

PAUL AND THE EARLY CHURCH:

A Study in Messianic Judaism

יִשְׂרָאֵל

Part Three

"The Apostle Paul, the Gentiles, and Ethiopia"

by

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“I am a Jew, and Jesus is my Rabbi!”

-- *Messianic Judaism*

Preface

Why I am no longer a Christian – but a *Messianic Jew* – is partly explained in the following historical and theological analysis of the Apostle Paul’s legacy and relationship to the Black Jews of Ethiopia.¹ Since the reign of the great King Solomon in, circa, 970 to 931 BC, and following the birth of his son, King Menelik I, who was born to his mother and the great Queen of Sheba, there have been hundreds of thousands of orthodox pre-Rabbinical Jews living in the ancient kingdom Ethiopia. These Jews were “Black Jews,” and they were never “lost” to the knowledge of the Israelites and Jews who inhabited Jerusalem. Indeed, there had always been an unbroken chain of commerce, discourse, and cultural exchange between them for nearly a thousand years or more before the birth of Yeshua the Messiah.

Black Jews frequented and worshiped in the Second Temple in Jerusalem, and when the Gospel was preached to them, they were among the first to be converted to the new “Christian” faith. When these Black Jews received the Gospel, they merged it into their own orthodox pre-

¹ The other reason has to do with “*The Way*” to Christ being originally without the name “*Christian*.” See, e.g., Deuteronomy 31:29 (KJV, “**the way**”); John 14:6 (“I am *the way*”); Acts 9:2 (NIV, “**the Way**”); Acts 18: 26 (“**the way** of God”); Acts 19:9 (NIV, “**the Way**”); and Acts 22:4 (NIV, “the followers of **this Way**”). See, also, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (“**the Way**” refers to a life of total devotion, obedience, and love toward God, characterized by keeping His commandments and passing this faith to future generations). The word “*Christian*,” on the other hand, has today taken on a set of social, racial, cultural, and political presuppositions that are so thoroughly woven into the history of Western Europe and the United States – whether Roman Catholic, Protestant, or an independent spin-off of the Protestant – that it fails to reflect the true nature of my conception of “*the Way*” of Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah and Christ, as explained by **John the Baptist** (i.e., a *Messianic Jew*) – before the name “*Christian*” (Acts 11:26), or “‘catholic’ *Christian*,” ever came into existence. Today, the word “*Christian*” is partly coterminous with Afrocentric moral relativism, superstition, and religious fatalism. See, e.g., Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies* (New York, NY: Library of America, 1995), pp. 361-362. The word “*Christian*” is also partly coterminous with white nationalism, Eurocentric divine right, and materialism. Although there are many pure and righteous “*Christians*” who are true born-again believers and followers of “*the Way*” of Christ, the word “*Christian*” is largely and predominantly a politically loaded term of art that no longer reflects the Gospel or “*the Way*” of Jesus Christ. See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics* (New York, NY: Thomas Whittaker Pub., 1905).

Rabbinical Judaism; and, afterwards, they developed a form of Christian religion that was in essence a form of “Messianic Judaism.” So that today, the primary descendants of these Black Jews – i.e., the Ethiopians and the Lemba people – are primarily “Messianic Jews” who practice a form of Christianity which fuses ancient Hebrew traditions and Jewish practices into their belief in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures.

As a proud descendant of the Lemba Jews, I am proud to claim this Black Jewish heritage. But I would be remiss if I did not here state, that as an African American civil rights attorney, I am aghast at how the organized Western and Eastern branches of the Catholic Church (together with their spin-off Protestant counterparts) have systematically suppressed the history of Ethiopia and the contributions of the Black Hebrews to the development of both Judaism and Christianity! As I consider the plain fact that these Christian churches tacitly ratified the transatlantic slave trade and the enslavement of Africans in the Western Hemisphere – often under the guise of the *necessity* of teaching Christianity to African heathens – and when we consider the plain fact that the African American slaves, in turn, modeled their Christian theology and structured of the Black Church² upon the ecclesiological designs of the predominantly-white Western Church (whether Catholic or Protestant); and when we also consider the plain fact that these African American slaves’ descendants have, in turn, faithfully maintained those same theological and ecclesiological Christian church structures, which they inherited from their white Christian counterparts but without giving any consideration or serious reflection upon the history and development of their heritage that is replete with Ethiopian Judaism (and, subsequently, Ethiopian Christianity), we cannot avoid honestly grappling with the following question that has vexed the

² In this position paper, the definition of the word “Black church” has been borrowed from the following text: C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 1 (“We use the term ‘the Black Church’ as do other scholars and much of the general public as a kind of sociological and theological shorthand reference to the pluralism of black Christian churches in the United States.”) See, also, James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Theology: A Documentary History*, Vol. One: 1966-1979 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003), p. 217, citing Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, and adopting the same definition of “Black Church.”

Black Church in the United States since the end of American slavery, which is, namely, this:

“Is Christianity the White Man’s religion?”

In this paper, I provide an unorthodox exploration of this question through the lens of the Apostle Paul’s ministry’s rather limited and ethnocentric focus on a group of persons known as Greeks and Romans, but to whom he also frequently referred to as “Gentiles” (i.e., all other non-Jewish races of mankind). Here, I suggest that Paul’s limited designation of only a small segment of the human population as the “Gentiles” for whom

Christ sent his Gospel has had tendency in later centuries to lead to exclusivity and racism within the universal churches of Jesus Christ.

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Introduction

The Apostle Paul is widely known as the apostle who was specially sent to the Gentiles. As such, Paul's ministry is often associated with his three amazing missionary journeys throughout ancient Asia Minor and Greece, between, circa, 46- 57, A.D., where he ministered in many Jewish synagogues throughout the Jewish diaspora, as well to many Greeks and Romans (i.e., the Gentiles). Although Paul made a very valiant effort in spreading the Gospel and teaching the Gentiles, he did not himself carry the Gospel to the four corners of the earth. He did not, for instance, travel to the Near East, where there were Babylonians and Persians; or into eastern Asia, where there were large numbers of Indians and Chinese. Nor did he go to Egypt or Ethiopia, where there were large numbers of Africans. Thus, an argument could be made that the group of Gentiles whom Paul preached to, and interacted with, were overwhelmingly "white" Greeks and "white" Romans, thus giving Paul's missionary efforts a rather ethnocentric focus that heavily emphasized Greco-Roman civilization and culture. In fact, the Western and Eastern branches of the Roman Catholic Church, which emerged largely as the legacy of Paul's missionary efforts, tended to be ethno-centered upon Greek and Latin culture and civilization, even despite its claim to be truly "catholic."³

And, yet, I have here offered a different reason for why Paul did not travel to Ethiopia — it was because Paul's mission did not include predominantly "Jewish" the city-states within ancient Judea, Egypt, and Ethiopia, and because the Ethiopians lived in a Jewish nation far to the south and they were, in fact, Jews — *not* Gentiles. Instead of the Apostle

³ See, e.g., Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, N.Y.: Touchstone, 2007), p. 282 ("We are aware that there were important parts of the world which were not subject to Rome — India and China, more especially.... This conception descended to the Church, which was "Catholic" in spite of Buddhists, Confucians, and (later) Mohammedans.")

Paul's being sent to Ethiopia, I believe that our Lord ordained and commissioned the Apostle Matthew to go to Ethiopia instead. In Ethiopia, Matthew famously labored, as his Gospel suggests, as "*a Jew preaching to other Jews.*" This little-known fact that the Ethiopians were Black Jews, and not Gentiles, is thus the very important subject of this paper. I here demonstrate that modern Ethiopians (as well as many modern Africans such as the Lemba Jews of southern Africa) are indeed the "*sons of Judah*"; and that the Judaism and Christianity which developed among the Ethiopians and the Lemba Jews were quite separate and distinct from their European counterparts.

The central theme of this paper emphasizes that an independent African Christianity may trace its roots to Ethiopia beginning with the reign of King Solomon (circa, 970 – 931 B.C.) and the Solomonic Dynasty of Ethiopia, which commenced through his son, Menelik I, in circa, 982 B.C. Easily a thousand years of *Ethiopian Judaism* was developed from the time of Solomon up to the birth of Jesus Christ in, circa, 4 A.D. This means that there were perhaps hundreds of thousands of Black Ethiopian Jews who existed long before the birth of Christ; and these Black Jews who stood ready to receive the Gospels, through the hands the Apostle Matthew and others, during the first century A.D.

Furthermore, I here suggest that when the Ethiopian Jews received the Gospel, they did not convert to conventional Christianity as we know it today. The word "Christian" was a term-of-art had not yet become common currency; and the Latin and Greek churches, as we know them today, had not yet come into existence. Instead, the Ethiopian Jews who received the Gospel were no different that the first Jews who received the Gospel in Jerusalem when John the Baptist preached, or when the Apostles Peter and James were leaders of the first churches in Jerusalem – i.e., they continued to worship in the Second Temple and in synagogues as "*Messianic Jews.*"

The form of Christianity that is prevalent amongst modern-day Ethiopians and the Lemba people is actually a branch of Messianic Judaism. In fact, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church – which has some 50 million souls-- is the largest denomination of “*Messianic Jews*” in existence. And, next to this Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, the Lemba people, who are Black Jews living in southern Africa and who are predominantly “Christian,” constitute the second largest denomination of “*Messianic Jews*” in the world. In fact, the Lemba people are actually a subunit of the larger Ethiopian Jewish diaspora.

African Messianic Jews are a unique branch of the Christian religion, because they trace their roots directly to first Black Jews living in ancient Ethiopia since the times of King Solomon and who frequently visited the Temple at Jerusalem. These Black Jews were also among the first to hear the Gospel preached. The history of these Black Jews suggest that African Christianity is fundamentally of “Hebrew” and “Jewish” in origin; and that the type of Christianity which developed in Egypt and Ethiopia was heavily Judaic and very distinct from the Greco-Roman Catholic Church.

As a former member of two mainline denominations within the Black Church in the United States, I must confess that mainline European-centered theology, church history, and church polity have completely disoriented, and nearly dismantled, African American Christianity, which today remains largely dissevered from its Ethiopian Jewish roots. So that today, the question, “*Is Christianity the White Man’s religion?*” continues to stigmatize the legacy Western Christendom which played a central role in the transatlantic slave trade during the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries and the subsequent colonization of sub-Saharan Africa during the 19th century.

This paper does not deprecate the great legacy of the Apostle Paul but it rather places Paul within a larger historical context in which the churches of Europe have elevated him to a superior status above all the other apostles, but in which the Ethiopian church has subordinated him to a status that is on *par* with all of the other apostles and saints.

Chapter One: "The Apostle Paul and the Greco-Roman Church"

In many ways, I am here picking up where I left off on several lively discussions on archeology, anthropology, and history while I was a student in Baltimore during the late 1980s and 1990s. Noticeably, I found no openly professed, born-again Christian believers on the faculty at the college campus there. I found nobody like the Apostle Paul who could attest to having met the risen Lord Jesus and who was willing to defend the Christian faith inside of a college lecture room. The Christian religion was *not* considered to be on par with serious history and science. It was always presented as the cause of ignorance, slavery, and debauchery in Africa and within the African American community. It was always presented as "*Christianity is the White Man's Religion.*" And so, as an undergraduate student, as an interloper up from rural northern Florida and the Southern bible belt, I fought vigorously – through oral rejoinders in classrooms and research papers and essays – against this claim.

During those years, I embraced the classical Latin prose and Catholic theology of Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions* and *The City of God*, and I imbibed the Catholic-Anglican heritage that was readily apparent in the writings of the great English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill. At the same time, I sought out great African and African American scholars, such as Cheikh Anta Diop, W.E.B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, and Benjamin Quarles to help guide my Christian thought and intellectual development on the delicate question "*Is Christianity the White Man's Religion?*"

Noticeably absent from my readings were any theological tracts from great African or African American churchmen, theologians, or pastors. I did not know about, e.g., Rev. Dr. James H. Cone or the very high-class genre of black theological writings then being produced within America's great bible colleges and seminaries. Today, I surmise that if I had known

about Dr. Cone's and other similar theological writings, that I would have felt vindicated in my defense of the Black Church and the Christian faith. And I undoubtedly would have been reaffirmed and reassured in my academic intuition on the ultimate supremacy of Christ's eternal "**golden rule**"⁴ which every logical conclusion has proven to be *true, irrefutable, and unchangeable*.

