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The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church's Interpretation of Ἀναξίως in 1 Cor. 11:27–29 in Relation to Worthy Admission to the Eucharist in Light of Ritual Jewish Purity Laws Embedded in its Qeddassé and Tradition

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THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX *TEWAHEDO* CHURCH'S (EOTC) INTERPRETATION OF ἈΝΑΞΊΩΣ IN 1 COR. 11:27−29 IN RELATION TO WORTHY ADMISSION TO THE EUCHARIST IN LIGHT OF RITUAL JEWISH PURITY LAWS EMBEDDED IN ITS *QEDDASSÉ* AND TRADITION

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I dedicate this thesis to my beloved wife (Jeri), my precious children (Nati, Lilly, and Beti), and my mom (Fele) who prays for me and my ministry without ceasing. [Amesegenalehu]

CONTENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AC	*Andemta Commentary*
AP	*Ethiopic Anaphora of the Apostles*
Ath	*Ethiopic Anaphora of St. Athanasius*
CI	*Longer Ethiopic Anaphora of St. Cyril*
CJ	*Concordia Journal*
EECMY	Ethipian Evangleical Church Mekane Yesus
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodx Tewahedo Church
FC	Formula of Concord
J	*Ethiopic Anaphora of Our Lord Jesus Christ*
JB	*Ethiopic Anaphora of St. James the Lord's Brother*
JC	*Ethiopic Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom*
JTSA	*Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*
LXX	Septuagint Translation
LTJ	*Lutheran Theological Journal*
LW	*Luther's Works*
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*

GLOSSARY

Abyssinia: Ancient name of Ethiopia

Aksum: Ancient capital city of Ethiopia

Andemta Commentary: The only EOTC's exegetical commentary of the Bible.

Bete Krestian: Church (literally it means the house of Christians)

Betekelile: Literally -'with Crowns' (marriage conducted with crown in the EOTC)

Fetha Nagast: The legislation of Kings

Ge'ez: It is ancient Semitic liturgical language of the EOTC.

Kebra Nagas:t Glory of the Kings

Kedist: Second section of the EOTC building

Ketera: The annual liturgical assembly in the eve of epiphany

Mashafa Berhan: The book of light

Mek'idesi: Inner part of the EOTC representing the holy of holies

Memhir: It is a professional title given to a teacher in the EOTC

Meskel: It is the Commemoration of the Findings of the True Cross of Christ

Miaphysis: Inseparable unity of the Godhead and the Manhood of the Christ in one nature/

Qeddassé: It literally means – liturgy, hallowing, thanksgiving

Qene mahlet: Specific place reserved for the choirs in the EOTC

Tabot: The Ark of the Covenant

Teregwame: It is the Ge'ez traditional exegesis that displays several readings and/or interpretations of words or phrases of the Scripture

Tewahedo: The term used to denote "composite unity" of the divinity and the humanity of Jesus Christ

Timket: Epiphany

ABSTRACT

Senbetu, Tibebu Teklu. "The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church's Interpretation of *Ἀναξίως* in 1 Cor. 11:27−29 in Relation to Worthy Admission to the Eucharist in Light of Ritual Jewish Purity Laws Embedded in its *Qeddassé* and Tradition." Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2021. 249pp.

This research examines the interpretation of 1 Cor. 11:27−29 and the practice of worthy admission to the Eucharist within the historical context and tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church (EOTC). Christianity in Ethiopia has ancient roots in Judaism and in the apostolic tradition of the early church fathers, whose religious orientation and teaching shaped the church's history, tradition, doctrine, and religious practices. In particular, we examine the church's focus on the sanctity of the Eucharist and the acceptable celebration of and participation in the Sacrament by the faithful.

Analyzing the multi-facetted legacies of the EOTC, including Judaism and the early church fathers, both from Antiochene and Alexandrian traditions, interlated to each other, the research discusses the biblical interpretative tradition of the EOTC, which is codified in the *Andemta* Commentary (AC) and which continues to influence the central, formative, ecclesiastical practice of teaching and preaching of the EOTC. The church's ancient historical religious tradition and its liturgy, the long-standing biblical interpretation embedded in the AC, and the subsequent Ethiopic Bible versions interpret the Greek term ἀναξίως in verse 27 *as an adjective*, thus requiring those who intend to partake in the Sacrament to demonstrate worthy Christian virtue and purity before partaking in the Eucharist. The conclusion is that this interpretive tradition has not only placed an undue burden on consciences, but has also provided a distorted interpretation of the Corinthian context and the correct interpretation of this verse.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this research is to fill a gap in the modern studies of the history of exegesis by focusing on how the Greek term ἀναξίως historically, contextually, exegetically, and theologically has been understood in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC). The research is based on the larger context of the Church and its relationship to Judaism, as well as the selected anaphoras of the early Church fathers as presented in the *Qeddassé*, the *Fetha Negast*, and the biblical interpretive tradition of the Church as preserved in the *Andemta Commentary* (AC) corpus. The evidence shows that the sacrificial language at the core of the EOTC's Eucharistic liturgy, and expressed in the Ethiopian commentary tradition, derived from both the Old Testament Judaism and the Early Church fathers' anaphoras, is symptomatic of a church that has been overly influenced by that tradition. It has exchanged the emphasis of grace and care for one another found in 1 Cor. 11 for a distorted legalism that moves from discouragement to de facto exclusion from the Eucharistic life of the EOTC, much as the Old Testament prescriptions set an almost impenetrable barrier around the sacrificial system practiced among the Israelites.

This dissertation is meant to be a clarion call to the EOTC's members to return to the biblical teaching of proper participation in the Eucharist. Through an essential analysis of the historical context of 1 Cor. 11 combined with the syntax and the overall Eucharistic teaching of the Sacred Scriptures, we shall render a more appropriate interpretation and application of the term ἀναξίως than that found in the EOTC. The Church's ancient and prestigious tradition is also, however, an important component of the study. The tradition elevates the sanctity of the Eucharist and fosters at careful and sincere urge to prepare before the sharing of the Eucharist.

And yet, we hope also to provide an awareness both to the Church and its members of the unintended consequences of terminologies and expression about the Eucharistic teaching in the writings of the Church that in practice seem to have forgotten that we are now under a new covenant.

Moreover, the EOTC itself is responsible for giving a clear and sound moral, theological, historical, and exegetical guide to its members, especially when the faithful members read the Church's authoritative documents and doctrine wrongly and thus habitually ignore the service of the Sacrament altogether, intending to avoid God's judgment. Therefore, this research draws robust theological and moral application of the word ἀναξίως to modern-day Eucharistic praxis of the EOTC that wrongly looks to the Old Testament ceremonial law as an avenue for making oneself ἀξίος for the Sacrament.

Christianity in Ancient Ethiopia

Since there is confusion regarding the beginning of Christianity in Ethiopia and its spread throughout the country, it is first vital to give a general overview of historical and traditional facts about Ethiopian Christianity. We can then explore the historical account of the pre-Christian ancient empire of *Aksum* and its relationship to the Old Testament rituals and holiness code that came to Ethiopia through the account of Queen Sheba, which we will address in detail in chapter two of this dissertation.

There was a fundamental difference between how Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia and how it was introduced to the Greco-Roman world. In the Greco-Roman world, Christianity began among the lower classes and eventually, perhaps after three centuries, succeeded in gaining converts among some royal family members and the elite. In Ethiopia, however, it was the other way round. Christianity began among the royal families, mainly in the Northern part of

the country, and eventually spread down to the lower levels of the society to the rest of the country.[1]

Concerning the beginning of Christianity in Ethiopia, it is more difficult to refer to a detailed account of the origin of Christianity in the country, especially during the first three centuries after the birth of Christ. Not many historical writings related to the origin of Christianity in Ethiopia elucidate the details of the matter. Nevertheless, this should not diminish the witness of a few ancient reliable historical sources and witnesses found in the Scripture and the writings of the early Church fathers or historians regarding the early arrival of Christianity in Ethiopia.

Nonetheless, many European scholars deconstructed the ancient history of Christianity in Ethiopia and argued that the middle of the fourth century brought a brand-new beginning of Christianity in Ethiopia. However, some early church historians and the EOTC tradition tell us that Christianity began in Ethiopia through various routes in the middle of the first century.[2] For example, the early Church historian Rufinus of Aquileia witnessed that the Apostle Matthew took the mission mandate of the Lord and went to Ethiopia. He notes, "In the division of the earth which the apostles made by lot for the preaching of God's word, when the different provisions fell to one or the other of them, Parthia, it is said, went by lot to Thomas, to Matthew fell Ethiopia, and Hither India, which adjoins it, went to Bartholomew."[3]

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[1] Sergew Hable Selassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press, 1972), 104.

[2] Keon-Sang An, *An Ethiopian Reading of the Bible: Biblical Interpretation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015), 86.

[3] Rufinus of Aquileia, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia*, books 10 and 11, trans. Philip R. Amidon, S.J. (New York: Oxford University, 1997), 18. One of the compelling reasons for St. Mathew to go for mission work to Ethiopia was the growing number of black people in the Northern part of Ethiopia among the people called the Felasha (Ethiopian Jews).

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church tradition also affirm Mathew's mission and martyrdom in Ethiopia.[4] In reading the works of St. John Chrysostom, he mentions that Ethiopians were present in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost and they returned to Ethiopia with many Jewish migrants.[5] If Christianity is thought to be the continuation of Judaism in some form, this link can be vividly found in the Ethiopian religious tradition, history, and customs maintained for more than two millennia. Petros S. Berga also notes that later on, "during the early Middle Ages when the country [Ethiopia] was surrounded by hostile Islamic nations, there was a strong movement of identification with biblical Israel."[6] As we will see in a later chapter, this identification of the Ethiopian church with Israel is an important aspect of its theology and life.

Further information in the Biblical account about Christianity's introduction into Ethiopia is found in Acts 8:26−39. There we read about the visit to Jerusalem and the conversion of an Ethiopian eunuch who introduced Christianity to Ethiopians at that early age upon his return to the country.[7] The Church historian Eusebius witnessed, "Tradition says that he [the Eunuch] who was the first fruit of the faithful throughout the world, returned to his native land and preached the gospel so that, by him, was fulfilled the prophecy, 'Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand to God' (Ps. 68:31)."[8] Further, Paulos Mikias notes, "There is no doubt that Judaic influences and Old Testament reflections had reached Ethiopia long before the introduction of Christianity ...

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[4] The Ethiopian Orthodox Church. *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spirituality* (Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 1970), 3.

[5] *Church of Ethiopia*, 3; see also An*, Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 86.

[6] Berga, *Original Christian Unity in Ethiopia*, 37.

[7] Giday Belai, *Ethiopian Civilization* (Addis Ababa: B. Giday, 1992), 93; see also Paulos Mikias, *Ethiopia: Africa in Focus Series* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC−CLIO, 2011), 180.

[8] Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, J. E. L. Oulton, and Hugh Jackson Lawlor (London: W. Heinemann, 1927), 109−10. Unless otherwise specified, all Bible texts are cited from EVS.

that is why the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading the Book of Isaiah during the time of the apostles."[9]

Therefore, the oral tradition in Ethiopia witnessed the presence of Christianity before its official establishment in the fourth century, and the presence of Christian Red Sea Traders in Ethiopia had a vital role in preaching the Gospel, which later led to the official establishment of a Christian Church around the fourth century. Berga notes, "The preaching of the Apostles and the activity of believing Greek merchants seems to have been among the various factors contributing to the growth of Christianity, preparing for the acceptance of Christianity as a state religion under Abba Selama (Frumentius)."[10] Thus, we may conclude that the message of the Gospel arrived in Ethiopia beginning from the first century and paved the way for the official establishment of the EOTC, which took place in the middle of the fourth century.

Establishment of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church

A turning point in the experience of Christianity in Ethiopia occurred in the fourth century when St. Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, ordained St. Frumentius as the first Patriarch of Ethiopia, giving it an official status. This also brought international recognition of Christianity in Ethiopia at that early age. This ancient Christian tradition in Ethiopia had a significant role in forming a national identity for the Ethiopians and has impacted the people through its orthodox religious orientation.

The EOTC is one of the ancient Orthodox Churches and the only African black, indigenous Christian Church in Sub-Saharan Africa. It originated far before European colonization of

[9] Mikias, *Ethiopia,* 170.

[10] Berga, *Original Christian Unity in Ethiopia*, 34.

Africa. The Church belongs to the faithful and apostolic Church founded upon the teaching of Jesus Christ and His Apostles.[11] The EOTC history is not just the nation's history; instead, historical studies have shown that the EOTC is the oldest Christian Church in Africa.[12] The Church united with the historical development of the whole country due to the strong unity between the Church and empire. The unity of the two granted the nation and the authentic church sources of power and authority appreciated by the world leaders.

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria administered the EOTC until the middle of twentieth century AD. The Council of Chalcedon, held in AD 451, was a council that split the oriental Orthodox churches from the rest of Christendom. The other Non-Chalcedonian members of the Orthodox churches are the Coptic, Eritrean, Armenian, Syrian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. Although the EOTC is part of the five Oriental Orthodox churches, it also shares a faith-related creed with other Eastern Orthodox churches. The Church is also unique in terms of engagement in practical religious observations of rituals and religious festivals such as the feast of the Commemoration of the True Cross of the Christ, known as መስቀል (Meskel), and Epiphany known as ጥምቀት (Timket).

Currently, the EOTC is numerically the largest of the five non-Chalcedonian Eastern Churches. These churches are known as the Oriental Orthodox Churches in order for them to be differentiated from other Byzantine Orthodox Churches. One of the main differences between the two is their theology concerning the two natures of Christ. The Oriental Orthodox Churches

[11] See the entire documents of *The Interim Secretariat Oriental Orthodox Conference*, ed. The Oriental Orthodox Churches Addis Ababa Conference (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printers, 1965); and see Alemayehu Desta, *Introduction to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Faith* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2012).

[12] John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African History, 62−1992* (Kenya: Nairobi, Paulines, 1994), 39−40; and see Edward Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible* (London: British Academy, 1968), 15.

do not use the controversial formula regarding the relationship of the two natures *in* Christ, and how the two natures exist and function in one person. They instead teach about the one incarnate nature of God, the Word. The Byzantine Orthodox Churches finally characterized the Oriental Orthodox Churches as a heretical group known as *Monophysitism*. The *monophysite* doctrine of the Church has been vigorously and avidly maintained in Ethiopia since the beginning until today because it is seen to adhere closer to the concepts of the Old Testament teaching concerning monotheism[13] and traces of Semitic culture and civilization, which has influenced Ethiopian Christianity as well as the lives of the Ethiopian people.

A clarification is also in order, however. The EOTC is erroneously called a *Monophysite* Church. The proper way of referring to the Church is as a 'Non-Chalcedonian' Orthodox Church[14] because the EOTC, in opposition to Chalcedon, always uses the term *miaphysis* rather than *monophysis* when describing the relationship of the divine and the human natures of the Christ. While the prefix *μία* in the former term stands for a composite unity of the two natures, the prefix *mono* in the latter one stands for an elemental unity of the two natures in Christ.[15] Therefore, the *Ge'ez* term '*Tewahedo*' means 'being made one,' which is the best expression for conveying the inseparable unity of the Godhead and manhood in the Person of Jesus Christ.

The Ethiopian Church is firm in its belief that only one nature has continued in Christ, a unique divine-human one. That one nature is composed of two aspects, the Divine and human, and retains all the characteristics of both natures after the union. However, the Church rejected

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[13] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 87 and 115.

[14] See John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African History 62−1992* (Nairobi: Paulines, 1994), 37−41; Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, 1970), 3; and Ayalew Tamiru, *YeEtiopia Emnet Be Sostu Hegegat: The Faith of Ethiopia According to the Three Laws* (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam, 1960), 205−6.

[15] Mebratu Kiros Gebru. *Miaphysite Christology: An Ethiopian Perspective* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2010), 18−23.

the allegation that the Divine absorbed the human or the other way around. Therefore, the EOTC Christology is neither Gnostic nor *monophysite*, but *Tewahedo*, meaning Christ is at once fully divine and fully human inseparably and without confusion.[16] Ephraim Isaac correctly notes, "the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is not *Eutychian.* It teaches the 'true man, true God' theory,"[17] implying the *Tewahedo* doctrine of Christology.

The Old Testament and Ethiopian Christianity

Ancient oriental churches had strong Jewish-oriented customs and traditions when they started; however, most of them have declined to keep those Judaic elements in their Christian history and practice today. On the other hand, Ethiopian Christianity expresses itself through strict adherence to Jewish customs and traditions by firmly preserving them. As we have described in detail concerning the strong tie between Ethiopia and Israel in chapter two of this dissertation, the Old Testament's teaching, and the long-standing Judaic traditions become part of the reality found in the religious life in Ethiopia, which contributed to the establishment of an Ethiopian Christian cultural matrix intermingling aspects of religion, culture, and tradition.

The Centrality of the Eucharist in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

The EOTC gives high regard to the Sacrament of Holy Communion and teaches that the members receive the actual body and blood of the Lord, which means they receive both the divinity and humanity of Jesus. The present *Qeddassé* openly expresses the notion of *Tewahedo* and that the faithful members commune with the One and united Person of Christ. Therefore,

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[16] Donald Crummey, *Priests and Politicians: Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia, 1830−1868* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 15−18. See also Ayala Takla-Haymanot, *The Ethiopian Church and its Christological* Doctrine (Addis Ababa: Graphics, 1981).

[17] Isaac, *Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahedo Church*, 20.

according to the EOTC, partaking of the true humanity and divinity of Christ requires holiness and cleanliness in accordance with the teaching and tradition of the Church.

The EOTC's worship and its liturgical theology articulate the experience of Heaven on earth in the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy. Liturgical worship, in this Church, is indivisibly tied to the oblation and celebration of the Lord's Eucharist, the Sacrament which must remain central to Christian worship and has been maintained by the liturgical practice of the Church. Therefore, the Eucharistic liturgy articulates the experience of Heaven on earth observed by the worthy members of the Church.

The EOTC liturgical worship incorporates each of the God-given human senses to immerse the worshipper in a heavenly encounter by directing all the attention toward the One and true God according to the traditional context of the Church. Orthodox worship requires the reality of an encounter with the Divine through the sacrifice of the altar. Therefore, the decorative beauty of robes and traditional liturgical instruments help create an atmosphere meaningful of celebration and glory. At the same time, icons channel the attendees' attention toward the true worship of the Lord along with the communion of those represented in the iconic depictions. Unlike some protestant denominations that despise icons, the EOTC firmly maintains icons during divine worship in order to help the attendees immerse themselves into the heavenly realities through the representation of visible icons. Besides the Ark of the Covenant replica, having a sufficient sampling of icons and often ornate vestments, crosses, candlesticks, and the like are vital to the Church's liturgical service. The worship service experience, along with its relation to the corporate assembly, finds its climax in the EOTC Christian observation and communion of the Lord's Supper, as this is the ultimate model for Christian worship and a celebration which is carried throughout the liturgical context of the Church. Just as the service of

the Eucharist is the apex and center of the Divine Liturgy, the EOTC's liturgy, as the way of worship, is at the center of the experience of belief.

The liturgy of the Eucharist in the EOTC was indeed significantly influenced by the pre-Christian Hebrew heritage. Thus, it is essential to know that the continuation of the liturgical traditions of the Church, which have been maintained in the EOTC, means that each generation of the faithful receives the rich tradition of the liturgy from their spiritual ancestors and subsequently passes it on to the following generation.

Rev. Marcos Daoud, one of the chief editors of the Ethiopian *Qeddassé*, stipulates that although the EOTC has been consistently encouraging its members to partake in the Eucharist weekly or at least three times a year, some people, however, are "misinformed" or "lack information" regarding the worthy participation in the Eucharist, which has led them to ignore the service of the Lord's Supper altogether.[18] However, Rev. Daoud leaves the door open for others to join him in order to find out from where, what, and how such misapprehension has been generated, negatively impacting its members. This research, therefore, attempts to enter in and analyze selected contents of the anaphoras[19] of the early church fathers as presented in the EOTC's *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast* (the Legislation of the Kings) accompanied by the evaluation of the Church's biblical interpretative tradition preserved in the AC corpus.

The Current Status of the Question

The *Andemta Commentary* on Scripture of the EOTC offers the most current commentary

[18] Marcos Daoud. *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church* (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam, 1954), 10.

[19] The term anaphora here refers to the early church father's liturgical writings. Since the fifth century, during which many liturgical texts were translated into Ge'ez language, the EOTC liturgy has preserved a rich treasure of various anaphoras. The teachings of these anaphoras had remarkable influence upon the EOTC's doctrine and liturgical praxis as we shall describe and analyze some of them in chapter three of this dissertation.

on every book of the Scripture. It is the traditional Biblical and patristic *Ge'ez-Amharic* commentary material of the EOTC. Studying the traditional Amharic commentary on specific *Ge'ez* texts preserved in the AC is seen as the highest stage of scholarship in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church education. In the commentary, the EOTC has a distinctive interpretative tradition that developed over its long history; however, it had not been appreciatively welcomed by western scholars because, for them, the EOTC has not clearly articulated its own hermeneutical or interpretative tradition. However, Cowley notes that "there are signs of the modern interest in the AC as a resource for the expansion of Amharic, and the word 'andemta' itself appears in some modern dictionaries with the meaning 'implication."[20] He goes on noting, "Today the prospects for the study of the AC materials are more favorable, as the EMML collection contains many microfilms of the AC MSS, and further MSS are contained in the British and Bodleian Libraries... and editions and studies of some related Arabic and Syriac texts... have become available."[21]

Moreover, some scholars compare and identify the interpretative method of the AC with that of the Antiochene School's interpretative tradition. In contrast, others identify the commentary's interpretative style with the Alexandrian interpretative strategies. However, we shall argue that the AC incorporates aspects of both school's interpretative traditions and places them uniquely in an Ethiopian and indigenized context. For example, Cowley notes, "In general, the AC regards allegorical interpretations not as lessons which may conveniently be attached to

[20] Roger W. Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation: A Study in Exegetical Tradition and Hermeneutics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 4.

[21] Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation,* 7. The abbreviation EMML stands for Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, A.A.

stories, but as the real truth which the original actions were intended to teach."[22] Besides, the commentary uniquely represents the tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's biblical interpretation and the writings of the early church fathers from both interpretative traditions. It still significantly influences the Church's biblical interpretation and doctrine today.

Since its establishment, the EOTC's tradition, doctrine, and biblical hermeneutics have been influenced by Judaic, Apostolic, Syriac, and Egyptian Coptic traditions but have not lost the Ethiopic forms integrated through contextualization, shaping the unique practice of Ethiopian Christianity. For example, the AC on Scripture of the EOTC offers the most current commentary on the question of what it means to be worthy in the communion liturgy and the various interpretations of the word ἀναξίως in 1 Cor. 11:27, as it mainly relates to the sacramental obligations and rituals within the tradition of the EOTC. These living traditions, coupled with the context of the indigenous Church in Ethiopia, play a significant role in the biblical interpretation of the Church. The AC frequently records multiple readings and textual variants and presents a valuable resource in understanding the transmission history of Ethiopic biblical interpretation. In other words, the commentary's wide range of allegorical and symbolic interpretations of every biblical text offers many possibilities to reveal aspects of the history of the formation of the EOTC traditions.

Although the AC does not deny the text's historicity, the EOTC's biblical hermeneutics endeavors to determine the significance of the past for the present by modifying or even changing the historical reality rather than merely interpreting it. This means the purpose of understanding any given text of the Scripture can consequently no longer be the subjective

[22] Roger W. Cowley, *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 49−50. See the reference for further examples of allegorical interpretations of the lesson it communicates.

recognition of the biblical author's intended meaning. For the EOTC, a practical understanding of a specific context or situation needs to be grounded in the lived reality that embodies its interpretations. Thus, as we have argued in chapter four of this dissertation, although the EOTC's interpretation of the Scripture does not question the Scripture's historicity and literal meaning, emphasis is placed on searching the spiritual significance of the text by employing an allegorical and symbolic interpretative approach.

Moreover, the narrative techniques utilized in the AC and applied to 1 Cor. 11:27 change the adverbial meaning of the term ἀναξίως into an adjective. Both the *Ge'ez* and the Amharic translation of the commentary further interpret the term in such a way that many members of the EOTC understand ἀναξίως to mean that, if they consider themselves unclean or impure in neglecting to keep the Old Testament rituals, they should stay away from partaking of the Eucharist. Otherwise, they incur God's wrath upon themselves and their family.

The other question we discuss in this dissertation comes from the EOTC's *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast*. The Eucharistic *Qeddassé* of the Church developed from the anaphoras of the early church fathers of various traditions such as the Antiochene, Alexandrian, and Syrian traditions. For example, in the *Qeddassé* as it currently stands, the Eucharist and the crucifixion of Christ are equally considered a sacrifice. Like the Old Testament bloody sacrifice, the Eucharist is believed to be an unbloody sacrifice offered by the priest on the altar.[23] Just as the Old Testament sacrifice required the attendees to be clean and pure through observation of rituals, the Eucharist requires the attendees to be pure and holy via rituals.

[23] Wondmagegnehu and Motovu, *Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, 103. According to the EOTC's tradition, before priests get ordained, they must spend two years as a *Qollo Temari*, a period of mendicancy in which they must travel far away from their family and other sources of support and live only of alms. Their separation from society is achieved through poverty that keeps them away from the profane, gives them control over their bodies, and qualifies them for the priestly office.

In addition to the *Qeddassé*, the domestic application of the *Fetha Nagast*, which is well-recorded and documented from the fifteenth century AD to the present,[24] is considered to be one of the most striking historical references that requires one to adhere to a particular Jewish ritual system before they can celebrate the Eucharist. Thus, we must analyze selected parts of the two authoritative documents of the Church in order to identify the precise moment when the danger of approaching the Eucharist when ritually impure was emphasized.

The Dissertation in the Context of Current Scholarship

The exegetical discussion of 1 Cor. 11:17−34 has certainly become a controversial theme across the different denominations. Many scholars such as Barrett, Das, Gibbs, Godet, Heinrici, Lietzmann, Weiss,[25] and others interpret the term ἀναξίως in reference to Paul's exhortation to 'discern or judge the body,' implying that discerning the sacred nature of the elements determine one's worthiness. According to them, the Corinthians' partaking of the Eucharist was ἀναξίως because they failed to discern or judge the sacred quality of the Eucharist. On the other hand, scholars such as Blomberg, Dann, Fee, Hays, Horrell, Stanley, Thiselton, and others interpret Paul's exhortation to discern or judge the body in reference to the Corinthians' failure to understand the term "body" as a reference to the Church, or a corporal body of Christ. In any case, however, our main question for this study is whether the Corinthians' failure to discern the sacred nature of the Sacrament and/or their failure to understand the Church as the corporal body of Christ made them ἀνάξιοί ('unworthy' in its adjectival sense). Further, we must ask what the difference is between the adverbial and the adjectival function of the word ἀξίος in 1 Cor. 11:27.

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[24] Abera Jembere, *An Introduction to the Legal History of Ethiopia 1434−1974* (Hamburg, Germany: Munster, 2000).

[25] All the sources of the above scholars from both groups are footnoted in the fifth chapter of this dissertation under "*An Argument on Paul's Use of Σῶμα (v. 29)*." See pages 200−5.

Another discussion we evaluate in this dissertation is whether the integration of Judaism into Ethiopian Christianity is a helpful experience or a pointless fabrication of the old covenant regulations regardless of its fulfillment under the New Covenant sacrifice. Some scholars such as Ullendorff, Rey, Burge, Haile, Stern, Charles, and Pawlikowski[26] argued against the assimilation of Judaism into Ethiopian Christianity. Other scholars such as Levine, Bruce, and the current writer of this research have observed a remarkable peculiarity in Jewish-oriented Christianity in Ethiopia. However, we must evaluate and be critical when the Old Testament rituals become an obstacle for the message of the Gospel, specifically in the EOTC's doctrine and practice of the Eucharist.

Thesis Statement

The EOTC regards the Eucharist as a Holy Sacrifice and affirms the efficacy of observing specific rituals to make the communicant worthy. Partaking of the Eucharist is restricted by a series of purity regulations, which are distinctively integrated from Judaism, channeled through the church fathers into the Ethiopian liturgy and Christian community—regulations that are so rigorous they make participation in the Eucharist unattainable for most of the members for most of their lives. Performance of certain rituals related to worthy admission to the Eucharist is embedded in the *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast*, which in turn are endemic to the EOTC as a unique Ethiopian-Jewish expression of Christianity. Therefore, two authoritative documents are determinative for understanding the Eucharistic practice in the EOTC, as they elucidate how some members' understanding of the role of rituals debar them from participation. This, combined with the Amharic Bible translation of ἀναξίως and its interpretation (*Teregwame*) in

[26] All the sources of the above scholars from both groups are footnoted in the second chapter of this dissertation under "*Current Scholars' View of Jewish Oriented Christianity in Ethiopia.*"

the AC tradition, has generated a blurred understanding of Christian piety and sacramental theology in the Ethiopian Church that dates back to its earliest days and is still prevalent today. Therefore, this thesis demonstrates that, while there is much to commend in the EOTC's continuation of Jewish practices within the context of Christianity, as mediated through its historic anaphoras and church fathers, this aspect of its liturgy and the hermeneutical assumptions that underlie it, have placed an undue burden on those who desire the Sacrament. They have in effect been excluded by their continual adherence to these Jewish customs and, even more so, by their misapplication and misunderstanding of the term ἀναξίως in the Pauline text.

Methodology

The methodology to be employed in this research is multifaceted since we are dealing with a biblical text which undergirds the Church's liturgical practice and its pastoral care that, in turn, has exercised discipline on those who desire to take the Eucharist in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The first methodology to be employed is to provide a historical exploration of the phenomenon of the EOTC as a unique expression in Christianity, both ancient and modern, in its symbiotic relationship with Judaism. We will begin by relating the account of how Judaism came to be closely associated with the Ethiopian expression of Christianity in terms of the account of King Solomon and Queen Sheba and their son *Menelik I*, who brought the True Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia. This relationship was further cemented in subsequent leaders of Ethiopia both before and after the advent of the Church, who sought to ground Christianity's expression in Ethiopia in terms of its Jewish roots.

After having established an intimate connection between Judaism and Orthodox Christianity in Ethiopia, we will then offer an exploration of the Jewish rituals of the Old

Testament explicitly connected with the purity laws that were prescribed in preparation for the sacrifices offered in the Temple. These are purity laws that are still enforced and continue to shape the Church's understanding of worthy preparation for the sacrifice that takes place in the EOTC's liturgy and observance of the Eucharist. As we present in the second chapter of this dissertation, the EOTC has integrated Judaism into its religious system and particularly into its Eucharistic liturgy. We have done so to such a degree that many of the Old Testament prescriptions that the New Testament prescribed as fulfilled in Christ (Col. 2:9) have not only perdured in Ethiopian Christianity but are central to its understanding of the faith. We see this in its continued observance of the Sabbath, the Ark of the Covenant, sexual purity, and fasting prescriptions, dietary laws, clean versus unclean animals, purity verses impurity laws, and the requirement of almsgiving and prayer. These all have pastoral and practical implications for the worthy partaking of what the EOTC refers to as the Eucharistic sacrifice.

The above religious obligations, required in the EOTC, vary from what Jesus and Paul taught about the Christian's relationship with those laws in the New Advent. For example, Paul indicates that the Old Testament laws are shadows of what is to come in Christ, "Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col. 2:16−18, cf. Gal. 4:8−11). As we shall see later, the writer of the Book of Hebrews clarifies how the perfect and once for all sacrifice of Christ on behalf of sinners has fulfilled all required Old Testament dietary and purity laws.

The connection of the Old Testament sacrificial system with the Eucharistic sacrificial language of the EOTC is a fundamental hermeneutical principle for understanding the participation (or lack of participation) in the Eucharist. This participation is governed by the

purity laws of the EOTC taken almost directly from the Old Testament laws and prohibitions that were stipulated in the Old Testament sacrificial system. Thus, we will compare and contrast the relationship between the Old Testament sacrifice and the sacrificial system related to the Eucharistic sacrifice that is believed to be a new sacrifice offered on the altar by the presiding priest every Sunday morning. We also compare how just as strict observance of the Jewish ritual and dietary rules culminated in the sacrifice in the Temple, cultic means of becoming worthy to partake in the Eucharistic sacrifice in the EOTC are also influenced by the Jewish laws of purity, cleanliness, and holiness codes.

Having established that the EOTC's Eucharistic practice is based on the Old Testament Jewish sacrificial laws and system, we will then explore a second influence that undergirds the liturgical and Eucharist practice of the EOTC. This is the adherence to the teaching and practice of the early church fathers who drew much of their theological and pastoral practice from the Old Testament, which for them formed the primary Scriptural reservoir in guiding their ecclesiastical observances.

