

Today's Ethiopia is the Ethiopia of the Holy Scriptures, History, and Antiquity.

Introduction

Among the lands and peoples of the Middle East and Northeastern Africa mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, ancient historical documents, and archaeological discoveries, Ethiopia and the Ethiopians occupy a prominent position. To understand this, one needs to explore various sources. Questions such as "Who are the Ethiopians?" and "Where is their geographical location?" arise. The answers to these questions are found in the texts and interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, in ancient historical documents, and in archaeological findings.

According to anthropological studies, Ethiopians are categorized as dark-skinned peoples. Their inhabited area was also named Ethiopia, relating to their color. The etymological root of "Ethiopia" comes from the Greek "Aithiops," meaning "people with burnt faces." The Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, translates "Cush" as "Ethiopia." Since then, it has been applied to the people of this country. However, early Ethiopian traditions suggest the name Ethiopia was derived from one of its ancient kings, Aithiops I.

Archaeological and historical investigations show that the term "Ethiopia" was used for lands south of Egypt, extending up to India. The inhabitants of this vast region were known as Ethiopians. Over time, the people of this region became known by different state names, with their own cultural affinities and religious variations. Specifically, "Ethiopia" was identified with the region of the Nile's source, an identification that continues today with its historical legacy.

Moreover, Ethiopia is recognized for its early state formation in the region, maintaining its freedom, integrity, and history as a testament to the evidence found in Holy Scriptures, ancient documents, and archaeology.

However, a new falsification of Scripture has emerged, contradicting the region's history, designation, and geographical location. This is seen in the American Bible Society's publication of the revised Good News Bible in 1976, which replaces "Ethiopia" with "Sudan" in several instances, a change that has been strongly protested by the Bible Society of Ethiopia and the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church.

Today's Ethiopia is the Ethiopia of the Past

The distribution of peoples in the world is influenced by geographical conditions. Even if it were assumed that peoples of the world had no variation in their nature, their spatial distribution (lowland, highland, temperate zone) and climatic conditions (hot, cold, airy place) could affect their way of living and color.

Thus, the designation of places and peoples seems related. For instance, "Ethiopia" was derived from the color of its people, possibly influenced by the surrounding climatic conditions. This assumption suggests looking at the designation of "Ethiopia" and "Ethiopians" from three aspects based on historical facts and Holy Scriptures: tribal offspring, geographical location, and foreign relations (Ethiopia and the surrounding regions).

Tribal Offspring

The Holy Scriptures state that the peoples of the world descend from Adam. Over centuries, climatic conditions have led to color differentiation among peoples. "Ethiopians" meant "men with burnt faces," and the name "Ethiopia" was given in relation to the color of its people. According to Graeco-Roman historians and geographers, "Ethiopia" is a Greek-coined term from two words, mainly given to this area of dark-skinned people. Homer, a Greek poet living around 500 B.C., was among the first to mention Ethiopians in literature, describing them as a kind people living at the world's end, favored by the gods.

Geographical Location

Homer's successors, including historians Herodotus and geographer Strabo, provided more specific locations for Ethiopia. Herodotus, after staying in Egypt, identified two Ethiopian regions: one adjoining Egypt and another to the south, the latter likely corresponding to today's Ethiopia. Strabo, using studies from earlier scholars, defined Ethiopia's boundaries more clearly, identifying the Nile River's source as within Ethiopia.

Foreign Relations

In the Old Testament, "Cush" (Hebrew) or "Ethiopia" (Greek) had established foreign relations with neighboring states, including Arabia, Persia, Israel, Egypt, and Libya. These interactions fostered trade, cultural, and religious similarities, with Ethiopia often leading in these areas. Ethiopia was among the earliest countries to accept monotheism, and its acceptance of Christianity further solidified its historical and religious significance.

Conclusion

The discussion highlights that the Biblical "Cush" and "Ethiopia" refer to a region with a rich historical legacy. Despite attempts to alter its biblical and historical identity, Ethiopia's significance remains unchanged. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church's resolution and ongoing efforts aim to correct misconceptions and preserve Ethiopia's rightful place in history and scripture.

Resolution of the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, August 1990.