But in law school, I was introduced to new forms of fallacious arguments and new modes of lodging objections to those fallacies – such as, e.g., statements that are *misleading [OR]* questions that are *compound*.

Hence, the question, "*Is Christianity the White Man's Religion*" is almost like asking, "*Was 'The Golden Rule' invented by the White Man?*" Of course, and for this very reason, the original question, "*Is Christianity the White Man's Religion*" is "misleading." But that question is also "compound," since in order to first rightly answer that question, one must first answer the question, "*What is Christianity?*" And if we first determine that this word "Christianity" is a loaded term, with multiple meanings, then we must also first grapple with "multiple loaded answers" along with "multiple loaded discussions" and "multiple loaded analysis" that are likely to lead to "multiple loaded conclusions." With that in mind, we must keep an open mind, while, as John Locke would say, holding fast to a "love for truth."

Here I confess my love for the Apostle Paul – as does the entire Christian world. For indeed, I firmly admire and agree with Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430 A.D.), who described the great Apostle Paul as "the teacher (doctor) of the nations in faith and truth," and who:

...also laboured more than all his fellow-apostles, and instructed the tribes of God's people by his epistles,

⁴ Matthew 7:12 ("Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.")

which edified not only those of his own time, but all those who were to be gathered in – that hero, I say, and athlete of Christ, instructed by Him, anointed of His Spirit, crucified with Him, glorious in Him, lawfully maintaining a great conflict on the theatre of this world, and being made a spectacle to angels and men, and pressing onwards for the prize of his high calling – very joyfully do we with the eyes of faith behold him rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that weep; though hampered by fightings without and fears within; desiring to depart and to be with Christ; longing to see the Romans, that he might have some fruit among them as among other Gentiles; being jealous over the Corinthians, and fearing in the jealousy lest their minds should be corrupted from the chastity that is in Christ; having great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for the Israelites, because they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God; and expressing not only his sorrow, but bitter lamentation over some who had formerly sinned and had not repented of their uncleanness and fornications.⁵

While Augustine’s general assessment of the great Apostle Paul is not unjustified, I note here that Augustine was himself a Latin-speaking North African and, like Paul, also a citizen of the Roman empire and a master of Greco-Roman civilization. Moreover, when Augustine became a bishop in northern Africa, he did so as a former distinguished professor of law and rhetoric at Milan, Italy, where he had laid the foundations for a promising career as a high-ranking civil servant in the Roman government. The

⁵ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 453.

emperor Constantine had recently legalized the new “catholic” Christian faith in 313 A.D., and the emperor Theodosius I had made this new “catholic” Christianity the official religion of the Roman empire in 381 A.D. Under this general Latin ecclesiastical regime, Augustine chose the Apostle Paul as the one apostle who had labored more mightily and more productively than all of the others.

But is Augustine’s assessment of Paul really and truly fair to the other apostles? Here I am asking the great theologian Augustine of Hippo to slow down and to reevaluate what he is actually saying about the other apostles. For where he says that the Apostle Paul “labored more than all his fellow-apostles,” it is clear that Augustine really does not know the real and true extent to which, e.g., the Apostle Matthew labored among the Ethiopian Jews.⁶ Here I surmise is an exemplification of bias within the Western Church.

That we have far more of the Apostle Paul’s writings than any of the other apostles is true. However, simply because we have more of Paul’s writings than of the other apostles does not necessarily mean that Paul labored more nobly than his fellow-apostles. If, however, Augustine meant that Paul labored more than his fellow-apostles among the Greeks and the Romans, then his point would be a valid one. But to make such a proposition, without providing a fair and balanced context, is why the Western Church has open the door to accusations that its “catholicity” is actually limited and biased.

But that begs the question, *“Why is St. Paul’s Christian labor among the Greeks and the Romans greater than St. Matthew’s Christian labor among the*

⁶ For the purpose of this paper, I shall focus only on the Apostle St. Matthew’s ministry among the Ethiopians, because my focus is on Ethiopian and African Christianity. However, the same analysis can be made with respect to Augustine’s lack of true knowledge about the extent to which the **Apostle Mark** labored among the **Egyptians** in the city of Alexandria; or the extent to which the **Apostle Phillip** labored among the Indians in southern **Asia**.

*Ethiopians?*⁷ Why does the Christian Church in the West (e.g., the Roman Catholic Church; the Church of England; the Church of Scotland; the national churches of Western Europe; and the various Protestant and non-denominational branches of the West) know almost everything about the Apostle Paul's ministry among the Greeks and the Romans, but next to nothing of the Apostle Matthew's ministry among the Ethiopians?

Institutionally, what effects, if any, does this over-emphasis upon the Apostle Paul's ministry among the Greeks and the Romans have upon the general conceptualization of "Christianity" within the imagination of most Christians today – including those African American Christians who are members of the Black Church within the United States?⁸

One major effect of this over-emphasis upon the Apostle Paul's ministry among the Greeks and the Romans, while excluding that of the Apostle Matthew's ministry among the Ethiopians, is the very question that I have previously posed, namely, "*Is Christianity the White Man's Religion?*"

With this perspective in mind, I have decided to maintain my unchangeable admiration for the Apostle Paul – since none of this is his fault or the fruit of his own making – while at the same time, I have also decided to critique the Apostle Paul's somewhat misleading description of the "Greeks" and the "Romans" as the "Gentiles," which tends to convey the false conclusion that the "only" Gentiles to whom the Gospel was

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ In this position paper, the definition of the word "Black church" has been borrowed from the following text: C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 1 ("We use the term 'the Black Church' as do other scholars and much of the general public as a kind of sociological and theological shorthand reference to the pluralism of black Christian churches in the United States.") See, also, James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Theology: A Documentary History*, Vol. One: 1966-1979 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003), p. 217, citing Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, and adopting the same definition of "Black Church."

directed were the “Greeks and the Romans.” Of course, the Gentiles includes every other race, ethnicity, and nation that are not Israelites or Jews – but, if we restrict the New Testament Gospel to Paul’s labors among the Greeks and the Romans, or define Paul’s labors as most important and most valuable than those of his fellow-apostles, then I think we have opened Pandora’s box to ecclesiastical ethnocentrism and even racism.

None of this is the Apostle Paul’s making, design, or intention – and, yet, Paul’s writings, together with his journeys among the Greeks and the Romans within the larger Roman empire, are “*misleading*” when they are presented as “universal” or “catholic” in scope. It is widely known that the Apostle Paul, who spoke fluent Greek, and whom the Early Church at Jerusalem designated to preach to, and to teach, the “Gentiles,” spent the vast majority of his ministry among “Gentiles” who were “Greeks” or “Romans.” In fact, all of Paul’s letters were written in Koine Greek.⁹ And throughout his New Testament letters, Paul used the words “Gentile” and “Greek” interchangeably, for example:

The Greeks

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the *Greek*.”¹⁰

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the *Greek*: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”¹¹

⁹ See “Pauline epistles,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pauline_epistles (“The evident principle of organization is descending length of the Greek text”).

¹⁰ Romans 1: 16.

¹¹ Romans 10: 12.

“For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or *Greeks*, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.”¹²

The Gentiles

“But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the *Gentile*.”¹³

“Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the *Gentiles*? Yes, of the *Gentiles* also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.”¹⁴

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the *Gentiles* might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the *Gentiles*, and sing unto thy name.¹⁵ And again he saith, Rejoice, ye *Gentiles*, with his people.¹⁶ And again, Praise the Lord, all ye *Gentiles*; and laud him, all ye people.¹⁷ And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over

¹² 1 Corinthians 12:13 (“Greeks,” American Standard Version); 1 Corinthians 12:13 (“Greeks,” English Standard Version); 1 Corinthians 12:13 (“Greeks,” New King James Version); 1 Corinthians 12:13 (“Greeks,” New American Standard Bible). But see 1 Corinthians 12:13 (“Gentiles,” in KJV).

¹³ Romans 2:10.

¹⁴ Romans 3: 29-30.

¹⁵ Here, Romans 15:9 quotes Psalm 18:49 (or 2 Samuel 22:50), where David states: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles [or nations], and sing to your name."

¹⁶ Here, Romans 15:10 references Deuteronomy 32:43 (specifically in the Septuagint/LXX translation). In this verse, part of the "Song of Moses," the Gentiles are called to rejoice alongside God's people (Israel).

¹⁷ Here, Romans 15:11 directly references Psalm 117:1 (or Psalm 116:1 in the Septuagint/LXX), which reads: "Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples."

the *Gentiles*; in him shall the *Gentiles* trust...¹⁸ That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the *Gentiles*, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the *Gentiles* might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.¹⁹

Here we find that Paul's immediate audience were the Greeks, even though his broader and wider ministry assignment was to the entire non-Hebrew world, known as the "Gentiles," whom the Greeks were only a very small but influential part. Ethnologically, these Greeks looked similar to present-day Mediterranean peoples, having a wide variety of olive-complexioned skin complexions. These Greeks were not darker skinned like Ethiopians, Egyptians, northern Africans, and sub-Saharan Africans; but neither were they "white skinned" like modern-day northern Europeans. And yet, the Greeks were generally lighter-skinned peoples so that today they would be classified as "white" Americans or as "white" Europeans.

Thus, as fate would decree, the Apostle Paul did not preach his Gospel to the Ethiopians or to other sub-Saharan Africans. Hence, the most influential and, perhaps, most important evangelist of the New Testament was not called to directly address the unique culture challenges or objections which many Ethiopians or other Africans might have presented to the new burgeoning Christian faith. Much of Paul's ministry limitations had to do with the plain fact that Rome – not Egypt or Ethiopia – was the imperial colonizer of ancient Palestine during the time when Paul preached. The Jewish nation stood in contention against Rome's imperial domination and desecration of sacred Jewish life when Paul lived and preached. Egyptian imperial power and influence had already receded to

¹⁸ Here, Romans 15:12 references Isaiah 11:10. In this verse, the Apostle Paul quotes the Old Testament, specifically the Septuagint (LXX) version, to highlight that the Messiah ("the Root of Jesse") would rule over the Gentiles and that the Gentiles would place their hope in him.

¹⁹ Romans 15: 8- 16.

the background, and with Ethiopia's reduced imperial and cultural influence upon ancient Palestine was naturally parallel to Egypt's.

Most significantly, the prophecy of Daniel had grappled with the rise and fall of four major kingdoms that were signified as the four metals²⁰ or the four beasts²¹ — i.e., the *Babylonians*, the *Medes-Persians*, the *Greeks*, and the *Romans* — before the coming of the eternal kingdom of the Messiah.²² And, thus, it was during the rise of the Roman empire, during the reign of Ceasar Augustus, that Christ was born in ancient Judea. Naturally, the Christian religion was organized under the auspices of the Greco-Roman empires. Therefore, the "Gentiles" to whom the Jews had to confront during Christ's lifetime on earth, as well as during Paul's ministry, were the Greeks and Romans, together with the influential Grecian culture which the Romans largely absorbed. Naturally, the universal, catholic church of the Roman empire grew out of these imperial, legal, and cultural connections.

Hence, the word "Christian," which was coined at the Grecian church at Antioch (presently located in the southeastern part of Turkey near the norther border of present-day Syria),²³ naturally related to *a particular class*

²⁰ Daniel 2: 1- 49, describing a head of gold (Babylon), chest/arms of silver (Medo-Persia), belly/thighs of bronze (Greece), and legs of iron with feet of iron/clay (Rome/divided kingdoms).

²¹ Daniel 7: 1 - 28, describing a lion with eagle's wings (Babylon), a lopsided bear (Medo-Persia), a four-winged/four-headed leopard (Greece), and a terrifying, ten-horned beast with iron teeth (Rome).

²² Daniel 7: 13-14 (the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven, and with dominion, glory, and a kingdom to rule over all people, nations, and languages); Daniel 9: 24- 27 (From the building of the Second Temple to the coming of the Messiah the Prince shall be 490 years (or 70 weeks, or 7 years for each week); after the first 434 years (or 62 weeks) of this period, the Messiah shall come, and he shall minister for 1 weeks; for 3 ½ years after which he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and he shall be cut off; but the remaining 3 ½ years the new covenant shall be confirmed and the Church is established. And then, from the Messiah's death to destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD is the completion of the 70 weeks prophecy.

