<sup>[28]</sup>, have suffered immensely. Rastafarianism, famine, the Derg<sup>[29]</sup>, and political discourse was a predecessor to another end for the Solomonic empire. Political discourse led to the eventual split of what became the Eritrean Church<sup>[30]</sup>. Other drama within the offset political scenes of Ethiopia mirrored problems for the Eritrean church<sup>[31]</sup>. Also, the Ethiopian Church split with the faithful of Tigray. This was done through an unsanctioned bishopric coup<sup>[32]</sup>. The people of Ethiopia suffered much, and with the death of their emperor, a unifier, came a genocidal divider. The political leaders within Ethiopia today aren't Ethiopian Orthodox, and the Crown Council, many Oriental Orthodox adherents, and various advocates are in exile.

### **Authenticity**

The authenticity of the actual Ethiopian Tewahedo bible has been one that stood the test of time. Ethiopians have gone out of their way to preserve the historical language of their ancestors, and even the adherents of Amharic aim to speak in Ge'ez<sup>[6]</sup>. Again, Ge'ez originated from the land of Sheba through the Sabiac language<sup>[33]</sup> as did Queen Sheba's son in which Ethiopians consider the ancient heir to the Solomonic dynasty for the Empire of Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Church, Eritrean Church, and truly Ethiopian faithful of Tigray have been affected both internally and externally. This includes bishops stealing or taking bribes, traces of magic<sup>[34]</sup> practiced within some deacons (debtera)<sup>[35]</sup>, corruption within the mistranslations of their authentic works, the suffering of Abune Antonios<sup>[36]</sup> in Eritrea (a

confessor/martyr), or the need for an authentic Pope in which Dioskoros is uncanonical<sup>[37]</sup> and the papacy is vacant. This is at a time of suffering for Oriental Orthodoxy in general<sup>[38]</sup>, amongst the apostolic churches, and the rise of charismatic movements such as the continuation of the World Council of Churches<sup>[39]</sup>.

The World Council of Churches is expected to convene in 2025 at Alexandria<sup>[40]</sup>, the See of St. Mark<sup>[41]</sup> and the spread of such interfaith movements threatens African diaspora. This includes Bishop Angelos of London praying the Annual Day of Prayer in Westminster Abbey<sup>[42]</sup>, a church known for interfaith and atheist vigils<sup>[43]</sup>. This form of inclusivity equates the African diaspora with Westernism, Europeanism, and modernity at a time of suffering within the Ethiopian churches, Oriental Orthodoxy, and a need for unified Coptic identity. After all, in these modern times, with the Tigrayan Orthodox Tewahedo Church and Eritreans having a vacancy as of 2024, perhaps a reconciliation could be possible. Instead, Oriental Orthodox leaders rather shift the core focus on adherence to western ideologies. This is ideological genocide and poses a threat to the authenticity of Ethiopian Orthodoxy, its bible, and a preserved language for one of the first times in centuries.

Ethiopia is the heart of Africa and an epicenter for history, theology, and archeology, including potentially housing the Ark of the Covenant<sup>[44]</sup>. There is a 21st century revival happening in terms of the Ethiopian Bible<sup>[45]</sup> over NKJV, KJV, Gideon or Gutenberg press bibles. The same also likely applies to Coptic bibles<sup>[46]</sup> that are within the Egyptian monasteries. However, this revival is counterculture, and not mainstream, but rather a result of the information age. The beauty of the Ethiopians is that throughout all this suffering and famine, very few nations are as filled with inner peace, simplicity, and as much hope. The Ethiopians love Christ, adhere the immaculateness of the Virgin Mary<sup>[47]</sup>, and are a culture of true diversity, simplicity, history, and courage. They are an example for humanity.

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