Once we have established the hermeneutical underpinnings of the purity laws and other regulations associated with the Jewish sacrificial system and their perpetuation and continuation in the ancient Church's use that was adopted into the EOTC, we will then analyze selected contents of the anaphoras of the early church fathers as presented in the EOTC's *Qeddassé*[27] and the *Fetha Nagast*. Being one of the most ancient of Christian Churches, dating back at least to the fourth century, the EOTC maintains that its tradition of Divine Liturgy centered in the Eucharist as the crown of all Sacraments and the climax of worship,[28] finds its proper observance

[27] Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Ethiopic Liturgy: Its Sources, Development, and Present Form* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman, 1915); and see Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*.

[28] Tamiru, *YeEtiopia Emnet: Faith of Ethiopia*, 205.

in following the tradition established by the early church fathers. The first part of this liturgy, known as the *Ordo Communis*, is introductory to the second part of the liturgy that deals with the Eucharist. The latter part, which we analyze, includes the composition of fourteen anaphoras of the early church fathers accepted by the EOTC since the fifth century AD.[29]

The two authoritative documents (the *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast*) further emphasize the idea that there is an inherent danger in approaching the Eucharist without being ritually clean and becoming 'worthy.' Steven Kaplan notes, "The public ritual of the Mass was often the vehicle for the dramatization of important issues of church discipline, communal borders, and social-political status. Only those judged worthy by standards of the Church were entitled to receive Communion with their fellow believers."[30] As stated above, it is within the deep historical and religious rituals and the context of the Old Testament sacrifice and the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist that we have researched the critical term ἀναξίως because it pertains to the Ethiopian ecclesial context and the worthy participation in the Eucharist.

As we have indicated earlier, the AC presents different interpretative traditions to produce a unique interpretative approach to the word ἀναξίως. We also critique and compare the Amharic Bible Translation on the use of the term ἀναξίως in an Ethiopian context through a careful study of Greek as well as the *Ge'ez* iterations of the term. The Amharic translation examination helps

[29] The EOTC has many anaphoras. Marcos Daoud, who translated the Liturgy from *Ge'ez* and Amharic into English, witnessed that these anaphoras were received from the Egyptian Church; however, the Egyptians lost most of them except St. Cyril, St. Gregory, and St. Basil. The following are lists of the anaphora in the EOTC's liturgy, respectively. The Anaphora of the Apostles, of the Lord, of John (Son of Thunder), of St. Mary, of the Three Hundred, of St. Athanasius, of St. Basil, of St. Gregory of Nyssa, of Epiphanius, of St. John Chrysostom, of St. Cyril, of St. Jacob of Serough, of St. Diocorus, and finally, the Anaphora of St. Gregory II (The Wonderworker). The EOTC has diligently assigned each of the anaphoras to be celebrated throughout the Church's liturgical year. Please refer to Daoud's categories for seasons of celebrations of each anaphora. Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 43, 58, 64, 74, 86, 97, 109, 120, 128, 136, 143, 151, 159, and 164; see also Hammerschmidt, *Ethiopian Anaphoras*, 41−43.

[30] Steven Kaplan, The Social and Religious Functions of the Eucharist in Medieval Ethiopia, in *Annales d'Ethiopie*, vol. 19 (Israel: University of Jerusalem, 2003), 7−18.

show how the modern Amharic translation stands contrary to the Greek syntax and the overall historical and literary context of 1 Cor. 11:17−34. Thus, the careful exegetical evaluation of the unique historical interpretative tradition of the EOTC's commentary and the comparison of the Amharic translation with the original language is imperative to understand fully the worthy partaking of the Eucharist in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Analyzing the two authoritative documents of the EOTC combined with an evaluation of the AC's interpretative tradition on 1 Cor. 11:27 will shed light on our understanding of ἀναξίως as related to the worthy admission to the Eucharist in the EOTC context.

In conclusion, we will summarize the findings of this thesis, recognizing that while there is much to commend in the unique expression of the Eucharistic liturgy and practice of the EOTC that draws on its Jewish and patristic roots, there are also debilitating and scripturally unwarranted restrictions around the Eucharist. Similar to Luther's critique of Rome's practice in the sixteen century, it puts an undue burden on the consciences for those who long to commune with their Lord in the EOTC.

Finally, we will offer an alternative Amharic translation of the term ἀναξίως that is compatible with the overall teachings of the Scripture regarding worthy participation in the Eucharist and could perhaps modestly start a conversation with the EOTC on what worthy participation could look like. This thesis, therefore, addresses the pressing need to reaffirm the good biblical translation and interpretation of ἀναξίως coupled with solid Lutheran teaching situated within the EOTC's rich and long-standing tradition, history, and liturgy. We hope that one of the fruits of this dissertation will be to draw proper ethical lessons out of this text by carefully considering the historical and socio-cultural hub of the EOTC teaching concerning the worthy participation in the Eucharist while still honoring the tradition in which the EOTC is

steeped.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF JUDAISM IN ETHIOPIAN HISTORY AND RELIGION

Introduction

The EOTC's central distinguishing feature from other Christian expressions is its preservation of the Old Testament Jewish rituals in liturgy and theology—more so than any other Christian group.[1] The Church has integrated the different symbol systems of Judaism into its religious system and the Eucharistic liturgy. It has been so proud of its religion's Judaic origins which make it an exciting example of non-Hellenized Christianity and demonstrate the peculiar Jewish origin of religious assimilation in Ethiopia. While other African churches assimilated various forms and traditions of Christianity that had been brought to the continent from the West,[2] the Abyssinians considered themselves the lawful successor of Israel and maintained uniformity and consistency by only embracing Judaism that remained integral to the expression of Abyssinian Christianity.

Therefore, this chapter is committed to studying the impact of the Hebraic and Old Testament elements on the peculiar form of indigenous Ethiopian Christianity. We first present the general historical background that tied Judaism to Ethiopian history and religion. Then we look at how current scholars and travelers of the earliest time—according to their view or bias—critique the impact of Judaism and the Old Testament upon Abyssinian Christianity. While some argue that the assimilation of Judaism in Ethiopian Christianity is an example of a unique

[1] John T. Pawlikowski, "The Judaic Spirit of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: A Case Study in Religious Acculturation," *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church: A Study in Indigenization. Journal of Religion in Africa* 4, no. 3 (January 1, 1972): 178−99; and see Edward Ullendorff, "Hebraic-Jewish Elements in Abyssinian (Monophysite) Christianity," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 1, no. 3 (July 1, 1956): 216−56.

[2] Tibebe Eshete, "Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti." in *Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2020), 147−49.

interpenetration of Judaism and Christianity, others have dismissed such ritualized avoidance behavior as an irrational and pointless duplication, considering it primitive and a mechanical observance of old-fashioned ancient rites and laws of Judaism. Finally, we explore certain Jewish rituals that shaped the concept of purity and worthy participation in the Eucharist. According to the EOTC, strict observance of the rituals determines a member's admission to, or exclusion from, partaking of the Eucharist.

Historical Relationship Between Ethiopia and Israel

Ethiopia, referenced often in the biblical tradition,[3] was a geographical name comprising various countries such as Nubia (in present-day northern Sudan and southern Egypt), Somalia, Djibouti, and the Red Sea coast Eritrea, and South Sudan. Christine Chaillot notes, "most authorities seem to agree that the culture of present northern Ethiopia had its origin in an influx of Semitic tribes from Southern Arabia to the Abyssinian highlands, in the kingdom of Da'amat (in the area of Yeha, near Adwa), around the 7th century B.C., who mixed with local people they found there."[4]

[3] There are numerous references to the name Ethiopia or Cush in the Old Testament. For example, Gen. 2:13, 10:6−8; Esther 1:1; 2 Chr. 12:3; 16:8; Ezek. 29:10; 30: 9; Isa. 20:3−5; 43:3; 46:9; Dan. 11:43, and so on. However, three texts are of importance in Ethiopian history. First, Num. 12:1 talks about Moses' marriage with an Ethiopian slave-girl against whom Miriam and Aaron spoke. See more on this in Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 8−9. Second, Amos 9:7 implies that God did not just bring up Israel out of Egypt, but equally, God had concern for other migrants such as the Ethiopians. Finally, the most popular and favorite text for Ethiopians, frequently cited, Ps. 68:32 says, "Ethiopia shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God."

[4] Christine Chaillot, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Tradition: A Brief Introduction to Its Life and Spirituality* (Paris: Inter-Orthodox Dialogue, 2002), 26. Enrico Molnar notes, "Homer knew this isolated land which tended to spurn contact with the outside world until recent centuries; he called it *Aithiopia* (Αιθιοπία), the "land of Sun-burned faces," and referred to its inhabitants as a "blameless race" and Herodotus called them "the Most Just Men." See Enrico S. Molnar, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church; A Contribution to the Ecumenical Study of Less Known Eastern Churches* (Pasadena: Bloy House Theological School, 1969), 2−3. Speaking of the country's pre-history, Ethiopia is the oldest nation home to the ancestor of humanity, Lucy, Australopithecus Afarensis (one of the longest-lived and best-known early human species). This skeleton, locally named *Denkneshis* 3.2 million years old, was discovered in 1974 by an American Professor, Donald Johanson, in the low Awash valley. See Chaillot, *Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Tradition*, 26.

Ethiopia shares with Egypt, China, and Greece the distinction of being among the most ancient countries with their fascinating history which covers more than four thousand years of continuous existence and unique civilization. For example, Ethiopia and Egypt are the only two African countries that invented an alphabet and developed a written language. Furthermore, Ethiopia and Armenia are the two oldest Christian countries, but only Ethiopia has preserved her independence up to the present.

Ethiopian secular and religious history lays claim to a long history that was indigenous and has been well documented in the most reliable indigenous sources. Charles Ray notes, "the country [Ethiopia] adapted Judaism nearly 1000 B.C., and about the time of the birth of Jesus the mythological beliefs of Greece appear to have been introduced, without, however, affecting the supersession of the Jewish faith."[5] Although other historians may locate the history of Queen Sheba in Yemen, the two ancient and primary documents known as *Kebra Nagast* (the Glory of the Kings)[6] and the *Fetha Nagast* (the Law of the Kings)[7] claim that the Queen resided in

[5] Charles F. Rey. *The Real Abyssinia* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1935), 175.

[6] The earliest form of *Kebra Negast* was written in Ge'ez around the sixth century C.E., probably by a Coptic priest complier. The book was a centuries-old revision and eventually translated from Ge'ez to Arabic, Amharic, English, and finally into German and French in late the nineteenth and early the twentieth Century. See for example, the edited version of *Kebra Negast* in German language by Carl Bezold, *Kebra Nagast, die Kerrlichkeit der Konige: Nach den Handschriften in Berlin, London, Oxford und Paris* (Munich: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1905). *Kebra Negast* consists of several traditions, some historical and some folkloristic character, being influenced by the Old Testament and rabbinic writings and Egyptian, Syrian, Arabian, and Ethiopian sources. See Ephraim Isaac, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahido Church* (New Jersey: The Red Sea, 2013), 244−45; and Gerald Hausman, *The Kebra Nagast: The Lost Bible of Rastafarian Wisdom and Faith from Ethiopia and Jamaica* (New York: St. Martin, 1997), 15−16. This manuscript of *Kebra Nagast* was taken to England by the Napier expedition in 1868 but returned to Ethiopia at the request of Ethiopian Emperor Yohannes, who wrote a fascinating letter to Earl Graville, the British Foreign Secretary. Finally, the "manuscript was returned to the King of Ethiopia by order of the Trustees on Dec. 14th, 1872." See the letter's content and how the emperor explained the manuscript's value for Ethiopian politics and religion. See Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 74−75; and see in Wallis E. A. Budge, *Amulets and Talismans* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), 197−99. Edward Ullendorff further notes that *Kebra Negast* is "the truest and most genuine expression of Abyssinian Christianity." See Ullendorff, "Hebraic-Jewish Elements," 226. He also witnessed in his other writing that *Kebre Negast* is both a literary work and the core of Ethiopian national and religious feelings and genuine expressions of Ethiopian Christianity. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 144.

[7] Justice in Abyssinian Culture and politics had been regulated by the *Fetha Nagast* code of laws, to which

Aksum, a great city built by Ebria Hakim, the son of King Solomon of Jerusalem and the Ethiopian Queen,[8] who was locally known as Queen Makeda.[9] Hakim visited his father, King Solomon in Jerusalem with the proof of a ring that King Solomon had given to his mother, Queen Makeda.[10] When Solomon failed to convince the young man to stay in Jerusalem, he commanded the princes of Dan, Levi, and Gad with Azariah, the Son of Zadok (the priest), to go to Ethiopia with Hakim to establish a solid Solomonic dynasty in Ethiopia. Hakim came to the throne with the royal name of *Menelik I* and progressed to establish a Judaistic religion.[11]

The loftiest claim of all is that of the ታቦት (Tabot), meaning the True Ark of the Covenant that is the heart of the *Kebra Nagast.*[12] Since the coming of the true Tabot, the Jewish royalty in Ethiopia have declared themselves to be direct descendants of King Solomon, claiming divine origin as if they were gods.[13] The Ethiopians have their local reproduction of Jerusalem as a new Zion established by Zagwe King Lalibela around the twelfth century.[14] These places are a

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Ethiopian tradition assigns a heavenly origin. More discussion regarding *Fetha Nagast* is found in the next chapter.

[8] Budge, *Kebra Nagast*, 19−33.

[9] The Ethiopian Queen went to Jerusalem with tributes of precious gifts, such as gold, to offer King Solomon of Jerusalem to test his wisdom. See more on Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Kebra Nagast* (New York: Cosimo Books, 2004), 19−33. Ancient civilization in Ethiopia began from Aksum, the powerful state between the Roman Empire and Persia. Aksum was well known for the execution of various forms of artistic work from ancient times. Monuments, palaces, and elaborate tombs were being fashioned with remarkable artistry out of big rocks.

[10] Rey, *Real Abyssinia,* 184−86; and see Gerald Hausman, *The Kebra Nagast: The Lost Bible of Rastafarian Wisdom and Faith from Ethiopia and Jamaica* (New York: St. Martin, 1997), 95.

[11] Budge, *Kebra Nagast*, 43−72.

[12] The *Ge'ez* word ታቦት (Tabot) means the Ark of the Covenant. The name for the Ark of the Covenant in Hebrew, Arabic, and *Ge'ez* are tebhah, tabut, and tabot, respectively. They have similar sounds depicting the strong semantic cultural ties between the three languages. Azariah took the Tabot with him to Ethiopia to receive security, power, and a warm welcome in the lands of Ethiopia. The *Kebra Nagast* further justifies the removal of the *Tabot* from Jerusalem to Ethiopia as an act of doing God's will. See Budge, *Queen of Sheba*, iv.

[13] Rey, *Real Abyssinia*, 122−26; Budge, *Queen of Sheba*, iv−vi; and see Stern, *Wanderings Among the Falashas*, xxxiii.

[14] See Kristen Pedersen, "Jerusalem," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica: He- N* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 273−77; and see Amsalu Tefera, "Colophonic Reflections on Dersana Ṣeyon and Kəbra Nagast," *Aethiopica. International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies* 17, no. 1 (2014): 78−89.

complex of eleven rock-hewn churches in Lalibela and are still in use. The rock-hewn churches are unique structures found nowhere else in the world besides Ethiopia, which is often perceived as a New Jerusalem for Ethiopian pilgrims.[15]

Other writers, such as Paulos Mikias, Carlo Rossini, and others, affirm the historical travel of the Ethiopian Queen to visiting King Solomon of Jerusalem.[16] For example, Paulos Mikias states that the social and religious ties between Ethiopians and Jewish people are remarkable ones. He notes that "Judaism also has deep roots in pre-Christian Ethiopia."[17] Carlo Rossini has frequently affirmed that "Judaism is ancient in Ethiopia and that there existed Jewish groups disseminated here and there."[18] The visit of the Queen is also stated in the Bible (1 Kings 10 and 1 Chr. 9), implying that there was a long-lasting socio-religious Israel-Ethiopia contact between the two countries. This would manifest in the creation of customs or standard Jewish religious practices such as "dietary regulations, circumcisions, the worship of [on] Saturday Sabbath, the worship of [or presence of] the Tabot or Ark of the Covenant, certain features of ecclesiastical music and dance, liturgy, and elements of religion-magic and language."[19]

According to tradition, the visit of Queen Makeda had religious consequences that gave her a chance to learn about Solomon's God, which led the Queen to abandon her pagan beliefs (such as the worship of the Sun, trees, idols, snakes, and others) and convert to the faith of the God of

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[15] See Sylvia Pankhurst, *Ethiopia: A Cultural History* (Essex: Lalibela House, 1955), 151; and see Marie-Laure Derat, "Lalibela," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica: He-N* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 479.

[16] Besides the primary and secondary written sources, oral traditions are an integral part when reconstructing the history and doctrine of the EOTC.

[17] Paulos Mikias, *Ethiopia: Africa in Focus* (Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2011), 169.

[18] Rossini, History of Ethiopia, 144.

[19] Ephraim Isaac, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahido Church* (Addis Ababa: Red Sea Press, 2013), 27.

Israel.[20] Along with the Tabot, the Pentateuch was brought to Aksum together with a cohort of Jewish priests and nobles around the tenth century BC.[21] After receiving the Holy Tabot and the Commandments, the Queen declared,

> From this moment I will not worship the Sun, but I shall worship the creator of the Sun, the God of Israel. And that Tabernacle of the God of Israel shall be unto me my Lady, and unto my seed after me, and unto all my kingdoms that are under my dominion. And because of this I have found favor before thee, and before the God of Israel my Creator, Who hath brought me unto thee, and hath made me to hear thy voice, and has shown me thy face, and hath made to me understand thy commandment.[22]

Furthermore, when *Menelik I* (King Solomon's son) was in Jerusalem, he learned the belief of Israel's religion. *Menelik I* was anointed by Zadok, an Israelite priest who left Jerusalem with Hakim by order of King Solomon.[23] Eventually, the people of Ethiopia in the northern part of the country were converted to the religion of Israel and embraced Judaism within their traditional religion. This occurrence reminds us of King Solomon's dream in which he saw the Sun leaving Israel but shining instead over Ethiopia.[24]

Although it is appropriate to imagine the close ties between Judaism and Ethiopian history and religion after the Queen visited King Solomon, the account of the Queen of Sheba is not the only story that indicates such a strong tie between the two countries. Many other events or records indicate the presence of religious pilgrimage to Israel that became standard practice

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[20] Bunge, *Kebra Negast*, 28−31 and 54.

[21] Budge, *The Queen of Sheba*, 43−72. The *Ge'ez* word ታቦት (Tabot) means the Ark of the Covenant. The names for the Tabot in Hebrew, Arabic, and *Ge'ez* are Tebhah, Tabut, and Tabot, respectively. They have similar sounds depicting the strong semantic cultural ties between the three languages.

[22] Budge, *Queen of Sheba*, 29; and see Gerald Hausman, *Kebra Nagast*, 91.

[23] Budge, *Queen of Sheba*, 53−55.

[24] According to Budge, King Solomon saw a dream. He told Zadok that he had seen the Sun moving from Judah to Ethiopia, implying how God's glory was moved to the new country known as Abyssinia or Ethiopia. See more on this in Budge, *Queen of Sheba*, 31, and 71−72.

along with the significant Jewish migrant presence in Ethiopia. To mention a few, in 586 BC, when Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, many Israelites were captured by the Babylonians, but others fled to Egypt and Ethiopia.[25] The prophet Zephaniah around the seventh century BC, said, "From beyond the rivers of Cush or Ethiopia my worshipers, the daughters of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering" (Zeph. 3:10). Thus, those Jewish migrants began to expand their religion initially in the northern part of Abyssinia.[26]

The account of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26−40 may suggest that pilgrimage to Jerusalem was practiced, at least by the elite.[27] Mikias notes, "There is no doubt that Judaic influences and Old Testament reflections had reached Ethiopia long before the introduction of Christianity... that is why the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading the book of Isaiah during the time of the apostles."[28] Furthermore, Ogbu Kalu notes that the three magi from the East, who visited Jesus when he was a baby, were all Ethiopians. At the same time, some argue that only one of them was an Ethiopian King while the remaining two kings were from Afghanistan and Persia.[29] Abba Gorgorios, who is the pope of Shewa in Ethiopia asserts that the Old Testament was translated into the *Ge'ez* language before the inauguration of Christianity, and this makes it most

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[25] Aba Goergoryos, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*: *The History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church* (Addis Ababa: EOTC, 2012), 6−7. አባ ጎርጎርዮስ (Aba Goergoryos), an EOTC pope of Shewa, notes how the culture and way of life of the Ethiopians express the old Semitic civilization. For example, a celebration of feasts, funerals, and weddings, the custom of women's and children's dress, including jewelry, follows Old Testament laws. See Aba Goergoryos, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*: 8−9.

[26] See more about this in Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 15−30.

[27] The historical tie between Israel and Ethiopia facilitated the earlier arrival of Christianity in Ethiopia around the First Century through the ministry of Apostle Matthew. Rufinus, a well-known fourth-century church historian, witnessed that Apostle Matthew went to Ethiopia to preach the Gospel to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and eventually suffered martyrdom there. Please see Rufinus of Aquileia, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia. Books 10 and 11*. Trans. by Philip R. Amidon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 18; and see The Ethiopian Orthodox Church. *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spirituality* (Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 1970), 3.

[28] Mikias, *Ethiopia*, 170.

[29] See Ogbu Kalu, *African Christianity: An African Story* (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2005), 106.

likely to assume some form of solid monotheistic belief that had existed in Abyssinia before the coming of Christianity in Ethiopia.[30]

The appearance of the name Ethiopia (also known as Cush) indicates that Ethiopians were present in the Biblical stories. If Christianity is thought to be the continuation of Judaism in some form, this link can be vividly located in Ethiopian history and practices. For example, The EOTC calls its religious leaders priests, and the garments worn by the Ethiopian priests are identical to those of Jewish priests. They wear the priestly belt, the skull cap, and the scapular. Several Hebrew terms that are associated with the service of the Old Testament temple also have been found in Ethiopian Christianity.[31] As we shall see soon, the Pentateuchal legal code is a further example of the presence of Jewish tradition in the life of the EOTC. The Mosaic food laws have been and continue to be practiced and followed carefully. Most of the customs about ritual cleanliness in the Old Testament are likewise strongly reminiscent of Hebraic customs accepted in Ethiopian Christianity since its earliest days.

In sum, we can see the strong influence Judaism has had on Ethiopia ever since their reception of the Tabot and its placement in the new Zion in Aksum. These facts have led the Ethiopians to claim that God specially chose the country of Ethiopia to be the tabernacle of the new covenant and new home of the spiritual and heavenly Zion, just as they also believed that God chose the Ethiopians to be his chosen people after the Jews became unworthy. For this reason, the EOTC and the whole nation value the *Kebra Nagast* as a literary work and as the core of Ethiopian national and religious identity, the genuine expression of non-Hellenized

[30] Abba Gorgorios Ye Shewa Papas, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahido Church History: Ye Etyopiya Orthodox Tewahido BeteKirstiyan Tarik* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 1974), 15.

[31] Terms like *Kurban* (*Korban*) and *Kahen* (*Kohen*) have similar traditions and functions in both Judaism and EOTC religions.

Christianity in Ethiopia.

Current Scholar's View of Jewish Oriented Christianity in Ethiopia

Current scholars have studied the relationship between Judaism and Ethiopian Christianity, with many arguing for or against the assimilation of Judaism into Ethiopian Christianity. Naming a few scholars, Edward Ullendorff, Getatchew Haile, Henry Stern, Charles Rey, and John Pawlikowski,[32] are among many others who have also written extensively on this subject matter. For example, Ullendorff, a contemporary historian and scholar, disregards the practice of Judaism in the EOTC. Although Ullendorff does not undermine the fact that Ethiopian Christianity was "impregnated with strong Hebraic and archaic Semitic elements,"[33] he notes that "They [the Ethiopians] are stubborn adherents to fossilized Hebrew Jewish beliefs, practices and customs."[34] Henry Stern accused the Abyssinian Church of departing from the Gospel and genuine Christian faith. He notes,

> She [the Abyssinian Church] soon substituted asceticism for purity of life, and mechanical performance of certain rites for the true worship of the living God. Fasts and penances, the adoration of the virgin, and the intercession of saints, together with the practice of circumcision, the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and all of the mosaic restrictions as to clean and unclean animals, form the essential teachings of her creed.[35]

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[32] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 73−130; see also Ullendorff, "Hebraic-Jewish Elements in Abyssinia (Monophysite) Christianity." *Journal of Semantic Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3 (July 1956): 216−56; Getatchew Haile, "The 49 Hour Sabbath of the Ethiopian Church," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 23, no. 2 (1988): 233−54; Henry A. Stern, *Wanderings Among the Falashas in Abyssinia, Together with a Description of the Country and Its Various Inhabitants* (London: Cass, 1968); Charles F. Rey. *The Real Abyssinia* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1935); and see John T. Pawlikowski, "The Judaic Spirit of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: A Case Study in Religious Acculturation." *Journal of Religion in Africa,* vol. 4, no. 4 (1972): 178−99.

[33] Ullendorff, "Hebraic-Jewish Elements," 216.

[34] Ullendorff, "Hebraic-Jewish Elements," 256.

[35] Stern, *Wanderings Among the Falashas*, 304.

Charles Rey also criticized Abyssinian Christianity for embracing superstition within the religion. For example, Rey makes the EOTC priests and *debteras*[36] accountable of syncretism due to their mixing the truth of the Gospel with superstition. He notes, "Their religion is overlaid with a thick layer of superstition, some of which is merely curious, but some apt to have dangerous result … So that in point of fact the Abyssinian priest does not appear to differ very much from the South African witch-doctor, and indeed of the two I should be inclined to give pride of place to the latter, so far as medical practice is concerned at all events."[37] Ephraim Isaac notes that King Solomon's legacy as the wise philosopher became a source of his role in Ethiopian magic exercised by the EOTC priests and debetras.[38] Furthermore, Ullendorff referred to superstition as one of the most notable practices or beliefs within Ethiopian Christianity.[39] He notes, "Amulets and Tefillin, the shield of David, and seal and net of Solomon are accompanied, among both Hebrews and Ethiopians, by spells to scatter demons (שדים–אקנת) and to avert disease."[40]

According to Bunge, key biblical figures such as Moses, Solomon, Christ, and His apostles or disciples are regarded by the Ethiopians as magicians, "and therefore the Books of the Old and

[36] According to Ullendorff, "The debtra occupies an 'intermediate' position 'between the clergy and layman in the Ethiopian church.' 'Though the debtra are not ordained, no service can adequately be held without their presence." See Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 92.

[37] Rey, *Real Abyssinia*, 196−97.

[38] See Isaac, *Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahido Church*, 27. The Scripture says, "so that King Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt" (1 Kings 4:30). Furthermore, there was a time when Solomon used the devils to obey him by his wisdom which the Ethiopian priests and *debetras* did the same. See more on this from Steven Kaplan, "Solomon," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 687−88.

[39] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 79−82.

[40] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 79.

New Testaments and copies of them were often regarded as amulets."[41] Bunge further explains the influence of the Hebrew, Coptic, and Egyptian amulets on the Ethiopian (Abyssinian) amulets.[42]

Furthermore, the sixteen century Jesuit missionaries who came to Ethiopia were aware of the dominant nature of Judaism in Ethiopian Christianity; however, most of them attempted to abolish it as an irrelevant and primitive practice.[43] Instead of respecting and reforming the teaching of Judaism and the customs that were well established in Ethiopia for centuries, the Jesuit missionaries in Ethiopia were obsessed with refuting the influence of Judaism and its customs upon Ethiopian Christianity and culture as a practice that needed to be regarded as primitive and irrelevant practices in the new dispensation.[44]

Despite such critiques against the unique form of Ethiopian Christianity and culture, the Church existed for centuries with stability and continued to worship the God of Israel. Some scholars such as David Levine and James Bruce challenged such conventional generalizations about the role of Judaism in Ethiopian Christianity.[45] For these scholars, the expression of Judaism and Christianity in Ethiopia is an example of the unique interpenetration of Judaism and Christianity. For example, David Levine has observed how the commonality of Jewish tradition

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[41] Budge, *Amulets and Talismans*, 197; and Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 82.

[42] Budge, *Amulets and Talismans*, 177−211. The entire book carefully examines the universal use of the amulets and amuletic inscriptions described and translated.

[43] See Rey, *Real Abyssinia*, 177 and 184.

[44] Portugal's intention to establish contact with Ethiopia was to control the Indian Ocean, convert Ethiopians to Roman Catholicism, and bring the EOTC into complete dominion and union with the Roman Christendom. However, it resulted in a religious conflict between the two, resulting in the expulsion of all foreign missionaries in the 1630s from the country. Ethiopians became hostile to foreign Christianity and Europeans, which was the cause for isolation up to mid-nineteenth Century. Please see more in Eshete, "Ethiopia," 147−51.

[45] Bruce, *Sources of the Nile*, and see David Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

within the Semitic Church in Ethiopia is vivid. He then challenged the conventional overview against Jewish-Ethiopian Christianity. For him, the expression of Judaism and Christianity in Ethiopia is an example of a unique interpenetration of Judaism and Christianity that is unlike anywhere else in the world.[46] Throughout his book, *Wax and Gold*, David Levine describes the Ethiopian Church as the most systematically Africanized of any Christian Church on the continent, which is the real example of African culture assimilation by Christianity. These scholars are critical of those who, from a Western perspective, disparage the practices of the Ethiopian Church. James Bruce notes, "The first Christian missionaries [Frumentius and Aedesius around the 4th Century] who found Jewish traditions confirmed in Ethiopia, chose to respect them rather than refute. Circumcision, the doctrine of clean and unclean meats, and many other Jewish rites and ceremonies are therefore part of the religion of the Abyssinians at this day."[47]

Scholars who have acknowledged the uniqueness of Abyssinian Christianity have observed the unique centrality of the Tabot in Ethiopian Christianity.[48] The theme of the Tabot is one of great importance throughout the *Kebra Nagast* and serves as a focal point for Ethiopian worship and spirituality. Ullendorff notes, "The concept and function of the Tabot represent one of the most remarkable areas of agreement with Old Testament forms of worship."[49] Unlike other Christian groups, what defines a church as a church in the EOTC is the presence of the Tabot in it. According to the canon of the Church, the Tabot gives sanctity to the Church to exist as a true

[46] David Levine, *Wax and Gold*, 25−36.

[47] Bruce, *Sources of the Nile*, 13.

[48] See Atiya, *Eastern Christianity*, 58−61; Richard Pankhurst, *A Social History of Ethiopia: The Northern and Central Highlands from Early Medieval Times to the Rise of Emperor Tewodros II* (Addis Ababa: Red Sea Press, 1992), 37−39; and Harry Hayatt, *The Church of Abyssinia* (London: Luzac and Co., 1928), 121−22.

[49] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 82.

Church, and the presence of a Tabot is obligatory in every Church; without it, there is no Holy Communion service. Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu note, "It is the Tabot which gives sanctity to the Church in which it is placed... The consecration of a church is a solemn and impressive ceremony with rites symbolic of the sacred uses to which the edifice is dedicated... The Tabot, or Ark, previously consecrated by the Patriarch, is installed with grandeur and is the chief feature of the ceremony."[50]

The transfer of the Tabot from Jerusalem to St. Mary Church in Aksum signified that the God of Israel had changed his dwelling place from Jerusalem to Aksum and the Ethiopians became the chosen people "because they did not reject the Son of Man when he walked on earth."[51] The Church of Aksum Seyon was the holy Church built by Negus Kaleb (King Kaleb) of Aksum in the fourth Century, and this holy place was dedicated to St. Mary, the Mother of Jesus.[52] This unique building takes the name of the Zion Church in Jerusalem, which was built by Maximus, bishop of Jerusalem around AD 340 on Mount Zion. According to the EOTC, therefore, the construction of the old Aksum Seyon Church demonstrates that the original symbolism of this Church was related to a venerated prototype, the Church of Zion in Jerusalem.[53] The rationale behind placing the true Tabot in the Church of St. Mary in Aksum is because the Ethiopians see St. Mary as the Ark of the New Covenant. The celebration of the famous Ethiopian feast known as Seyon Maryam in Aksum annually implies that the Arks of the

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[50] Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu, eds. *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, 1970), 46; see also Hyatt, *Church of Abyssinia*, 121.

[51] Gerald Hausman, *The Kebra Nagast: The Lost Bible of Rastafarian Wisdom and Faith from Ethiopia and Jamaica* (New York: St. Martin, 1997), 13.

[52] Budge, *Queen of Sheba*, 50−74. The term Zion in this context refers to the commonly used term to refer to the city of the eschatological age of salvation.