²³ Acts 11: 26.

of persons who spoke Greek or Latin, and who were subjects and citizens of the Roman empire. On the other hand, it has been argued that the Apostle Paul himself was of the darker-skinned type – perhaps lighter than darker-skinned Africans, but lighter than an olive-skinned Greek – and that this was why the chief captain, who was assigned to arrest Paul, mistook Paul for being an Egyptian, and wondered whether Paul was able to speak Greek?²⁴ In other words, Paul himself looked like a darker skinned Egyptian or a lighter-skinned Ethiopian; he did not look like the “white” Greeks and the “white” Romans to whom he preached. Nevertheless, the major theological point to be made here is that because the Apostle Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles was primarily a ministry to the “white” Greeks and “white” Romans, that the “culture of the Early Church” was not really universal, but rather it was “Greek” or “Greco-Roman.”

I doubt not, that when we consider the secular writings of great African and African American scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop and W.E.B. Du Bois – writings which defend the “African origin of Western civilization” – we discover the Greek and Roman copying or expropriations of Ethiopian, Egyptian, and African culture and civilization, which Europeans failed to acknowledge from at least the 15th century onward and especially after African slavery in the New World became profitable.²⁵ Suffice it to say here that the legacy of the great Apostle Paul’s writings and theology – as received and developed in the Christian West – have come under scrutiny from very many groups, scholars, and non-Christian religious sects.

²⁴ Acts 21: 37-38. See, e.g., Dante Forston, “Paul: The Black Apostle to the Gentiles,” *Black History in the Bible: A Virtual Museum of Israelite History and Culture* (January 17, 2017).
<https://www.blackhistoryinthebible.com/2017/01/paul-the-black-apostle-to-the-gentiles/>

²⁵ Although this topic is imminently relevant to our discussion, I shall address this in more detail in my next paper on the Apostle Paul.

Accordingly, this paper is a critique that should be construed as that of a lone African American scholar who is writing as a *Messianic Jew*.

Chapter Two: “Apostle St. Matthew, Not the Apostle St. Paul, was Sent to the Black Jews of Ethiopia”

Easily the most difficult challenge to the authority of the New Testament canon, which contains thirteen letters attributed to the authorship of the Apostle Paul, is that Paul’s writings were non-existent in Ethiopia when the Apostle Matthew labored there from between 40 and 60 AD.

This same Matthew was also the author of the first book listed in the Four Synoptic Gospels – **The Gospel According to Matthew**. Since it is believed that Matthew had already written this Gospel before he went to Ethiopia, he would have had it in his possession during his proselytizing the Ethiopians. As such, this Gospel – and not Paul’s letters – should be construed to be the major operative document that is at the foundation of Ethiopian Christianity!

But even if we assume that Matthew had not yet reduced his Gospel to writing when he first traveled to Ethiopia, then we might rightfully deduce that he must have written this sublime Gospel while he was living in Ethiopia, since we know that Matthew died there in Ethiopia. Here I suggest that the “Gospel According to Matthew” may rightfully be construed as being the “Gospel to the Ethiopians.” And we may rightfully preach that “*the Gospel of St. Matthew is the Gospel specially designed for Ethiopian Jews.*”

Significantly, Matthew’s Gospel has been widely and popularly described as a message for Jews, about their Jewish messiah. It is widely concluded that Matthew’s objective was to preach his Gospel to a Jewish audience, and that his written Gospel was designed specifically for this purpose.

Matthew is the gospel written by a Jew to Jews about a Jew. Matthew is the writer, his countrymen are the readers, and Jesus Christ is the subject.

Matthew's design is to present Jesus as the King of the Jews, the long-awaited Messiah. Through a carefully selected series of Old Testament quotations, Matthew documents Jesus Christ's claim to be the Messiah. His genealogy, baptism, messages, and miracles all point to the same inescapable conclusion: Christ is King. Even in His death, seeming defeat is turned to victory by the Resurrection, and the message again echoes forth: the King of the Jews lives.

At an early date this gospel was given the title *Kata Matthaion*, 'According to Matthew.' As this title suggests, other gospel accounts were known at that time (the word 'Gospel' was added later). Matthew ('Gift of the Lord') was also surnamed Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27).²⁶

Unlike the Apostle Paul's letters which were all written in Koine Greek, the Gospel of Matthew was originally written **in Hebrew**; and, as its audience was decisively Jewish, it contains significantly more references to the Old Testament prophesy than any other of the four Gospels.

According to Ethiopian tradition, the Apostle Matthew preached the Gospel in Ethiopia; and he also worked *many miracles* there. And because Matthew's widespread ministry success resulted in many Ethiopians converting to the new Christian faith,²⁷ an irritated the local ruler had Matthew executed (i.e., martyred) in circa 60 AD.²⁸ An alternative reason

²⁶ The Holy Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017), p. 1233.

²⁷ Ethiopian King Akaptah Tsenfa Ared converted in to the new Christian faith during, circa, 30-38 A.D., under the preaching of Matthew.

²⁸ Ethiopian King Horentaku (a/k/a King Hirtacus) had Matthew executed in, circa, 60-65 A.D.

given for Matthew's execution, according to Ethiopian tradition, is that Matthew would not sanction the king's marriage to a young woman whom he had recently converted to the new Christian faith. It has been reported, too, that this same Ethiopian king who had Matthew executed was later converted to the new Christian faith following one or more miracles that had proven the divine truths of Matthew's preaching.

These Ethiopian legends and traditions about Matthew's sojourn in Ethiopia plainly demonstrate that Ethiopia was already "Jewish" and that the Apostle Matthew's preaching had been very influential among the Ethiopian elite. Moreover, this Ethiopian history also demonstrates that the Ethiopian population to whom the Apostle Matthew preached and converted to the new "Christian faith" were already Jewish; and that, upon their conversion, they became *Messianic Jews* – not "Christians."

Chapter Three: “When the Apostle Paul preached, Ethiopia had already been ‘Jewish’ for nearly a Thousand Years”

The Apostle Paul’s ministry to the Greco-Roman world fell largely outside of the Ethiopian world, including even Egypt and all of Africa. Paul also spoke Kione Greek, and all of his letters were written in Kione Greek. And, as a Roman citizen who was born, lived, and moved within the several provinces of the Roman empire, the scope of Paul’s ministry was restricted to a particular class of “Gentiles” who were Greeks or Romans – but not Ethiopians. Here, I surmise that Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, was never commissioned to preach to Jews, and that the Ethiopians were actually “Black Hebrews” or “Black Jews” – and not Gentiles!

The Apostle Matthew – not Paul – was commissioned to preach to the Ethiopians, because Matthew was a Jew commissioned to preach the Gospel to fellow Jews. The same was true of the Apostles Peter and James, who led the converted Jews at Jerusalem during the same period – these Apostles were Jews who had been commissioned to preach to their fellow Jews. And once these Jews believed in the Gospel, they were converted to “Messianic Jews” – i.e., they were not technically “Christians” in the same manner as were the converted Gentiles to whom Paul had preached.²⁹ Hence, where Matthew preached to, and helped to convert, the Ethiopians, those converted Ethiopians became *Messianic Jews* – not Christians. Today, their Ethiopian brand of Christianity exists to this very day in the form of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

Now the foundations Ethiopia’s “Messianic Judaism” rested in pre-rabbinic Judaism several centuries (i.e., circa 930 B.C. to 4 A.D.) before the

²⁹ See, generally, Acts 15: 1-21 (the decision of the Council at Jerusalem on the question of whether Gentiles should be circumcised); and Acts 21: 17-26 (Apostle James and the elders instruct the Apostle Paul that converted Jews should continue to keep the Law of Moses).

birth of Jesus Christ. Prior to Christian era, the kingdom of Aksum was majority Hebrew-Jewish in culture and religious worldview since the days of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, circa 965 to 930 B.C.

“Steven Kaplan argues that...[b]y the time Christianity took hold in the fourth century, **many of the originally Hebraic-Jewish elements had been adopted by much of the indigenous population** and were no longer viewed as foreign characteristics. **Nor were they perceived as in conflict with the acceptance of Christianity.**”³⁰ From this argument flows the natural conclusion that the new Solomonic dynasty, which was established by Menelik I in, circa, 930 BC, was “Hebrew-Jewish.”

Indeed, this historically accurate and fact-based argument suggests that pre-rabbinic Hebrew-Jewish religion had reached the kingdom of Aksum since the time of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, to wit:

Menelik I (Ge'ez: ጭኒልክ, Mənilək) was the legendary first Emperor of Ethiopia's Solomonic dynasty. According to the *Kebrā Nagast*, a 14th-century national epic, in the 10th century BC he is said to have inaugurated the Solomonic dynasty of Ethiopia, so named because Menelik I was the son of the biblical King Solomon of ancient Israel and of Makeda, the Queen of Sheba....

According to legend, **Menelik I founded the Solomonic dynasty that ruled Ethiopia with few interruptions for close to three thousand years.** This dynasty ended after 225 generations, with the deposition of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.

The Solomonic dynasty began (or was restored, based on the traditional narrative) in 1270, when Yekuno Amlak, who claimed descent from biblical Solomon and Sheba, overthrew the last ruler of the Zagwe dynasty, dismissing them as not of "the house of Israel" (i.e., of Solomon). and re-established the

³⁰ “Kingdom of Aksum,” *Wikipedia* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Aksum

Solomonic Dynasty in 1270 AD. The term Madrā Ag'azi appears in the Gädlä Marqorewos (Conti Rossini 1904, 27 (text); 38, tr.) as the realm of King Mənəlik....

According to Ethiopian tradition, the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Ethiopia by first-born sons of Israelites who accompanied Menelik on his return from Jerusalem.

The Ark is believed by some people to be held in a shrine in Axum that no one is allowed to enter, except for one monk who is assigned to guard it for life and is not allowed to leave the courtyard of the church. During the persecution of Gudit in the 10th century and the Ethiopian-Adal war in the 16th century, the Ark was moved south to Lake Ziway and later brought back to Axum.³¹

This kingdom of Axum included parts of modern-day northern Ethiopia, parts of modern-day Sudan; modern-day Eritrea; and parts of modern-day southern Yemen.



This kingdom of Axum was essentially a pre-rabbinic “Jewish” kingdom, since the times of Menelik I, who reigned from, circa, 952 to 957 BC.




The following history demonstrates that, unlike orthodox Rabbinic Jews who did not accept the Gospels, most of the Ethiopian Jews did accept the Gospels; and this was especially true during the 4th Century AD. Thus,

³¹ Ibid.

the Solomonic Dynasty in Ethiopia mutated from being a Jewish kingdom into a *Messianic Jewish* (or Christian) kingdom.