[53] Marilyn E. Heldman, "Architectural symbolism, Sacred Geography, and the Ethiopian Church," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22, no. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1992): 224−29.

Old and the New Testament are uniquely celebrated simultaneously, combining the two testaments into one.

Moreover, the holy Tabot is central to the worship of the EOTC, and how it is carried in procession around the Ethiopian churches during annual Christian celebrations such as ጥምቀት (Timket) is similar to the Jewish forms of worship which we do not see in any other religion but the EOTC. The Jewish practice of the carrying of the Torah or the Ark of the Covenant in a procession accompanied by spiritual song and dance, especially during the feast of Simhath Torah, where David and the people of Israel dance around the Ark (see 2 Sam. 6:1−23), gives evidence for the indigenous spiritual and Christian songs and dances during the celebration of ጥምቀት (Timket) in Ethiopia.[54]

Although from the religious aspect, members of the EOTC are the main actors of the ጥምቀት festival, from the traditional and social perspective, it is a holiday for all Ethiopians. According to the local calendar, this holiday is celebrated from the eighteenth to twenty-first of January, which is the first month of the year. This holiday is the commemoration of the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. ጥምቀት resembles the ritual re-enactment of baptism, similar to re-enactments carried out by Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land when they visit the Jordan. On the first day of the celebration, the holy Tabots, wrapped with ornamental cloth, are carried to a central area. Since it is rare to see several Tabots together on a single day such as ጥምቀት, an enormous crowd of people flock from different areas escorting every Tabot, chanting sacred songs, ringing bells, ululating (joyful sounds) and blowing horns. The Tabots then spend the nights in tents pitched nearby a river or a stream. Accompanied by a religious ceremony, priests

[54] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 2−3 and 85; and see also Hyatt, *Church of Abyssinia*, 169−74.

bless the water for this evening, called *Ketera*, the annual liturgical assembly. Surrounding the river or the stream, they chant the night mass, known as የሌሊት: ቅዳሴ (the Night Liturgy), and the Divine Liturgy starts at about 3:00 am.

It is customary for EOTC congregants to also spend the nights, either in self-brought tents or in the open air with picnics around the Holy Tabots singing and praising God the whole night.[55] Liturgical prayers continue in the morning of the next days, where the morning mass, የጠዋት ቅዳሴ (yet'ewati k'idasē) meaning the Morning Liturgy, is held, which ends with the blessing of the water. This occasion reaches its peak when the rite of sprinkling the congregation with holy water begins. With this, adherents renew their baptismal vows and receive blessings for the remission of their sins. Religious chants accompany the entire process of the ritual. After the ceremony ends, the Tabots are carried back to their churches, with people singing spiritual songs along the way, sometimes by slaughtering an Ox and shedding its blood at a specific location.[56]

Another feature that the current scholars have observed as unique to Ethiopian Christianity is their celebration of the two Sabbaths. It is a historical peculiarity of the EOTC that both Saturday and Sunday are treated as Sabbaths in recognition of both the Hebraic and Christian traditions. This has officially been the practice since about the fifteenth-century, during the reign of king Zer'a Ya'iqob.[57] Although there is no clear record as to when precisely that custom came

[55] Rey, *Real Abyssinia*, 191−94.

[56] Sometimes, the EOTC's priests and monks, who carry the Tabot cannot move forward when the Tabots become too heavy for them to carry and walk. In that instance, a good-looking ox must be slaughtered, and its blood is shed so that the priests can walk to the particular church building where the Tabot resides.

[57] According to Herman Norden, St. Gregory of Nyssa affirms the need to keep both Sabbath days. He notes, "With what eyes do you regard the Lord's Day, you who have desecrated the Sabbath? Do you know that these two days [Saturday and Sunday] are inseparably interrelated, failure to keep one of them will stumble against the other?" See more on Herman Norden, *Africa's Last Empire: Through Abyssinia to Lake Tana and the Country of the*

up, the question of whether or not the Old Testament Sabbath should be observed "was a severe problem, probably throughout the history of the local church, but definitely during the time from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century."[58]

In the EOTC, the Divine Service and the celebration of the Eucharist are observed on both days as a remembrance of what God had done for his people on Saturday, according to the Old Testament tradition, and on Sunday according to the New Testament tradition. This fact is often cited as displaying the continuity and discontinuity between the Old and the New Testament in the EOTC.[59] St. Gregory of Nyssa, whose teaching has a significant influence upon the EOTC liturgy,[60] affirms the need to observe both Sabbath days. He notes, "With what eyes do you regard the Lord's Day, you who have desecrated the Sabbath? Do you know that these two days are related, that if you wrong one of them, you will stumble against the other?"[61] All work restrictions on the Sabbath days are listed in Mashafa Berhan (the Book of Light) with remarkable similarity to the Mishna and the Talmud of the Jews.[62] Thus, as Steven Kaplan notes, we may conclude that Judaism's strong sense of 'influence' in Ethiopian Christianity shaped its tradition, doctrine, and practice.[63]

Falasha (London: Witherby, 1930), 201.

[58] Haile, "The 49 Hour Sabbath," 233−34.

[59] John Binns, *An Introduction to the Christian Orthodox Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30−35. The *Fetha Nagast* gives further order to celebrate the Eucharist more days in a week. It says, the "Eucharist shall be offered every week on Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and on feast days if they fall on Weekdays." Tzadua, *Fetha Nagast*, 85.

[60] Marcos Daoud, *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church* (Addis Abeba: Berhanena Selam, 1954), 120−27.

[61] Norden, *Africa's Last Empire*, 201.

[62] Ernest Hammerschmidt, "Jewish Elements in the Cult of the Ethiopian Church," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 3, no. 2 (Unknown Binding,1965): 1−12; and Phillip Tovey, *Inculturation of Christian Worship: Exploring the Eucharist* (Aldershot, Hants, U.K.: Ashgate, 2004), 56−78.

[63] Steven Kaplan, *The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia: From Earliest Times to the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press. 1992), 17−20.

Outside of the EOTC's context, Mary Douglas argued that in defense of Jewish rituals, purity rights as practices should no longer be dismissed as something inherently primitive because "Each primitive culture is a universe to itself.... We cannot start to compare primitive religions until we know the range of powers and dangers they recognized. Primitive society is an energized structure in the center of its universe."[64] In her book "*Purity and Danger*," she identifies the concern for purity as a key theme at the heart of every society. For her, purity refers to the general principle of categorizing and structuring every society. Therefore, ritualized avoidance of any religious tradition has to be treated systematically or structurally in its rite because rituals draw external boundaries and control certain undesirable behaviors in a given society and context.

The analysis of impurity is a matter of social perception and an interpretation of one's actions based on what is deemed to be acceptable or unacceptable to God. In other words, the concept of purity in each society may be defined in a general sense as a system of ordering things and classifying those things as pure or impure. It may also refer to specific rules and regulations whereby persons, objects, and spaces are categorized as pure or impure in a particular social group. Mary Douglas notes, "Culture, in the sense of shared standardized values of a community, mediates the experience of individuals. It provides in advance some basic categories, a positive pattern in which ideas and values are tidily ordered."[65]

The Jews had taken the sense of purity and impurity from the Scripture. In Leviticus, God commanded Israel, "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, you

[64] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970), 14.

[65] Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 38−39.

shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2).[66] The central replication of the idea of order and purity was established from the temple system. In other words, the concept of holiness and purity was mainly mediated to the Jewish people through the specific rules surrounding participation in the service of the Temple. More specifically, they specified what kind of animals should be sacrificed, how and when the animals should be sacrificed, and who should be admitted to participate in the holy sacrifice of the Temple (Lev. 21:16−20). Priests observed specific purity rules, and just as the Temple and the priests were holy, the whole people of Israel observed the purity laws so that they would be deemed holy, too.

Jewish Rituals and Worthy Admission to the Eucharist

The concept of purity in the Book of Leviticus is broader than the mere listing of lifestyle suggestions; instead, it is a serious codified regulation within which punishment is attached to it. In other words, the seriousness of observing the temple purity system is seen from the severe punishments resulting from the offenses. Violations may make the offender guilty, and in order to return to a status of purity, the offender would need to observe additional rules and present extra offerings to purge the sin committed (Lev. 5:1−6). Looking at the punishments attached to many of the offenses, one can learn that the entire community life in Israel was organized in terms of purity rules set by God (See Lev. 20:26). It encompassed a wide range of issues regarding everyday life, not just those exclusively centering around laws of the Temple.

Likewise, in the EOTC liturgy and tradition, as we shall see in the following chapter, certain customs are believed to be acceptable to make one worthy for participation in the Sacrament. Failure to keep those religious and social rules and purity laws disqualify members

[66] See Mary Douglas's work for a detailed description of the Old Testament's origin and development of purity and impurity concepts. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 41−57.

from partaking in the Eucharist. It also leaves them in a state of impurity and considered taboo in that community. This frequent motivation to become holy and pure was adapted by Judaism and became part of the Semitic Christian Church in Ethiopia, originating from God's command expressed in Scripture and from the belief that the Ethiopians are God's chosen people. Besides, the purity and cleanliness required in both religions signify an external boundary marker between God's people and other ungodly people. Further, this is manifested through the observance of rituals and the addition of other Jewish rites and ceremonies that have made their way into Ethiopian Christianity over the years. The rituals enact the form of religious and social relations, giving them a visible expression while also enabling the members of the EOTC to know their identity as God's chosen people.

The EOTC teaches that members receive both the divinity and the humanity of Jesus in the Eucharist, which is so sacred that the members cannot approach it without carefully observing rituals and having an intermediary. All rituals, which are required before partaking of the Lord's Supper, epitomize the sacred nature of the Eucharist, which must be mediated by priests, saints, sacred objects, and strict observance of rituals in order to bridge the boundaries between the sacred and the profane and make the attendees eligible for the Eucharist. Although the EOTC at times sounds dualistic, such teaching is not as strong as Gnostic teaching. The tangible categories and distinction between the sacred and the profane is more apparent in the Platonic thoughts of religion, but it is less likely in the Hebrew religion. Since the physical and spiritual separation is less likely to be made in the Hebrew religion, it has no robust features in Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. Instead, the focus of the Church is on how to bridge the two through rituals and the service of other mediators. Next, therefore, we will describe the selected Jewish rituals that are obligatory in the EOTC so that members can ensure their worthiness in their partaking in the

Eucharist.

Fasting and Dietary Laws

According to the EOTC's present-day teaching, fasting is a ritual practice and liturgical preparation that every member of the Church must perform before partaking of the Sacred Meal.[67] The importance of fasting can hardly be overstated if one is to understand the Church. In other words, understanding fasting as a ritual practice is necessary for a valid account of its importance in the EOTC's understanding of worthiness required for church members to be admitted to the Eucharist. The standard fasting rules include two days of fasting during the week, which occur on Wednesdays (in commemoration of the trial of Christ) and Fridays (in commemoration of the Passion of Christ). The Great Fast before Easter represents fifty-five days.

Concerning the order of fasting, there are several Judaic elements in the present-day EOTC's food and dietary laws. The church members have been given restrictions on what to eat and not to eat, which have not changed since the fourth Century AD. For example, certain food items must not be eaten during Lenten fasting, such as meat, milk, eggs, fish, and cheese. These food items also must not be eaten on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the whole year in addition to other fasting seasons and days. Due to such rigid abstinence rules, members prefer not to eat meat and/or animal products during the fasting season even if they are physically weak and ill.[68] Breaking these fasting rules disqualifies the faithful from partaking of the Eucharist and

[67] However, some scholars such as Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw critique the concept of fasting as a ritual. See Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 65−68.

[68] Rey, *Real Abyssinia*, 188−89.

makes the members unclean.[69]

There are seven significant fasts in all, and each relates to a particular event in biblical history. However, many members of the Church may not be aware of the historical value and connection of why they are observing fasting during these particular days of the seasons.[70] Priests, monks, and clergy must keep all of the seven fasts and strictly observe every fast that covers more than 250 days within a year, eating no meat during those days. The minimum fasting order for laypeople is to keep the Lenten and the Wednesday and Friday fasts throughout the year and the three days of fasting on Neneiveh (Nineveh) that prepare the faithful for Lent.[71] The peak of the greatest fast begins on Good Friday and goes through Easter Saturday, the gehad (vigil), and remains until the breaking of the fast in the celebrations and the feast on Easter Sunday. On these three crucial days, no one can even swallow his or her saliva or offer greetings by shaking hands.[72] When ordered by the priest or soul father, there can be extra fasting days for penance and/or other personal reasons. Specifically, a minimum of fifteen to eighteen hours of fasting is required before attending the liturgy and partaking of Holy Communion. There is no food or water between midnight and 3:00 pm. On Easter Saturday, the vigil, and right before partaking of Holy Communion, no one is allowed to swallow his saliva or speak aloud.

Moreover, the EOTC today still strictly follows the Food Laws in Lev. 11:1−47. Rev.

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[69] Tom Boylston, *The Stranger at the Feast: Prohibition and Meditation in an Ethiopian Orthodox Church Community* (Berkley: University of California, 2018).

[70] Isaac Ephraim, "The Significance of Food in Hebraic–African Thought and the Role of Fasting in the Ethiopian Church," in *Asceticism*, eds. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richards Valantasis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 338.

[71] The fasting and prayer on Neneiveh is a three-day lent recognized by the EOTC and conducted two weeks before the beginning of the Great Lent. The fast is ritualistically similar to Lent which is performed in commemoration of the three days that the Prophet Jonah spent inside the belly of the great fish and the subsequent fast and repentance of the Ninevites.

[72] According to the oral tradition, the abstinence of the handshaking is to commemorate the betrayal of Christ by the 'Jews' and the kissing of Judah, who betrayed Jesus as he greeted the Lord (Luke 22:48).

Daoud notes, “The washing of hands before and after meals and not eating the meat of animals that are prohibited in Leviticus Chapter Eleven are observed by modern Ethiopians [just] as they were by ancient Hebrews.”[73] Animals with uncloven hoofs and/or those animals that do not chew their cud are ርኩስ (rikusi) meaning ‘unclean’ and must not be consumed by the faithful members of the Church throughout their entire life.[74] Many Ethiopians died during the great famine in 1985 refusing to eat animals of uncloven hoofs. For instance, animals like the pig, horse, camel, donkey, dogs, frogs, and others are prohibited for the faithful to consume. Among the sky birds, clean ones must have fully separated talons with no attachment to each other. The EOTC does not allow its members to eat blood because the Scripture says that the life of a creature is in the blood, and God has shed animal’s blood for humans to make atonement on the altar for the sins committed; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life (Lev. 17:11, 14; and cf. Deut. 12:23). The blood thus symbolizes life and is commanded to not be consumed. According to the EOTC, consuming blood makes one unclean because blood is a symbol of life, and the blood of the animal is the only part of it that is powerful enough to bring purification.

The dietary law in the EOTC is directly linked to the purity concerns observed in early rabbinic food law. Failure to observe this law disqualifies faithful members from entering the Church and partaking of the Eucharist. For example, besides permanent abstinence from the so-called ‘unclean food,’ the EOTC members must abstain from eating clean meat and dairy products during Lent, Wednesday, and Friday in order to get forgiveness of the sins that they have committed during the entire year. Further, they must undergo a rigorous schedule of fasting and prayers to ensure their worthiness for the Eucharist. The dietary restrictions include

[73] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 3.

[74] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 103−5.

considerations like who eats with whom, who slaughters the clean animal and how, and where the food is eaten determine whether one can approach the Divine Service and the Holy Sacrament.

As we have stated previously, the Old Testament sacrifice of the Temple finds its parallel with the celebration of the Eucharist in the EOTC. For example, the purity system in Leviticus is a codified commandment resulting in the punishments attached to many of the offenses. Those who fail to observe the laws become guilty and experience several punishments (Lev. 26:14−46). Likewise, just as all forms of bodily discharges defiled and disqualified the Jewish believer from approaching the Temple, members who failed to observe the cultic means of purification in the EOTC are considered unclean and unworthy to partake of the Eucharist. Sometimes the concept of cleanliness and purification among the members turns into a more magical meaning having a tendency of seeking purification in a mechanical and/or instrumental way, for example, drinking 'holy water,' and being sprinkled with ጦበል meaning a 'holy water' by a 'soul father.'[75]

Thus, just as strict observance of the dietary rules would have been a meaningful part of the tremendous liturgical act of recognition and worship, which culminated in the sacrifice in the Temple, cultic means of becoming worthy to partake in the Eucharist in the EOTC today is influenced by the Jewish laws of purity and holiness codes. The physical perfection through dietary law and fasting, including sanctifying things presented in the Temple, such as offering blameless animals as a sacrifice, purification of the attendees in the Temple, and a call to be

[75] According to the EOTC belief, drinking and washing with the ጦበል (Holy Water) have practical significance as a non-Eucharistic medium for sacred contact. Drinking or being sprinkled with holy water by the priest offers a means for those lacking the highest purity levels to receive blessing and healing. Members moving to a new house will call a priest from the EOTC to bless the building with the holy water before moving into the new house, and the house will also be blessed after childbirth with the mother and the baby. Priests and monks sprinkle the Holy Water widely, especially on the *Timqet festival* (the Epiphany) and other prominent Saints' days.

ritually clean before approaching the Temple, is implied in the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. Likewise, a call to purity in Judaism through the fasting and dietary laws that occur before religious festivals and occasions is linked to a call for worthiness before Communion, expressing that concrete actions such as the good works must be performed by the faithful who intend to partake of the Eucharist.

Sexuality and Worthiness

Another contemporary aspect of purity and worthiness in the EOTC concerns sexual abstinence between couples (three days before and two days after Holy Communion), which is mandatory in the Eucharistic teachings of the EOTC.[76] The *Fetha Nagast* utilizes Lev. 20:18, which deals with sexual relations, in connection with the Eucharistic teaching of the Church. Between Christian couples, bodily contact and flow of substances is prohibited during fasting. It is said to follow Mosaic Law which prohibits sexual relations during fasting and temple service. In the EOTC, couples should not even sleep on the same bed on the days they engage themselves with the congregational Sacrament. Kessis Kefyalew Merahi notes that the rationale behind such a notion is that on that day, "the human soul should be deprived of its animal behaviors and has to perform Angelic deeds."[77] Thus, each participant should control the physical senses or desire for sex so that no sin can enter the heart and make the heart perfect and pure. According to the EOTC traditional marriage, known as *betekelile* (with crown), those married couples also cannot partake of the Holy Communion separately. If one of the couples cannot meet the conditions or is not willing to partake of Communion, the remaining one also becomes unworthy by default,

[76] Kefyalew Merahi, *The Order of Marriage and Social Ethics* (Addis Ababa: OSSA, 1990); and see also Emmanuel Fritsch, *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig, vols. 3−4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 271.

[77] Merahi, *Order of Marriage*, 88.

meaning one spouse alone cannot receive Communion in the absence of the other. Due to such a strong sense of the requirement of worthiness, many people conclude that "receiving Holy Communion is unattainable since such an awesome sacrament deserves the utmost preparation and is tantamount to dying."[78]

According to the EOTC, marital fasting offers an opportunity to resist one's fleshly desires and redirect one's energies towards worshiping God, just as one fasts from the desire for food. Tzadua notes, "The prohibition of sex [is imposed] on fasting days in order that one [may] fulfill the desire which must be obtained through fasting, which is the restraining of the animal soul from animal concupiscence, in honor of the rational soul, which is united with it in accordance with its spiritual nature."[79] Sexual impurity breaks the rule of fasting, and those people who break the fast cannot enter the Church to receive Communion before a complete physical cleansing occurs. If they have not gone through the cleansing process, they cannot enter the church compound at all. For instance, if a man or a woman is in a condition of impurity with bodily discharge that is accompanied by a dream or otherwise, she or he must not partake of the Eucharist.

Judaism never welcomed women into religious activities and did not allow them to enter the Temple because a woman in menstruation is regarded as 'unclean' (Lev. 15:19−30). Likewise, a menstruating woman is excluded from religious activities in the Sanctuary of the EOTC, a practice adopted from the Old Testament teaching of the Jews. In Leviticus, a menstruating woman is unclean for seven days, and anything she lies upon or sits upon is unclean. Anyone who touches her, her bedding, or what she has sat upon is unclean until

[78] Fritsch, *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, 869.

[79] Tzadua, *Fetha Nagast*, 146.

evening, and anyone who has intercourse with her is unclean for seven days. The strict restriction also prevents the transmission of uncleanness towards other adherents, including the objects in the Temple. This restriction is the same for a woman as for a man with genital discharges (Lev. 15:31−33).[80]

The EOTC regards menstruation as a result of God's curse, which is related to Gen. 3:16 where God declared that He would multiply Eve's sorrow and her conception. For the church, if menstruation does not make a woman impure, she would not have been subjected to impurity, as is recorded in the Book of Leviticus. So, menstruation in the EOTC is seen as a consequence of sin, and that is why sexual intercourse between couples is restricted before the woman has undergone purification.[81] Tzadua notes, "The conjugal act in the days of menstruation and childbed of women is prohibited because the genital organ is spoiled thereby and because leprosy befalls the children conceived in the womb [during menstruation] as a consequence of this thing."[82]

The separation of the menstruating woman in the EOTC signifies the detachment of the individual from an established set of religious conditions, and the isolation and denial of admission to the Eucharist begins immediately when a stain of blood is dropped. Furthermore, menstruating women are not allowed to come to the Church until they are ritually cleansed. The time of a menstruating woman's impurity is seven days. Then she must purify herself by immersion in water at home before going out in public and by the sprinkling of holy water by the

[80] Menstruation is a natural process over which women have no control, but ejaculation comes from sexual desire. Nevertheless, both incidents make the person unclean, according to the Book of Leviticus and the EOTC teaching about holiness.

[81] The Torah regards Jewish menstruating women as impure, and in that condition, she must be secluded. Please see more on this Arnold Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*. Trans. Monica Vizedom and Gabrielle Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 58−59.

[82] Tzadua, *Fetha Nagast*, 146.

priest before she goes to the Sanctuary for the Divine Service and the Sacrament.

The *Fetha Nagast* stipulates the danger of admitting a menstruating woman to the Eucharist and notes, "If a priest or a deacon fails in his duties of control by allowing a woman who is menstruating to enter into the church, or give her the Eucharist during the days of her menstruation, he shall be deposed even if the woman is from the royal family."[83] Therefore, just as menstrual impurity is at the center of the exclusion of women from the sacred in Judaism, the EOTC restricts menstruating women from approaching the church building and partaking of Holy Communion.

Childbirth is another factor of the women's exclusion from the Church and the Eucharist related to their gender. The EOTC's teaching concerning the ritual uncleanliness of a woman who has given birth is also still observed. Neither the mother nor the child can enter the Church until the Christening takes place. Both become impure due to their bleeding, according to Lev. 12:1−7. They are considered impure until the child gets baptized, and the mother is christened. If the baby's father enters the same house where the childbirth occurs, he also becomes unclean by default. Harry Hayatt notes, "A man who has been present at childbirth or who has entered the natal chamber is held to be unclean."[84]

While in Leviticus purity is achieved via sacrifice, in the EOTC purity is achieved via Christening by a sprinkling of holy water upon the mother and through baptism for the child on the fortieth day (for boys) or the eightieth day (for girls). At that time, the priest performs an exceptional service of cleansing at the church door to welcome a mother back to the Church and the service of the Sacrament at the end of her period of uncleanness. It implies that the human

[83] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 46.

[84] Hayatt, *Church of Abyssinia*, 185.

body is defined not only in the sense of the self but also in terms of the socio-cultural context of the Ethiopian community.

In both cases (menstruation and childbirth), there is no moral dimension to these physical impurities, but still, it leaves the women in a condition of impurity. Just as all forms of bodily discharges defile and disqualify the Jewish believer from approaching the Holy Temple, EOTC members who fail to sexually abstain and have bodily discharges in menstruation and childbirth before coming to the service of the Eucharist are considered unworthy to enter the church building and partake of the Eucharist.

Purity and Laws

Although the laws concerning purity are different from society to society, the concept as expressed in the EOTC today can be traced to the Jewish temple system and their understanding of the whole order of creation.[85] In the EOTC, the idea of purity and impurity as binary opposites is based on ancient Judaism and Lev. 15. Indeed, the purity issues addressed in the entire Book of Leviticus such as touching impure objects, eating fat and blood, food that is acceptable or unacceptable based on the species of animal, skin diseases, genital discharges both normal and/or abnormal, issues related to the Sanctuary, sacrificial animals, sexual partners, profaning the divine name, and so on are observed in the EOTC as well.

The purity system in Leviticus is not just limited to a sacrifice and the Sanctuary; instead, the purity code was extended to the entire social system depicting that the whole of Israelite life is organized in terms of purity rules. In Judaism, only priests need to observe the specific rules of purity; however, all faithful members should follow the law of purity so that all the members

[85] Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 43−58. Mary Douglas is a British anthropologist and scholar known for her interpretation of the Book of Leviticus. She presents an alternate way of investigating the general language of 'clean' and 'unclean' and its specific forms in Jewish and Christian literature in Chapter 3 of her book.

may be holy, just as the Temple, the sacrifices, and the priests are holy.[86] Likewise, today, the EOTC's definition of specific purity rules whereby persons, objects, places are labeled pure or impure is influenced by Jewish law.

The concept of uncleanness in the EOTC includes animals slaughtered by Muslims or Protestants and utensils used by Muslims and/or Protestants. An Ethiopian Orthodox church member must eat an animal slaughtered by a man who belongs to the EOTC and must be a man who fully kept the rule of fasting. While slaughtering a clean animal, the butcher must confess the name of the Triune God, saying, "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Eating the meat of an animal that is slaughtered without confessing the Trinity makes the meat and the eater unclean. For this reason, an EOTC member is prohibited from eating an animal slaughtered by a man of a different faith or eating meat slaughtered by a woman. In Ethiopia, members of the Orthodox Church never eat meat offered by a Muslim or a protestant friend or neighbors when they have feasts in common. When people from either group hold a feast for a wedding or other kind of feast, they must be sure to serve vegetables in hospitality to friends and neighbors of the other religions.

K'idusane, Objects, and Materials

In the EOTC today, Christ as God—despite his humanity, which is made available to believers in his body and blood—is too pure and sacred for *alemawī sewochi* (worldly or secular people) to approach without an intermediary. Members of the Church must seek other *K'idusane*[87] and sacred materials that are believed to be purer and cleaner due to their lesser

[86] Moshe Bildstein, *Purity, Community, and Ritual in Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Kenneth. C. Hanson, "Blood and Purity in Leviticus and Revelation," *Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture,* 28, no 3 (Oxford, Oxford Press, 1993): 215−30.

[87] Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia understand their relationship with the saints, angels, and St. Mary as

contact with the secular world. Although the EOTC seems to be dualistic at times, its true focus is on how it can bridge the gap between Jesus (who is separated from the world) and humanity (which is profane) through the careful management of rituals regulated by the clergy, saints, and sacred materials and spaces.

The purity of priests, monks, and clergy in the EOTC is necessary to build and maintain the boundaries between the sacred and the profane. They also facilitate and mediate contact between humans and God, taking on the responsibility that such contact is appropriately achieved according to the Church's teaching and tradition. Steve Kaplan notes, "Repeatedly the holy men intervened between men and demonic, divine, or natural forces... They intervened with a distant God on behalf of their followers and disciples... Born into human society, and they attained and maintained a position somewhat outside and above it, which enables them to fulfill a variety of vital mediatory functions."[88] He goes on to note, "By living an angelic life, the holy men become the same as angels, divine messengers believed to be capable of both conveying and influencing the divine will. Such a mediatory role is of tremendous importance in Ethiopia, where a pious Christian was primarily concerned with gaining the favor of a mediator, such as an angel, Mary, or a holy man, instead of appealing to a remote and unreachable God."[89]

According to the EOTC, the chief priest, who also has a significant role in local society and the Church, is the primary mediator between the church members and God, as he presents Jesus through the bread and the wine. Kaplan notes, "Both as a monk and as an ascetic, the image of the holy man [the priest] was intimately associated with the angel. Indeed, at times the line

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definitive of their religion instead of Protestant members. The Amharic word comprehended all those figureheads with the broad term *K'idusani* (holy beings).

[88] Steven Kaplan, *The Monastic Holy Man and the Christianization of Early Solomonic Ethiopia* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1984), 70.

[89] Kaplan, *Monastic Holy Man*, 82.

drawn between the angel and the holy man [the priest] appears to have been quite a thin one."[90] Therefore, means for interacting with the divine entity, as presented through the bread and wine, are mediated through priests, monks, material, ranging from smoke and incense to the exchange of offerings and financial gifts in the form of religious vow.[91]

Lastly, understanding the EOTC's religious system and EOTC's rituals fully requires an exploration of the EOTC's architecture of the temple or sanctuary, because even the church space itself is structured to ensure ritual purity is kept. The EOTC, being influenced by Semitic culture and civilization, has preserved its unique church architecture up to the present day, placing the Holy Tabot at the center of the church building. This architecture is similar to the Jewish Temple but is different from the Western Basilica model.[92]

The Hebrew sanctuary whose threefold division was structured towards maintaining ritual purity has continued to be the main style used in Ethiopia, ever since the country adopted Christianity. Every Orthodox Church building in Ethiopia is designed using the threefold division of the Old Testament temple. The center of the Church is called ጦቅደስ (mek'idesi),

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[90] Kaplan, *Monastic Holy Man*, 81.

[91] To enter into exchange relations with saints in whom the supplication gives some kind of gifts such as money or material goods in exchange for intercession is expected in the EOTC. It is believed that priests possess mysterious knowledge, not available through any kind of public institution, for which clients must pay. All priests receive payment in the form of cash, food, or drink for the private ritual services they provide, such as officiating at funerals, weddings, christenings, private confession, and absolution.

[92] The shape and type of the EOTC building can be categorized into three different shapes throughout history and the seating arrangements in the church signify the level of hierarchy and purity. The oldest churches built in Debre Damo and Aksum Zion exhibit rectangular structures and a wood-and-stone sandwich-style of construction. The second and more of the latest ones are built in either circular or octagonal shapes. These are the most and common forms of EOTC buildings in most parts of Ethiopia. They are primarily found in the countryside, and they are usually built on elevations and thatched roofs. The final shape of the EOTC church buildings is old and historic rock-hewn built during the Zagwe Dynasty in the twelfth and thirteenth Century in Lalibela. See more on Ullendorff, *Ethiopian and the Bible*, 87−89; and see Hailemariam Shemelis, *ኦርቶዶክሳዊ ቅዱሳት ሥዕላት። ታሪክ፤ መንፈሳዊ ትርጉም፤ የሊቃውንት አስተምሀሮ እና ሌሎችም. Orthodox Saintly Paintings: History, Spiritual Meaning, Teachings of Religious Intellectuals and Others* (Addis Ababa: Mahibere Qidusan, 2007). Interestingly, the later book clarifies how the Ethiopian church building and art profoundly impact the style and use of sacred paintings in Eastern Orthodox Churches, Latin Christian churches, and oriental churches.

representing the קודש הקודשים of the Jewish Temple. This part of the Church is the innermost or central section of the Church, like the Jewish Temple where the holy Tabot is placed.[93] Ullendorff notes, "The concept and function of the Tabot represents one of the most remarkable areas of agreement with Old Testament forms of worship."[94] The holiness of this place is viewed using the Old Testament analogy of the Sanctuary of the Church representing the Holy of Holies. The unleavened bread and the unfermented wine are also placed in this section of the church building when the chief priest starts the action of consecration. The EOTC priests are the only people who have access to this place. Further, they can only enter this place barefoot and after they have gone through strict cultic purification orders or ascetic forms because this place signifies the holiest part of the Temple (Exod. 3:5). The laity is forbidden from entering mek'idesi and from ever seeing or touching the Tabot. The holy Tabot leaves the Church in procession, being covered with an ornate cloth only twice a year during the celebration of Timket and on annual saints' days such as St. Gabriel and St. Michael.

The second part of the Church is called the ቅድስት (k'idisiti) meaning inner court, which represents the קָדוֹשׁ of the Jewish Temple. It is the place where the priests carry out the *Qeddassé* and distribute the Eucharist to the members. This particular place is reserved for those who are worthy, clean, and ready to receive the Eucharist. The rest of the people who feel unworthy to receive the Eucharist stand in the outer ring of the k'idisiti. From the outer ring of the k'idisiti those considered unworthy are sent away from the Sanctuary right before the distribution of the

[93] According to the rites of the EOTC, መቅደስ (mek'idesi) has three main doors and one door to the east towards Bethlehem. In the west, glory to God is recited, and the Eucharist is shared. In the north, we see the faithful men attending liturgy and the priests who perform horology. Furthermore, in the south, we see women members of the church attending liturgy and praying from there.

[94] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 82.

Sacrament. All who enter this place must take off their shoes, and women and men cannot stand or sit together; instead, women stand or sit on the right side while men stand or sit on the left side.

The third section of the Church is called the ቅኔ ማህሌት (k'inē mahilēti) meaning the outer gallery. This part is reserved for the debteras, priests, and chanters who perform spiritual songs (Zema) before and after the Eucharist. Rev. Daoud says that the k'inē mahilēti "corresponds to the naser of the Tabernacle of Solomon's Temple."[95] In the EOTC's music, St. Yared's Zema has been much used for the spiritual services that have a spiritual and Jewish character.[96] Edward Ullendorff also argued for the spiritual and Old Testament nature of the EOTC's Zema. He notes, "While the importance of music, song and dirge, dance and accompanying instruments, is common to most peoples of the East, we are, I suggest, able to recognize certain specifically Old Testament elements in the musical manifestations, largely of a religious character, of the Ethiopians."[97] He further notes, "Antiphonal singing as part of the worship was an established form of the Hebrew Liturgy since the earliest times and was taken over by the Christian Churches ... It is unlikely that the Hebraic forms were anywhere more faithfully preserved than in the Ethiopian service with its emphasis on chant and antiphony."[98] For example, the unique musical instruments, bagana (harp), kabaro (traditional drum), and the two categories of clergymen, the kahen and the dabtara, have parallels with Jewish spiritual musical instruments

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[95] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 10.

[96] Kifle Assefa, *The Significance of St. Yared's Music in the Age of Globalization, Orthodox Archdeacon* (Columbus: University of Ohio, 2009), 167−68. In the EOTC, St. Yared's Zema is considered God's heavenly gift given to St. Yared through his miraculous experience in the sixth century AD He taught for more than eleven years as an ordained high priest of the EOTC. His chants have established a classic Zema, known as Zema-Mahlet tradition, usually performed in the outer section of the Church's interior.

[97] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 90.

[98] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 68.

that are part of the twofold categories of the ministry of the priesthood in Israel.[99]

Large numbers of people, who for various reasons consider themselves impure and thus not able to enter the church building, gather in the courtyard outside of k'inē mahilēti. Furthermore, every Church must have a small house to the eastern side of the Church known as ቤተልሄም (bētelihēmi), which is built within the courtyard of the Church. The Eucharistic elements are prepared in this house, representing the Bethlehem of Jerusalem where Jesus Christ was born.[100] The EOTC's deacon prepares the bread from the best wheat only after he takes off his shoes, washes his hands (three times), and puts on a special vestment with a prayer offered to St. Mary.[101] The deacon prepares several loaves of bread, "but only those that are without blemish are used in the liturgy."[102] Tzadua notes, "The bread must not have cracks in it and must be without any stain."[103]

The concept of achieving purity and cleanness is related to the Sanctuary, and the materials used for the Eucharist celebration must be consecrated beforehand. For example, such distinction is evident from the prayers held over all vessels of the Church: the coverings, the cross-spoon, the Paten, the Masob, and the Chalice.[104] One of the prayers on the Preparatory Service II says: "And make this church and this Ark, chosen vessels, clean, and pure refined seven times from all

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[99] See more on this in Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 91−92.

[100] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 10.

[101] Phillip Tovey, *Inculturation of Christian Worship: Exploring the Eucharist* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2004), 64.

[102] Tovey, *Christian Worship*, 64. The term 'blemish' in this sense is to refer to the good-looking unleavened bread made by the EOTC deacons, not deaconesses.

[103] Tzadua, *Fetha Nagast*, 86. The western side of the Church has a hall called ደጀሰላም (Deje Selami), meaning 'the gate of peace,' which is an additional confirmation of the Old Testament textuality of the EOTC's Christianity.

[104] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 9−16.

spot and stain and uncleanness and transgressions like the cleansing of silver from the earth, refined, purified and tested."[105]

In sum, by example of the aforementioned witnesses and documents, the presence and influence of Judaism in Ethiopian history, tradition, and religion seems established beyond doubt. In today's EOTC, the sharing of the Eucharist represents the meeting of God and humanity in an encounter where the nature of Christ is most clearly seen and experienced. The total fasting and bodily rituals required before partaking of the Eucharist epitomize the sacred nature of the Eucharist, which must be mediated by the EOTC priests, saints, and sacred materials in order to make the attendees eligible for the Eucharist. Thus, Judaic practices in Ethiopia remain integral to the expression of Christianity in Ethiopia by re-appropriating the need to observe certain rituals and purity codes to qualify for the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the altar.

Conclusion

The EOTC remarkably fuses the Jewish and Christian traditions into an indissoluble whole and has enjoyed a long-standing presence as a national church, and the forms of Judaism have retained great value even after Christianity became the dominant faith. This Church strictly teaches the values of observing the Old Testament rituals such as the Sabbaths, fasting and dietary laws, purity laws, and the holiness codes of Moses by dictating how members of the Church must make themselves worthy to partake of the sacrifice of the Eucharist.

Access to the Eucharistic liturgy is extremely limited to a few faithful members and is highly controlled by the clergy of the Church. Only the ones who are ritually pure are made

[105] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 15.

worthy to receive the Lord's Supper. To be allowed to participate, one is usually required to observe many rules and rituals in order to purify one's body and soul from sin and sinful thoughts. Because of all of this restriction usually only a few people (children, old people, priests, and monks) can participate in the Eucharist liturgy. Most of the audience stays outside the church building during the mass, considering themselves unclean and unworthy to approach the temple and the sacrament.

In this context, we see the EOTC adapting Judaism and its practices to the doctrine and participation in the Eucharist. The concept prominent in the Old Testament of the *Sancta Sanctis*, meaning holy things (the Sacrament) for holy people (adherents who passed through a strict cultic purification system), implies in an Ethiopian context that only the so-called ritually 'clean' and 'pure' are worthy and can approach the Eucharist in worthiness. The Old Testament notion of *holy things for holy people* is not only implicit but becomes explicit in the sharing of the Eucharist when only those who have made themselves clean through rituals are invited to the Sacrament. Thus, for members of the EOTC, entering a place of holiness is dangerous. To eat the holy body and blood of the Sacrifice requires purity through observing rituals and vigorous preparation on one's part. The EOTC's *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast* further intensify the danger of approaching the Sacrament, which is the discussion of the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

ἈΞΙΩΣ IN THE *QEDASSE* AND THE *FETHA NAGAST* AND IN ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S HOMILY

Introduction

The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church's *Qeddassé* (Liturgy) reveals the impact and influence of Coptic (as influenced by Hebrew liturgy) and Syrian liturgical forms, teachings, and traditions. Most notably, the Egyptian liturgical tradition played an influential role in the overall development of early Christian worship. The EOTC *Qeddassé* naturally shows the characteristics of the Alexandrian family, being most closely connected with the Greek Liturgy of St. Mark and with the Coptic St. Cyril of Alexandria. The main emphasis of the Liturgy is its focus on the mystery of the Divine Wisdom and Light coming into the world to save God's creation. The Church's liturgical worship, as it is the case in other Eastern Orthodox Churches, is characterized by the strictness of rituals and mystical spirituality where members of the Church are shut off from the chancel, and the most sacred actions, such as the consecration of the Eucharist, are hidden from view.

In what follows; therefore, we first describe the historical origins of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Liturgy and briefly describe its communality and distinction from other Eastern Orthodox Churches. Then, we describe the source and role of *Fetha Nagast* (the Law of the Kings) as one of the ecclesiastical documents that influence the Church's order and the life of the adherents. Then we analyze selected contents of the anaphoras of the early church fathers, as presented in the EOTC's *Qeddassé,* and examine selected sections of the *Fetha Nagast*, specifically looking at how the two authoritative documents stress the danger of approaching the Eucharist if the Holy Sacrament is taken ἀναξίως ("in an unworthy manner"). Finally, since this dissertation focuses explicitly on the issue of worthiness in partaking of the Eucharist, we shall

explore St. Chrysostom's interpretation of the word ἀναξίως in his homily XXVII-XXVIII in comparison to the EOTC's doctrine of almsgiving as it is related to the Eucharist. His teaching on helping the poor or charity is aligned with his interpretation of the term ἀναξίως and can be used to evaluate whether the EOTC correctly understood his concern and interpretation of worthily partaking of the Eucharist in 1 Cor. 11:27 in its context. We have chosen St. Chrysostom because he is one of the influential early church fathers in the EOTC.

Origin of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church's *Qeddassé*

Early church history tells us that in the Western part of the Roman Empire, the single Roman Rite flourished for centuries without any strong competition. Nevertheless, that was not the case in the Eastern provinces and beyond the limits of the empire. In these areas, there were at least four effective forms that arose and developed into mature rites. These four forms of rites are the Antiochene, the Alexandrian, the Cappadocian, and the East Syrian.[1] These significant rites become the source of other rites in the East from which, over time, other various rites such as Jerusalem, Coptic or Egyptian, Byzantium, Armenian and others were invented.

The EOTC's *Qeddassé* is part of the family of the Coptic Liturgy and retains Syrian elements as well. The earliest form of the Antiochene liturgy gave rise to many other liturgical rites, including elements of the EOTC liturgy. For the sake of understanding the peculiar nature of the Ethiopic *Qeddassé,* it is vital to mention its place within the context of the post-Chalcedonian liturgical development after AD 451. According to Samuel Mercer, the Melchites used the Liturgy of St. James in the Greek language, which has been used for centuries. After the

[1] See more on Samuel how the four major rites become the source of other rites in the East. Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Ethiopic Liturgy: its Sources, Development, and Present Form* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman, 1915), 46−72.

centralization by Constantinople, the Byzantine rite prevailed much more, whereas the Jacobites, Malabarese, and Malankarese liturgies utilized the St. James liturgy in Syriac.[2] Mercer notes, "The Jacobites have, in addition to the Syriac Liturgy of St. James, a large number of other Anaphoras."[3] The Eastern Syrian Rite, which comprises the Chaldean, Assyrian, and Persian liturgies, consists of the Liturgy of Mari and Addai, including several other rites derived from Antioch.[4]

The impact of Syriac tradition in the EOTC is evident from several factors. First, the Amharas and Tigres, the dominant ethnic group in Ethiopia in the Aksumite kingdom in the northern part of the country, identify themselves as a "Semitic immigrant of a Syrian type."[5] Levine notes, "Christianity soon became a central component of ethnic identity of the Aksumites and their descendants the Tigreans."[6] According to Keon-Sang An, the language, physiognomy, and customs of the tribes are often Semitic.[7] Second, the arrival of Syrian missionaries in Ethiopia, such as Frumentius and the Nine Syrian Saints who fled persecution and went to Ethiopia between the fourth and sixth centuries, contributed to Ethiopian Christianity and its development of liturgy. The Nine Syrian Saints translated the Bible and other early church fathers' writings from Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic into *Ge'ez*. For example, some of the early church fathers' doctrinal treatises and homilies were translated into the *Ge'ez* language. Keon-Sang An notes, "In particular, St. Cyril's *De Recta Fide*, which was translated under the

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[2] Mercer, *Ethiopic Liturgy*, 73−114.

[3] Mercer, *Ethiopic Liturgy*, 75.

[4] Mercer, *Ethiopic Liturgy*, 75−76.

[5] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 100.

[6] Donald Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965), 32; and see also An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 101.

[7] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 100.

title of *Qerlos*, laid a foundation for the teaching of the EOTC. The *Ascetic Rules of Pachomius* still regulate the monastic life of today's Ethiopia. The *Life of Saint Anthony* by Athanasius remains popular among the people of Ethiopia."[8] Thus, in general, we may say that the Syrian elements are evident in the development of *Ge'ez* language, liturgy, and literature.

The strong tie between the Coptic and the Ethiopic Church has also been around since the fourth century AD. Until the mid-twentieth century AD, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was dogmatically and juridically dependent upon the Egyptian Coptic Church. Patriarchs in the Ethiopian Church had been chosen from Egypt and consecrated by the Egyptian patriarch. For example, the first bishop of the Ethiopian Church, known as Bishop Frumentius, was consecrated by the patriarch of Alexandria, St. Athanasius. Keon-Sang An notes, "The EOTC had Coptic elements, not only in theological tradition, but also in church practices such as the liturgy, rituals, the church calendar, and other customs."[9] Monasticism was also introduced to Ethiopians from Egypt through the Nine Saints, who stayed in Egyptian monasteries before they left for Ethiopia.[10]

Even though there are no precise written details on the liturgy which St. Frumentius had brought with him from Alexandria in Egypt,[11] it is most likely that all Egyptian nominees to Ethiopia, known as Abuna(s), brought the Alexandrian Rite of worship to Ethiopia, with which they were accustomed. For at least until after the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), the

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[8] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 102.

[9] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 104.

[10] Hyatt, *Church of Abyssinia*, 65.

[11] However, Tzadua notes that St. Frumentius was trained with the New Testament for five years in Alexandria, and "after his Episcopal consecration, bishop Frumentius returned to Ethiopia carrying with him all of the liturgies." See Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 6n5.

Alexandrian liturgy in the Greek language had been used in Ethiopia.[12] Tzadua notes, "with the Macedonian conquest at first and later with the influence of the Ptolemies, the Greek language spread not only in that part of Africa [Egypt] around the Mediterranean basin but also at the court of Aksum in Ethiopia."[13]

When looking at the Egyptian Rite, Jerusalem became the earliest source of Egyptian Christianity, and the earliest Christianity in Egypt was Jewish. The first converts to Christianity were already accustomed to offering prayers to the divine being accompanying those prayers by appropriate ritual acts. It is evident from the early church history that Alexandria was home to the largest Jewish Diaspora community that arrived from Palestine, specifically Jerusalem, and had religious experiences and rituals. History tells us that among the leading figures of the Jewish diasporas in Egypt, Philo and Josephus were the prominent ones. Colin H. Roberts' thorough study concluded that the earliest Christian documents would generally have been identified with the Jewish ones.[14] He noted, "In the first age of the Church Christians in Alexandria and consequently throughout Egypt were either unable or unwilling to escape from the Jewish connection or at any rate to appear to do so in the eyes of non-Christians; the fate of the first church in Alexandria would thus have been involved, willy-nilly, with that of Judaism."[15]

The EOTC's lectionary is derived from the Egyptian or Coptic Rite, containing a liturgy of

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[12] See Abu Salih, Basil Evetts, and Alfred Butler. *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighboring Countries, Attributed to Abû Ṣâliḥ, the Armenian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1898), 284−91.

[13] Paulos Tzadua, *The Divine Liturgy According to the Rite of the Ethiopian Church* (Place of publication and publisher is not identified, 1900), 6.

[14] Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 49−73; see also Mercer, *Ethiopic Liturgy*, 21−35.

[15] Roberts, *Manuscript,* 57.

the word (the reading of the sacred texts), which mostly follows the structure adopted from the Coptic Church in Egypt and inserts this Liturgy of the Word into a liturgical year developed within the Ethiopian context.[16] Unlike the present-day Alexandrian or Coptic traditions, but in keeping with the tradition of the Syriac-speaking Churches, the EOTC has developed fixed liturgical periods with variable lengths of time that may be as short as only one day and the total length of which is fixed.

Although the Egyptian Rite influences the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's *Qeddassé*, it is also distinctive. Irenee-Henri Dalmais notes that "the most notable accomplishment of the Coptic Church must be sought in Ethiopia."[17] During the earlier years, the liturgy used in Ethiopia was used at Alexandria, in the Greek language, until after the council of Chalcedon. When in the fifth century AD the Copts separated from the Alexandrian Church into *Miaphysitism* and created a Church of their own, the Ethiopians were made known of the schism through the Coptic Church and a few other *Miaphysite* monks. They migrated from Syria to Egypt and Ethiopia, and Ethiopia embraced *miaphysitism* from the Copts.[18] The Ethiopian Orthodox doctrine and liturgy are of great importance from a historical and pastoral point of view, as it considers its peculiar religious practices, rich history, and culture. According to Nicholas Zernov, the peculiar situation of Ethiopia is its prestigious and ancient traditions which give the Church a special place in today's Christian Africa that is conscious of its differences from other Christian groups.[19]

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[16] Fritsch, Emmanuel. *The Liturgical Year of the Ethiopian Church* (Ethiopia: Master, 2001), 71−74; and see Maxwell E. Johnson, *Liturgy in Early Christian Egypt* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1995), 46−51.

[17] See further description in Irenee-Henri Dalmais, *Eastern Liturgies*. Trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1960), 29−31.

[18] After the separation of the Coptic Church from constantinopolitan Orthodoxy, the main changes made were the rejection of the idea of the *filioque* clause and a belief in Consecration by the epiclesis.

[19] The peculiar situation of Ethiopia is its prestigious and ancient traditions that should give the Church a special place in today's Christian Africa that is conscious of its differences from other Christian groups. See more on this Nicholas Zernov, *Eastern Christendom* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), 241−42.

Today, the canonical discipline that governs the EOTC's *Qeddassé* is mainly contained in the books locally known as *Sinodos*, *Mashafa Kidan Zaegziena Yesus Krestos Didascalia*, and the *Fetha Nagast*.[20] The Sinodos is a vast theological and ecclesiastical collection of ancient canons present in the EOTC.[21] It is a version of the Egyptian Church order which is also known as the Ethiopian Church Order. According to Tzadua, the Sinodos includes the Canon of the Apostles, of Clement, of Hippolytus of Rome, of the Synods of Ancyra, and the Canons of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea.[22] The *Mashafa Kidan Zaegziena Yesus Krestosis* an EOTC's version of the *Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, meaning the Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ, is, according to Tzadua, a document of Syrian origin from the fifth century AD. Similarly there is an Ethiopian version of the *Didascalia Apostolorum* adopted from "books I-VII of the Apostolic Constitutions."[23] Furthermore, we have the *Fetha Nagast*, which we will shortly examine concerning its role in Ethiopian history. Of all these historical documents, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church adds the Sinodos and the Testament of Our Lord to the number of the canonical lists of Books of the New Testament.[24]

The initial liturgical innovation in Ethiopia was introduced during the Aksumite era, named

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[20] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 4−5.

[21] The Sinodos has always been a part of the *Ge'ez* version of the New Testament. However, it is not included in the Amharic versions, and the same as Qerlos (Cyril), the Sinodos is a collection of several writings that describes the early history of the Catholic Church. The EOTC's Liturgy is governed by the historical documents known as the Sinodos, the Ethiopic *Didascalia*, and the *Synkesar* (the Synaxar of the Coptic Church translated into *Ge'ez* along with many other Ethiopian indigenous additions).

[22] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 4.

[23] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 4n7.

[24] The EOTC's biblical canon consists of a Hebrew Bible ('Old Testament'), Late Second Temple Jewish Literature, and the New Testament. Please see more on this Isaac, *Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church*, 59. Many church historians and biblical scholars agree that the EOTC's biblical canon is the largest in number compared to the biblical Canon of any other church, including the Roman Catholic Church, comprising 81 books known as *Semaniya Ahadu*, which means eighty-one. Nevertheless, this biblical canon is not an only giant in number, but also it is one of the oldest in translations, and it is unique in including some books that are not in other Christian canons. See more on this Isaac, *Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church*, 61−62.

after the historical capital of the Ethiopian Empire. Paulos Tzadua notes, "While the Ethiopian rite gets its origin from Alexandria, it underwent, nevertheless, such an evolution that the actual form of the liturgy seems to be very distant from the original to the point of assuming the dignity of an independent rite."[25] Since the Egyptian mother church appointed the Abunas, the EOTC was primarily influenced by it. It eventually introduced holiness and rituals by incorporating liturgical dances, drums, and sistrums, which were influenced by Judaic apocalyptical legends that differed from the Coptic Egyptian church. For example, vernacular language, customs, and Christian songs contributed mainly to the development of the Ethiopian liturgy, giving the Ethiopian rite its characteristic features.

On the other hand, the biblical interpretation, discussion, exegesis, terminologies, antiphonal singing, rituals, and the function of the clergy in Ethiopia have been adopted from Jewish-Aramaic influences. Ullendroff notes, "The labio-velar sound in the Ethiopic form goes back to an original *targum* which shows that this concept entered Abyssinia through Jewish influences from South Arabia rather than by way of the Syrian missionaries of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D."[26] All the dietary prescriptions, ritual cleanness observances, the obligation of keeping the Sabbath and approaching the temple in holiness, and other Old Testament purity requirements related to the temple and the Sacrifice, which we have discussed in the previous chapter, are required for appropriate participation in the *Qeddassé*.

Moreover, the concept of divinization in the EOTC has a significant role in adequately attending the Divine Liturgy, which is God's eternal plan for humanity. The Church holds Christ to be at the center of its liturgical celebration, which is constantly revealed and experienced in

[25] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 4.

[26] Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 98.

the daily sacramental life of the Church. For the EOTC, the very purpose of Jesus' death and incarnation is for believers to partake in the divine life of God, as initiated in baptism and nurtured throughout the worthy celebration of the Holy Communion. The Church believes that the sacramental grace of Christ has been bestowed upon the members through the strict liturgical celebration and observation of the rituals, which enables them to become appropriate partakers of the Divine life of God. According to Ivan Popov, Aymro Wondmagnehu, Joachim Motovu, Ayalew Tamiru, and other writers on the Early Eastern Church, the EOTC's liturgy provides a foretaste of potential divinization, as the liturgical life mediates this salvific grace upon the faithful members of the Church.[27] The realization of the likeness of God in faithful members' lives, therefore, is an ongoing process that is realized by the Holy Spirit and the willingness and obedience of the faithful members of the Church. Thus, the divine-human cooperation towards the fulfillment of one's worthiness for the Eucharist, and ultimately, for salvation is vital in the EOTC liturgical teachings.[28]

In sum, the theology and spirituality of divinization is the center of the Church's Eucharistic ecclesiology, reflected throughout the Eucharistic anaphoras of the Church. Being one of the most ancient of Christian Churches, which has maintained the tradition of the divine worship of the early apostolic Church, the Eucharistic liturgy is the central feature of the Church, constantly celebrating the saving work of God that culminates in the remembrance of the

[27] Please see further Ivan V. Popov, "The Idea of Deification in the Early Eastern Church," in *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 2:42−82; Aymro Wondmagnehu and Joachim Motovu, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, 1970), 3−5; and see Ayalew Tamiru, *YeEtiopia Emnet BeSostu Hegegat: The Faith of Ethiopia According to the Three Laws* (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam, 1960), 205−7.

[28] For the EOTC, faith must be practiced along with good works; otherwise, the notion of '*sola fide*' (faith alone) alone would not count for much. Please see more on this The Ethiopican Orthodox Church, *YaItyopya Ortodoks Tawahedo Bétakerestiyan: Emnat Sereata Amlekotena Yawec Geneñunat: The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith, Order of Worship and Ecumenical Relations* (Addis Ababa: Tensae Masatamiya Derejet, 1996), 68–69.

sacrificial death and resurrection of the Christ.

Form and Structure

The basic structure and practice of the Ethiopic *Qeddassé* still reflects its fourth century AD roots. Rev. Daoud notes, "With the exception of translations from *Ge'ez,* the ancient liturgical language to Amharic, the modern Ethiopian language; and those into Arabic and English, for the use of non-Amharic speaking faithful, there has been no major change or reform in the Ethiopic Liturgy."[29] The *Qeddassé* consists of four sections. The first part is called the *Serate Qeddassé*, meaning Preparatory Rites. This part of the *Qeddassé* is composed of prayers and blessings upon the Church's various vessels and coverings used for the Holy Communion service. For example, the prayers conducted over the Paten, Chalice, Cross-spoon, and Vestments. It also sets down different instructions and guiding principles of liturgical functions appropriate to the patriarch(s), monks, priests, deacons, and the laity, who attend the Divine Service.

The second part of the *Qeddassé* is known as the *Ordo Communis*, which introduces the Eucharistic part of the liturgy. This part is the Pre-anaphora section, which mainly consists of introductory prayers and rites, Scriptural readings, and the profession of faith, including the Creed's recitation. This part of the liturgy is invariable except for the readings from the New Testament, the Gospel, and the three verses taken from one of the Psalms and sung by the deacon alternately with the people before the Gospel reading.[30] Maxwell E. Johnson notes, "It is from

[29] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 8.

[30] According to the sources of the Ethiopian Church, this part had been rearranged by St. Basil of Antioch. See more on this in Mercer, Samuel A. B., *The Ethiopic Liturgy: Its Sources, Development, and Present Form* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman, 1915), 151; see also Ernst Hammerschmidt, *Studies in the Ethiopic Anaphoras* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), 48n 5.

Egypt that the church [EOTC] inherited, both through Cassian's description of monastic liturgy and the family of the Egyptian monks, a style for the liturgy of the hours which finds its center in the recitation of and meditation on the Psalter."[31]

The EOTC's liturgy is unique in its structure and form. Although the Ethiopian *liturgy* keeps the ancient Alexandrian liturgical structural lines, the Pre-anaphora part of the liturgy in Ethiopia developed uniquely by partly adopting the rites of other oriental Orthodox Church liturgies in its maintenance of its unique characteristic features. For example, like the other Oriental Church liturgies, "the rite of preparation was introduced placing the offertory at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy; and the ceremony of incensation, the song of the *Trisagion* and the *Creed* were introduced."[32]

The *Ordo Communis* comprises the rite of preparation accompanied by the offertory, the absolution of the Son, the incensing, and various readings, such as the Gospel, along with the creeds, and the kiss of the peace. However, manuscripts and text from various points in time showcase that it has developed and changed in three major stages. According to Tzadua, the three stages of development took place in the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth centuries, and during the Modern-day Liturgy.[33] The significant sections that changed during the three developmental stages were: "preparatory part, the offertory part, and the ceremony of

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[31] Johnson, *Liturgy in Early Christian Egypt*, 50. The general form of structure of this part of the liturgy is adapted from the corresponding part of the ancient Alexandrian liturgy in the fourth century AD. And it is structured as follows: The greetings of the priest, readings and hymns, gospel and homily, dismissal of the Catechumens, the kissing of peace, and the offertory.

[32] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 8.

[33] The first development of the liturgy took place around the beginning of the 16th century, and the addition is documented in that period and the "Missal printed in Rome in 1549 by the Ethiopian Monk Abba Tesfa-Sion." The second development of the Liturgy took place around the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. This revision "includes the additions and the changes the established order was subject to in the manuscripts of the 16th century." The changes were made on the rubrics, the brief and expressive prayers, and their order of succession. Furthermore, the third stage of the development builds based on the second stage of the development. See more in Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 8−10.

incensation. These parts, which, in the first documents, had several proportioned and limited prayers and formulas with a systematic arrangement of ceremonies, became, over time, lengthened in prayers and formularies and more refined and pompous in ceremonies."[34] Thus, the actual content of the *Ordo Communis* has been unchangeable; however, over time, its entire formula and length did not remain rigidly tied to the original formula.

The third and foremost part of the *Qeddassé* is called the Fere Qeddassé or the anaphora, which can be translated as Prayer of Thanksgiving. Its overall structure is formed by the dialogue, Sanctus, Post-Sanctus, Institution Narrative, Anamnesis, Epiclesis, and Diptychs, and ends with the sincere invitation to Holy Communion.[35] This part of the *Qeddassé*, which is known as the Eucharistic part, is somehow changeable based on the kind of the feast days. The Eucharistic part of the liturgy, which we partly analyze in the next half of this chapter, includes the composition of fourteen anaphoras of the early church fathers which was accepted into the EOTC as early as the fifth century AD.[36] The Church has diligently assigned each of the anaphora to be celebrated at different points throughout the Church's liturgical year. For example, the Anaphora of the Apostles is celebrated on the memorial feast of the prophets, apostles, and martyrs. The Anaphora of the Lord is performed on the feasts of the holy family's return from their flight to Egypt, on the consecration of a newly constructed Church, and the Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary. The Anaphora of St. Mary is celebrated on her different

[34] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 8.

[35] The Eucharist liturgy of all rites (Coptic, Ethiopic, Syrian, Malankares, Maronite, Melkite, and Russian) has been similar in its basic structure. It has three major divisions: the Preparatory prayers and Rites, The Sacrifice, and The Communion Banquet.

[36] Please refer to Rev. Daoud's categories for seasons of celebrations of each anaphora, and most of these anaphoras had been translated from Ethiopic into English, German, and Latin by Rev. Marcos Daoud and Harden Mercer. See Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 43, 58, 64, 74, 86, 97, 109, 120, 128, 136, 143, 151, 159, and 164. See also on Hammerschmidt, *Ethiopian Anaphoras*, 41−43.

feast days and the Feast of Annunciation. The Anaphoras of the Church Fathers are celebrated on the feasts of Holy Trinity, epiphany, transfiguration, the crucifixion, the commemoration of the Holy Cross, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, Cherubim and Seraphim, the Lord's Day, saints, and the commemoration of archbishops, bishops, and priests.[37]

The EOTC is one of the churches that has the most significant number of anaphoras, after the Syro-Antiochene Church.[38] Rev. Marcos Daoud, who translated the liturgy from *Ge'ez* and Amharic into English, notes that these anaphoras were received initially from the Egyptian Church; however, the Egyptians lost most of them except that of St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Gregory, and St. Basil, among which the Egyptians' anaphora of St. Basil is similar to the Ethiopian's Anaphora of St. Basil. At the same time, the remaining two (the Anaphora of St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Anaphora of St. Gregory) are different in form and content from that of the Ethiopians.[39]

The Church recognized fourteen anaphoras, but there are six more anaphoras that are still in discussion within the Church, but have been used and approved by the Ethiopian Catholic and the EOTC scholars as apocryphal books.[40] The general structure of the Anaphora of Ethiopic liturgies consists of the great Eucharistic prayer, which includes the preface, the triumphal hymn or sanctus with its prayer, and the commemoration. Then what follows is the consecration,

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[37] Please refer to Rev. Daoud's categories for seasons of celebrations of each anaphora. Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 43, 58, 64, 74, 86, 97, 109, 120, 128, 136, 143, 151, 159, and 164; and see also Ernst Hammerschmidt, *Studies in the Ethiopic Anaphoras* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), 41−43.

[38] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 9.

[39] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 2.

[40] See more on this in Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 10−11. The following lists of fourteen anaphoras are the ones that are fully adopted into the EOTC's Qeddassé and accepted as authoritative sources of the Eucharistic liturgy. These are: the Anaphora of the Apostles, of the Lord Jesus Christ, of St. John the Evangelist, of Our Lady St. Mary, of the 318 Orthodox Fathers, of St. Athanasius, of St. Basil, of St. Gregory of Nyssa, of Epiphanius, of St. John Chrysostom, of St. Cyril, of St. Jacob or James of Serough, of St. Diocorus, And the Anaphora of St. Gregory the Armenian.

consisting of the institution, oblation, and invocation. The third part contains the great intercessory prayer, consisting of general intercessions and the Lord's prayer. Finally, we have the Communion, consisting of the *sancta sanctis* with accompanying prayers and manual acts, the fraction, confession, Communion, the thanksgiving prayer, and the dismissal.[41]

Of all the anaphoras, the Anaphora of the Apostles was the earliest and is considered to be the *Medebawi*, meaning the model or basis for the other anaphoras. The inner structure of all the anaphoras mostly follows the classical form of the Anaphora of the Apostles. The other anaphora, perhaps as ancient as the first anaphora, is the Anaphora of the Lord Jesus Christ, derived from a known document called The Testament of our Lord.[42] When St. Frumentius came to Ethiopia from Alexandria, he most likely brought with him the Anaphora of St. Mark with the (Greek) anaphora of the same name at that time in use by the Church of Alexandria, which is also probably one of the oldest anaphora in use by the Ethiopian Church.[43]

Most anaphoras have a similar order of progression; however, there is a slight difference in their order at the prayer of intercession and the epiclesis in some of the anaphoras. For example, the prayer of intercession, "while it is normally placed within the introduction of Eucharistic prayer and the sanctus, exceptions are found in the Anaphora of St. James, the brother of the Lord, and St. Basil, as in these two anaphoras the said prayer comes after the epiclesis like in the Anaphora of the Syriac-Antiochian type."[44]

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[41] Please see Nikolaus Liesel, *The Eucharistic Liturgies of the Eastern Churches* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1963), 40−59. See the comparison of the Coptic Rite and the Ethiopic Rite on pages 8 and 9.

[42] See more about lists of anaphoras that originated in Ethiopia and those anaphoras composed from foreign elements so that they can be typically Ethiopian in character by using free translation. Lee Hammerschmidt, *Studies in the Ethiopic Anaphoras*, 48−49.

[43] Regarding St. Basil's Anaphora in Ethiopia, Tzadua notes, "An anaphora which can be considered as a true translation, is the Anaphora of St. Basil [no.7]. It corresponds more or less to the anaphora of the same name used in the Coptic Church of Alexandria" See Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 14.

[44] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 16.

The last section of the *Qeddassé* that is worth mentioning is the *selota kīdani* (ጸሎተ ኪዳን), which is translated as Prayer of the Covenant. This part of the liturgy is attached as an appendix at the end of the liturgical books, offering post Communion prayers and giving general instruction for the daily prayers and proper character throughout the rest of the week, which is expected of one who has received the Eucharist.