	Solomonic-Jewish Dynasty of Kings and Queens in Ancient Ethiopia-- from 982 BC - 1974AD	Year of Reign
1.	Menelik I (biological son of King Solomon and Queen of Sheba) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty; Judaism established as official religion of the kingdom/ empire.</i>	982 – 957 BC
2.	Handeyon I ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	957 – 956 BC
3.	Sera I ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	956 – 930 B.C.
4.	Amen Hotep (Zagdur II) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	930 – 899 BC
5.	Aksumay Ramissy ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	899- 879 BC

6.	Aweyo Sera II  <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	879 – 841 BC
7.	Tawasya II  <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	841- 820 BC
8.	Abralyus Wiyankihi II  <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	820 – 788 BC
9.	Aksung Waranda Tsahay II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolished Judaism as the official religion of the kingdom of Aksum and reinstated ancient Ethiopian cults. • Many of the ancient <u>Ethiopian gods</u> were the forerunners of the ancient <u>Egyptian, Greek and Roman gods</u>. • The Greco-Roman counterparts to these same ancient Ethiopian gods were described as “demons” and rejected by the Apostle Paul and, later, by Augustine of Hippo. 	788- 765 BC
10.	Kashta Hanyon I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	765 – 752 BC
11.	Sabaka <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	752 – 740 BC
12.	Nikanta Kandake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished 	740 – 730 BC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	
13.	Tsawe Terhak Warada Nagash (Sawe II) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	730 – 681 BC
14.	Erda Amen (Awseya a/k/a Taharga, son of Piye (Abralyus Wiyakihi II)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	681 – 675 BC
15.	Gasyo Eskikatir <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	675 BC
16.	Nautmeawn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	675 – 671 BC
17.	Tomadyon Piyankihi (Toma) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	671 – 659 BC
18.	Amen Asro II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established <p>[Lemba-Bantu (“Black Jews” of Southern Africa trace their Jewish lineage from the migration of Levitical-Benjamite priests from ancient Israel to Yemen beginning in this period)].</p>	659 – 643 BC
19.	Tomadyon Piyankihi (Piyankihi IV)	643 – 609 BC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established <p>[Lemba-Bantu (“Black Jews” of Southern Africa trace their Jewish lineage from the migration of Levitical-Benjamite priests from ancient Israel to Yemen beginning in this period)].</p>	
20.	<p>Zaware Nebret Aspurta (Iaware Nebret)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established <p>[Lemba-Bantu (“Black Jews” of Southern Africa trace their Jewish lineage from the migration of Levitical-Benjamite priests from ancient Israel to Yemen beginning in this period)].</p> <p>[Beta Israel (the “Tribe of Dan” from ancient Judea is believed to have migrated to Ethiopia following the fall of Solomon’s Temple and the Babylonian captivity which occurred between, circa, 597 – 586 BC.</p>	609 – 568 BC
21.	<p>Sifay Hariataw (Safay I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established <p>[Lemba-Bantu (“Black Jews” of Southern Africa trace their Jewish lineage from the migration of Levitical-Benjamite priests from ancient Israel to Yemen beginning in this period)].</p>	568 – 556 BC
22.	<p>Ramhay Nastossanan (Ramhay I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established <p>[Lemba-Bantu (“Black Jews” of Southern Africa trace their Jewish lineage from the migration of Levitical-Benjamite priests from ancient Israel to Yemen beginning in this period)].</p>	556 – 543 BC
23.	<p>Handu Wuha Abra (Handu I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished 	542 – 531 BC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established <p>[Lemba-Bantu (“Black Jews” of Southern Africa trace their Jewish lineage from the migration of Levitical-Benjamite priests from ancient Israel to Yemen beginning in this period)].</p>	
24.	<p>Safelya Sabakon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established <p>[Lemba-Bantu (“Black Jews” of Southern Africa trace their Jewish lineage from the migration of Levitical-Benjamite priests from ancient Israel to Yemen beginning in this period)].</p>	531 – 500 BC
25.	<p>Agalbus Sepekos I (Agalbus I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established <p>[Lemba-Bantu (“Black Jews” of Southern Africa trace their Jewish lineage from the migration of Levitical-Benjamite priests from ancient Israel to Yemen beginning in this period)].</p>	500 – 478 BC
26.	<p>Pesmarit Waradanegash</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	478 – 457 BC
27.	<p>Awsaya Trakos (Awsey II)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	457 – 445 BC
28.	<p>KanazPsmis (Qamiz)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	445 – 432 BC

29.	Apride (Apras) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	432 – 422 BC
30.	Kashta Walda Ahuhu (Kashta II) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism abolished • Ancient Ethiopian gods, temples, cults re-established 	422 – 402 BC
31.	Elalion Tauke (Elalion) Judaism was restored as the official religion of the Kingdom of Aksum ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	402 – 392 BC
32.	Atserk Amen III ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	392 – 382 BC
33.	Atserk Amen IV ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	382- 372 BC
34.	Hadina ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	372 – 362 BC
35.	Atserk Amen V ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	362 – 352 BC







36.	Atserk Amend VI ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	352 – 342 BC
37.	Nikawsis Kandake II (Queen Nikawla) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	342 – 332 BC
38.	Bassyo ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	332 – 325 BC
39.	Nikawsis Kandake III (Queen Akawsis Kandake) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	325- 315 BC
40.	Ankamen I ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	315 – 305 BC
41.	Awtet Arawura (Awtet II) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	305 – 295 BC
42.	Kolas II ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	295 – 285 BC




43.	Zaware Nebrat II ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	285 – 269 BC
44.	Satyo III (Stiyo) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	269 – 255 BC
45.	Safay II ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	255 – 242 BC
46.	Nikosis Kandake IV (Queen Nikosis) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	242 – 232 BC
47.	Ramhay Arkamen (Ramhay II) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	232 – 222 BC
48.	Feliza Hernekhit (Feliza II) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	222 – 207 BC
49.	Hende Awkerara (Handu II) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	207 – 187 BC







50.	Aghabu Baseheran ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	187 – 177 BC
51.	Sulay Kawawmenu ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	177 – 157 BC
52.	Messelm Keramer (Masaline II) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	157 – 149 BC
53.	Nagsey Bsente ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	149 – 139 BC
54.	Etbenukawer ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	139 – 129 BC
55.	Safelya Abramem (Safelya II) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	129 – 109 BC
56.	Sanay ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	109 – 99 BC

57.	Awsena ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	99 – 88 BC
58.	Dawit II ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	88 – 78 BC
59.	Agalbus II ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	78 – 70 BC
60.	Bawawel ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	70 – 60 BC
61.	Barawas ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	60 – 50 BC
62.	Danidad ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	50 – 40 BC
63.	Amoy Mahasse (Amoy II) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	40-35 BC







64.	Nicotris Kanadke V (Queen Nicotris) ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	35-25 BC
65.	Nalke ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	25-20 BC
66.	Luzay ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	20- 8 BC
Birth of Jesus Christ, circa 4 AD		
67.	Bazen ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	8 BC- 9 AD
68.	Sartu Tsenta Assagd ★ <i>Solomonic Dynasty.</i>	9 – 30 AD
Ethiopian “Messianic Judaism,” circa 30-38 AD		
69.	Akaptah Tsenfa Ared (Egippus) Converted to Christianity by Matthew the Apostle	30 – 38 AD







	 <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/ beginning of “Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	
70.	<p>Settah [historical record is not clear]</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/ “Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	--
71.	<p>Horentaku</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/ “Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordered execution of Matthew the Apostle 	38 – 40 AD
72.	<p>Garsemot Kandake VI (Queen Garsemot)</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/ “Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	40 – 50 AD
73.	<p>Hatez</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/ “Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	50 – 78 AD
74.	<p>Mesenh</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/ “Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	78 – 85 AD
75.	<p>Setwa</p>	85 – 94 AD






	 <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	
76.	<p>Adgala II</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	94 – 104 AD
77.	<p>Agba</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	104– 105 AD
78.	<p>Serada</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	105- 121 AD
79.	<p>Malis II</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	121- 125 AD
80.	<p>Hakli II</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	125- 131 AD
81.	<p>Hakli III</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	131- 143 AD





82.	Demahe II  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	143- 153 AD
83.	Awtet III  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	153- 155 AD
84.	Ela (Bagaman)  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	155- 162 AD
85.	Awadu  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	162- 192 AD
86.	Zagun  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	192- 197 AD
87.	Rema  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	197- 200 AD
88.	Azagan II	200- 207 AD





	 <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	
89.	<p>Gafale</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	207- 208 AD
90.	<p>Segay</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	208- 212 AD
91.	<p>Gaza</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	212- 221 AD
92.	<p>Agduba</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	221- 229 AD
93.	<p>Saweza II</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	229- 230 AD
94.	<p>Wakana</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i></p>	230 AD

95.	Hadaws  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	230 AD
96.	Ela San (Sagal)  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	230-233 AD
97.	Asfehi  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	233- 247 AD
98.	Atsgaba  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	247- 253 AD
99.	Ayba II  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	253- 270 AD
100.	Saham I  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	270- 279 AD

101.	Segab  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	279- 289 AD
102.	Tazer  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	289- 299 AD
103.	Ahywa  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	299- 306 AD
104.	Abreha I and Atsbeha (joint reign)  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>	306- 332 AD
105.	Abreha I  <i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Messianic-Jewish Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum.</i>  Established the Coptic Church of Ethiopia. Coptic Christianity became the official State Church in the kingdom of Aksum.	332-344 AD
106.	Asfeha II	344-351 AD

	 <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	
107.	<p>Sahel II</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	351- 365 AD
108.	<p>Arfed</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	365- 369 AD
109.	<p>Adhana I</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	374- 379 AD
110.	<p>Rita</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p>	379- 384 AD

	Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.	
111.	<p>Asfeha III</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	375- 376 AD
112.	<p>Atsbeha II</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	376- 381 AD
113.	<p>Ameda II</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	381- 396 AD
114.	<p>Abreha II</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	396 AD

115.	<p>(Ela) Sahel III</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	396 AD
116.	<p>(Elas) Gabez I (Ella Gabaz I)</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	396-398 AD
117.	<p>Sahel IV</p>  <p><i>Solomonic Dynasty/“Coptic Christianity” in Ethiopia or the Kingdom of Aksum/ Ethiopia.</i></p> <p>Ethiopian Copts merged Jewish practices with Christian practices.</p>	398- 402 AD
---	 <p><u>The Solomonic Dynasty until 1974</u></p> <p>From 402 to 1136 AD, the Solomonic Dynasty ruled.</p> <p>From 1137 to 1270, the Zagwe Dynasty overthrew the Solomonic Dynasty.</p> <p>In 1270, the Yakuno Amlak overthrew the Zagwa Dyanasty and re-established the Solomonic Dynasty.</p> <p>The Solomonic Dynasty then ruled from1270 to 1974.</p>	402 to 1974 AD

Emperor Haile Selassie (1892 - 1975) was the last emperor of the Solomonic dynasty.



The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church

Remains the official state church of Ethiopia

Merger of Judaism and Christianity

Ethiopian Copts *merged* (a) Jewish practices with (b) Christian practices.

This merger reflects the Ethiopian Copts' conception of Christianity's *not being fundamentally inconsistent* with Judaism.

Hence, the Ethiopian Copts' conception of the Christian religion is that of "*Messianic Judaism*" and is one that reflects the viewpoint of Jewish "Christians" within the Early Church – including that of the Apostle James; the Apostle Peter; and, later, the Apostle Paul.

The dichotomy between Judaism and Christianity that became commonplace in the West (particularly in Western Europe) cannot be found amongst the Ethiopians, because the Ethiopians have always been either Jews or Messianic Jews (i.e., Jews who retained Judaism while also acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the World).

This does not mean that there was no conflict between Ethiopian Messianic Jews (i.e., "Christians") and the Beta Israel (i.e., "Jews").

But unlike in Europe, where there were definite ethnic differences between European Christians and Semitic Jews, in Ethiopia, both the Ethiopian Christians (or Ethiopian Messianic Jews) and the Ethiopian Jews (or Beta Israel) sprang from the *same ethnic blood lines* – the only difference being their religion.

Chapter Four: “Modern Ethiopians are the ‘Sons of Judah’”

The Apostle Paul’s ministry to the Greco-Roman world did not include Ethiopia, because the Ethiopians were “Black Hebrews” or “Black Jews” – and Paul was called to specially preach to the Gentiles.

For this reason, Ethiopian Christianity presents an important chapter in the development of the Christian religion, because Ethiopian Christianity represents an important merger between Judaism and Christianity that is known as *Messianic Judaism*. When the Greek and Roman Christians began to develop the Western and Eastern branches of Roman Catholicism, certain types of anti-Semitism inexplicably appeared in various disguises, so that Greek and Roman culture tended to challenge and displace the Jewish foundations of the Christian religion. Ultimately, Ethiopian Christianity was not favorably treated or seen as being compatible with the Western or Eastern branches of Roman Catholicism. Nevertheless, even Roman Catholicism could not challenge or displace the antiquity of the Ethiopians within the Hebrew Scriptures or within Judaism and Christianity.

Roman Catholicism would not easily acknowledge the plain fact that the ancient Ethiopians were amongst the first “Christians,” or that these Ethiopians were also Black Hebrews and (or) Black Jews-- not “Gentiles,” like the Greeks and the Romans who predominantly laid the conceptual foundations of both Western and Eastern European Catholicism.

For example, the reigns of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba during the 10th century BC, and the birth of their son, Menelik I, who laid the foundations for Ethiopia’s Solomonic Dynasty, presented an uncomfortable intellectual, cultural, and historical challenge to both Western and Eastern European Catholicism.³²

³² See, generally, W.E.B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa*, supra., pp. 220.

Moreover, it is quite likely that the Egyptians (via the preaching and teaching from the Apostle Mark during, circa, 30- 50 AD) and the Ethiopians (via the preaching and teaching from the Apostle Matthew during, circa, 30-50 AD) first heard the Gospel as an expression of the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures, or as the natural outgrowth of the Judaism which they had already become accustomed to practice. If this was true, then Messianic Judaism would appear to have a more legitimate claim to the “catholic” label than the versions of Greek and Latin Christianity that was predominant among the Europeans.

Indeed, the spread of Messianic Judaism would likely to have occurred before the New Testament was ever assembled. Messianic Judaism would have relied upon only the written text of the Hebrew Scriptures, together with the oral preaching of apostles such as Phillip, Mark, and Matthew – Jews teaching other Jews about the life and message of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, these Jews would not likely have used the label “Christian,” when speaking to other Jews about the new Gospel. Nowhere in the four Gospels do we find that Christ or any of his followers ever referred to themselves as “Christians.” The Jews who first believed did not stop referring to themselves as “Jews.” In the Book of Acts, for instance, we learn that a group of Gentile believers in the Gospel first called themselves “Christians.” Perhaps this was indeed the work of divine Providence. And yet, nowhere in Scripture did Jesus instruct his own followers to give themselves the name “Christian.”

I do not mean here to imply that the name “Christian” is improper or wrong. However, what I am getting at is that the word “Christian” is “extra-Scriptural” and “man-made” – never required by our risen Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. My point here is to suggest that the name “Christian” was largely utilized and embraced by the “Gentiles” (and a few “Jewish

converts”) who were members of orthodox churches which the Greek and Romans eventually established and controlled.³³

In the beginning of the preaching of the Gospels, at least in Jerusalem and Ethiopia, it was certainly possible for a Jew, such as John the Baptist, to believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah; and yet not use the name “Christian.” This was likely true of that first generation of Jewish believers in first-century Judea and Ethiopia; these believers were not nominally “Christian,” but rather they were in essence and nature “Messianic Jews.”

In the case of Ethiopia, since the days of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, in, circa, 970 – 931 BC, the Ethiopians likely conceptualized themselves as Jews. The cultural, political, economic, and religious commercial exchange between ancient *Ethiopia* (i.e., *Kush*, or *Cush*) and ancient Israel was quite extensive. This is reflected throughout the Hebrew scriptures. For instance, the Prophet Zephaniah writes that the “Ethiopians” or the “Cushites” will be “slain by [God’s] sword.”³⁴ But this same prophet also writes that “[f]rom beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering”;³⁵ and (or) “[f]rom beyond the rivers of Cush my worshippers, my scattered people, will bring me offerings.”³⁶

³³ Since the word “Christian” was coined by a Greco-Roman church in the Roman province of Antioch (currently in western Turkey), it is quite possible that the ancient Ethiopians and Egyptians who received the Gospels from the Apostles Matthew and Mark did not call themselves “Christians.”

³⁴ Zephaniah 2:12 [KJV, NIV].

³⁵ Zephaniah 3:10 [KJV].

³⁶ Zephaniah 3:10 [NIV]. The footnote to the 1984 New International Version says that “the rivers of Cush” mean “the upper Nile region.” The upper Nile region is essentially southern Egypt (i.e., upper Nile valley), the Sudan, and Ethiopia.

According to Augustine of Hippo, this passage which includes the reference to “Ethiopia” [or “Cush”] is a reference to “those predictions about Christ by the prophet Zephaniah.... [A] little after he says[:]

Then will I turn to the people a tongue, and to His offspring, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, and serve Him under one yoke. From the borders of the rivers of Ethiopia shall they bring sacrifices unto me. In that day thou shalt not be confounded for all thy curious inventions, which thou hast done impiously against me: for then I will take away from thee the naughtiness of thy trespass; and thou shalt no more magnify thyself above thy holy mountain. And I will leave in thee a meek and humble people, and they who shall be left of Israel shall fear the name of the Lord.’³⁷

“These are the remnant,” Augustine continues, “of whom the apostle quotes that which is elsewhere prophesied: ‘Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.’ These are the remnant of that nation who have believed in Christ.”³⁸

Here, in the Book of Zephaniah, the “remnant,” which is described as the restored Israel, and which is believed to be the Christian Church, explicitly includes the Ethiopian-Cushite faithful.³⁹ The Book of Zephaniah

³⁷ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 641. Here, Augustine quotes Zephaniah 3:9-12. [NOTE: Augustine’s Latin translation is slightly different than the texts of the King James Version or the New International Version].

³⁸ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 641.

³⁹ *Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible* (Zephaniah 3:10) lack a Reformed theological scholarship on the presence of “**Ethiopian Jews**” who existed perhaps since as early as the days of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Reformed theologians should further develop this research. See, e.g., “Origins of Ethiopia’s Black Jews,” CNEWA <https://cnewa.org/magazine/origins-of-ethiopias-black-jews-30374/> (“Zephaniah 3:10 says, “From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my supplicants, the daughters of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering.” If this prophecy truly dates from around 630 B.C.E., as most scholars believe, then it would indicate that Zephaniah was aware of the presence of a Jewish community in East Africa long before the fall of the first Temple.”)

certainly prophesies the rise of an African gathering of God's people emanating upon the borders of the rivers beyond Ethiopia.

Thus, in the positive development of Judaism and Christianity, the continent of Africa and Ethiopia loom large. And by the time when the Apostle Matthew first preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ among the Ethiopians almost one thousand years after the reigns of Solomon and Sheba, those Ethiopians would have received this Gospel as the fulfillment of their pre-existing Judaism – without ever having heard the word or the name “Christian”.

For this reason, the type of “Christianity” which took root in Ethiopia was not the same Christianity that would become the dominant religion within the Latin Western or Greek Eastern churches. But rather, the type of “Christianity” which these Ethiopians received was a distinct form of “Messianic Judaism” – i.e., Ethiopian Judaism with an acknowledgment that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah. This brand of Ethiopian “Messianic Judaism” evolved into what is today known as the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

These Ethiopians are thus the “sons of Judah,” because they are “Jews” and their “Tewahedo” denomination is “Messianic Jewish.” According to Augustine, there are “*two walls of partition*” between Jew (sons of Judah) and Gentile (sons of Israel). To that very point, and while commenting on the prophecy of Hosea, Augustine wrote:

The prophet Hosea speaks so very profoundly that it is laborious work to penetrate his meaning. But, according to promise, we must insert something from his book. He says, ‘And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there they shall be called the sons of the living God.’

Even the apostles understood this as a prophetic testimony of the calling of nations who did not formerly belong

to God; and because this same people of the Gentiles is itself spiritually among the children of Abraham, and for that reason is rightly called Israel, therefore he goes on to say, 'And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together in one, and shall appoint themselves one headship, and shall ascend from the earth.'

We should but weaken the savour of this prophetic oracle if we set ourselves to expound it. Let the reader but call to mind **the corner stone and those two walls of partition**, the **one of the Jews**, the **other of the Gentiles**, and he will recognize them, the one under the term **sons of Judah**, the other as **sons of Israel**, supporting themselves by **one and the same headship**, and ascending from the earth.⁴⁰

Therefore, the Ethiopians (including even the Ethiopian Tewahedo Christians or Ethiopian Copts) are indeed "Black Jews" who fall on the Jewish side of the Augustine's "two great walls of partition"; and, thus, the Ethiopians are the "sons of Judah." As such, the Apostle Paul was not originally sent to these Ethiopians because they were "Jews" – not Gentiles.

⁴⁰ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 634.

Chapter Five: “Modern Lemba-Bantu Peoples are also the ‘Sons of Judah’”

The Apostle Paul’s ministry to the Greco-Roman world also fell outside of the boundaries of the transitory world of the Lemba Jews of eastern, central, and southern Africa. This history is extremely important, because it is important here to note that there are other black Africans other than the Ethiopians who are indeed “Black Hebrews” or “Black Jews.” An important example of this is the Lemba tribes of southern Africa.⁴¹

The Lemba Jews’ patrilineal descent is from the Semitic-speaking Israelites (specifically, the Levitical and Benjamite tribes) who left ancient Judea after the period of the Babylonian captivity in, circa, 597 BC.⁴² The Lemba people consider the Ethiopians (both the *Beta Israel* (“Jewish”) and the *Ethiopian Tewahedo-Copts* (“Christian”)) to be their cousins.⁴³ And they are divided into twelve Lemba tribes, as follows:

⁴¹ I do not take the position that all persons of African descent are “Black Jews.” I hold that the DNA or ethnic diversity within the African continent is greater than that of any other part of the world. Hence, some Africans are genetically “Hebrew or Jewish” while some Africans (and perhaps most Africans) are not “Hebrew or Jewish.” Hence, this paper is not an advocacy paper of the popular idea that all African Americans are descendants of the original Israelites or Black Hebrews – although it is quite possible that some of the descendants of the original Israelites or Black Hebrews came to the Western Hemisphere through means of the transatlantic slave trade.

⁴² See, generally, Sigrun Bjarnadottir, *On the Jewish Ancestry of Lemba People of South Africa: How Genetics Can Support Claims of Ancestry* (BA Thesis in Anthropology, Univ. of Iceland, 2013) <https://nebula.wsimg.com/39437594bf1d7508958b48c0db6aa24f?AccessKeyId=CFD051C099636C9F5827&disposition=0&alloworigin=1> (“Yet another tale of the origin of the Lemba people of South Africa was told by a respected member of the Lemba Cultural Association. It describes how the Jewish ancestors of the Lemba travelled to Sena in Yemen where they established a community in the 7th century BC. According to this version, the community in Sena got larger when exiles from the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC immigrated.”)

⁴³ Ibid. (“Lemba people from Zimbabwe have an oral tradition claiming that they came from the north, either from Yemen, Egypt, Judea or **Ethiopia**, and that their forefathers did metalwork for the Arabs. Sometimes this place in the north, which they often call Sena, is of an unknown

- 1). **Buba**/Juda;⁴⁴
- 2). **Hamisi**/Hamese;
- 3). **Bakali**/Bakari/Pakgadi/Rabakali/Rapakgadi;
- 4). **Seremani**/Seremane/Solomon, Shlomo/ Suleiman;
- 5). **Tovhakale**/Thobakgale/Tovakare;
- 6). **Mhani**/Mani;
- 7). **Hadzhi**/Hadji/Rahadji;
- 8). **Sadiki**/Sathekge/Sadiq/Tzadik;
- 9). **Ngavi**/Zungunde;
- 10). **Mange**/Nemanga;
- 11). **Salefu**/Sarefu; and
- 12). **Thinyaladzi**/Chinyaladzi.⁴⁵

Notably, for the purpose of our discussion, the Lemba people are monotheistic Jewish.⁴⁶ And yet, the Lemba people *do not believe* that

location (Spurdle and Jenkins, 1996; le Roux, 2003)..... Later on, splitting up of the community followed in AD 600 due to a quarrel between the Lemba and the Arabs in Yemen... [t]wo migrations to Africa took place, one to **Ethiopia** and the other to South Africa where they established posts along the east African coast for goods trading....")

⁴⁴ Ibid., stating that the **Buba clan**, which is the "senior clan" of all the twelve Lemba tribes, have the most concentrations of genetic Y Chromosomes corresponding to the "Cohen gene" that designates direct ancestry to the priestly Aaronic-Levitical tribe, and with the exact same percentages as found among the so-called European Jews.

⁴⁵ See, generally, "Lemba Cultural Association," <https://www.lembaculturalassociation.co.za/LEMBA-CLANS-AND-UNITY.html>

⁴⁶ Ibid. ("The Lembas adore, worship and pray only to Yahweh (Mwali we Denga) the living spiritual being, i.e. Monotheism, they neither adore ancestral spirits nor idols of animals, trees, stones, the sun, stars or the moon which Yahweh has made. They had their priest of the Buba Clan, who when praying would wash their hands, wear a white cloth around the neck and end

“Christianity” is incompatible with their understanding of “Judaism.”⁴⁷ And there were many Lemba people who retain their Jewish identity while practicing their “Christian” faith.⁴⁸ Here, then, is yet another example of African-centered “Messianic Judaism” that is found on the African continent.