In sum, the Ethiopic *Qeddassé* was initially in Greek, and even today, we find some Greek elements in it.[45] However, the Ethiopians felt that the development of Hellenistic culture was crucial to their identity and culture, especially in terms of their linguistic field, which eventually obliged them to translate the *Qeddassé* into the Ethiopic language.[46] Consequently, from the fourth century AD until today, the entire liturgical language in the EOTC is the classical Ethiopian language known as *Ge'ez*, which remained the spoken language until the seventeenth century AD. Since then, Amharic has replaced it, and today *Ge'ez* is no longer understood by the laity, though it is still a liturgical language of the Church.

The *Fetha Nagast*

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the Ethiopians used to be at first ruled by the Mosaic Law. However, after the advent of Christianity in Ethiopia, the whole nation has been governed by the *Fetha Nagast*.[47] This document is derived from an Arabic work known as Magmu al-qawanın (meaning Collection of Canons), but scholars commonly refer to it as the

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[45] Aziz Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christendom* (London: Methuen, 1968), 153.

[46] Tzadua, *Divine Liturgy*, 6.

[47] Paulos Tzadua, *The Fetḥa Nagast: The Law of the Kings* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie University, 1968), v. The history of the *Fetha Nagast* in Ethiopia is a debated subject among scholars about the origins and dates of introduction into Ethiopia. That debate being in progress, the consensus is that the book is not an indigenous code to Ethiopia. The general belief, which adds to the prestige associated with the codes, is that the *Fetha Nagast* originated with the 318 Orthodox Sages at the council of Nicaea. Please see Aberra Jembere, *An Introduction to the Legal History of Ethiopia: 1434−1974* (Munster: Lit, 2000), 188−89.

"Nomocanon of Ibn al- ' Assal,"[48] which was documented around the middle of the thirteenth century by the Coptic Christian Egyptian called 'AbulFada'il Ibn al-'Assal when Cyril III was Patriarch of Alexandria (1235−1243).[49] The authoritative document deals with matters related to canonical and civil laws and criminal law. *Fetha Nagast* was initially compiled for the Christians living in Egypt. It was eventually introduced to Ethiopia, where it became the authoritative book for teaching legal matters in Ethiopian schools up to modern times. Besides its function in the EOTC, *Fetha Nagast* has governed the Ethiopian empire for centuries, perhaps best illustrating the influence and place of religion in the law and government.

The entire work of *Fetha Nagast* can be divided into two major parts, and the first one deals with religious matters (chapters 1−22) depending on the ancient church canons and the writings of several fathers of the early Church. This part is derived from the Old Testament and the New Testament, the writings of the alleged apostolic origin, Canons of the early Councils, and the writings of the early Church Fathers. Although the *Fetha Nagast* is a collection of precepts and laws from the Ethiopic churches that were practiced throughout the centuries, it is further based on adopted laws from the powerful Christian nations of antiquity and contains many provisions that stem from Roman and Byzantine laws.[50] The presence of religious laws in the collection of laws that governed the empire of Ethiopia points to the centrality of religion in the state until the official separation of the EOTC and the state, which took place in 1974. Chapter 95 of the *Kebra Nagast* (another authoritative book of the church) confirmed the EOTC

[48] The Nomocanon of Ibn al- 'Assal was written and compiled to guide the Christian Coptic people living among Egypt's Muslims. See more on Tzadua, *Kebra Nagast*, xvi.

[49] Tzadua, *Fetḥa Nagast*, xv.

[50] The *Fetha Nagast* became a respected book in Jamaica. Tzadua notes, "When Ethiopia's stature as an impendent African monarchy helped to catalyze the emergence of the Ras Tafari religion in Jamaica, the *Fetha Nagast* acquired new status as a revered book outside Ethiopia; in 2002, copies of this translation were printed for distribution within that religious community." Please see more on this Tzadua, *Fetḥa Nagast*, xxxv.

as the legitimate religion of Abyssinia by the decree of God and also expressed a tension between Christianity and the Judaic roots of Ethiopia.[51] The second part (chapters 23–51) deals with secular or civil matters depending mainly on Roman-Byzantine laws. It is mainly based on the four-book collection of laws commonly known as the 'Canons of the Kings.' This book is well known in Ethiopia, and it is also widely available, mainly because of the numerous printed editions available.[52]

Although the compilation of the *Fetha Nagast* began with the Church's governing law and rules of organization and conduct, it has been venerated, supported, and applied by the Church and the government for centuries. It governed the Ethiopian empire for centuries and signified the influence and place of religion in the secular law and government because it is also represented the imperial law that governed the people of the empire of Ethiopia. Its core revolves around laws that are derived from Christian notions of morality and holiness. Therefore, for Ethiopians, these laws were not outside impositions; rather, the laws keep with the Ethiopian notions of justice and morality because the compilation begins with the Church's governing law and rules of organization and conduct.

In sum, the survival and domestic application of the *Fetha Nagast*, which has been well-recorded and documented for centuries, must be considered one of the essential historical references that enforce the ritual system of the Eucharist celebration in Ethiopian Christian history. Therefore, in the pages that follow we examine the criteria, which are documented throughout these two authoritative documents that set forth how one gains worthy admission to

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[51] Please see more in Budge, Sir E.A. Wallis, trans. *The Kebra Nagast: Book of the Glory of Kings* (Great Britain: Aziloth Books, 2013), 161. Furthermore, see also Sirgu Galaw, trans. *The Kebra Nagast*: *Ge'ez and Amharic* (Addis Abeba: BerhanenaSelam, 2005), 109.

[52] When the Arabs invaded Ethiopia, "the copies already been printed, but not distributed were burnt together with the printing press." Tzadua, *Fetḥa Nagast*, v.

the Eucharist.

Worthiness in the *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast*

The EOTC *Qeddassé* is a highly complex ceremony and highly apophatic, making it extremely mystical, spiritual, and ritualistic. For example, the celebrant disperses incense twice during the divine service, first around the altar at the beginning of the service and then before the Gospel reading. The Gospel itself is treated with veneration, demonstrated by the fact that when it is read aloud it is sheltered under the ornate umbrella that conveys honor and respect. That same umbrella is later opened over the chalice. Then the Bible is covered in a delicately embroidered garment and passed around the Church for the attendees to kiss.[53] This entails that during the *Qeddassé* service in the EOTC, hearing the Gospel is supplemented by physical devotional contact with it.

The term *Qeddassé* in the EOTC is much deeper than the English translation of "liturgy." It offers readers a precious resource for understanding the Ethiopian tradition, as well as its theology, spirituality, and Christian lifestyle. The word *Qeddassé* means 'hallowing' and/or 'sanctifying,' requiring purity and holiness both from those who lead and those who attend the *Qeddassé* (Lev. 11:44) which holds the most fundamental doctrines of the EOTC. The entire Eucharistic *Qeddassé,* doctrine, and theology of the Church articulates the way in which one can worthily partake of the Eucharist, preserving the liturgical tradition and teaching adopted from the anaphoras of the early church fathers. According to the EOTC's *Qeddassé* and the writings of the *Fetha Nagast*, priests and all faithful members of the Church must exercise control over all physical senses so that no obscure sins may enter the heart. In doing this, the attendees may

[53] Chaillot, *Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Tradition*, 106.

change into the status of an angel. Wet compares angelic status with the holiness of the priest and links it to the Consecration of the Sacrament when he notes, "This angelic status is necessary for the transubstantiation of the Eucharist... Whilst their [priests'] social status is concerned with the management of human bodies in the Christian community located in the sinful πόλις, their liturgical status is concerned with the control, regulation, and management of the mystical body of Christ present during the rite of the Eucharist."[54] Thus, both clergy and laypeople who participate in the *Qeddassé* and partake of the Eucharist must properly prepare, which may, in turn, lead them to attain angelic status. The liturgical celebration is so serious that each individual must ask himself before attending the *Qeddassé*, "What do I have to offer? What am I willing to give to make growth occur in this encounter? Rather than what May I expect to get from it?"[55]

Besides our exploration of the things that are prohibited to be observed before, during, and after partaking of the Eucharist, we now present some of the obligations of preparation and show how the danger of approaching the Eucharist is depicted in the *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast,* respectively. To begin with, the danger of approaching the Sacrament unworthily begins with the Preparatory Service of the *Qeddassé,* which gives warnings to those who attend the liturgical service late because late attendance of the Divine Service disqualifies one from partaking of the Communion. The Preparatory Service stipulates this fact and notes, "If there be any one of the faithful that hath entered the Church at the time of mass and hath not heard the Holy Scriptures, and hath not waited until they finish the prayer of the Mass, let him be driven out of the Church:

[54] Wet, "Priestly Body," 7. Wet used the language of Transubstantiation in his observation of the EOTC's understanding of the Eucharist. However, the EOTC, does not talk much about transubstantiation or attempt to explain how the change takes place; rather, they prefer to refer to the Eucharist as a sacrifice, which is offered on the altar by the EOTC's priest.

[55] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 6.

for he hath violated the law of God and disdained to stand before the heavenly King, the King of Body and Spirit. This, the Apostles have taught us in their canons."[56]

Another fact that intensifies the experience of partaking of the Eucharist is the use of the term 'consuming fire.' The danger of approaching the Sacrament, which is pictured through the 'consuming fire,' referring to the Sacrifice of the altar is fully utilized in the *Qeddassé*. According to the EOTC's teaching, God presents himself in the sacrifice as a 'consuming fire' (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29) that burns sinners who approach the *Eucharistia Sacrificium* 'in an unworthy manner.' The assistant priest issues a declaration to the people to ensure that they qualify for the Eucharist before chewing the consuming fire. He declares, "He that is pure let him receive of the oblation [Eucharist] and he that is not pure let him not receive it, that he may not be *consumed by the fire of the godhead* which is prepared for the devil and his angels."[57] The Anaphora of St. Mary 6−8 confirms the supremacy of the Eucharistic Sacrifice by comparing it to the animals sacrificed in the Old Testament using the picture of a 'consuming fire.' It notes, "It is not like the Sacrifice of the forefathers which depended upon the blood of sheep, oxen, and cows, but it is fire. Truly it is the fire that even the fire clad Cherubim and Seraphim cannot touch... It is a consuming fire to the unrighteous who denied His name."[58]

Likewise, Isa. 6:1−8 is appealed to for this representation of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist as a consuming fire. One of the prayers at the Consecration of the Cross-Spoon 13 says, "Lay Thy hand now on this holy cross-spoon which is Thine; bless it, sanctify it, and give it power as thou didst give to the tongs which were in the hand of one of the Seraphim, the

[56] *Liturgy Book*, 3 and 5.

[57] *Liturgy Book*, 57; and Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 41. (Emphasis mine).

[58] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 74.

holy angels, for the purification of the lips of Isaiah the Prophet."[59] Consequently, the EOTC believes that similar to the apostles who became divinized as they shared from the holy and divine Supper, the faithful believers are to become the bearers of Christ through the same liturgical celebration of the 'consuming fire.'

The Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom 85 also testifies to the danger of approaching the 'consuming fire' (the Eucharist) as a sinner. St. Chrysostom notes, "This bread is not useless as you see it earthly dry, baked, able to be felt and touched, but it is the fire of the Godhead, which burns the thorn of sin. It is so consuming that it consumes the wicked; it is so burning that it burns the sinners."[60] St. Chrysostom commands each individual to examine themselves before partaking of the Eucharist seriously, and he defines self-examination in terms of searching for a 'blemish in the body' and 'sin in the soul' of the faithful so that the attendees may immediately decide to either depart from Communion or partake of it.[61] In the Anaphora of St. Mary 142, the priest emphasizes the consuming character of the Holy Eucharist, saying, "It is the fire of the godhead. What mouth is that which takes in this bread, what teeth and those which masticate the bread, and what stomach is that which can contain this bread?"[62] St. Cyril of Alexandria is no different from the other fathers in his description of the Sacrament as a Divine fire that consumes those who cannot purify their body and soul. He notes, "It is fearful of opening the lips to eat burning fire and swallow glowing coal if the belly is not purified from deceit."[63] In this context,

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[59] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 11.

[60] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 141.

[61] In his anaphora, St. Chrysostom focuses on examining one's Christian lifestyle before partaking in the Eucharist by emphasizing the holiness of the sacrifice on the altar. In his homily on 1 Cor. 11, as we shall see towards the end of this chapter, he mainly defines the question of worthiness in terms of one's commitment to Christian charity and almsgiving.

[62] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 83.

[63] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 148.

the purification of the belly from deceit is most likely referring to the complete fasting from food before the sharing of the Eucharist, as we shall shortly see in the *Fetha Nagast*.

The emphasis on the Eucharist as a 'consuming fire,' however, has been misunderstood by members of the Church. It has gotten to the point where it terrifies those who intend to partake of the Sacrifice but recognized that they were sinners and therefore felt unworthy. Due to the strictness of the preparation for the Eucharist, members of the Church developed feelings that they could not make themselves pure and worthy, concluding they should avoid partaking of the Eucharist altogether. The liturgy further explains that this consuming fire is a fire prepared for the devil and his angels for their eternal damnation together with those who dare partake of the Eucharist without carefully observing the sacramental obligations. The destiny of those who fail to observe the sacramental obligations but still participate in the Sacrament, even though unworthy, are both cut off from the community in the here and now while also being promised eternal damnation in the coming world. The unworthy partakers are put in the same category as Judas Iscariot, who was cursed and cast away amongst God's people. At the same time, those who are worthy and attend the Sacrament are considered divinized by the Sacrament and their own merit.

In sum, the 'consuming fire' image of the Sacrament ends up terrorizing the attendees, leading them to the wrong conclusion and causing them to stay away from the service of the Sacrament in order to avoid God's judgment. The recurring image of the 'coal of fire' has overshadowed the mercy and the grace of God made available through the prayer in the *Qeddassé* and, ultimately, through the sharing of the Eucharist itself.

When we carefully read the whole *Qeddassé*, however, we see the opposite: the early church fathers' prayer in the anaphoras beseech God to make the attendees worthy for the

Sacrament and make the Sacrifice acceptable. The EOTC's preparatory service of the *Qeddassé* stipulates that the adherents think of their sins seriously and ask forgiveness so that they may obtain mercy from God before partaking in the Sacrifice. After the priest enters the Holy of Holies in the Preparatory Service, he prays, "Make us worthy of this thy holy mystery, remove every evil thought and lust which war against our soul that we may offer to Thee a sacrifice and a sweet heavenly savior without blemish and defilement."[64]

Throughout the *Qeddassé* the Eucharistic prayer attests to how the Holy Spirit descends from heaven to overshadow and sanctify both the Sacrifice and the attendees. The *Qeddassé* also testifies that the same Spirit bestows His divine power and grace to transform the priest to become worthy for the celebration of the Sacrifice, rather than the priest making himself worthy for the Sacrifice. For example, The Anaphora of St. Gregory of Nyssa, a brother of St. Basil, writes a priest's prayer in the *Qeddassé*, asking God to make those who should not draw near the Sacrifice clean of their sinfulness through the power of God's word which they hear before they commune.[65] The Prayer of the Fraction in the Anaphora of the Apostles shows a prayer requesting God to make the attendees worthy through sharing the body and the blood of Christ. It notes, "And again we beseech the Almighty God, the Father our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ to grant us to take of this holy mystery [Eucharist] with blessing, to grant to us confirmation and not to condemn any of us, but to make worthy all that partake of the holy mystery, of the body and blood of Christ."[66] In this citation, the question of worthiness is seen as

[64] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 14.

[65] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 123.

[66] The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, *The Liturgy Book of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church*: Preparatory Service, Anaphora of the Apostles and Anaphora of St. Dioscorus (Haile Selase University: Lion of Judah Society's Imperial, 2012), 77. See also Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 46.

a gift to the partakers through the mystery of sharing the Sacrifice. In the Anaphora of St. Cyril of Alexandria, in the Prayer of Fraction 105, the priest prays, "Let us also entreat the almighty Lord our God that He makes us worthy even of the Communion and participation of His divine and undying mysteries, the holy body and the precious blood of His Christ."[67]

In addition to prayers presented to God for worthiness in the *Qeddassé*, the early church fathers witness how the faithful need to approach the Sacrament by grace through faith, anticipating the forgiveness of sins and salvation offered through sharing the Lord's body and blood. In the same Anaphora of the Apostles, and under the Prayer of Penitence which occurs after the leading priest points to the bread and the wine he prays, "This is the true precious blood of our Lord and our God and our Savior Jesus Christ, which is given for life and salvation and for the remission of sin unto those who drink of it in faith."[68] The chief priest attests the role of God's grace and his wisdom to the attendees in the Anaphora of our Lord 13, "Let us come near the medicine of life. Let us receive the holiness which is granted unto us by grace through the wisdom of the Lord."[69]

In contrast to this almost Evangelical approach, when we look at the portion of the *Fetha Nagast*, which details the practice surrounding the Eucharist, αξίως is rendered in its adjectival form further stipulating that participants in the Eucharist are required to make their "soul good" and "saintly" and return to the status of angels before they partake of the Sacrament.[70] It

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[67] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 117.

[68] Ethiopian Church, *Liturgy Book*, 89. The priest continues praying to say, "I believe, I believe, I believe, and I confess that his godhead was not separated from his manhood, not for an hour nor the twinkling of an eye, but he gave it up for our sakes for the life and for salvation and for the remission of sin unto them that partake of it in faith." See on p. 91.

[69] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 59.

[70] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 86 and 94; Wondmagegnehu and Motovu, *Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, 35−41; and Habte Michael Kidane, "Eucharist," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopicaz*, 2nd ed, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 449.

particularly emphasizes the obligation to fully fast before partaking of the Eucharist and approach the Sacrifice in worthiness, possibly under the advice of a priest. Abba Tzadua notes, "No one shall receive the Eucharist unless he fasts with purity, and if any faithful, man or woman, has tested [food] and then dares receive the Eucharist, he shall be perpetually expelled from the church of the Lord."[71]

As seen in the previous chapter, the recognition of fasting as a ritual is essential to a valid account of its significance in Ethiopian Orthodoxy. In the EOTC, fasting is a spiritual exercise, and the obligation of fasting is not just restricted to those who attend the Liturgy and partake of the Eucharist. Nevertheless, for young members of the Church who do not regularly attend the church service and partake of the Eucharist, observing fasts can be a reassurance and affirmation of their Christianity; or for the strict observers of the liturgy it can be an act of devotion to God; for the saints and the clergy, and for those who cannot attend the Church for many reasons, it is a way to participate in religious practice.[72] The *Fetha Nagast* instructs that "fasting does not consist merely of [taking] bread and water only; the fast which is acceptable before God is living in the purity of heart. If the body is hungry and thirsty, but the soul eats whatever it likes, and the heart is entirely given to delights, what benefit derives from your fast?"[73]

According to Shaw, the importance of fasting in the EOTC indicates a profound recognition that "the soul's character and condition are subject to the bodily influence, and

[71] Tzadua, *Fetha Nagast*, 86.

[72] The importance of fasting in the EOTC is observed insofar members are not permitted to be married in the church during fasting seasons because feasting is the opposite of fasting. No marriage and/or funeral church services are permitted during the great fast or ordinary fasting days.

[73] Tzadua, *Fetha Nagast*, 96.

therefore also to bodily management."[74] In other words, fasting serves to weaken the sinful desire of the body and is considered a weapon to punish sinful desire of the body so that the body may obey the rational soul, having a transformative impact on the person. The *Fetha Nagast* notes,

> Fasting is the tribute of the body, just as giving alms is the tribute of wealth. The purpose of the law in imposing fasting is to weaken the force of concupiscence and make the latter submit to the rational soul, just as the purpose of prayer is to make the force of anger submit to the mind. Furthermore, through the benefit we derive from fasting, we resemble Spiritual [beings]. With this resemblance, he who emulates gains the power to approach the [spiritual] model.[75]

Thus, the effect of fasting is somehow a subtle transformation of a person that places him in religious orientation and is considered an act of self-formation.

In addition, fasting is required before taking Communion because "the person who fasts is enabled to realize the suffering of hunger and may have pity for the hungry and those who ask for alms."[76] The *Fetha Nagast* teaches that fasting is a tribute of the body just as giving alms to the needy is the tribute of wealth. It encompasses abstaining from all other factors that give delight to the body because, according to the EOTC, mortification is the most appropriate means to attain purity. It is by fasting that the EOTC members tend to define themselves as Christians. Members who observe a fast more strictly than what is commanded in the law shall receive a greater reward which enables them to resemble the spiritual beings.

In particular, the obligation of fasting is combined with prayer and almsgiving, which is enforced both upon the clergy and the laymen. The *Fetha Nagast* warns of perpetual expulsion

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[74] Teresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortune, 1998), 33.

[75] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 94.

[76] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 94.

from the Church unless one fasts with purity in prayer and almsgiving before partaking the Sacrament.[77] It further stipulates that "anyone who, without being impeded by physical illness, does not fast during the Lenten time or on Wednesdays and Fridays, shall be deposed."[78] The Arabic text of the *Fetha Nagast* specifies the kinds of punishment against those who fail to fast, noting, "If he is a priest, he shall be deposed, and if he is a layman, he shall be segregated."[79]

For the EOTC, almsgiving often goes along with fasting and prayer. When one prays and fasts, one must show love through active generosity to the poor in order for them to be sinless and clean, as the EOTC's Scripture (which include the Apocrypha books) teaches that almsgiving purges sin. For example, The Book of Tobit says, "It is better to give alms than to store up gold, for almsgiving saves from death, and purges all sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life." [12:9]. Likewise, the *Fetha Nagast* affirms, "Everyone must believe that alms purify from sin, forgive the fault and save from evil; because of giving them one receives a double reward. He who, while able, neglects to give alms is like the infidel and the wicked."[80]

The *Fetha Nagast* offers further instructions to be followed before partaking of the Eucharist that demonstrate that the liturgy goes beyond helpful practice to meticulous strictures that exceed any kind of Scriptural warrant. It notes that the faithful must not swim or brush their teeth or gargle with water to avoid the risk of accidentally swallowing the water, which leads to breaking the fasting. Breaking the fast during one's preparation for communion will cause punishment on par with the ex-communication referred to in Lev. 7:20, which results in being cut off from the community in general and the family in particular. It compares the defiled

[77] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 86−87.

[78] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 61.

[79] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 61n37.

[80] Tzadua, *Kebra Nagast*, 101.

people who approach the sacrifice in Lev. 7:20 with the unworthy Christians who partake of the Eucharistic sacrifice without fasting and rigorously observe the sacramental obligations. Moses warned the people who approached the sacrifice, "If anyone eats of the sacrifice of the Lord while defiled, his soul shall be cut off from his people."[81] Likewise, anyone who partakes of the Eucharistic sacrifice without being worthy through the Eucharistic obligation of the Church shall be excommunicated from God's people and will be destroyed together with the devil at the second coming of Christ.[82]

The intensity of the strict observance is further acted out in the handwashing of the priest, followed by the announcement of the assistant priest sending those who feel unworthy away from the Church. The officiating priest washes his hands twice and announces that he is free of the sin of anyone who takes the Eucharist while being unworthy, and once his hands are washed, he touches only the bread and the chalice. The presiding priest says right before distributing the Sacrament, "As I have cleansed my hands from outward pollution, so also I am pure from the blood of you all. If you presumptuously draw nigh to the body and blood of Christ, I will not be responsible for your reception thereof. I am sure of your wickedness, but your sin will return upon your head if you do not draw nigh in purity."[83] Then the assisting deacon declares, "You, who do not receive the Eucharist, get out."[84]

The presiding priest is not washing his hands to make his hands clean; rather, the performance of washing the hands implies the hand washing of Pontius Pilate, who declared

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[81] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 86.

[82] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 61−62.

[83] *Liturgy Book*, 57; and Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 41. Similarly, in the Preparatory Service IV 47, the priest declares his innocence against the fate of those who would dare to take communion without proper participation.

[84] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 84.

himself blameless in the condemnation of Christ. Indeed, all the clergy wash their hands, body, and clothes before they enter into the holy of holies as an obligation to their priesthood office; however, the second washing of the hands in front of the congregants around the holy altar is to emphasize and intensify the need to be personally cleansed of all sins and transgressions and take the responsibility of approaching the 'consuming fire' without being sinless. The hands stand for people's daily actions, and in washing them, they symbolize purity and blamelessness of action before coming to the sharing of the mysterious Sacrament.

In the EOTC, besides hand washing, the symbolic expression of 'kissing one another with the holy kiss in front of the holy altar and the call for reconciliation between neighbors before sharing the Eucharist is helpfully connected to the call for worthiness that is expressed persistently in the *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast* and in Scripture. For instance, the Anaphora of St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea, right before the order of the Holy Kiss stipulates, "O Lord, in thy goodwill, fill the hearts of us all and purify us from corruption and all excess, and from all revenge and envy and from all wrong-doing and from the remembrance of ill which clothes with death. And make us all meet to salute one another with a holy salutation."[85] This is connected to Jesus' teaching in the sermon on the Mount that commands Christians to leave their gift before the altar and go and first be reconciled with their neighbors, and only then can they come and offer their gift (Matt 5:24). Failure to do the reconciliation before the sharing of the Eucharist may make the person unworthy, and it may also defile their sacrifice (the Eucharist) which they offer to God as an offering gift.[86]

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[85] Ethiopian Church, *Liturgy Book, 59*.

[86] The commandment of reconciliation before offering your gift at the altar in the Gospel of Matthew does not directly relate to the question of being personally worthy for the Sacrament. Moreover, an individual's failure to make reconciliation before the sharing of the Eucharist does not defile the Sacrifice of the Altar.

Other Means of Becoming Worthy

The EOTC *Qeddassé* stipulates other sacramental obligations that must be observed by the faithful members and maintained by them before, during, and after partaking of the Eucharist. To begin with, among various means of becoming spiritually worthy, የንሰሃ ጸሎት (yeniseha ts'eloti) translated as the 'Prayer of Penance' is what faithful members should strictly observe. Penance is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. It is seen as a process of worthiness and divinization achieved through deeds until the person becomes a master over their sin and becomes spiritually worthy. Before the service of the Eucharist, individuals must make a private confession of sin to the priest and then carefully do what the priest orders until they receive the final private absolution. This process is also seen as a process of sanctification and deification to help the person meet the conditions.

There are three significant elements in penance: confession of sins, good deeds, and absolution. Individuals confess their everyday sins to the priests, and then they receive ritualistic orders tantamount to the nature of their sins which they confessed to the priest. It could include the order of fasting and prayer, prostrations, recitation of psalms, making a vow of gifts to the Church in the name of saints, and others. The Orthodox Church priests are the ones who give prescriptions and later the absolution. They are considered spiritual doctors who can diagnose sin and prescribe proper medications for whatever sinful passions afflict one's soul and body.[87]

Public confession of sins before the Church's Eucharistic worship have become part of the Church's doctrine since the fourth century AD. Confession of sins as part of penance has become part of the individual member's program to help the members pass the qualifications. Only then, when they meet the conditions, they are considered personally worthy of the Eucharist and are

[87] Wondmagegnehu and Motovu, *Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, 33−34.

permitted by the priest to partake of the Eucharist. Penance begins with a private confession of sins to the priest followed by doing the prescribed good deeds, and it is finalized by receiving absolution from the priest. This is a required act seen as a process making members of the Church gradually worthy to receive the Eucharist. Thus, there is a strong link between private confession of everyday sin (as a sacramental obligation), penance (as a gradual healing process), and the Eucharist as the central focus of all Orthodox Christian life.

Second, just like penance, faithful church members must participate in the complete service of the *Qeddassé*. The participants should be present from the very beginning of the Liturgy until the attendees receive absolution. An attendee who cannot attend the whole Liturgy from the beginning to the end must not receive Holy Communion and is segregated and set apart from the communing members.[88] The *Fetha Nagast* stipulates, "The faithful men and women shall always stand during the prayer of the Eucharist, singing lauds and beseeching God, and shall restrain themselves from speaking in the church."[89] Appropriate participation in the *Qeddassé* requires proper preparation because it is, after all, a divine encounter just like those that were given to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. It takes forethought; it takes honest personal prayer that includes a change of heart. It means that proper celebration of the Liturgy anticipates "the passing of this world as God's kingdom is already breaking through into our cosmos."[90]

Just like penance, the prayer of the *Qeddassé* is recited before the distribution of the Sacrament and includes in it the same three elements: confession of sins, good deeds, and absolution. The liturgical confession of sins is made communally in a congregational setting.

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[88] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 82.

[89] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 86.

[90] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 6

Whenever the deacon names a list of sins, the people are to say at every pause, “According to thy mercy, our God, and not according to our sins.” This phrase must be repeated three times by the congregants at every pause. Then, good deeds done during the liturgical service are a growth mark in the process of sanctification and an expression of exterior reverence. For example, the good deeds can be kissing the Bible in the deacon’s hands, kneeling, and bowing deeply before the Eucharistic elements when they are passed around the congregation to show their adoration towards the elements and which are also accompanied by bell ringing and incense that fills the air. It is believed that such an act calls for mental and emotional attention and results in fear, awe, and distancing oneself from sinful thought.

Finally, during the service of the Liturgy, faithful members receive absolution of sins at two specific points. The first absolution is called ፍትሀተ: ዘወልድ (fitihāte zewelidi: ‘Absolution of the Son of God’), i.e., the prayer addressed to Christ by the officiating priest followed by the litany and forgiveness imparted by the same priest and experienced by Christian penitents. The second absolution is through ፍትሀተ: እጣን (fitihāte: it’ani), meaning ‘Absolution in Incense,’ which is an offering presented by the priest in order to receive forgiveness of sins and not condemnation in the Eucharist.[91]

The sacramental obligation is restricted to before the service and must be maintained during and after the service of the Communion. The faithful men and women must stand throughout the entire prayer service for the Eucharist, except for when they are prostrating themselves or bowing down. They sing aloud and beseech God with intense fear. They also are required to refrain from speaking in the Church when not beseeching God with their songs and

[91] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church,* 24–25, 27.

prayers. The Prayer of Faith in the Preparatory Service says, "If there be any who disdains this word of the priest or laughs or speaks or stands in the church in an impudent manner, let him know and understand that he is provoking to wrath our Lord Jesus Christ, and bringing upon himself a curse instead of a blessing, and will get from God the fire of hell instead of the remission of sin."[92] The preparatory service continues warning those who speak during the service of the liturgy, "When the message of the earthly King is being read no one may speak, or if presumptuously he does speak he will suffer punishment and tribulation, how much greater punishment will he suffer who speaks while the message of heavenly King is being read?"[93] In case of laughing during mass (intentionally or unintentionally), the person will be prescribed one more week of fasting as a punishment, and he shall immediately be sent off from the Eucharist service.[94] If the one who laughs during the mass celebration is the clergyman, he must be punished with one week of fasting but is not asked to leave the service.[95]

The sacramental obligation must also be maintained afterward, as is evident from Rev. Daoud's explanation of the Anaphora of the Apostles 166, "After partaking of the Holy Communion one shall not wash his hands or feet, shall not take of his clothes, or bow down or kneel, shall not spit or commit bloodletting nor cut his nails or hair nor got to a public bathing place [swim], nor eat or drink too much, nor indulge in any excess nor another occasion of sin. None of these or the like should be done after receiving the Holy Communion."[96] The *Fetha*

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[92] Ethiopian Church, *Liturgy Book*, 57; and Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 41.

[93] Ethiopian Church , *Liturgy Book*, 45. The Fetha Nagast also gives orders saying that the one who talks in the Church during the mass service should be sent off for that one time, and he must not be allowed to receive the Eucharist. Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 82.

[94] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 82.

[95] Strauss, *Fetha Nagast*, 61.

[96] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 56.

Nagast instructs, "No one shall drink water, nor shall anyone cover [mix] the Eucharist he received with [ordinary] bread before the dismissal, and from the water [taken] to wash [the mouth afterward], nothing shall trickle out of the mouth."[97]

In sum, members who can distance themselves from sin and sinful thoughts both internally and externally, keep the sacramental obligations, and pass through a strict self-examination process through penance, rituals, and proper participation in the Liturgy are the only people who will benefit from the gift of the Sacrament. Faithful members thus confess their sins frequently during the service, do good deeds, and receive absolution of sins to become worthy to receive the Lord's Supper. In other words, the sacramental obligations in the EOTC are processes of divinization and growth marks of sanctification that one must achieve. Steven Kaplan notes, "The public ritual of the Mass was often the vehicle for the dramatization of important issues of church discipline, communal borders, and social-political status. Only those judged worthy by standards of the Church were entitled to receive Communion with their fellow believers."[98]

Eucharistic Sacrifice

In the EOTC liturgy, as it currently stands, there is another factor that stands in the way of participation in the Eucharist: the fact that the Eucharist itself is equated with the sacrifice of Christ. As Abba Tzadua notes, "if anyone eats of the Sacrifice of the Lord while defiled, his soul shall be cut off from his people."[99]

The EOTC Eucharistic prayer in the liturgy calls the Eucharist a Sacrifice, stating that this sacrifice is an act of worship that the priest and the entire worshippers offer to God. In the

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[97] Tzadua, *Fetha Nagast*, 87.