These Lemba people, like their Ethiopian cousins, are indeed “Black Jews” who fall on the Jewish side of Augustine of Hippo’s “two great walls of partition”;⁴⁹ and, thus, the Lemba people are also the “sons of Judah.”

For the purpose of our discussion here, it is important to note that as the “sons of Judah,” the great Apostle Paul’s mission did not directly include these Lemba people, because Paul was sent to the Gentiles, not to Jews.⁵⁰ Here, I surmise that Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, was not called to preach to the Ethiopians or to the Lemba people because they were “Black Hebrews” or “Black Jews” – not Gentiles.

their prayer with the word ‘Amen’ (Ex 20:4-5). The Lembas have lost their book (The Torah: The Law) on their long journeys, but the message of the book is written in their hearts.”)

⁴⁷ Citing Tudor Parfitt, *Genes, Religion, and History: The Creation of a Discourse of Origin Among a Judaizing African Tribe*, 42 *Jurimetrics J.* 209-219 (2002), authors of “Lemba” in *Wikipedia* (online encyclopedia) write: “Most Lemba today are members of Christian churches, with a significant Muslim minority. A smaller number have in recent decades identified explicitly with religious Judaism. Scholars have consistently noted, however, that these denominational affiliations are held in a cultural rather than exclusively doctrinal frame: as Parfitt observed, those Lemba who perceive themselves as ethnically Jewish ‘find no contradiction in regularly attending a Christian church.’”

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 634.

⁵⁰ Galatians 2:8.

Chapter Six: “The Judaism and Christianity of the Ethiopians and the Lemba are Distinct from Their European Counterparts”

From these two examples of the Ethiopians and the Lemba, we can see vaguely how one might argue that “Pauline Christianity” (i.e., the Christian religion as it developed in the Western and Eastern branches of the Catholic Church) was not originally designed by, or for, certain classes of black Africans who were undoubtedly of ancient Hebrew extraction – i.e., “Black Jews.” One might argue, too, that the type of “Christianity” which these Black Jews adopted was really a form of Messianic Judaism. However, I would not draw from these two examples of Black Jews a conclusion that the Christianity that was developed within the Western and Eastern branches of the Catholic Church is inherently the “*White Man’s Religion.*”

One might persuasively argue, however, that for Black Jews such as Ethiopians and the Lemba, that the Roman Catholic Church does not represent their type of Messianic Judaism. As previously mentioned, Judaism took root in Black Africa many centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ, so that when the Christian religion (i.e., news that the Messiah had come and fulfilled the Hebrew prophecies) reached the same parts of Africa, a form of Christianity known also as “Messianic Judaism” – not Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodox Catholicism – took root in Africa.

This African-oriented “Messianic Judaism” was similar in nature to “Islam” in style, culture, and theology of the one-ness of God; but this African-oriented Messianic Judaism also differed radically from Islam in that it maintained that Jesus of Nazareth was also the Son of God, coeternal with God the Father, etc. As the Ethiopian Tewahedo and Lemba church traditions plainly demonstrate, “Judaism” (i.e., ancient Hebrew customs

and traditions) remained at the foundation of these autocephalous African Christian or African Messianic Jewish traditions.

And so, from this historical perspective, we may draw certain important conclusions:

- First-Temple Judaism reached that part of Black Africa known as “Ethiopia,” which then included a much larger area of land than what is today called the modern nation-state of Ethiopia, at least nine hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. This began under the reigns of King Solomon (son of David) and the Queen of Sheba, who gave birth to his son.
- Under a “Solomonic-Ethiopian” dynasty, which lasted from the reign of Solomon and Sheba, up to the time of Emperor Haile Salassie in 1974.
- When Jesus was born, preached and ministered, and was crucified in Jerusalem, the Ethiopian and Lemba Jews were already living in Arabia (Yemen) and Ethiopia.
- Technically, both the Ethiopian Jews and the Lemba Jews were *not present* in Jerusalem when Christ was crucified; they were not members of the Jewish Sanhedrin that tried and condemned Christ; they were not members of the Sadducees, the Pharisees, or other sectors of the Jewish elite in Jerusalem. Nor were they “subjects” of the Roman empire.
- The Ethiopian Jews (and the Lemba Jews) retained a primitive type of “First Temple” Judaism which did not follow the “House of Hillel,” the Pharisees, or the subsequent generations of Rabbinical Jews who were disbursed throughout the Roman empire following the collapse of the Second Temple in 70 AD.

- The Apostle Paul had not been sent to the Ethiopian (or Lemba) Jews, because he had been designated as the apostle to the Gentiles.⁵¹
- The Greco-Roman churches which the Apostle Paul established were not set up amongst the Ethiopian (or Lemba) Jews.
- The Book of Acts records what is perhaps the very beginnings of the spread of Christianity among the Ethiopians where the Apostle Phillip is described as having explained the meaning of the Book of Isaiah to an Ethiopian eunuch, who was high-ranking civil servant to Queen Candace, then visiting Jerusalem to worship at the Temple.⁵²
- The Ethiopian eunuch, whom the Apostle Phillip taught, was obviously already “Jewish,” as evidenced by this Ethiopian’s visit to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple.⁵³ This is anecdotal evidence that the Ethiopian empire, from which he had travelled, was also already “Jewish.”
- According to Christian or church tradition, the Apostle Mark first spread the Gospel in Egypt; and the Apostle Matthew (following the Ethiopian eunuch) spread the Gospel in Ethiopia.

⁵¹ Galatians 2:8.

⁵² Acts 8: 26-40.

⁵³ Ibid.

- The Apostle James, who was the brother of Jesus, took over the leadership of the Messianic Jews in Jerusalem, after the Apostle Peter travelled to Rome. When the Apostle Paul last visited Rome, just before he was arrested, the Apostle James admonished the Apostle Paul not to teach the Jews to stop keeping the “law of Moses” (e.g., circumcision or the feast days) after they heard and received the Gospels.⁵⁴ This series of discussions indicates that, from the beginning, there was a “*church of the Jews*” (i.e., Messianic Jews) and a “*church of the Gentiles*” (i.e., the Pauline Christians, etc.). In his *magnum opus*, titled *The City of God*, Augustine of Hippo likewise acknowledge this division.⁵⁵
- When the converted believers in the Gospels were first called “Christians” at Antioch, that nomenclature was likely a derogatory term assigned to them by outsiders, and it never made “official” amongst the Jewish converts, many of whom continued to practice Judaism within the Second Temple and the Synagogues – the first Jewish converts were in essence “Messianic Jews.” This was also the pattern in Ethiopia, among the first Ethiopian Jews who accepted the largely unwritten, oral Gospels.
- Importantly, although the Apostle Paul was not sent to the Ethiopian (or Lemba) Jews, he was indeed “*one of them*,” that is to say, the Apostle Paul was (a) religiously or ethnically Jewish; and he was also likely (b) of a swarthy, dark complexion.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Acts 21: 17 – 26.

⁵⁵ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 634.

⁵⁶ Acts 21: 37- 40.



The Apostle Paul (Here depicted as a darker-skinned, Black Jew)

The Black Hebrews (or Black Jews) of Africa – which the Ethiopian and Lemba Jews represent – were too far removed from the political action in ancient Judea, during the reigns of Caesar Augustus, Tiberius Caesar, or the Emperor Nero, to be said to have been responsible for Christ’s crucifixion or the subsequent arrests and executions of the Apostles James, Peter, and Paul.

Nor were these Black Hebrews (or Black Jews) involved in the subsequent developments of *pre-rabbinic* Judaism [i.e., the development of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, and other Rabbinic laws and traditions] that developed largely amongst the Jewish diaspora disbursed throughout Western and Eastern Europe, and which developed often in conflict with the “churches of the Gentiles” in Europe.

On the other hand, as the Ethiopian and Lemba Jewish cultures reflect, the Black Hebrews (or Black Jews) in Africa incorporated the Gospel of Jesus Christ into their own pre-existing Judaism – developing a similar type of Messianic Judaism which the Apostle James taught and promoted in first-century Jerusalem.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Acts 21: 17- 26 (Apostle James’ instructions to the Apostle Paul regarding the Jewish converts to the Christian faith).

None of this, however, proves that “*Christianity is the White Man’s religion.*” However, this history demonstrates that the very first Africans who embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ were actually Jewish, or “Black Hebrews”; and that, when they embraced the Gospels, they incorporated it into their pre-existing, pre-rabbinic Judaism – making them Messianic Jews, but not “catholic” Christians who were the direct heirs of the Greeks and Romans who had received the Apostle Paul’s preaching.

Chapter Seven: “Apostle Paul and the Legacy of Greco-Roman Bias within the ‘Catholic Church’”

As the history of the Roman Catholic Church evolved, it undoubtedly centered around a *particular class of Greco-Roman persons* whom the Apostle Paul generally and correctly categorized as “Gentiles.” All of Paul’s letters were directed to this class of persons and other Jews who were then living either in ancient Judea or the Roman empire.

Obviously, although there were other large numbers of “Gentiles” who did not fall within this *particular class of Greco-Roman persons* – such as the Ethiopians, the northern Africans, the sub-Saharan Africans, the Chinese, the Indians, or several other classes of persons – the Apostle Paul’s several letters did not directly relate to or address these other classes of “Gentiles.” Consequently, “Pauline Christianity” unwittingly became somewhat ethnocentric – but this was not Paul’s fault, intent, or design.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, the new Greco-Roman Catholic Church (i.e., prior to the Great Schism which separated the Western Church from the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1054 AD) identified with, and preferred, the “Gentiles” who comprised that *particular class of Greco-Roman persons* who the West today considers to be “white.”

At least for Augustine of Hippo, the Roman Catholic Church’s (and later the several Protestant churches’) preference for “white” Greco-Roman culture was not intentional, but rather it was simply a historical accident. Initially, the first Christian bishops were called upon to defend the Christian faith against Greco-Roman paganism and heresy – much similar

⁵⁸ Acts 17: 24- 26 (Paul preaching in Athens, Greece, stating: “God that hath made the world and all things therein... hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth....”).

to the Apostle Paul's original missionary tasks amongst those same Gentiles.

For this reason, according to Augustine, the first Christian bishops were called upon to grapple with the Greek philosophers, especially the Platonists, who enjoyed "*superiority to all others in the judgement of posterity*,"⁵⁹ in terms of philosophical development, including Plato and the Platonists, and Aristotle and the Peripatetics.⁶⁰ Hence, Augustine politely admitted that "*the Greeks, whose tongue holds the highest place among the languages of the Gentiles*"⁶¹ were given preference in the development of Catholic philosophy and theology.

And yet, even while Augustine performed this monumental task of grappling with Greek philosophy within his magnum opus, titled *The City of God*, he also acknowledged that there were "wise men and philosophers among all nations... be they *Atlantics, Libyans, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, Scythians, Gauls, Spaniards*, or of other nations,"⁶² who, like the Greek Platonists or Peripatetics, had discovered "the supreme God... the maker of all created things."⁶³ Augustine's tacit admission that there were *wise men* – just as wise as the Greeks – *among other nations and other groups of Gentiles*, however, did not prevent the Roman Catholic Church or the spin-off national churches of Europe from becoming ethnocentric, if not

⁵⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 257-258 ("I have chosen the Platonic philosophers undeservedly as the parties with whom to discuss.... I have specially chosen them because their juster thoughts concerning the one God who made heaven and earth, have made them illustrious among philosophers. This has given them such superiority to all others in the judgment of posterity....")

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 255.

⁶² Ibid., p. 254.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 253.

altogether racist, in their development, interpretation, reinterpretation, and application of Christian theology within their provinces.

The Apostle Paul, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine of Hippo, who would become Paul's foremost interpreter, as well as many others, had always acknowledged the "universality" of the Gospels, without respect to color, ethnicity, or race. But because these early Church Fathers were *forced to expend most of their theological energies* upon the Greeks and the Romans, the word "Christian" was perhaps unwittingly transformed into a cultural ideal that tended to denote "whiteness" or White Europeans and White North Americans.