[98] Steven Kaplan, "The Social and Religious Functions of the Eucharist in Medieval Ethiopia," *Annales d'Ethiopie* 19, no. 1 (June 2003): 7−18.

[99] Tzadua, *Fetha Nagast*, 86.

Preparatory Service III, 23 of the liturgy, after the chief priest pleads with the whole congregation to pray for him and the Sacrifice on the altar, the assistant priest prays for the leading priest, saying, "May God hear you in all that you have asked and accept your sacrifice and offering like the sacrifice of Melchizedek and Aaron and Zacharias, the priests of the church of the firstborn."[100] Then the priest continues consecrating the elements beseeching God to change the elements into the actual body and blood of the Lord. In the Anaphora of the Apostles, after the prayer of the preparation of the Holy Communion, the priest prays, "Let the Holy Spirit descend on this served Holy of Holies [Eucharist]" then, the people reply, "The Holy Spirit will descend upon the bread and wine and towards the flesh and blood. His special Spirit will transform them in an instant with his wisdom."[101]

Thus, the EOTC priest assumes the role of the Old Testament priest and becomes the mediator between man and God without whom there is no forgiveness and salvation. The elements themselves are referred to as the Sacrifice, meaning that Christ, as a victim, is being brought to the Altar. After the assistant priest embraces the presiding priest, he prays in the second chapter of the Preparatory Service 25, "May the Lord keep your priesthood and accept your sacrifice and offering with a gracious countenance."[102] This implies that the language of Sacrifice in the EOTC is that the Eucharistic Sacrifice is something the Church brings to God, and it is a sacrifice that the Church offers to God as a spiritual act of worship. In this regard, one is led to ask: Is the Eucharistic Sacrifice what Christ does for the Church as an act of grace that the Church receives from Christ? Or is the Eucharistic Sacrifice an act of worship that the priest

[100] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 21.

[101] Ethiopian Church, *Liturgy Book,* 93.

[102] Daoud, *Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*, 21.

and the entire congregation offer to God? In the EOTC, admittedly, the sacrificial language of the Eucharist is sometimes referred to as the act of offering prayerful thanksgiving for the person and work of Jesus through the Eucharistic celebration. In contrast, the Eucharistic elements themselves are referred to as the Sacrifice brought to God on the Altar. However, in both cases, the Eucharistic Sacrifice is something brought to God by the Church. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is the Church's offering presented to God as an act of worship.

Conceivably, the most apparent evidence that the Eucharist has been viewed as a sacrifice in the EOTC is found in the present-day Amharic term used to name the Eucharist. The Amharic word for Eucharist is ቁርባን (k'uribani), which according to Wolf Leslau means 'offering,' 'gift,' 'dedication,' 'thanksgiving,' and 'Host.'[103] It is similar to the word '*korban*' which Jesus used in Matt. 15:6 and Mark 7:11 in reference to the Jewish practice of offerings for the temple treasury. The commonly used Amharic term is መስዋእት (mesiwa'iti), which only means 'Sacrifice.'[104] The latter term appears at numerous points throughout the entire Liturgy as a designation of the Eucharist.[105] Thus, the use of the two terms interchangeably in the EOTC's Liturgy communicates the best and most representative theology of the *Eucharistia Sacrificium* of the Holy Communion. As indicated in the prayers of the presiding priests in the EOTC liturgy, just like the Old Testament bloody sacrifice made by the priests, the Eucharist is considered an unbloody sacrifice constantly offered by the high priest on the Altar.[106] Similar to the Old

[103] Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic): Ge'ez-English/English-Ge'ez, with an Index of the Semitic Roots* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), 440−42.

[104] Leslau, *Dictionary of Ge'ez*, 440.

[105] Hammerschmidt, *Ethiopic Anaphoras,* 37−38.

[106] Wondmagegnehu and Motovu, *Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, 103. In the EOTC, before priests get ordained, they must spend two years as a Qollo Temari, a period of mendicancy in which they must travel far away from their family and other sources of support and live only on alms. Their separation from society is achieved

Testament sacrificial theology, which required Jews to go through a strict cultic purification system to make them worthy for the Sacrifice, the New Testament Sacrifice (the Eucharist), according to the EOTC, requires partakers to be similarly pure and clean in order to qualify for making and receiving the Sacrifice.

According to the EOTC's teaching, Jesus never held an eternal high priesthood office after his exaltation. Instead, Jesus' exaltation is an affirmation of his human task as the high priest that demonstrates that he fully returns to his divine majesty and glory afterward. The present high priestly ministry of Christ is limited to his past work on the Cross, which is linked only to the Eucharistic Sacrifice that is daily offered in the hands of priests. In other words, no longer does Jesus function as the high priest; rather, his greatness and exaltation are perceived as his remoteness along with the termination of his office as the high priest. The only continuity of Christ's present ministry is through the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which grants Christ's human priestly function to the daily activities of the priests. The EOTC believes that a faithful Christian needs the flesh and blood of Christ sacrificed on the altar as a continuation of the Sacrifice of Christ that washes away sins. This implies that it is not the priestly ministry of Christ but instead his past Sacrifice that continues for the present needs of believers. The EOTC priests serve as mediators between God and sinners and are therefore called vicars of Christ, as they hold his priestly office on earth.[107]

In general, the adaptation of the Old Testament view of Sacrifice is vigorously presented throughout the EOTC's Liturgy. The expression "holy things for holy people" becomes the theme of the word of invitation to the Eucharist, and the receivers need to chew the Holy

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through poverty, which keeps them away from the profane, gives them control over their bodies, and qualifies them for the priestly office.

[107] Ethiopian Orthodox Church, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith*, 43.

Sacrifice in great fear and trembling without making any sound. The people, in other words, are holy not because of Christ's Sacrifice for them, so much as because of their own preparations for worthiness which are based on the Old Testament ritual purity laws observed before sacrifices in the Old Testament were to be offered.

Ἀναξίως in St. John Chrysostom's Homily

St. John Chrysostom's teaching concerning Christian virtue in relation to the worthy admission and celebration of the Eucharist is primarily apparent through the picture of poverty and charity like the EOTC's teaching regarding worthy admission to the Eucharist through the lens of Christian's responsibility in charity and almsgiving. The act of charity to the poor, as a virtuous act, becomes St. Chrysostom's focus in his interpretation of the word ἀναξίως implying the commitment to serve the poor as a type of spiritual worship that grows out of proper observance of the Sacrament. When we see St. Chrysostom's Homily XXVII on 1 Cor. 11:27, we find him strongly stipulating a close tie between charity and ἀξίως.[108] He begins the text by saying that Christians in Corinth were not coming together for better but for the worse, noting, "ye do not go forward unto virtue. For it was meet that your liberality should increase and become manifold, but ye have taken rather from the custom which already prevailed, and has so taken from it as even to need a warning from me, so that ye may return to the former order."[109] The Corinthians' virtuous life became weak because of their lack of charity to the poor, which, in turn, made them guilty of Christ. We see this in his homily because the wealthy Christians in Corinth poured out the body and the blood of Christ as "a slaughter and no longer as a

[108] John Chrysostom,"Homily XXVII on 1 Corinthians 11:27," *in Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians,* A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 12, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1893), 283.

[109] Chrysostom, "Homily XXVII on 1 Corinthians 11:27," 277.

sacrifice."[110] The Corinthians alienated themselves from Christ, placing themselves among those who rejected Christ and put him to death rather than among those for whose redemption Christ died. Thus, the Corinthians would not be among those who benefit from the Sacrament but would instead be among those who were condemned.

St. Chrysostom clearly defines the Greek term ἀναξίως in the sense of one's failure in charity towards the poor. In his Homily XXVII, St. Chrysostom notes,

> He that cometh for it [Eucharist] unworthily and reaps no profit thereby. Seest thou how fearful he makes his discourse and inveighs against them very exceedingly, signifying that if they are thus to drink, they partake unworthily of the elements? For how can it be other than unworthily when it is he who neglects the hungry? Who besides overlooking him puts him to shame? Since if not giving to the poor casteth one out of the kingdom, even though one should be a virgin; or rather, not giving liberally: (for even those virgins too had oil, only they had it not abundantly:) consider how great the evil will prove, to have wrought so many impieties? [111]

In the above text, St. Chrysostom greatly exemplifies the need to help the poor and demonstrates how Christians are responsible for the needs of others.[112] Nonetheless, Chrysostom does shift the focus from the poor to the Church. He links the act of despising the poor and shaming them as an equivalent to hating the Church of God and ultimately the Christ who died for the Church. He notes, "If therefore thou comest for a sacrifice of thanksgiving, do thou on thy part nothing unworthy of that sacrifice: by no means either dishonor thy brother or neglect him in his hunger; be not drunken, insult not the Church."[113] According to St. Chrysostom, partakers must make their soul pure and perfect before partaking in the Eucharist through charity and virtuous living.

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[110] Chrysostom, "Homily XXVII on 1 Corinthians 11:27," 277.

[111] Chrysostom, "Homily XXVII on 1 Corinthians 11:27," 83−84.

[112] According to Wet, St. Chrysostom believed that the poor "live[d] like angels due to the disciplinary and pedagogical nature of poverty." See Chris L. de Wet, "The Priestly Body: Power-Discourse and Identity in John Chrysostom's De Sacerdotio," *Religion and Theology* 18 (Brill: University of South Africa, 2011), 6.

[113] Chrysostom, "Homily XXVII on 1 Corinthians 11:27," 82.

Like the EOTC's requirement of making the soul have an equal status to angels and saints, St. Chrysostom requires a life worthy of the Eucharist. He notes, "Thou hast partook of such a Table and when thou oughtest to be more gentle than any and like the angels, none so cruel as thou art become."[114] Thus, he encourages Christians to live a life worthy of the Sacrament because the Eucharistic life commits Christians to the poor, and Christians must recognize Christ in the most destitute.

Although St. Chrysostom emphasizes the need to live a worthy life and encourages Christians towards charitable acts, almsgiving, fasting and prayer, and self-control of the body both prior and after partaking of the Sacrament, neither his homily on 1 Cor. 11:17−34 nor his interpretation of the term ἀναξίως substitutes the adverbial meaning of the word into an adjective requiring almsgiving or charity as a condition to be ἀξιοί. In contrast, St. Chrysostom notes, "Notwithstanding, God delivered thee from all those [ten thousand sins] and counted thee worthy of such a Table: but thou art not even thus become more merciful: therefore of course nothing else remaineth but that thou shouldest be delivered to the tormentors."[115] His teaching never implies that the lack of charity makes the partakers ἀναξιοί (in its adjectival sense).[116] Instead, he encourages the faithful to pursue charity and virtue as an outcome of being counted ἀξιοί for the Sacrament employing true faith in Christ.

Almsgiving and charity were St. Chrysostom's practical advice when the society he lived in faced inequality between the wealthy and the poor Christians. His sympathy and love towards his impoverished neighbors were manifested through his charitable works, making him an

[114] Chrysostom, "Homily XXVII on 1 Corinthians 11:27," 283−84.

[115] Chrysostom, "Homily XXVII on 1 Corinthians 11:27," 84.

[116] The difference between the adverbial (ἀναξίως) and the adjectival (ἀνάξιοί) reading of the text shall be analyzed in chapter six under the exegetical analysis of 1 Cor. 11:17−34.

ambassador of the poor and a preacher of almsgiving, as he lived among the company of the poor and the beggars.[117] For St. Chrysostom, "failure to share one's good with others was equal to theft, swindle, and fraud."[118] He had a firm conviction that Christians should deposit their treasures in heaven, not on earth. And godly use of possessions was justified only by their proper use in feeding the hungry and supporting the needy, [119] and it is even a determining factor in whether one enters heaven or goes to hell.[120]

The main question then is, does St. Chrysostom contradict Paul's teaching that salvation is by grace through faith and that our works do not count before God? Has Chrysostom been understood correctly? In chapter 4 of his book, *Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom*, Gerald Bray draws a parallel between Paul and St. Chrysostom to show us the similarities and differences in their teachings about the relationship between virtue and Christian salvation. Bray's work helps modern readers correctly understand St. Chrysostom's emphasis on purity, not as opposed to Paul's focus on salvation by faith alone; instead, Bray urges us to read both of them in their context and not as contradictory but complementary.[121]

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[117] Georges Florovsky, "St. John Chrysostom: The Prophet of Charity," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 4, nos. 3/4 (1955): 37−42. St. Chrysostom, known as a prophet of charity' and a preacher of morality, believes that prosperity is a danger that must be overcome through the gift of charity and love. After he left the city life, St. Chrysostom set examples of charity by building hospitals and orphanage centers to help the needy. His courage and commitment to sacramental life led him to publicly condemn sin and sinners, which became one of the reasons for his tragic death. Before St. Chrysostom's death in exile, the accusations started against him: he sold the gold and dowry of the Church, then used the Church's income to help the poor.

[118] John Chrysostom, *St. John Chrysostom on Wealth and Poverty*, trans. by Catharine Roth (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1984), 49. According to St. Chrysostom's teaching, a Christian's character, virtue, and deeds will either help or harm him/her in the time of judgment that is awaiting all of us.

[119] For St. Chrysostom, Florovsky notes, "Everything is Gods except the good deeds of man- it is the only thing that man can own." See Florovsky, "Prophet of Charity," 40. With due respect to Florovsky's conclusion, we argue that even the good works that humans do are the work of God's grace that operates in the life of the faithful.

[120] Miller, *Chrysostom's Devil*, 142−43, and 161−62. In Chapter 4, Miller deals with St. Chrysostom's teaching concerning the Devine-Human cooperation for salvation that modern readers have misunderstood.

[121] Gerald Bray, *Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom* (Bellingham: Lexham, 2020).

However, among members of the EOTC, St. Chrysostom can be misunderstood to be an advocate of moralism. Nevertheless, one must not ignore that St. Chrysostom's focus on Christian charity, almsgiving, and ethics is both deeply rooted in the true Christian faith and fueled by authentic Sacramental living. For him, there is an inseparable connection between faith and charity. His teaching of Christian charity and ethics with proper preparation for the Eucharist must be understood within the framework of faith alone, which is the center of good works and our worthiness for the Sacrament.

Therefore, it should be underlined that living a life worthy of the Eucharist is not the same as making oneself worthy to partake in the Eucharist, though the two should not be separated from each other. In other words, for St. Chrysostom, we argue, living in a 'worthy manner' [ἀξίως] of the Eucharist is not the same as making oneself 'worthy' [ἀξιος] for the Eucharist by mean of almsgiving and other good works. Therefore, his teaching about Christian almsgiving and prayer, concerning the worthy admission to the Eucharist, must be understood within the notion of *sola fide*, which is the center of charity and good works.

Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt is made to enter into and analyze selected contents of the anaphoras of the early church fathers in the EOTC's *Qeddassé* and one of the authoritative documents of the Church known as the *Fetha Nagast*. The Ethiopian Church developed different liturgies, primarily derived from the Coptic rite, representing a much greater variety of anaphoras than the ones used in Egypt. As one of the most ancient of Christian Churches, dating back at least to the fourth century, the EOTC maintains that its tradition of the Divine Liturgy centered

in the Eucharist as the crown of all Sacraments and the climax of worship,[122] finds its faithful observance in following the tradition established by the early church fathers who, in turn, looked to the Old Testament practices to inform their own, as we present in the next chapter.

The prescriptions in the EOTC liturgical tradition, as embodied in the *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast* and the EOTC's literature surrounding them, clearly show a paradoxical tension in the liturgy between God's grace and forgiveness through the body and the blood, and the call to worthiness achieved through strict observance of rituals and self-examination. Although this is evidenced throughout the entire liturgy, the paradox is most clearly seen in the serious call for worthiness through various rituals to qualify for the Eucharist and the prayer offered to God to make the attendees worthy. There is a tension between the human effort in making oneself worthy on the one hand and confessing that God alone can declare one worthy for the Sacrament—and both elements are found in the documents.

We also analyzed how St. John Chrysostom's emphasis on Christian virtue and charity can be misunderstood when interpreted out of its own context and applied to the question of worthiness in the EOTC. We learned that St. Chrysostom actually provides the EOTC with what a Christian's life should look like after conversion. His teaching about the call to worthiness never implies that failure to give alms makes the partakers ἀνάξιοί (in its adjectival sense); instead, he encouraged the faithful to pursue good works in helping the poor as an outcome of authentic Christian life formed by the Sacrament. Faithful Christians are made worthy of Christ's body and blood by grace through faith. At the same time, they are called to live a life worthy of the body and the blood of Christ, which should manifest itself in the sharing of God-given

[122] Ayalew Tamiru, *YeEtiopia Emnet BeSostu Hegegat: The Faith of Ethiopia According to the Three Laws (*Addis Ababa: BerhanenaSelam, 1960), 205.

resources with the poor.

The analysis of this chapter also highlights the perhaps unintended consequences of an overemphasis on the cultic rituals of the Old Testament that pervade the EOTC's Eucharistic liturgy. The parallels that are drawn there and in other authoritative documents point to how the Old Testament and Eucharistic sacrifices both display the event as a consuming fire that perpetuates fear and intimidation in those who desire the Eucharist. Further, these people might refrain due to an overwhelming sense of unworthiness communicated by the very same liturgy that was meant to invite and involve them in participation in their Lord's body and blood which was given and shed for their forgiveness, not their condemnation.

CHAPTER FOUR

EARLY CHURCH FATHERS EXEGESIS OF THE SCRIPTURE AND THEIR VIEW OF THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRIFICE

Introduction

The EOTC rightfully prides itself on its continuity with the early church in its doctrine, its liturgy, its teaching and practice. To a large extent, all of these are based on the exegetical approach they have also inherited from the early church and which is reflected also in the *Ademta* Commentary of the EOTC. In this chapter and the next we will explore the early fathers' exegetical approach in an attempt to understand how the EOTC arrives at its understanding of the Eucharist as sacrifice which has proven so formidable in discouraging participation in the sacrament and in its concomitant conceptualizing of worthiness. As Luther understood, not all Tradition, or traditions, are equal. Some can have deleterious effect on the faith to the point of even jeopardizing one's salvation.

The main concern of the early church fathers when interpreting the Scripture was not to merely reconstruct the *Sitz im Leben* of the text being studied, but to project its historical setting into the readers' lives and context. They mainly concerned themselves with pointing out the deep spiritual meaning of the Scripture for the readers, not just as a homiletic application distinct from the text's original and literal meaning, but also as an organic part of the whole complex of God's divine Word. In other words, the early church fathers exegete the Scripture from a different culture with various presuppositions and assumptions in order to respond to their situation as pastors, bishops, and monks whose interpretation was done primarily within that pastoral context. They became better at engaging with the scriptural texts as they grew in their faith in Christ, were led by the Holy Spirit, and formed by the early church teaching.

In what follows, we shall first describe the early church fathers' exegetical strategies and

then show how the fathers interpreted the Eucharist in light of the Old Testament sacrifices, which received its perfect fulfillment in the sacrificial death of Christ. The Book of Hebrews has extensively used typological interpretation of the Old Testament sacrifice and placed it into the context of the Eucharist. Since the first century, Jewish Christians and the early church fathers drew their theology and terminology from the Old Testament sacrificial system and applied it to the Eucharistic theology. Analyzing a few sections of the Book of Hebrews concerning Christ's crucifixion will help us understand the Eucharistic theology and interpretative methods used by the early Christians who viewed Christianity at times in light of its Jewish roots.

Therefore, this present chapter intends to establish a foundation for the following chapter to evaluate the EOTC's exegetical tradition of the Scripture as documented in the *Andemta* Commentary corpus. As we will see in the next chapter, the AC adopts the early church fathers' interpretative approaches of the Scripture even while it developed its indigenous interpretation style that was mainly shaped by Judaism and the historic Ethiopian Orthodox religious context and tradition.[1]

Early Church Fathers' Exegetical Approach

The early Church fathers' exegesis of the Scripture is foundational to the development of Christianity as a religion and offers insight into how they thought about Christian doctrines and

[1] The overall interpretation of the *Andemta Commentary* follows the use of the literary works of the Antiochene Church fathers. The EOTC acknowledges the historical narrative of the Scripture, and the commentary somehow presents the literary, biblical historical fact concerning the historical situation of the biblical authors and the historical context in which the Scripture was written. However, the commentary extensively employs the Alexandrian way of exegesis, which mainly employed an allegorical way of reading the Scripture. The commentary presents allegorical *teregwame* (interpretation) regarding the worthy admission to the Eucharist in accord with the doctrine of the EOTC (as Judaism mainly influences it) and the context of the implied readers as inhabit the historic Ethiopian Orthodox religious context and tradition. The EOTC also has a long-standing historical affinity with the Alexandrian church and shares common doctrine, particularly about Christology. At the same time, the EOTC maintains its unique *Tewahedo* doctrine in contrast to the Antiochene approach, which focuses on the distinction of the two natures in Christ.

practices. O'Keefe and Reno will serve as a helpful guide in analyzing the specific reading techniques employed by the fathers to expound upon the meaning they believed to be essential to scriptural passages.[2] The authors generally categorized the fathers' exegetical approach around typology, allegory, and literary interpretative strategies, recognizing that typology and allegory were often two sides of the same coin when seeking the spiritual sense of the Scripture.

That spiritual interpretation became an essential interpretative strategy for early church fathers because it searched for a particular and distinct hidden meaning. The interpreter's task was to discern and then expound upon that hidden spiritual meaning of the Scripture. In this interpretative strategy, the author's original intent of the Scripture may or may not have had much of an effect on the spiritual meaning of a given text. The fathers who used this spiritual interpretation understood their faith in Christ as the recapitulation of the divine plan because the larger unity of the Scripture had been structured around the figure of Christ, who is the interpretative key to exploring the more significant coherence of the Old and the New Testament.[3] The fathers' Christological reading of the Old Testament was key to their process of searching the deeper spiritual meaning of a given text typologically.[4] Joel Elowsky notes, "Christian writers knew that the exegetical work was not done until the text in some way pointed to Christ, demonstrating that the text is living and active for the Church of all time."[5] Placing

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[2] John O'Keefe and Russell Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (London: Hopkins University Press, 2005), 1−139.

[3] O'Keefe and Russell, *Sanctified Vision*, 69. Joel Elowsky notes, "Christ is the one who brings about the unity between the Old and the New Testaments because he is the focal point, the endpoint, the fullness (sensusplenior) of Scripture to which the letter of Scripture is only a handmaid or servant." See Joel Elowsky, "With a view to the End: Christ in the Ancient Church's Understanding of Scripture," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 70, no.1 (2016): 66.

[4] We shall describe in this chapter the conventional interpretative dichotomy drawn between Antioch and Alexandria specifically regarding their typologically interpretation of biblical texts.

[5] Elowsky, "With a view to the End," 65.

Christ at the heart of their spiritual interpretation allowed the early exegetes to develop a unified reading of the Old Testament and New Testament as well as providing them a means to bring Christian practice and experience into the structured economy of the Scripture and the church, all drawing upon the key and central figure, Jesus Christ.

Both St. Justin Martyr and St. Irenaeus of Lyon employed a spiritual interpretation that focused on a typological interpretation of the Scripture and set a foundation for the early church fathers' exegesis. Furthermore, both appreciated and searched for the spiritual and divine meaning of the Scripture typologically. For example, Justin Martyr (AD 100 –165) was an early Christian apologist and philosopher who placed the account of the Passover in the context of the suffering servant in Isaiah and interpreted it Christologically. He notes, "For the Passover was Christ, who was afterward sacrificed. Isaiah said, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. Furthermore, it is written that on the day of the Passover, you seized Him, and that also during the Passover, you crucified Him. And as the blood of the Passover saved those who were in Egypt, so also the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed."[6] St. Justin often employed various typological interpretations in his exegesis. For example, personal names in the Old Testament such as Adam, David, and Joshua are types of Christ, and they are associated with Christ by biblical authors in the New Testament (See 1 Cor. 15:21−22, and Rom. 5:14).[7]

St. Irenaeus (AD 130–202) was regarded as a Christian martyr in Catholic and Orthodox churches. He, too, understood the coming of Christ typologically as the main event that inaugurates the divine economy because his coming is the fulfillment of the Old Testament

[6] *Dialogue with Trypho*, 111, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Saint Justin Martyr* (110−165). http://www.logoslibrary.org/justin/trypho/index.html

[7] O'Keefe and Russell, *Sanctified Vision*, 75−78.

promises. For him, the interpreter's faith in Christ, which was informed by the Spirit, was of far greater importance than human interpretative tools or information.[8] His emphasis on the interpreter's "sanctified vision" stands against a current perception that one can be an excellent biblical exegete even if the interpreter is not a true believer or does not accept the most central teaching of the Scriptures. Without faith in Christ, and a life lived by the direction of the Spirit and accompanied by a daily desire to be drawn closer to God in faith, personal devotion, and relationship to the Holy Spirit, one could hardly hope to discover the deep spiritual meaning of the text rightly. Fathers like St. Irenaeus understood that interpreting the Scripture is an ongoing process where a faithful interpreter closely observes each detail of the text through faith in Christ and grasps the spiritual meaning while being led by the Spirit.

The Alexandrian school, in particular, made extensive use of the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, focusing on the allegorical interpretative method, which dominated biblical interpretation during the third century when Neoplatonism was emerging and Gnosticism was still in evidence. Alexandria was an important city of learning where both Jewish and Greek scholars came together and discussed religious matters.[9] This school developed a mainly allegorical method of interpretation primarily meant to appropriate the truth of the Scripture into the daily life of Christians. Its exegesis was primarily influenced by Neo-platonic ideologies and Gnosticism, which were already present in the pre-Christian Jewish community of Alexandria, where these ideologies introduced allegorical interpretative strategies, reminiscent of the earlier commentaries on Homer by scholars such as Heraclitus, who were trying to reconcile some of

[8] O'Keefe and Russell, *Sanctified Vision*, 40. St. Irenaeus of Lyons fought against the Gnostic interpretative theory that ripped apart the text from its original and historical context and came up with a different and/or contradictory meaning of the Scripture. Please see more examples and discussions on this from the following article. Elowsky, "With a View to the End," 74−77.

[9] Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation; Sacred Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1950), 19.

the more fantastic aspects of Greek mythology about the gods.[10]

For the early fathers, however, allegorical interpretation was not primarily a method for resolving interpretative difficulties. It was mainly a tool that helped find the theological unity between the two testaments by placing Christ at the center of the fathers' exegesis and focusing on their interpretation of the Old Testament. The use of allegory was most apparent in the works of Origen around the third century. Origen remained an influential representative of the Alexandrian school of exegesis, even after his posthumous condemnation at the fifth ecumenical council. Michael Graves notes, "Origen's legacy in the church is complicated. On the one hand, his writings were fundamental for the development of mainstream Christian theology and exegesis. On the other hand, some of his ideas brought considerable controversy, especially when later admirers of him took certain of his ideas to extremes."[11] Two of Origen's condemned teachings—the mystical preexistence of the human soul and his speculation about the apocatastasis, meaning the universal salvation of all creation—had little to do with his exegetical method widely practiced and followed even by those who condemned him. However, we note this nonetheless since, as Graves noted, it cast a pall for some time on his writings and reputation.[12]

In *On First Principle* 4.2.5, Origen argues that all Scripture has a spiritual sense, and it was normal for him to draw moral lessons from the narrative letter. More significantly, he was persistently driven into discerning the spiritual meaning of a symbolic nature independent of the

[10] O'Keefe and Russell, *Sanctified Vision*, 3−5.

[11] Michael Graves, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 68.

[12] Origen speculated that all human beings would be saved, and even the devil would repent and be saved at the end of the age. For him, all substances, mainly the preexistent soul created by God, would not perish, but ultimately be saved at the final Day of Judgment. This teaching, however, was in his more speculative works and did not necessarily constitute the core of what he taught or wrote.

historical context and flow of the text, especially after noting what seemed like inconsistencies or interpretive problems.[13] These were signposts from God that the text was meant to be read for a higher spiritual meaning. For him, every part of the inspired Scripture had a spiritual sense. Therefore, they must be read allegorically, and "the intent of Scripture lay not at the level of the literary author but at the level of the inspiring Spirit: So, consistency lay not in the text and its wording, but in the deeper spiritual realities to which the text referred.[14] Young notes, "Origen quite explicitly states that, without spiritual awareness, participation in the communion-sacrifice has no effect, the food just passing through the material body like any other."[15] This implies that God's aim in the Bible is to hide secret mysteries which on the surface, seem to offer a plain narrative of events. However, in reality, an allegorical approach to a given text involves searching for an inner vision of what has first to be read in the text. For example, words, word orders, numbers, events, places, etymology, and characters in the Bible all have a literal meaning but also must stand for something else that is much deeper.[16] These "letters" of the text speak for another reality and realm of meaning apart from their historicity. Everything in the text needed to be worthy of the divine author,[17] and if its literal meaning was not worthy, Origen reasoned that there must be a deeper meaning behind the signs on the page. He thought that the real source of the meaning of a given text is found upon discerning what the divine author was trying to

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[13] Karlfried Froehlich, trans., and ed., *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: Sources of Early Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 58−59.

[14] Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997), 184.

[15] Frances M. Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979), 252.

[16] Froehlich, *Sensing the Scriptures*, 51.

[17] See Mark Sheridan, *Language for God in Patristic Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015).

communicate. To twenty-first century eyes, this is a far cry from the historical-grammatical approach, but it would have been popular within mainstream patristic interpretation.

Origen saw that many important figures used allegorical interpretations to communicate the spiritual message. He claims the Apostle Paul was an explicit model of allegorical interpretation,[18] if not Homer of Philo.[19] Origen was following naturally what Apostle Paul was doing. For example, in *On First Principle 4.2.6*, Origen mentions how Paul employed allegory when interpreting Hagar and Sarah, referring to the Old and the New covenant, respectively (Gal. 4:24).[20] Origen cites Paul's allegorical interpretation of Deut. 25:4 *On First Principle* 4.2.6 and notes, "You shall not muzzle the Ox that treads out," showing how Paul allegorically applied the text to his apostolic right in order to be supported by the Christians whom he served (1 Tim. 5:18 and 1 Cor. 9:9).[21] *On First Principle* 4.2.6, Origen found more Pauline models of allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament.[22] For example, the Old Testament rock from which the Israelites drank water in the wilderness (Exod. 17:6, Num. 20:10−12, Ps. 78:15−17, and Ps. 105:41) is allegorically interpreted by Paul referring to Christ. Paul said, "And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4−5). This spiritual rock and a life-giving water is the Christ. Jesus

[18] Froehlich, *Sensing the Scriptures*, 52; and see also Elowsky, "With a view to the End," 68. Dr. Elowsky notes, "The fathers were especially interested in St. Paul's exegesis in Romans 7, 1 Corinthians 10, and 2 Corinthians 3, where Paul places the letter and the spirit in opposition. Romans 3−11, Galatians 4, and the entire book of Hebrews were also fertile ground for seeking out examples of allegory and typology. Paul's exegesis in Ephesians 5:21ff explained the otherwise inexplicable inclusion of the Song of Songs in the canon of Scripture as a metaphor for the union of Christ and the church." For more discussions, please see the article from pp. 68−70.

[19] Philo was one of the early practitioners of allegorical interpretation who was a Jew from Alexandria. He was a contemporary of Paul the Apostle who might have influenced Paul in his allegorical interpretation.

[20] Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*, 60.

[21] Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*, 59.

[22] Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*, 59−60.

himself said in the Gospel of John that he is a life-giving water, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (John 3:37) because "whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). Perhaps the concept of going to Jesus implies a personal relationship with Jesus, who spiritually blesses those who believe in him, over against those who were proud of keeping Mosaic laws and rituals apart from true faith in Christ. Thus, Origen's allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament implies a conviction that the Scripture is written for us, and we must interpret the text in our context without being much influenced by the historical situation of the human author and the historical situation of the first recipients of the Scripture.[23] This is similar to how the EOTC appropriates the text of Scripture as it speaks to the various aspects of life in the church, including participation in the Eucharist.

Didymus the Blind was the last great exponent of the Alexandrian School who was active in the second half of the fourth century. Like Origen, Didymus also believed that "both Old Testament and New Testament under their obscurity, conceal supernatural mysteries; the literal sense (historia) can be a step towards uncovering these, but only the analogical sense can arrive at them through allegory."[24] The influence of the combination of the two people (Philo and Origen) is reflected mainly in Didymus's allegorical interpretation of the Book of Genesis 16:1−2 (Hagar and Sarah), where he typologically applied the two people to the two testaments.[25]

As interpreters in Alexandria followed their allegorical approach to interpretation, a

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[23] Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*, 50.

[24] Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 78.

[25] Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, 78−79.

competing hermeneutical approach emerged out of Antioch. Today this group of exegetes is referred to as the Antiochene exegetes because of their connection to the city of Antioch. The Antiochenes, however, were not a school in a strict sense. Instead, this group simply had a private and personal teaching role and influence upon the church.[26] The Antiochenes emphasized the literal and/or historical sense of the Scripture. They denounced Origen's interpretative approach to the Scripture, which they believed was not faithful to the literal and historical context of the Scripture and violated the narrative flow of the text.[27]

Although the Antiochenes focused on the literal meaning of the Scripture, which functioned as the basis for interpretation, they also understood the Scripture to be the inspired word of God, able to reach beyond the literality of words. For example, Frances Young mentions how Origen of Alexandria was accused of being literalist by Eustathius of Antioch when reading 1 Sam. 28:1−25 about Saul's meeting with a witch woman who is a medium at En-dor. According to Eustathius, Origen was taking the text too literally because the text is telling us allegorically that the devil is using the witch's mind to control Saul. Nevertheless, for Origen, the witch is actually bringing Samuel back from the dead, and it should be understood as an actual historical occurrence.[28]

The historical reference is not the end of the story, and that is why the early exegetes from

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[26] See Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, 67. The city of Antioch was the center of learning, especially in rhetoric, and the tradition of paganism was also strong in that city. It also fostered a remarkable group of Christian thinkers and ascetics frequently grouped and named Antiochene School.

[27] According to Frances Young, "neither literalism nor an interest in history stimulated the Antiochene reaction against Origenist allegory, but rather a different approach to finding meaning in literature which had its background in the rhetorical schools." See Frances M. Young, "The Rhetorical Schools and Their Influence on Patristic Exegesis." In *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honor of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 193.

[28] See Young, "Rhetorical Schools," 189, and 194−95. Thus, the Antiochene verses Alexandrian exegetical dichotomy falls short to consistently explain itself, especially when one looks at a couple of representatives from each school, as we have indicated above.

both schools tried to connect ancient events to their context and practices. O'Keefe and Russell note, "For Irenaeus and the patristic tradition in general, the Bible was not a perfect historical record. Scripture was, for them, the orienting, luminous center of a highly varied and complex reality shaped by divine providence. It was true not by virtue successfully or accurately representing any one event or part of this divinely ordained reality. Rather, the truth rested in the Scripture's power to illuminate and disclose the order and the pattern of all things."[29] For example, Eusebius was a historical exegete who represented an essential link between the allegorical and literal interpretation of the Scripture.[30] Although he exclusively focused on the literal interpretation of the Scripture, even some of the readings such as the ram in Gen. 22:13 and the bitter water of the Marah in Exod. 15:22 were a symbol of Christ and the cross.[31]

A fellow African brother, St. Augustine also emphasized the spiritual sense of the Scripture, as for him the "historical sense [of the Scripture] is the sacrament of the spiritual."[32] This implies that the historical sense of the Scripture leads analogically to its spiritual sense; the letter alone kills, especially when the Scripture is read without awareness of its spiritual senses. De Margerie notes, "Augustine does not seem to have taken an interest in the re-reading of the biblical text within the economy of the Old covenant, but he did devote attention to the reinterpretation of Old Testament books in the context of the New Dispensation, after the death of the apostles."[33] Besides, Augustine understood the plurality of the scriptural meaning because

[29] O'Keefe and Russell, *Sanctified Vision*, 11.

[30] Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, 55−63.

[31] Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, 63.

[32] Da Margerie, *History of Exegesis*, 17.

[33] De Margerie, *History of Exegesis*, 58.

the meaning of the text cannot be solely limited to the humanly intended historical meaning.[34] The Scripture is both divine and human, and the Holy Spirit also intends meanings beyond the intention of the human author to communicate to readers of different circumstances and times.[35]

In his book *Participatory Biblical Exegesis*, Matthew Levering argues that the Modern Christian's biblical interpretation has relied entirely on historical-critical methods that undermine God's essential divine and spiritual realities central to the patristic fathers' exegesis of the Scripture. Thus, Levering intends to establish the valuable finds of historical-critical methodology for Christian interpretation by proposing a broader understanding of history, including a 'participatory' dimension of biblical interpretation. He mainly argues that for one "to enter into the realities taught in the biblical texts [it] requires not only linear-historical tools (archeology, philosophy, and others) but also, and indeed primarily, participatory tools—doctrine and practice—by which the exegete enters fully into the biblical world."[36] However, we argue that participation must be realized by proclamation of the Word and Sacrament and faith alone not just by a tool. Levering is correct that history is not merely linear-historical but also participatory, insofar as the idea of participatory is centered around proclamation and faith alone. Faith and practice should be combined and the leading of the divine Spirit through the Word and Sacrament must be apparent. Levering is right that there should be an effort to go beyond the

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[34] De Margerie, *History of Exegesis*, 58−59.

[35] Tarmo Toom, *Patristic Theories of Biblical Interpretation: The Latin Fathers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2016), 97. Augustine also talked about the necessity of charity when interpreting Scripture. For him, exegetes are required to follow the commandment of love in carrying out their interpretative task because "charity must be at once the source, the object and the purpose of exegesis, which should obey the most fundamental of all divine commands." See De Margerie, *History of Exegesis*, 20−22.

[36] Matthew Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis: A Theology of Biblical Interpretation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2008), 2. Levering's work invites Christians to embrace and rethink an authentically Christian hermeneutical basis without discarding all other useful critical tools but at the same time keeps the divine realities central to the task of interpretation. In other words, the participatory biblical exegesis is as equally crucial as linear historical exegesis.

linear-historical dynamics of a given text to account for the realities beyond the words.[37] This reality flows from theoretical analysis of the Scripture and a life lived by faith in the Spirit as expressed in true proclamation and faith alone.

The modern critical method also thinks that the Alexandrian Father's interpretation of the Scripture disregarded the historical sense of the Scripture. For them Origen never really understood the Bible because he approached history loosely. Critics question whether the fathers were too subjective and uncontrolled in their constant bringing of various texts together, having no regard for context or any objective approach for doing so. However, the fathers were very concerned with following a rule of faith that provided an objective means for seeking truth in addition to being led by the Spirit of God. Their belief in the inspiration of the entire Scripture was persistent, and they never questioned the historical events in the Scripture. They also believed that everything was held together and proceeded according to God's eternal and divine economy, which received its fulfillment on the Cross of Christ at Calvary.

Therefore, the early church fathers from both schools neither regarded the historical events as the only foundation to know the meaning of the Scripture nor underestimated the need to study the historical references in the text. The fathers were serious about studying and discussing historical details with their contemporaries from other religious groups. For example, Elowsky notes that some of the fathers "often consulted with Jewish exegetes to understand details of the text"[38] so that they may grasp the text's complete and correct historical meaning before exploring the deeper spiritual meaning derived from the text. The early Father's effort in reading the Scripture in its original language and historical context helped them study the text more

[37] Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis*, 6−12.

[38] Elowsky, "With a View to the End," 65.

closely, leading them to love and appreciate it to a greater extent. Therefore, the idea that Scripture refers to historical events was never denied by most fathers who have used allegory and/or typology in their exegesis of the Scripture. They believed that determining the historical meaning was only the first step in delving into the more profound riches of Scripture.

Most of the church fathers from the Alexandrian and Antiochene groups utilized allegorical and literal approaches in their interpretation of Scripture, especially to interpret the Old Testament Christologically.[39] The Antiochene fathers' search for the literal meaning of Scripture was perhaps, in some ways, a more rigorous effort at bridging the spiritual and historical approaches to biblical interpretation, though this can also be found in interpreters such as Origen. The Antiochene spiritual hermeneutic, known as *theoria* (fuller/more profound sense), lies at the center of their concern for a unified reading of the historical and Christological meanings of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Their application of *theoria* in biblical exegesis required them to find the spiritual interpretation, which was not to be confused with what they saw as an unprecedented allegorical interpretation by Alexandrian exegetes that were not connected to the historical accounts in the Scripture. However, the antagonism between the two ancient schools belies the fact that Antiochene exegesis was not solely literalist, nor was Alexandrian exegesis solely allegorical.[40] For example, the Antiochenes such as Theodore of Mopsuestia searched for the historical situation of the Scripture like Eusebius; however, primarily not just for the sake of historicity but rather to prevent further allegorizing of the text that would deny the reality of

[39] De Lubac notes, "He who faithfully esteems history, allegory, tropology, and anagogy faithfully embraces both the Old Testament and the New Testament." The combined reading of the Scripture will help Christians today to appreciate how both testaments are united into a single body of doctrine because of the Cross of Christ. See De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 101 and 239.

[40] Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, 67−68.

history in the Scripture.[41]

In sum, the difficulty with allegorical interpretation from the Antiochene point of view is that it functions with a "mode of thinking in which the forms of thought used are detachable and changeable, and can be rationalized only when assimilated to other forms of thought that do not arise on the same ground and are not necessarily related to the subject in question."[42] However, most of the early church fathers from both schools used allegorical or typological and literal interpretative approaches in order to discern the deeper and fuller spiritual meaning of the Scriptures. Although one can find emphases on either side of their interpretive approaches, most of the Father's interpretations did not contradict the biblical history and the overall divine and spiritual message of salvation in the Scripture. The historical sense of the Scriptures provides the foundation for the allegorical. It offers a possible reading of Scripture that is historically honest but seeks to read Scripture in a broader context that is made alive through the resurrection of Christ and the works of the Holy Spirit.[43] In other words, the historical sense of the Scripture ought to be illuminated by the spiritual sense. The historically honest reading of Scripture seeks a broader context, which is made alive through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the works of the Holy Spirit.

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[41] See also Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 180−82. Frances Young correctly notes that Theodore of Mopsuestia was one of the best-known hermeneutical representatives of the School of Antioch, highlighting the fact that Pauline uses of allegory in the Book of Galatians did not eliminate the historia; instead, Paul believed that his allegorical interpretation was prefigured in the historia, and Theodore's effort to typologically read Messianic Passages in Psalms was mostly to reinterpret them historically. See also Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, 21.

[42] Thomas Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 35.

[43] Henri De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1:97−100. Torrance correctly concludes that "Both elements demand attention, the most diligent search for hidden meanings [allegory], and the preservation of those on the surface [literal] which cannot be challenged." Torrance, *Divine Meaning*, 25.

Re-reading the Old Testament in the New Testament

Over the course of Christian history, it is essential to understand that Christianity did not come to abolish Judaism; instead, in a sense, it came to become the fulfillment of Judaism. Jesus introduced himself as destroying nothing in the Law and the prophets; instead, he came to fulfill everything spoken about the Messiah in the Old Testament (Matt. 5:17−18). The early church fathers relied remarkably on the Old Testament when reading, learning, interpreting, preaching, and following Jesus under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They used the Old Testament texts extensively in their writings and relied heavily on the Septuagint (LXX) translation when reading Jesus who was prefigured and predicted as the מָשִׁיחַ.

The fathers read the Old Testament as affirming the Gospel, the deity of Jesus, his ministry, his plan of salvation, and many other aspects of his life and ministry. They believed Jesus himself had permitted them to do so in his discussion with the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:25−27) as well as in his debates with the Jewish leaders (John. 5:39). They never questioned that the Old Testament held a central position in the church's life because of its relation to the New Testament, even though there were few in their days, like Marcion, who rejected the Old Testament altogether.[44] Instead, in the words of the 20th-century scholar Karl Barth, the fathers believed that "The New Testament is concealed within the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is revealed by the New Testament."[45] The New Testament itself affirms this fact. For example, when we read the New Testament, we read words such as "in accordance with the Scriptures" or "as it is written," which, of course, are appealing to the truth of the Old Testament. Therefore, the fathers saw Scripture appealing to Scripture, implying the hermeneutical principle

[44] Ronald E. Heine, *Reading the Old Testament with the Ancient Church: Exploring the Formation of Early Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 29 and 50.

[45] Heine, *Reading the Old Testament*, 27.

that Scripture interprets Scripture because it guides and gives an understanding of how to interpret the New Testament in light of the Old Testament or vice versa.

Christ was prefigured in the Mosaic Law, the Writings, and the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, making them fundamental for Christian theology. The fathers believed that the New Testament could only be adequately understood by considering a correct and profound theological reading of the Old Testament.[46] Nowhere is this more evident than in the New Testament Book of Hebrews, which interprets the sacrificial system of the Old Testament in terms of its fulfillment in Christ, the Great High Priest. Thus, we now turn our attention to analyzing how the author of the Book of Hebrews interpreted Christ's crucifixion in light of the Old Testament sacrifice, setting a pattern of interpretation that would be taken up by the early fathers of the church in their teaching on the Eucharist. In a later chapter we shall see how much of this informs the EOTC's teaching and practice concerning the Eucharist.

Sacrifice in the Book of Hebrews

Exploring the Book of Hebrews for this study is essential because it interprets the concept of Jewish sacrifices in light of Jesus' sacrifice more extensively and typologically than the other New Testament books. The synoptic gospels and the epistles provide the narrative of the sacrifice and explore some of these theological implications. Nevertheless, Hebrews spells out the theological and typological implications of his sacrifice on the Cross in particular. Gustaf Aulen puts it this way: "His [Christ's] death is a part of a larger context; it is the climax and the conclusion of his total service."[47] In relation to the motive of the Suffering Servant of the Lord in

[46] Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays, *The Art of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 20.

[47] Gustaf Aulen, and Eric H. Wahlstrom, *Eucharist and Sacrifice* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1958), 146−47. Aulen correctly notes, "His [Christ's] death is a part of a larger context; it is the climax and the conclusion of his total service." See also Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 261.

the Book of Isaiah 53, Christ's sacrificial life is an entire journey, which began at the time of his incarnation. Again, Aulen notes, "In reality, his [Christ's] act of sacrifice extends back into the heavenly world; incarnation and sacrifice are inseparably connected."[48]

The Old Testament had various types of sacrificial systems and theology that the early church tapped into for different aspects of their theology. The Book of Hebrews' discussion of the Old Testament sacrifice is a general one that encompasses all forms of sacrifices such as sin offering, the guilt offering, a burnt offering, and peace offering. Other than the flesh of burnt offering, which was entirely burned outside of the camp and consumed by God, all other forms of flesh sacrifices were consumed by God's people as a consecrated and exceptional food that was eaten with a spirit of thanksgiving.[49] The eating of the food ultimately establishes communion with God and with each other. The poor in particular were given the privilege of being nourished from the offering after they became clean to eat the sacrificial flesh. Specifically, peace offering requires a degree of cleanness and holiness before the laity consumes it.[50] The Old Testament worship directives always involved sacred eating and drinking, which Christians considered to be in the background of the intended meaning and implication of the sacrifice of the Eucharist fulfilled in Christ, a sacrifice which sets the former priesthood and sacrifices aside.

The theme of sacrifice and the concept of Eucharist, even though the term 'Eucharist' is not explicitly stated in the Book of Hebrews, is foundational and even decisive in understanding the sacrament of the Eucharist and comprehending the sharing of God's gifts of salvation through

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[48] Aulen, and Eric, *Eucharist and Sacrifice*, 148.

[49] Daniel J. Brege, *Eating God's Sacrifice: The Lord's Supper Portrayed in Old Testament Sacrifice* (Decatur, IN: Daniel J. Brege, 2009), 24.

[50] Brege, *Eating God's Sacrifice*, 25.

the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice.[51] In other words, the Eucharist as a cultic anticipation of Christ's death remains very much in the background of the epistle. Daly notes, "The dominant sacrificial idea of the whole letter is that of Christ seen as the fulfiller and the fulfillment of the Old Testament cult, particularly the sacrifice for sin."[52]

The writer of Hebrews is much interested in detailing how Christ fulfilled the highest priestly and cultic function of the Jewish sacrifices, being both the High Priest and, at the same time, the sacrificial victim. This is evident in the text, "Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a High Priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus, it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer" (Heb. 8:1−3). After two chapters, the author says, "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;" therefore, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22).

Christ's saving acts parallel the tasks of the high priest in the order of the Levitical priesthood. The author of Hebrews provides a detailed presentation of the high priest's function in entering the holy places of the tabernacle. As but one example: "For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the presence. It is called

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[51] Daniel Brege states some possible reasons the term Eucharist is not mentioned in the Book of Hebrews. He mentioned some of the reasons: first, it was common to mature Jewish audience to quickly appropriate the connection to the Eucharist that he needed not to write the specific word. Second, it could be because of the "Esoteric attitude of the early Christian community," which he calls "discipline of the secret." Please see more on Brege, *Eating God's Sacrifice*, 371−74; and see Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 136. Specifically, Jeremias notes, "The Conspicuous absence of any reference to the Eucharist in the list of subjects taught to beginners in the faith (Heb. 6:1f) is probably to be explained by the consideration that the Eucharistic doctrine belonged to those elements which were reserved to the mature." See on page 134.

[52] Robert J. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press. 1978), 263.

the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place" (Heb. 9:2−3). In the Old Testament, on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), the high priest entered the holiest place behind the second curtain to sprinkle the blood of the bull and the goat before the mercy seat. On this day alone, the high priest made atonement for the holy place, for himself and his household, and all the assembly of Israel (Lev. 16:16−17). The Jewish Yom Kipper, commonly known as the Day of Atonement, became the climax of those other daily sacrifices in the Temple. A bull was sacrificed on behalf of the priest as a sin-offering, while a goat was sacrificed as a sin-offering for the people. Another scapegoat was brought to the priest so that the priest might lay his hands upon it and transfer all the people's sins. The scapegoat carried peoples' sins, and it was not sacrificed or consumed but driven out into the desert.[53]

St. Chrysostom helps us see the typology operative here. In his homily on Hebrews, he comments, "The types, therefore, contain the figure only, not the power; just as in images, the image has the figure of the man, not the power. So that the reality and the type have [somewhat] in common with one another. For the figure exists equally in both, but not the power."[54] The old procedure of animal sacrifices could not perfect the conscience of the worshipers (See Heb. 10:4, 11, and Cf. also 7:11, 9:9), and that is why the sacrifice had to be repeated every year (Heb. 10:1). However, Jesus entered not the holy of holies, but also the eternal sanctuary before the presence of God, sitting before the divine throne of grace. He is the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, who offers his own blood signifying in himself the end and fulfillment of the Old Testament priesthood. Daly notes, "The author [of Hebrews] uses this Melchizedek tradition to support his main thesis of the inadequacy of the old covenant and the perfection of

[53] See further explanation on this on Young, *Use of Sacrificial Ideas*, 47−50.

[54] "St. Chrysostom's Homily 17 on Hebrews 10:2−9."

the new."[55] The high priestly intercession of the Christ on behalf of sinners is a continuous, heavenly, and eternal reality, which is done once for all.[56]

For all the types of animal sacrifices offered on the tabernacle altar, the blood was the atoning component, pointing to the greater atoning blood of Christ. Just as the Old Testament high priest enters the holy of holies carrying the blood of an animal as a sacrifice to be offered first on behalf of himself and then the people (Lev. 16:1−19), Christ enters the holy of holies shedding his innocent blood as a ransom for many. The old sacrifice then dealt only with food and drink and various washings and regulations for the body that were imposed until the fulfillment of the covenant when we are sanctified through the offering of Christ's body (Heb. 10:9−10). The guilt of sin could only be removed entirely at the cost of the blood from the life laid down in Christ. Thus, Jesus obtained an excellent ministry far greater than the Levitical priests because "Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better since it is enacted on better promises" (Heb. 8:6).

Unlike the Old Testament priests, Christ did not need to offer sacrifice for himself (Heb. 7:27). What the Old Testament sacrifice could not purify, i.e., the human conscience, the New Testament sacrifice, which is far greater than the animal blood (Heb. 10:18), purifies, and the Holy Spirit empowers the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Hebrews says that the sacrifice of Christ have absolute power "to perfect (τελειῶσαι) the conscience of the worshiper" (Heb. 9:9 and see also Heb. 9:13−14). For Chrysostom, "The New [sacrifice] then has not simply caused

[55] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 265.

[56] While some argue that Christ's high priestly ministry was effective just from the time of his glorification, the EOTC rejects the idea that Christ holds a continuous, heavenly, and eternal high priestly service. For the EOTC, Christ's high priestly service was completed during his earthly ministry before his glorification.

the old to cease, but because it was no longer useful, it had grown outdated."[57]

The picture of animal sacrifice in the Old Testament is then a type of Christ's sacrifice in the Eucharist, foreshadowing the only way of salvation, which is achieved through the sacrificial death of Christ. Jesus Christ is the High Priest who offered himself to God for the sake of sinners, and this is evident in Hebrews and the use of the ὑπὲρ-formula (the "for you" formula) in the Eucharistic words of institution.[58] The old sacrificial system, as detailed in Leviticus and reinterpreted typologically in Hebrews, is perfectly completed in Christ's sacrifice.[59] Now, when the faithful receive the blood of Christ, it not only brings life but also gives atonement for sin because Christ's moral innocence and his shed blood surpassed the powerlessness of the animal sacrifice, which was a sacrifice that could perfectly purify neither the high priest nor the people.

The blood of the covenant stated in the Book of Exodus 24 was just a sign of the covenant-sealing sign, and Hebrews associates that covenant sealing with purification and atonement achieved through the Messiah.[60] The idea of sacrifice in Hebrews provides the meaning of Christ's redemptive act. The implication is that the Jewish sacrificial cult was not completely effective in pardoning sin for eternity because the Jewish cultic sacrifice had a temporary effect that required repetition (Heb. 7:27). However, the Book of Hebrews confirms that the new and

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[57] "St. Chrysostom's Homily 14 on Hebrews 8:7."

[58] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 273−74.

[59] Francis Young concludes that Christ's sacrifice fulfilled communion-sacrifice, gift-sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and a sin-offering. Besides, Christ's sacrifice typologically fulfilled the Passover sacrifice and the covenant sacrifice. See Young, *Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers*, 240.

[60] Christ's priestly work in relation to the peace offering is frequently associated with the theme of the covenant. See more on William Lane, *A Call to Commitment* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985), 139−40. Jeremiah's prophecy about the new covenant combines the sin offering and the peace offering with God's new covenant granted to us through the sacrifice of the Christ (Heb. 8:7−13 and compare with Exod. 24: 5−11). Hebrews 9:18 says that "Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood," and the eating and drinking followed the dashing of the blood. (Please see Exod. 24:11). In the old covenant, Moses sprinkled the blood upon the people, but Christ let his people drink the blood of the new covenant. Jesus said, "This is the blood of the (new) Covenant."

perfect antitype is much more superior to the type because God himself actively participated in bringing that true and prime sacrifice to fruition.

Distinct from the effects of the Old Testament Jewish sacrifice, partaking of the Eucharist involves both dying to the old Adam and walking in the newness of life. When the living Lord meets his people in the Eucharistic sacrifice, He has already actualized the sacrifice anew in the gift of the consecrated bread and wine, and partakers are spiritually participating in the life and death of the Christ and the life-giving power of his resurrection. Finally, the author of Hebrews connects the sacrificial death of Christ with the spiritual sacrifice that Christians are to offer God. In chapter 13, he exhorts that Christians ought to offer their lives as sacrifices pleasing to God. He notes, "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28−29). The very purpose of the sacrifice of Christ is presented as the sacrifice that enables a believer to offer his life in gratitude to God as a kind of sacrifice. The author notes, "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name." and he goes on to qualify what that meant saying, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (Heb. 13:15−16). In the sacrificial death of Christ, believers are exhorted to take part in offering their lives as a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God. The Christian life is a life lived in the likeness of the incarnate, crucified, and risen Christ, which is reflected through the believer's everyday life in their relationship to God and their neighbors. The author says, "Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby, and some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body" (Heb. 13:1−3).

Another contrast the writer to the Hebrews makes is that the Old Testament sacrifice was unable to save those who made sacrifices apart from the faith, which trusts in the anticipated sacrifice of the Messiah. God's economy of salvation has a consistent means to grant that salvation to all human beings of all ages. This implies that God did not order two different means of atonement and salvation, one, through the sacrifice of an animal in the Old Testament, and the other through the sacrifice of Christ in the New Testament. Instead, the old covenant sacrifices profoundly functioned as a shadow of the perfect sacrifice, pointing to the actual sacrifice in Christ. The Book of Hebrews clarifies that the Old Testament type of sacrifice ceases to have much value apart from its newly revealed meaning. Now the perfect sacrifice has come, and this Lamb of the sacrifice has obtained eternal redemption and has granted it to all who believe in him through the Eucharist. In the new covenant believers come "to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (Heb. 12:24).

Thus, the typological interpretation employed in Hebrews emphasizes the interpretive thought over the literal thought, affirming that the type ceases to have much value apart from its newly fulfilled meaning. The presence of Christ in the bread and wine is the compelling presence of Christ's sacrifice. Christ now accomplishes what sacrifice was thought to accomplish in the former covenant, and this holy sacrifice is offered to the faithful in the Lord's Supper. By eating and drinking the body and blood of the Lord, the faithful participate in the redeeming power of the Messiah's death and resurrection, which calls them to live a life worthy of that true sacrifice by doing good and being generous to the poor.

Eucharist as a Sacrifice

The Jewish religion highly influenced the early Christians and their liturgical institutions,

including their book (the Septuagint), culture, and tradition. Jesus himself and his disciples were of Jewish origin, and therefore Christianity was not considered a new religion without origin, but rather a new religious sect that came out of Judaism,[61] although the Romans still referred to Christianity as a new religion. Roman religion, too, was centered around sacrifice. As McGowan points out, "The centrality of the sacrifice for ancient Mediterranean society is hard to exaggerate."[62] However, while Christianity saw some aspects of its liturgical sacrifice in continuity with Israel, there was no such continuity with the pagan sacrifices of the day, which were simply idolatry. Enrico Mazza has analyzed the origin of the Jewish ritual sacrifice and liturgy, placing the Christian liturgy of the Eucharist entirely with this context. His analysis directs us primarily to the concept of Jewish sacrifices, which figures prominently in the Eucharist as the Sacrifice of the New Covenant.

The Jewish prayer conducted at a meal is related to sacrifice. Moses instituted the prayer to give thanks to Yahweh. He instructed how Israel was to pray after they had consumed a meal saying, "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you" (Deut. 8:10). The Jewish celebrated God with a meal because He had already given them food and the Promised Land as their inheritance. Mazza notes, "It was the Deuteronomic reform that introduced the practice of the nonreligious slaughter of animals; the result was a clear differentiation between sacrifice with its sacred meal and the "secular" meal, taken solely for nourishment."[63] This reform gave rise to the special liturgy of the Jewish ritual

[61] The Scripture also tells us that Christians are the new Israel and lets us know the radical character of the Gospel in forming new covenant people. See 1 Pet. 2:10 and Rom. 9:1−13.

[62] Brian A. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practice in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2014), 32.

[63] Mazza, "Eucharist in the First Four Centuries," *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. 3, ed Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1997), 20n12.

and religious meal, which was traced back to the divine command given by Moses (Deut. 8:10). Since the meal was considered to be the gift of God, it had a religious character when consecrated with prayer and thanksgiving as God's provision for his people. This prayer is called the Birkat ha-Mazon, a prayer most often offered at the Passover meal and in the rite of communion sacrifice, the Eucharistic sacrifice.[64] In praying the Birkat ha-Mazon at every meal, "the devout Jew celebrates and remembers the gift of the land that is a pledge of the covenant."[65] Mazza combines the Jewish liturgy of morning and Evening Prayer with the celebration of the Jewish ritual meal. For him, "Both the meal and the morning and evening prayers were linked to the sacrifices that were offered, morning and evening, in the Jerusalem temple; the typological method ensured that the prayers of the Therapeutae were a participation in the nature of the temple sacrifices."[66] Mazza concludes that the Birkat ha-Mazon prayer was adopted into the Christian liturgy and tradition of the Lord's Supper.[67] The cultic and sacrificial character of the Jewish Morning Prayer and ritual meal, which is linked to the Old Testament sacrifices, has been adapted into the prayer of the Christian Eucharist liturgy.

Moreover, in the church's history, the Eucharist is placed in the context of the paschal texts, connecting the practice to the redemptive suffering of Jesus. The tradition that the Lord's Supper is the Christian Passover meal implies that the Jewish Passover was a type of the Eucharist in that tit was a thankful celebration of God's deliverance from sin and death with the

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[64] Mazza, "Eucharist in the First Four Centuries," 20. See Young, *Use of Sacrificial Ideas*, 256−58.

[65] Mazza, "Eucharist in the First Four Centuries," 21.

[66] Mazza, "Eucharist in the First Four Centuries," 31−32. Therapeutae (is a Latin word derived from the Greek word Θεραπευταί and it means "healers") were a Jewish sect that existed in Alexandria and other parts of the Diaspora of Hellenistic Judaism towards the final years of the Second Temple period (AD 70) used the term in relation temple sacrifices.

[67] Mazza, "Eucharist in the First Four Centuries," 20; and see Young, *Use of Sacrificial Ideas*, 256−58.

anticipation of the future eschatological deliverance at the second coming of Jesus. The Eucharist was instituted to give believers the fullness of that entire Old Testament history of salvation, which has now been fulfilled in Christ as a fulfillment of the Jewish Passover.[68] The prefigured Old Testament Passover would be interpreted typologically by the church fathers who described the Eucharist often in terms of the Pascha, as we shall see in what follows from the writings of the Didache, Justin Martyr, and the works of Melito of Sardis.

The Didache is an early Christian teaching document which is known as the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. In this earliest document, which was probably contemporary with the earliest of New Testament documents, most of the wording of blessings, graces, and the Eucharistic prayers has Jewish content and tone, especially chapters 9, 10, and 14, which contains a Passover sacrificial allusion from the Book of Exodus. In Exod. 12, God commanded Israel that the Jews remember the Exodus event with a Seder supper each year during the annual remembrance of the Passover event. In this case, the wine would represent the blood of the Lamb that was shed and put on each door. The unleavened bread would represent God's provision for the journey out of slavery into freedom for the nation of Israel by providing the Israelites the flesh of the Lamb for them to eat as they prepared for the journey into the wilderness as they escaped from slavery in Egypt.

The Eucharistic reference by the early Christians in relation to Mal. 1:10−11, 14 is emphasized in the Didache14.1 and 3, showing its sacrificial character. It notes, "And on the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. For this sacrifice it is that was spoken of by

[68] The three main Jewish elements of the sacrifice which are fulfilled in the sacrifice of Jesus as an actualization of the old sacrifice are: "the sacrificial character of the prayer of thanksgiving, the cultic character of the Eucharistic celebration, and the use of Malachi 1:11 as an account of the institution of the sacrifice and worship that are brought to fulfillment in the Eucharist." See Mazza, "Eucharist in the First Four Centuries," 32.

the Lord."[69] Didache 14 emphasizes the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist when requiring purity before participation. This sacrificial meal requires moral purity, just as participation in the Old Testament sacrifice requires ritual purity. At times, the Eucharist was even called the Pascha, which means the Passover or Passover Lamb, and this Paschal context of the gospel tradition has clear sacrificial implications.[70] Daly concluded that the Christian Eucharist came to be looked upon in the early church as the new Pasch, and "the Jewish Passover, as it was understood at the time of Christ, provides not merely the background but the very foundation of Christian soteriology."[71] The substitutionary understanding concerning Jesus as the paschal Lamb was not new for the early Christians; instead, it is explicitly stated in biblical passages such as 1 Cor. 5:7 and Rom. 6 that have a strong Paschal echo. Besides, all-important past events were considered Paschal events, and participation in that Paschal rite assured the benefits of salvation. The eschatological end-event was also looked forward to as a Paschal event. It is in this background that the Didache refers to Christ as a Paschal sacrifice given for sinners.

Moreover, in chapters 9 and 10 of the Didache, there are instructions for observing the Eucharist as well as prayers of thanksgiving for the Eucharist. The prayers are unusual insofar as they do not refer to the death of Jesus but the story of the feeding of the five thousand.[72] John introduces the narrative of the feeding of five thousand in his Gospel with a specific reference to the Passover (John 6:4), and Jesus referred to himself as true bread which came down from

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[69] The whole Didache14 speaks of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. Justin sees the Eucharist as a pure sacrifice that fulfills Malachi's prophecy. See Justin, *First Apology* 65−67; and *Justin Dialogue with Trypho* 41.1−3 and 117. 14.

[70] Rene Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, trans., by Stephen Bann and Michel Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 158−59.

[71] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 207. See chapter VI (pp. 196−207) for how the the early church came to look upon the Eucharist as the new Paschal sacrifice.