Chapter Eight: “At Chalcedon in 451 AD, ‘Greco-Roman Christianity’ Split from ‘Ethiopian Christianity’ and Global South Churches”

Tragically, an argument can also be made that “Pauline Christianity,” that is to say, the Christianity of the Western and Eastern branches of the Catholic Church, made certain tactical decisions which set it upon the course of being justifiably accused of being “the *White Man’s religion*” during the 5th century, A.D. The first great crisis occurred in 451 AD at the Council of Chalcedon. There, a theological dispute as to the nature of Christ – i.e., whether He had only *one nature* (the Miaphysitism) or two natures (i.e., Dyophysitism).

The *Miaphysites* were primarily members of the present-day Oriental Orthodox Churches, which are predominant primarily in the Global South, or the developing world, and includes:

- Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria: Primarily based in Egypt, it is one of the oldest churches.
- Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch: Historically centered in Syria and the Middle East.
- Armenian Apostolic Church: Comprises two main sees (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and Holy See of Cilicia).
- Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church: The largest of the Oriental Orthodox churches, based in Ethiopia.
- Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church: Autocephalous church based in Eritrea, historically linked to the Ethiopian church.

- Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church: Known as the Indian Orthodox Church.
- Jacobite Syrian Christian Church: An autonomous body under the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, also in India.
- British Orthodox Church: A small jurisdiction under the Coptic Orthodox Church.
- French Coptic Orthodox Church: A small jurisdiction under the Coptic Orthodox Church.

The *Dyophysites* were primarily members of the present-day churches which are predominant in the United States, Europe, and Russia, including:

- Roman Catholic Church (i.e., the Western or Latin Church)
- Eastern Orthodox Church (i.e., the Eastern or Greek Church)
- Protestant Churches (i.e., Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinist Reformed, Baptists, Methodists, Independents (non-denominational), etc.

Therefore, less than 100 years had elapsed between the year when Roman emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the official religion of the Roman empire in 380 A.D and the schism of 451 AD which split the Christian churches in Egypt, Ethiopia, India, and parts of western Asia away from the Catholic Church (which was then unified between the Western and Eastern branches).

This break-up of the Catholic Christian Church in 451 A.D. appears to have been mostly driven by culture, and *perhaps by race*⁶⁴ – because Rome

⁶⁴ This is only “hinted at” in many voluminous manuscripts. I suggest that racism was a probable contributing fact to this Schism of 451 A.D.

and Constantinople did not wish to share power with their erudite, influential brethren from Alexandria, Egypt; Jerusalem; and far away Ethiopia and India.

As a result, the new “catholic” Christian Church developed after 451 A.D. as a decisively Latin, Greek, and Eurocentric institution – while the “oriental” Christian churches of Africa, India, and western Asia developed outside the direct influences of European Christianity.

And, perhaps, this is arguably how and why “*Christianity became the White man’s religion*” in the eyes of many non-Europeans – especially those churches in Africa and Asia from which the Roman Catholics has voluntarily separated.⁶⁵ Hence, from between 451 A.D., up to period of time when the transatlantic slave trade began in earnest in, circa, the 1500s, the Christian religion (and its Church) was severely split along cultural ethnic lines that had long-standing consequences for the Christian religion.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See W.E.B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa* (New York, N.Y.: International Publishers, 2015), p. 220, stating:

This thousand years of history might have been different if the Christian Church had retained its hold upon Asia and Africa instead of expelling these countries and turning to the Nordic barbarians. In Northern Africa, the Nile Valley, and Ethiopia, in Syria and the Middle East, the Catholic Church had a wide range and power during the early Middle Ages. Through the greed of the Eastern Roman Empire, and because of endless controversy and disputes... all these churches were lost to the Roman hierarchy.... When, on the other hand, Christianity met black folk in the African slave and red men in America, it regarded them as lost heathens to be exterminated or enslaved. Thus the Church upheld the slave trade and its consequences.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Chapter Nine: "The Christian Legacy of African Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade"

The other contributing factor to the perception that "*Christianity becoming the White man's religion*" was the transatlantic slave trade, African slavery in the New World, and European imperialism on the African continent. This theme is a very cogent one, and it is succinctly and accurately reflected in W.E.B. Du Bois' *The World and Africa*, as follows:

[T]he conscience of the world began to writhe. 'Modern slavery was created by Christians, it was continued by Christians, it was in some respects more barbarous than anything the world had yet seen, and its worst features were to be witnessed in countries that were most ostentatious in their parade of Christianity. It is this that provides the final and unanswerable indictment of the Christian Church.' There had been the splendor of the Catholic Church under Alexander VI and Leo X, and then the revolt led by Luther, the Reformation. Thus was the growing consciousness of the dignity of the human soul brought face to face with slavery and a new slave trade. *Gradually it was rationalized widely as a method of rescuing the heathen from perdition and saving his soul.* However, this rationalization meant nothing when it conflicted with the profits of trade; and planters particularly, stoutly refused to release converts, and innumerable Christians often would not allow conversion. The profits of this new aspect of trade meant investment and the capitalist system.⁶⁷

Investment called for labor, and cheap labor, if the profit was to be high.... This was the meaning of five slave revolts among the

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 53.

blacks in America and the beginning of the fateful dynasty of Maroons, or free Negroes, hiding in organized rebellion in the mountains of Cuba, Jamaica, and Haiti, in Mexico and Brazil....⁶⁸

For a long time the fiction of the slave trade as a method of conversion to Christianity had ceased to salve the conscience of honest-thinking men. Slavery and the slave trade were pouring such treasure into England... that the defense of the system was fierce.⁶⁹

Eventually Negro slavery and the slave trade were abandoned in favor of colonial imperialism, and the England which in the eighteenth century established modern slavery in America on a vast scale, appeared in the nineteenth century as the official emancipator of slaves and founder of a method of control of human labor and material which proved more profitable than slavery.⁷⁰

[T]he British Empire became the victim of the worst legacy of Negro slavery: the doctrine of race superiority and the color line, which in a later century made civilized man commit suicide in a mad attempt to hold the vast majority of the earth's peoples in thrall to the white race – a goal to which they still cling today, hidden away behind nationalism and power politics.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 64.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 66.

In the African American community in the United States, this case against Christianity and Christians, and this description of Christianity as ostensibly being “*the White Man’s Religion*,” as Dr. Du Bois has described it here, has been embraced by very many highly regarded and professional persons, including many leading scholars and theologians, as primary reasons to reject the Christian religion. Some of these objectors go so far as to suggest that even quote some of the Apostle Paul’s writings to support their claims that even Paul himself had condoned servitude and slavery.⁷² And these criticisms of the Christian religion persist even though there obviously were great anti-slavery movements among many Christian sects such as, e.g., the Puritans, the Quakers, the Roman Catholics, and several other Protestant groups.⁷³

Yet the atrocities of African slavery and the transatlantic African slave trade which occurred under auspices of “Pauline Christianity” (i.e., the Catholic and Protestant churches that comprise all of Western Christendom) that ostensibly quoted Paul to justify their actions have never lost their sting upon the hearts, minds, and souls of many African and African American freedom fights, human rights activists, and civil rights lawyers, such as the undersigned author. Many of these persons use slavery and the slave trade as their primary basis for citing the “bad faith”

⁷² See, e.g., **1 Timothy 6:1-2** (Paul tells slaves to honor their masters to avoid blaspheming God's name); **Ephesians 6:5-8** (Paul instructs slaves to work with fear and sincerity as if serving Christ); **Colossians 4:1** (Paul commands masters to treat slaves with justice and fairness, noting they also have a Master in heaven); **1 Corinthians 7:21-23** (Paul advises slaves to seek freedom if possible, but emphasizes that their status does not affect their standing in Christ, even advising against becoming slaves of men); and **Philemon** (Paul sends the runaway slave Onesimus back to Philemon, not as a slave, but as a beloved brother, advocating for his freedom).

⁷³ Ibid., p. 65 (“The revolt against the Protestants began to appear among the Methodists, Baptists, and Quakers. Methodism [though not John Wesley himself] condoned slavery but was sensitive to and alarmed over the slave trade. The Baptists, beginning in England in 1600, developed into an extremely democratic organization which appealed to workers and even to slaves; and the general philosophical and economic enlightenment of the eighteenth century brought men of learning and artists into a distinct anti-slavery movement.”)

of “Pauline Christianity” religion as a whole; and they often cite the organized Christian Church as having played a vital role in the perpetuation of crimes against humanity over the course of more than four centuries – from the late 1400s up through the end of colonialism in Africa!

That such aggrieved persons who critique the organized Christian Church are today described as “threats to Western civilization” is also a major problem within contemporary American political and civil discourse.⁷⁴ And the fact that the organized Christian churches’ (both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic so-called “Pauline churches”) historic past support of African slavery and profits from the transatlantic slave trade is often treated only as *strange afterthoughts* which must remain outside the boundaries of conventional Christian ecclesiastical concerns, contributes greatly to the widespread claim that “*Christianity is the White Man’s religion*” among many.⁷⁵ The great Frederick Douglass tried to distinguished between false slave-holding Christianity and the true freedom-loving Christianity⁷⁶ – but, today, I have completely disavowed the name “Christian” as being altogether unnecessary to be a devoted following of our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ See, generally, Josh Hammer, *Israel and Civilization: The Fate of the Jewish Nation and the Destiny of the West* (New York, N.Y.: Radius Book Group, 2025).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ See, e.g., Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1995), p. 10 (“ ‘A slaveholder’s profession of Christianity is a palpable imposture. He is a felon of the highest grade....’ ”); p. 97 (Christianity is, inter alia, a slaveholding religion; and there is a difference between “the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ”); p. 99 (the Christianity of America is hypocrisy and iniquity by virtue of its perpetuation of slavery); p. 400 (while boasting of Christianity, Americans deny basic human rights to American slaves); p. 406 (slavery is still possible even in a land of professing Christians); p. 407 (the humanity of Christianity is needed to remove slavery); p. 420 (the American slaveholder even though he be a Christian is still prone to cruelty); and p. 438 (the slave power and American Christianity).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

I close this section in stating my own thoughts upon the subject matter at hand: the Apostle Paul himself could not have foreseen how some of his own words could have been misused by proponents of African slavery and the transatlantic slave trade – proponents, who are also high-ranking churchmen within the very the churches which claimed their succession and pedigree from the Greek and Roman churches which Paul helped to found.⁷⁸ The Apostle Paul himself can not justifiably be held accountable or responsible for these later events involving African slavery or the transatlantic slave trade.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, “Pauline Christianity” – i.e., the Western and Eastern branches of the Catholic Church and their successive, spin-off Protestant churches – did evolve into an institution which committed egregious actions in connection with African slavery and the transatlantic slave trade which today has opened the door to claims that “*Christianity is the White Man’s religion.*”⁸⁰ And a fundamental reason why I am no longer a Christian is partly rooted in this well-established and well-known truism: namely, that, even today, that same Christianity – even as it is disguised in many branches of the Black Church – still vigorously fights to maintain the *evil social, economic, political, and psychological effects* of African slavery and the transatlantic slave trade upon persons of African descent.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Chapter Ten: “Conflict and Difference Between the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and the Roman Catholic Church”

Aside from the crimes involving African slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church has only aggravated the crisis which undergirds that claim that “*Christianity is the White Man’s religion.*”

We may thus rightfully grapple with “Pauline” or “Greco-Roman Christianity” as being not necessarily applicable to Black Jews of Ethiopia. Whether this is true or not, it is clear to me that the Ethiopian Jews and Greco-Roman Gentiles received and applied the Apostle Paul’s message *differently*. In the case of the Greco-Roman Gentiles, “Pauline Christianity” permitted the enslavement of black-skinned persons to white-skinned persons as a matter of course.⁸²

In Jerusalem and Ethiopia, for instance, it is also not clear as to whether the first Jewish converts to the new “Christian” faith had ever heard Paul preach, or whether they had ever read any of Paul’s epistles. As previously mentioned, the Early Church at Jerusalem had designated Paul to be the chief apostle to be sent to the Gentiles.⁸³ But in one passage of scripture, the Apostle Peter does make reference to Paul’s writings having been received, but it is not clear as to whether Peter was then writing from Jerusalem or Rome.⁸⁴ And whenever the Ethiopian Jews probably received Paul’s letters, many centuries had likely already passed; and by then the

⁸² See, generally, W.E.B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa*, supra.

⁸³ Galatians 2: 8.

⁸⁴ 2 Peter 3: 15-16. It is likely that Peter wrote this epistle while he was in Rome and facing certain execution. This letter was likely addressed to the same group of Christians in Turkey (Asia Minor) who had received Paul’s previous letters and Gospel messages.

Ethiopians had already incorporated Matthew's Gospel message to their pre-existing Ethiopic Judaism. This is also what likely occurred amongst the *Messianic Jews* in Jerusalem as well; for by the time the Jews of Jerusalem had ever received copies of Paul's letters, they had already heard the Gospel being preached from Apostles Peter, James, and others. Hence, when the Jews in Jerusalem and Ethiopia converted to the new "Christian" faith, they adopted and practiced the first forms of *Messianic Judaism* – not Christianity.⁸⁵

For this reason, much of the conflict that later developed between the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and that of the Roman Catholic Church stemmed primarily from the fundamental differences in these two distinct versions of "Christianity."⁸⁶ At the foundation of the national

⁸⁵ The "Christian religion" or the emerging "Catholic Christian Church" was actually "a **breakaway version of messianic Judaism** that, over three centuries, had won support in areas far beyond its ethnic and geographical roots in Roman Palestine." Mark Vessey, Editor, "Introduction" to St. Augustine, *Confessions* (New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Nobles, 2007), p. xx.

⁸⁶ Consider, e.g., the following "AI summary" of "Ethiopian Catholic Church," *Wikipedia* (online), to wit:

There is a significant history of conflict, particularly in the 17th century and during the 1930s. Tensions centered on Catholic missionary attempts to impose Latin rites, leading to violent backlash, and later, Catholic support for the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, which involved the persecution of Orthodox clergy.

Key Historical Conflicts:

17th Century Jesuit Efforts (Latinization): Following Portuguese support in the 16th century against regional threats, Jesuit missionaries attempted to convert the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church to Roman Catholicism. Emperor Susenyos converted in 1622 and, with Jesuit support, tried to force Latin practices on his people, resulting in widespread rebellion and civil war, causing him to abdicate.

Expulsion of Missionaries: After 1632, the violent backlash forced the expulsion of Jesuits and missionaries, closing Ethiopia to Catholicism for nearly two centuries.

1935–1943 Invasion: Italy's Crusade against the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/977880>): During Mussolini's occupation, the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Italy widely backed the invasion. Pope Pius XI described the

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is “Judaism.” Whereas the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church is “Greco-Romanism,” or Western civilization as it evolved in Europe.

Hence, the Roman Catholics and the Ethiopians applied the Apostle Paul’s teachings and other Sacred Scriptures quite differently. These two applications of the Scriptures were not only *incompatible*,⁸⁷ but , in practical application, the Roman Catholic Church also *tried to displace* the Ethiopian Tewahedo Church in Ethiopia as the Roman Catholics sought to support the imperial expansion of the fascist and Mussolini-led Italian government during the 1930s. As a consequence of these Italian imperial effort in Ethiopia, **thousands of Ethiopian priests and monks were executed**.⁸⁸ One might argue that this suppression had nothing to do with race, and that it had everything to do with how the Roman Catholic leaders dealt with, and suppressed, all types of dissent.⁸⁹ I leave that question to the Reader.

invasion as a needed intervention, and Italian forces destroyed churches and executed thousands of Ethiopian Orthodox clergy.

Modern Relations

While historical relations were characterized by profound conflict, modern relations are primarily focused on dialogue, with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church maintaining a firm, independent identity and regarding Catholicism as a separate entity.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid. (See, also, the following additional “*AI Overview*,” stating: “Italian occupation forces, under Viceroy Rudolfo Graziani, massacred over 2,000 monks at the Debre Libanos monastery in Ethiopia in May 1937. This was part of a broader, violent campaign targeting the Ethiopian Orthodox clergy and followers, which included the execution of high-ranking clerics like Abune Petros in 1936.... The incidents were part of a brutal pacification campaign aimed at breaking Ethiopian resistance and replacing Orthodox Christianity with Italian Catholic influence.”)

⁸⁹ Historically, the powerful Roman Catholic Church thus stood against other groups of Christians who sought independence from its authority – the Ethiopian Tewahedo Church was no different. The important point, here, is to denote how nearly all of this opposition to Roman Catholic power and authority – including the opposition led by Luther and Calvin during the Protestant Reformation – relied upon the Apostle Paul, who was himself a Messianic Jew.

Ultimately, we are tasked with addressing whether the claim that “*Christianity is the White Man’s religion*” is historically and theologically justifiable. And although the Roman Catholic Church’s suppression of the Ethiopian Tewahedo church does not necessarily prove that this claim is true, it also does nothing to refute that claim either. This Italian history in Ethiopia also lends credence to the claim that it was Apostle Matthew’s (and the Apostles James’s)⁹⁰ conception of *Messianic Judaism* – and not that of the “Pauline Christianity” of the Greeks and the Romans – that laid the foundations of Ethiopian (and Egyptian-Coptic and all sub-Saharan African) Christianity.

⁹⁰ Acts 21: 17- 26.

CONCLUSION

In the first installment of this series on the great Apostle Paul, we examined the origin and nature of Judaism, the state of being a Jew, and Paul's self-identification as a sort of *Messianic Jew* – demonstrating how Paul's theology was somewhere between the present-day orthodox Jews and our present-day New Testament or Christian faith.⁹¹

In the second installment, we next analyzed the Apostle Paul's Jewish rabbinical credentials and training in the House of Hillel. There we analyzed whether the Pharisees had already cultivated a sort of "proto-Christian worldview" that had already anticipated the coming of a messiah to save Israel around the time when Herod the Great reigned during the first century AD. There, I suggested that the House of Hillel and the Pharisees were the spiritual forefathers of Pauline theology; and that Rabbinical Judaism's developed alongside the new Christian religion was not coincidental. Both of these theological develops had the same endgame, denoting a fundamental spiritual mutation in the worship of Yahweh through prayer and holiness of living.

Mindful of the plight of the African continent and its monumental role in the development of Judaism and Christianity, I have, in this installment, stepped outside of this narrative in order to address an important subpopulation of influential Jews known as Ethiopians – i.e., Black Jews, as well as the Apostle Paul's relationship to those Jews.

Black Jews have been amongst the ancient Hebrews from the beginning of story of Abraham's descendants. They are called Cushites, Kushites, Ethiopians and the like, throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. And

⁹¹ "The Apostle Paul: Pharisee and Jew,"

<https://nebula.wsimg.com/423c9a463aed49a62cc0f61b7f284eda?AccessKeyId=CFD051C099636C9F5827&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

during the time of Christ, these Black Jews existed on the periphery of orthodox Judaism and seemingly formed no part of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the Sadducees, the Pharisees, or later developments of Rabbinical Judaism. Nor were these Black Jews a part of the “lost tribes of Israel” but, instead, they were certainly well-known to the Jews.

In his monumental work, *The World and Africa*, scholar W.E.B. Du Bois captures the relationship between Jews and Ethiopia as follows:

It was around 2500 BC that the Hebrew nation had begun to arise. It became enslaved in Egypt, perhaps in the time of Rameses I. Its history touched Ethiopia at many points, and Jews showed the blacks the highest respect.

In personal relations there were repeated bonds between Jews and Ethiopians. A black minister of state, Ebedmulech, rescued the prophet Jeremiah from prison.... Mose married a black woman.... The writer of the Song of Solomon defended the color of the Ethiopians.... Jewish writers pictured Ethiopia as one of the most powerful countries of their day, equal in strength to Egypt, Persia, Assyria, and Babylon.... The prophet Isaiah wrote [a] well-known appeal to Ethiopia.... Jews hoped that Ethiopia might turn to the Jewish faith.... Isaiah summoned the Ethiopians in the struggle against Sennacherib. Repeatedly the Jews made alliance with the Ethiopians. [But also] The Jews envied the resources of Ethiopia....⁹²

Wherefore, this history on Jewish and Ethiopian relations is ancient and looms large. Moreover, as the history of the Lemba Jews plainly demonstrate, the “white” orthodox Rabbinical Jews in the state of Israel, Europe, and throughout North America, and the Black Jews of Africa, are

⁹² W.E.B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa*, supra, pp. 131-133.

also *genealogical* brothers.⁹³ These genealogical links certainly refute claims by many “Black Hebrew Israelite” groups who believe that “white Jews” are not the “real Jews.” I reject these arguments and claims.⁹⁴

On the other hand, I surmise that if the Apostle Paul was alive today, that he would likely fall into the category of a “Black Jew – i.e., as a lighter-skinned Ethiopian or a darker-skinned Egyptian.”⁹⁵ I believe, too, that today’s orthodox Rabbinical Jews would certainly reject this darker-skinned Apostle Paul, not because of his skin color but because of his “Messianic Jewish” belief in our risen Lord Jesus.

At the same time, I believe that the orthodox Catholics and most orthodox Protestants today would look with greater suspicion on the fact that the Apostle Paul has a darker skin tone which was dark enough to have likely disqualified him from American citizenship during the antebellum period of the United States. Their “anti-Semitism” would also likely cause them to look with suspicion upon Paul’s proudly self-identifying as a Pharisee and Jew, as a former student of the great Gamaliel

⁹³ See, generally, Sigrun Bjarnadottir, *On the Jewish Ancestry of Lemba People of South Africa: How Genetics Can Support Claims of Ancestry* (BA Thesis in Anthropology, Univ. of Iceland, 2013) <https://nebula.wsimg.com/39437594bf1d7508958b48c0db6aa24f?AccessKeyId=CFD051C099636C9F5827&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>; and Tudor Parfitt, *Genes, Religion, and History: The Creation of a Discourse of Origin Among a Judaizing African Tribe*, 42 *Jurimetrics J.* 209-219 (2002).

⁹⁴ I do not take the position that all persons of African descent are “Black Jews.” I hold that the DNA or ethnic diversity within the African continent is greater than that of any other part of the world. Hence, some Africans are genetically “Hebrew or Jewish” while some Africans (and perhaps most Africans) are not “Hebrew or Jewish.” Hence, this paper is not an advocacy paper of the popular idea that all African Americans are descendants of the original Israelites or Black Hebrews – although it is quite possible that some of the descendants of the original Israelites or Black Hebrews came to the Western Hemisphere through means of the transatlantic slave trade.

⁹⁵ Acts 21: 37-38 (Paul being mistaken for being an Egyptian. See, also, Dante Forston, “Paul: The Black Apostle to the Gentiles,” *Black History in the Bible: A Virtual Museum of Israelite History and Culture* (January 17, 2017).

I, as an alumnus of the Rabbinical House of Hillel; and as a keeper of the orthodox Jewish traditions and Law of Moses.

Therefore, I believe that if a darker-skinned Apostle Paul was alive today, professing Christ, proudly acknowledging his position as a Pharisee, and maintaining his Jewish practices, that he would have no choice but to affiliate himself with the Ethiopian or the Lemba Jews – i.e., the Black Jews – of Africa!

THE END





ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX TEWAHEDO CHRISTIANITY:

The Most Judaic Expression of Christianity

Rooted in Ancient Israelite Traditions



Ark of the Covenant Tradition

Sacred Tabot Processions



Extensive Old Testament Canon

Enoch, Jubilees, Meqabyan



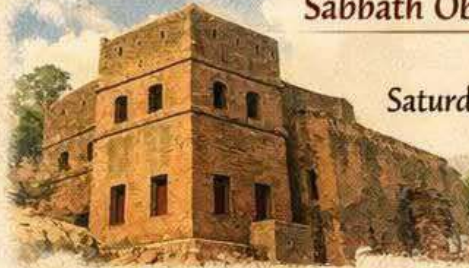
Dietary Laws

Kosher-like Food Restrictions



Sabbath Observance

Saturday & Sunday



Temple-Like Worship

Holy of Holies with the Tabot



Ancient Jewish Presence

Beta Israel Community



Early Christian Origins



Ancient Israelite Traditions Preserved in Ethiopia