[72] Please compare *Didache* 9:4 with John 6:10−13.

heaven (John 6:33−35). The early fathers saw this text as Eucharistic, and the crucified Lord is identified as the bread and the sacrificial Lamb.[73] Christ is the true bread which is both the bread of the Passover meal (John 6:51−57) and the manna that the Israelites ate in the wilderness wanderings. The bread continues to be the focus of the Lord's Supper, along with the wine, and the association of the Eucharist with the deliverance of historic Passover is still central to the Christian teaching.[74]

St. Justin Martyr referred to the Lamb sacrificed at Passover as a type of the Christ that superseded all other forms of Old Testament sacrificial rites, emphasizing the importance of the Paschal aspect of the celebration of the Eucharist.[75] Justin notes, "For the Passover was Christ, who was afterward sacrificed, as also Isaiah said, 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter' (Isa. 53)."[76] For Justin, the mystery of the Lamb, which God ordered to be sacrificed for the Passover, was a type of Christ, and "whenever Justin tends to be more specific about the sacrifice, he is speaking of the Eucharist."[77] Thus, Justin sees Christ's death as a sacrificial one who is both the Christian Paschal lamb and the sin offering of the new dispensation.[78]

Melito of Sardis placed the sacrificial death of Christ in the context of the Old Testament

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[73] Whether John's text should be seen as Eucharistic text or not is controversial among biblical scholars. For example, Martin Luther did not see John 6 as Eucharist text in his debates with Zwingli.

[74] Melito of Sardis was correct when he wrote *On Pascha* 2, "The mystery of the Passover is new and old, eternal and provisional, perishable and imperishable, mortal and immortal." See Melito and Alistair C. Stewart, *On Pascha: With the Fragments of Melito and other Material Related to the Quartodecimans* (Crestwood, St. Vladimir's Seminary, 2001), 37. Hereafter this source is cited as Melito, *On Pascha*.

[75] Young, *Use of Sacrificial Ideas*, 258.

[76] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 111.3 and 117; *First Apology* 65−66; and see Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 329.

[77] Robert Daly*, Christian Sacrifice: The Judea-Christian Background before Origen* (Darton: Longman and Todd, 1978), 90 and 328−38, and see also Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 40.1.

[78] Justin presented the service of sharing the meal in the context of the second-century Christian liturgy and what happened on Sunday meetings during the sharing of the Lord's Supper as the sacrificial meal given to sinners. For further descriptions, please refer to Justin's *First Apology* 67.

Pascha. During his time, the early Asian church understood the interplay between the Passion of Jesus Christ and the deliverance history of the Old Testament. *On Pascha* is the liturgical text of the Seder and a second-century homily of Melito, bishop of Sardis, written in Asian Minor. Stewart Sykes argues that "Peri Pascha itself is the liturgical text of the Seder, on the basis that it is formally a Haggadah, and so like the Jewish Haggadah belongs in a liturgical setting, on the basis that it is commemorative in intent, as is the paschal liturgy as a whole, since its shape is directed by liturgical needs."[79] Melito's typological interpretative strategy is portrayed in his association of the Pascha and the salvation history accomplished in Jesus.

In Melito's *On Pascha*, the components of the mystery of the Passover go back to the history of the creation of humankind and the incident of the fall, which brought sin and the consequence that sin brought upon the entire creation. God promised to reverse the condition of fallen humankind through Christ's suffering and his sacrificial death as a substitute for sinners. Deliverance of humankind through Christ's death becomes the central figure of the paschal event. After Melito finished the historic redemption narrative in the Old Testament, he discussed it typologically to show how the Pascha is the fulfillment of prophecy spoken in the Old Testament and how the fulfillment in the Lord's Pascha annulled former rite.[80]

Melito bound *On Pascha's* pattern to the liturgical action of the Quartodeciman.[81] Pascha,

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[79]Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *The Lamb's High Feast: Melito, Peri Pascha and the Quartodeciman Paschal Liturgy at Sardis (*Leiden: Brill, 1998), 142.

[80] Melito, *On Pascha* 17.

[81] Some Christian sects in Asia Minor continued to follow some Jewish customs and observed the annual Passover feast on the 14th of Nisan. This group of Christians was called Quartodecimans (meaning the 'fourteeners'). They observed a Christianized Passover feast according to the Jewish calendar, rather than on most Christians' practice on Sunday. For further discussions on this, please read Lyn Cohick, "Melito of Sardis's Peri Pascha and Its Israel," *Harvard Theological Review* 91, no. 4 (1998): 354. Most of the Christians' Practice the Divine service on Sunday. St. Justin witnessed on his *First Apology* 67 and noted, "For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration."

which embraced "both... Good Friday and ... Easter, for in keeping with the Johannine tradition according to which the crucifixion was itself the manifestation of God's glory. In keeping with the Jewish liturgical tradition of a single celebration of the Passover, the Pascha was a single festival which commemorated both the passion and the resurrection."[82] Just as the Jews anticipated the coming of the Messiah on Passover night, Christians too believed that the Messiah came to them in the celebration of the Pascha, which had an eschatological tone pointing to the Lord's final return. Thus, Melito's message in *On Pascha* is intended to commemorate and present the work of God in a sacramental sense. This means that Jesus is the Passover of our salvation made known to humankind by sharing the broken bread and bloodshed for our salvation.

On Pascha does not have a direct reference to the gift of the Eucharist. Nevertheless, Melito wanted to emphasize that the death of the Lord is the same as the death of the Passover lambs and a substitute for the death of the Passover lambs was the fulfillment of the Pascha. The writer uses historical typology extensively to show us how the events of the Old Testament are typified in the New Testament to show us the close tie between the Old Testament liberation celebrated through the Passover meal and the New Testament salvation achieved through the sacrifice of the Lord as celebrated and shared in the Eucharist. Stewart notes, "Melito has a theory of typology according to which the type, say the first Passover, precedes the reality, the salvation worked by Jesus, which fulfills it."[83] He notes concerning *On Pascha* 6, "So the slaughter of the sheep, and the sacrificial procession of the blood, and the writing of the Law encompasses Christ, on whose account everything in the previous law took place, though better

[82] Melito, *On Pascha*, 18.

[83] Melito, *On Pascha*, 31.

in the new dispensation."[84]

Melito compares the Passover lamb and the Lord in *On Pascha* 4, noting "The sheep is perishable, but the Lord, not broken as a lamb but raised as God is imperishable. For though he led to the slaughter like a sheep, he was no sheep. Though speechless as a lamb, neither yet was he a lamb. For there was once a type, but now the reality has appeared."[85] He narrates the order God gave to Moses in Egypt to take a lamb, spotless and unblemished, and in the evening to slay the Lamb with the sons of Israel to eat it without breaking the bone of the Lamb (Num. 9:12). He ordered them to take the animal's blood and spread it across the front doors of the Israelite's house as a sign of the blood so that the angels could pass over them. In *On Pascha* 34, Melito expresses the mysterious deliverance of the Israelites: "What is this strange mystery that Egypt is struck down for destruction and Israel is protected for salvation?"[86]

Towards the end of *On Pascha*, Melito sounds like a prophet by speaking the words of the risen Christ, who is also present in the sacramental action of the Pascha. In *On Pascha* 103, he uses the Johannine expression of Christ's divinity by repeatedly using the term ἐγώ εἰμι in relation to the purpose of his sacrificial death. Melito notes, "So come all families of people, adulterated with sin, and receive forgiveness of sins, for I am your freedom. I am the Passover of salvation, I am the Lamb slaughtered for you, I am your ransom, I am your life, I am your light, I am your salvation, I am your resurrection, I am your king."[87]

In sum, as we have seen above, one of the significant steps in a historical reconstruction of the Eucharist is to find out the sacrificial narratives of the Lord's death by situating the events

[84] Melito, *On Pascha*, 38.

[85] Melito, *On Pascha*, 38.

[86] Melito, *On Pascha*, 45.

[87] Melito, *On Pascha*, 65−66.

described within a Passover framework that convey the mystery of salvation history within the liturgy and praxis of Judaism.[88] Early Christians interpreted Jesus' life and death by pointing to the ancient Jewish narrative of redemption, primarily the story of the Exodus from Egypt, where Jesus' death echoes the Exodus from Egypt. This development of the Old Testament redemption theory, signified by the celebration of the Passover meal, is a familiar oriental idea where eating and drinking communicates the divine gifts understood due to God's redemptive act.

The Passover meal is one of the merciful acts of God that initially introduced Israel to the concept of grace because the theology of the Passover sacrifice was essentially that of grace, as the act of the Passover sacrifice was a gift of grace because God was faithful and kept his covenant with his people when He acted in righteousness. Jesus is our Passover lamb in the new covenant, and He has introduced us to God's grace and love based on His will to die for sinners. (Rom. 5:10). Young correctly notes that "The Eucharist has the same function in Christianity as the Passover in Judaism since both looked back with rejoicing and thanksgiving to the deliverance already brought about by God; they both also anticipated his future eschatological salvation."[89]

Conclusion

This chapter presented that the early church fathers' interpretation of the Scripture and their reading of the Old Testament through the New Testament was principally Christocentric. Their main goal of using allegorical and typological interpretative methods of the Scripture was to read

[88] According to Francis Young, the two Jewish feasts which are unique of importance as background to Christian sacrifice of the Eucharist are The Day of Atonement Ritual and The Feast of Passover. For further details of the two Jewish feasts and how they become essential in Christianity, please refer to Young, *Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers*, 43−50.

[89] Young, *Use of Sacrificial Ideas*, 274−75.

the Scripture as a single text that teaches a coherent and unified truth about the nature of God and human destiny. While focused on the spiritual sense, the Alexandrians' allegorical exegesis acknowledged the idea that the Scripture refers to historical events. The Antiochenes emphasized the coherent discourse of the Scripture as basically understood by the original audience in mind and then moved on to searching for the spiritual meaning of the text. Both traditions believed the interpretive task was not finished if one did not consider the text's spiritual understanding.

The searching of the spiritual meaning of the Scripture is especially true in the early fathers' interpretation of the Pascha and the significance of the sacrifice of the Lamb within the whole Levitical sacrificial system. The fathers' interpretative theory of the Eucharistic sacrifice was tied to the Jewish sacrificial system in the Old Testament, which received its fulfillment through the sacrifice of Christ on the altar of the cross. They believed that all the sacrifices in the Old Testament found their fulfillment in the Eucharistic sacrifice. The early exegetes understood the Eucharist as a reutilization of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. They introduced the cultic understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice that required partakers to participate in the life of Christ.

The EOTC scholars and Christians, particularly those who regularly preach and teach in the church, should better understand, and apply the early church fathers' interpretive approaches to Scripture in our post-critical context. However, as the church seeks to portray this positively, it should also be aware of the instances where the allegorical interpretative approaches goes off the literal meaning. Relying solely on the allegorical interpretation of the Scripture becomes dangerous, especially when the EOTC priests and members of the church emphasize too much the role of the present interpreter and take the meaning of the text too far from the historical situation and syntactical construction of a given text. Thus, a faithful reading of Scripture in the

EOTC should call the interpreter to properly understand the original text in its historical context before searching for the deeper spiritual meaning that must be grasped from the studied text.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETIVE TRADITION OF THE ANDEMTA COMMENTARY

Introduction

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has traditionally attracted the attention of historians and theologians for its ancient Christianity history and its unique and traditional interpretation and exegeses of the Scripture. However, despite the significant contributions made to the study of this complex tradition of biblical interpretation, it is still, to a large extent, not studied very well. In the previous chapter, we argued that most early church fathers interpreted the Scripture following various interpretative traditions. While the Antiochene exegetes emphasized the literal interpretative strategies, the Alexandrians emphasized the allegorical interpretation of the Scripture. However, the early fathers, from both interpretative traditions, were concerned with finding out the deep spiritual meaning of the Scripture within the framework of the historical meaning of the text and attempted to place the text in the context of readers of their time in order to respond to their specific situation in time.

In this chapter, which is based on the previous chapter's argument, we will show how the *Andemta* commentary (AC) interpretative tradition has been influenced by the early church fathers' interpretative strategies from both traditions. In addition to the early exegetes' influence, the AC has been developed within Ethiopian tradition, maintaining its own indigenous style of interpretation of the Scripture. Therefore, in what follows, we shall first describe the general features of the AC interpretative tradition in its context, understanding that it is a living tradition that continues to considerably affect the EOTC's biblical interpretation and preaching. Then, we shall describe the sources for the interpretative tradition, followed by describing the influence of the Antiochene-Alexandrian interpretive traditions. Furthermore, we shall critique the unique

hermeneutical tradition of the AC on 1 Cor. 11:27, because most of the time, the word ἀναξίως is taken out of context, so to speak, and wrongly interpreted and practiced in the EOTC. The way this portion of the Scripture is translated, interpreted, and practiced has long confused its members. Thus, we shall specifically examine how the AC interpretative tradition uses its unique context to further elucidate the biblical text to fit within its own cultural and theological context, thus developing a new narrative situation different from the clearly stated first-century environment in Corinth and showing how such interpretation of the keyword deviates from the historical and scriptural teachings regarding the worthy partaking of the Eucharist.

General Features of *Andemta Commentary* Tradition

The EOTC has developed its distinctive interpretative tradition throughout its history, which is preserved in the AC. This has substantially shaped how the Church interprets and preaches the Scripture. The Commentary originated from both internal and external traditions to reach its final form.[1] It is comprised of Amharic commentaries on *Ge'ez* biblical and patristic texts both in typeset and handwritten form. Roger Cowley notes, "It [AC] has been formed as an Ethiopian oral tradition, but parts of the material have been printed, and the rest is available in MSS of varying degrees of completeness."[2]

The AC is the interpretation of the EOTC that comprises both the Old and New Testament

[1] The internal and external sources refer to the Ethiopian ancient religious tradition (the worship of the Serpent and the Sun God), the ancient tradition of Hebraic-Judaism, the apostolic tradition, the Syriac tradition, and the Egyptian Coptic tradition.

[2] Roger W. Cowley, *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983), 3. The AC is partly published, but other essential commentaries are preserved in the manuscript form, and the institution of Ethiopian Studies at the University of Addis Ababa preserves them in their manuscript collection.

books of the Bible, including fifteen apocryphal books.[3] It is believed that the scholars and teachers who wrote the AC were highly educated and knew Hebrew, Greek, Coptic, Arabic, and Syriac well and were thus able to translate and interpret the patristic commentaries on the Old and New Testaments written by the Apostles, the three hundred eighteen bishops[4] who had been at the council of Nicaea, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Gregory, along with *Fetha Nagast*, the fourteen worship books, Eusebian canons, Ethiopian historical works, and others.[5]

The exact date and chronological origins of the *Andemta* literature are not known; however, it is traditionally understood that the Pentateuch came to Ethiopia together with the True Ark of the Covenant and a group of Jewish priests and nobles in the tenth century BC, as we have stated in chapter one, as related to the *Kebra Nagast*. Tradition states that at some point, the Pentateuch was translated from Hebrew into *Ge'ez* along with its ancient commentaries. During the Christian era, the New Testament and patristic writings and their homilies were brought to Ethiopia, and their biblical commentaries were translated into the *Ge'ez* language.[6] Ralph Lee notes, "Other commentaries are thought to have arrived along with the book of the Old and the New Testament

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[3] The fifteen apocryphal books include the Books of Monks and the Books of Scholars (the early fathers). See more lists on Mekere Selase GebreAmanuel, Beluy Seyefe Selase Yohanns, Berhanu Gebree Amanuel, and Meleak Tabor Teshome Zerihun, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ ከልደተ ክርስቶስ እስከ ፳፩ ዓ.ም (2000): The History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church from the Birth of Jesus to AD 2000* (Addis Ababa: EOTC, 2000), 176−79. Hereafter this material is footnoted as GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*.

[4] The historians differ over how many church fathers attended the Nicene council of AD 325. However, the EOTC believes that the number of fathers who attended the council was three hundred and eighteen.

[5] Roger Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in the Ethiopian Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983), 19. For the entire list of contents of the *Andemta Commentary*, please refer to Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 6−14. Besides the eighty-one biblical books considered canonical by the EOTC, there are several patristic writings and the Ethiopian liturgical texts. Please see Keon-Sang An, *An Ethiopian Reading of the Bible: Biblical Interpretation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015), 121.

[6] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 19.

when translated from Greek."[7] The written versions of the commentaries can trace their origin to a time during the *Aksumite* Kingdom, which was between the tenth century BC and the ninth century AD. However, the current form came into being during the Gondar kingdom which was from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries AD.[8] Roger Cowley notes that in antiquity the EOTC's teachers used the various materials at their disposal and eventually produced a commentary corpus, which reached a definitive form during the Gondar Kingdom (AD 1632−1855).[9]

The *Andemta* Commentary, therefore, represents a long-running Ethiopian oral tradition, possibly originating from the *Aksumite* Kingdom between the advent of Christianity in the early fourth century and the ninth century.[10] However, the printed full and final edition of the commentary was published in the nineteenth-century AD. Since then, the style and the content of the commentary have remained substantially unchanged. This commentary has been taught through oral instruction and memorization to impart a thorough understanding of the Scripture. It is also combined with the teachings of the early church fathers, demonstrating a concurrence with the doctrine of the Church. Tendencies reflecting a background of theological dispute are generally absent from the AC's interpretation of the Scriptures.[11]

The meaning of the term *Andemta* can be literally translated as 'for one' and 'for another.' According to Mohammed Girma,

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[7] Ralph Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopian and Early Syriac Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 24:34.

[8] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretation*, 35; see also Roger W. Cowley, "Old Testament Introduction in the *Andemta* Commentary Tradition." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 1, no. 13 (1974): 133−75.

[9] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 23.

[10] Ralph Lee, "Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopic and Ephremic Literature." Ph.D. thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies (London: University of London, 2011), 40−53. http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/12742/

[11] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 46.

> The etymological origin of the term *Andemta* is the Amharic word *Aand*—which means 'number one.' *Andem* means 'for one' with [the] obvious expectation of *lelam,* which means 'for another.' Hence, so far as the meaning of the text in question is spiritual and deep enough, *Andemta* leaves no room for contention even when two parties come up with entirely different meanings of the text. Hence, hermeneutically, *Amdemta* is an interpretive tradition (or philosophy, for that matter) that opens the way for pluriformity of deeper meaning(s) by bypassing the material or literal meaning.[12]

Roger Cowley notes that the Amharic term *Andemta* means 'also,' 'either/or,' and 'on the one hand/on the other hand,' having the meaning of a complementary or contrasting interpretation of words or phrases of the Scripture.[13] Cowley notes, "Often more than one alternative is presented, the alternatives either corresponding to different ways of understanding the *Ge'ez* text or to different Amharic expressions of the same thought."[14]

The term *Andem* therefore, suggests alternative interpretations of the ancient *Ge'ez* biblical and patristic texts given by various teachers,[15] depicting yet another Jewish connection since this approach was similar to how the Talmud presents its exegesis. For example, Jesus said to Nathaniel, "I saw you under a fig tree" in John 1:48, and the AC offers five various and even contradictory interpretations of the event. It notes,

> (a) Nathaniel's mother had concealed him under a fig tree in a basket made from a bees' nest, at the time when Herod had the infants slaughtered, (b) just as Adam and Eve had done wrong in eating the fig, so Nathaniel had done wrong in murdering a man, or seducing someone's wife, (c) Nathaniel was rich and would spend the day under a fig tree trying agricultural animals, (d) he was learned in the Torah and would

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[12] Mohammed Girma, "Whose Meaning?: A Critical Look at Wax and Gold Tradition as a Philosophical Foundation for A Unique Ethiopian Hermeneutics." *Sophia* 1, no. 50 (2011): 184; and see An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 117. Keon-Sang An notes, "The term [Andem] occasionally introduces a chain of successive comments, which can number as many as ten or fifteen." Please see further examples on the referred page of Keon-Sang An.

[13] Roger Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation: A Study in Exegetical Tradition and Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 39−89; and see Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 3.

[14] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 4−5. The Amharic language uses various idiomatic speech and poetry to express thoughts and ideas that could be understood in various and dissimilar ways. It also uses the traditional way of wax and gold expressions that only the elites can understand the hidden meaning of a plain word or phrase.

[15] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 117.

spend the day under a fig tree calculating whether the time for Messiah's coming had arrived, (e) as fig leaves are extensive, so Nathaniel's sin was extensive.[16]

The commentary provides multiple alternative interpretations of words and/or phrases of the text without prioritizing one over the other; it instead leaves the choice for readers because the task of the commentary is to introduce readers to various possibilities of interpretations without imposing one over the other since all options agree with the doctrine of the Church.[17]

The AC's corpus and its interpretative tradition is the only authorized exposition, interpretative tradition, and biblical commentary of the EOTC. Professor Cowley notes several essential characteristics of the interpretive tradition of the AC, and in his work, he identifies the formulaic use of the *Andem* to introduce successive interpretations. He notes that the typical structure of the *Andem* is made up of the *Ge'ez* text, the Amharic translation of the text, and the commentary consisting of illustrative stories, explanation, and application, which helped to inform subsequent studies of the *Andemta* corpus.[18] This commentary represents the tradition of the Church's biblical interpretation and the writings of the early church fathers and still significantly influences the Church's interpretation and preaching of the Scripture.[19]

Contemporary students and scholars of the EOTC are neither allowed to question the

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[16] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 51. We are not quite sure what is meant by the entry of letter c, but have rendered it as Cowley presents it. Another example from Ralph Lee notes that "the white horse" mentioned in the Book of Revelation 6:2 is interpreted differently. First, "it is the time of the false Messiah. He calls it white because the Jews were pleased when he reigned over them." and the other alternative interpretation reads, "it is the time of the false Messiah. He calls it white because, in His time, the believers will rejoice." See also Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopian*, 33.

[17] Please see further examples of such interpretations from An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 117−18.

[18] Please see Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation*. See also Roger Cowley, *New Testament Introduction in the Andemta Commentary Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 16−20.

[19] The EOTC has a distinctive interpretative tradition that developed over its long history; however, other churches have not appreciated it because it has not clearly articulated its own hermeneutical or interpretative tradition.

content and interpretive methodology of the AC nor propose to change it for any reason.[20] Any student or teacher of this commentary is prohibited from reflecting any critical opinion about any text to be commented upon because it is believed that God revealed the content to the Church Fathers through the Holy Spirit, and the EOTC scholars adapted it from them. Cowley notes, "The commentary effectively assumes inerrancy for the originals of the texts commented upon, and gives reasons for apparent error and discrepancies, notably scribal error (gedfata Sahafi)."[21] A student who questions or openly declares his opposition to the interpretation of AC will be declared a heretic.[22] Instead, a student's task is to recite fully and strictly memorize the interpretation in the commentary as the mark of reaching the highest stage of the EOTC's theological education. The strong prohibition of being critical, along with the accepted authenticity of the interpretative tradition in the commentary, led EOTC scholars not to present an alternative interpretation of any word or phrase or write other commentaries, and up until now, the Church has held the AC to be the only and single authorized commentary throughout its history.

The tasks of reading, exegeting, and engaging the Scripture have historically been the work of the priesthood. In contrast, lay engagement revolved around fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, and observing various rituals to be holy and clean for the sacraments.[23] In other words, lay Orthodox practice have traditionally been built around discipline, ritual, and bodily engagement,

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[20] Mulgeta Belayneh, *The Nature of Hermeneutics in EOTC and Attitude towards It Today* (Addis Ababa: Holy Trinity Theological College, 2001), 92−94. According to Mr. Belayneh, "The *Andemta* Commentary does not appeal to the mental advancement (thinking) of the present generation. This is because the exegetes use unfamiliar jargon, periphrastic sentences, and unorganized grammatical construction, which does not exist in the contemporary daily Amharic usage." Please see the reference.

[21] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 5.

[22] HabteMariam Worqineh, *Tintawi Ye Ethiopia Serate Timehrt* (Addis Ababa: Tinsae Printing, 1971), 217.

[23] Unlike the Protestants in Ethiopia, most members of the EOTC do not possess a Bible or the AC at home or carry the Scripture with them to the Church.

unlike many Protestants in Ethiopia who emphasize textuality and reason.

According to the history of the EOTC, the AC's interpretation is vital for Ethiopians for four imperative reasons.[24] To begin with, after the fall, the human ability to understand God's Word was corrupted and darkened by sin. Humanity was unable to directly understand God's message, for Yahweh's mystery has been concealed from humankind. Another reason is that human beings were different from one another in various ways such as their culture, religion, worldview, tradition, language, education, and others. Therefore, they needed an interpretation in accord with their unique life settings and context. Third, the Scripture was written many centuries ago for its first recipients, different from our generation in many ways. Their history, culture, language, and tradition were very different from ours, so it required interpretation of the Scripture for the contemporary Christian community. Lastly, various biblical genres required different techniques of interpretation. For example, the Scripture had wisdom, writings, poetry, Gospels, historical narratives, letters, and apocalyptic writings that demanded a particular interpretative approach. In addition to this list, one of the major tasks of the AC was to make a solid connection between the interpreted text and the EOTC's dogma, which is shaped by the doctrine of *Tewahedo*, Mariology, and other basic moral and ritual traditions adopted from the Ethiopian ancient traditional religious tradition, the ancient tradition of Hebraic-Judaism, the apostolic tradition, Syriac tradition, and the Egyptian Coptic tradition.

Therefore, the writers of the *Andemta* Commentary made the spiritual and hidden meanings of the text understandable for the audiences in their specific context and tradition by illuminating the hidden mystery found all over the Scripture. The commentary employs specific exegetical and interpretative strategies to achieve such a goal, which we will discuss later in this chapter.

[24] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*, 174.

Sources for *Andemta* Commentary

The *Andemta* Commentary (AC) results from multiple sources, both internal and external, that are named and unnamed. The first and foremost source is the *Ge'ez* translation of the Holy Scripture and the commentary material in the *Ge'ez* language. The *Ge'ez* text, also known as "the Scholars' text," has been traditionally regarded as an authoritative and accurate text, and any other texts that contradict the *Ge'ez* texts are regarded as erroneous.[25] There were numerous *Ge'ez* commentaries on the *Ge'ez* text of all books of the Scripture, including patristic writings translated from various sources and origins.[26] The authors of the commentary made exegetical comments based on the *Ge'ez* translation of the Scripture, which, according to Ullendorff, was principally translated from Greek, Syriac, and later revised mainly from Arabic text into the *Ge'ez* language.[27] The first Ethiopian patriarch (Frumentius known as Abuna Selama Kesate Birhan) and the Nine Syrian saints played a vital role in the first Ethiopic Bible translation. Keon-Sang An notes, "the Nine Saints used a Syrio-Greek text since they know both Syriac and Greek. Later, in the fourteenth century, the translation of the whole Bible was revised from Arabic into *Ge'ez*."[28] Likewise, Cowley notes that the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew, the New Testament from Greek, and finally, the whole Scripture was translated into Arabic into the *Ge'ez* language.[29]

It is worth mentioning here the Jewish source that probably most impacted the

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[25] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 3.

[26] The EOTC scholars and religious leaders, including Mameher Esdros, Aqane Sa at Kabte, Malaka Gannet, Takle haymanot, Ato Adrahen, and Azzaz Lamech, have made contributions and corrections in the translation and interpretation works.

[27] Ullendorff, *Ethiopian and the Bible*, 31−72.

[28] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 128; and see also, The Ethiopian Orthodox Church. *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spirituality* (Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 1970), 8−9.

[29] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 17−18.

interpretative tradition of the AC. Cowley noticed the similarities in exegetical methodology between the AC and rabbinic commentaries. He notes, "it [AC] does exhibit methodological or formulaic parallels with the Jewish material."[30] According to Cowley, "Jewish and Ethiopian rules are generalizations arising from actual engagement in exegetical debate, rather than expressions of a philosophical interpretive system which has been separately constructed and then applied to the text."[31] Ralph noticed that just like the Midrash material, the AC bears some similarity to the allegorical and typological approach, and the Targumic use of paraphrases and explanatory expansions to illustrate the Holy Scriptures is a prominent characteristic of the commentary.[32]

As we have argued in the first chapter of this dissertation, given the Hebraic-Jewish character of Ethiopian history, religion, and culture, the exegetical similarities between the AC and the Jewish rabbinic commentaries are apparent from the cultural background that both traditions shared. For example, there are some rabbinic sources mainly found in the commentary on Ezekiel,[33] whose compiler perhaps has added material after "having an opportunity to study the material at first hand during his stay in Jerusalem from 1882 to 1912 E.C."[34] Thus, it is most likely that the authors of AC used the rabbinic commentaries and that the Jewish rabbinic exegetical traditions heavily influenced them.

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[30] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 374, 381.

[31] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation,* 374.

[32] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretation*, 49.

[33] The AC of Ezekiel mainly refers to the actual works of Josephus. The Ethiopian tradition records that the original version of Ezekiel's commentary was lost, and some Ethiopian Christian scholars were taught the interpretation of Ezekiel by a Falasha (meaning an Ethiopian Jew) teacher named Isaac. The printed version of the commentary was prepared in 1924 by a Christian Ethiopian who had lived in Jerusalem who depicted knowledge of rabbinic commentaries, the Septuagint text, and Josephus. See for example Ezek. 7:12; 17:1, 23; 24:8; 26:1; 27:19; 23:20, etc.

[34] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 45.

Ralph Lee notes that "The midrash bears similarity to the allegorical and typological approach of early Christian theology in general, suggesting early Christian influence on the Andemta."[35] However, the relationship between Judaism and the EOTC in the interpretation of the AC corpus is not an exact one, meaning the commentary is not directly copied from the Jewish rabbinic commentaries. Therefore, Cowley notes, "There are general similarities in methodology between the AC and rabbinic commentaries. These, like similarities of worldview, background, culture, and religious attitudes, demonstrate that the creative thinkers of the traditions had much in common, but they do not prove direct contact."[36] The AC, just like the rabbinic exegetical commentaries such as the Tanakh, Mishnah, and Talmud, gives extended alternative *teregwame* (interpretations), offering very detailed instructions and guidance which is to be applied to the daily life of the followers.[37] Lee notes, "The targumic use of paraphrases and explanatory expansions to illuminate the Old Testament is reminiscent of the andemta."[38] Like targumic, the EOTC *teregwame* in the AC utilizes a story-telling approach, suggesting that narrative analysis is a helpful and practical approach to studying the commentary material. It first presents the literal biblical historical fact in relation to the context of the writers and recipients, and then it presents extended *teregwame* in relation to the doctrine of the Church and the context of the implied reader who inhabits the historic EOTC religious context.

In addition to the Scripture, some ancient religious history, the writing of the lives of saints, and the known historical monastic stories are included in the commentary. For example, the writings from Senkessar and books of monastic stories (Zana Abaw) are among the unnamed

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[35] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretation*, 49.

[36] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 66.

[37] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretation*, 49.

[38] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretation*, 49.

references. Among named works, we find Tamer Maryam, Tamer Iyasu, and the Gadls of Takle Haymanot, John the Baptist, and Victor (and Thecla) Minas are few among many.[39] There are *Ge'ez* prayers and chants attributed to the works of St. Yared known as Deggwa (a book of chant), and some textual additions supposedly made by St. Yared.[40] Furthermore, the commentary has philosophical sayings attributed to the Mashafa Felasfa and a science section containing several references to astronomy and medicine.[41]

In sum, the *Andemta* Commentary was formed and developed under the influence of several sources from various theological and exegetical traditions. However, those sources and traditions are assimilated into the commentary by native scholars who inhabit the Ethiopian traditional and cultural context.

Place of Context and Tradition in Biblical Interpretation

Every interpretation and reading of the Scripture is influenced and/or formed by the tradition and context of a specific community. Interpretation of Scripture is mediated through a particular conceptual frame of reference primarily derived from the worldview and the socio-cultural context of a particular cultural community, which in turn also informs and shapes the exegetical methodology and practice as a framework for the meaning of the text. Thus, certain people's social location, culture, and tradition highly influence biblical interpretation. For example, the task of historical critics mainly focuses on thoroughly studying and searching history in the light of the cultural and literary principles of its own context because the Scripture

[39] Please reference Roger Cowley to find which parts of the Scripture the authors of the AC have used those sources. Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 41−45.

[40] St. Yared was a great *Aksumite* music composer in the sixth century AD. He composed the Ethiopian Zema meaning the traditional chant of Ethiopia, particularly the chants of the Ethiopian-Eritrean Orthodox *Tewahedo* Churches, which are still performed during the liturgical service of the Church.

[41] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 45.

is used as a source in the pursuit of Christian history. The historical-criticism method, according to John Collins, "seeks to answer a basic question: to what historical circumstances does this text refer, and out of what historical circumstances did it emerge?"[42] However, an essential theological task must be made in contextualizing the past history into the current context of a reader after critically having studied ancient history.

Ellen Davis and Richard Hays describe the difference between historical criticism and traditional exegesis. For them, historical criticism attempts to see texts in their place and time; whereas traditional exegesis reads the Scripture in light of later developments.[43] The early exegetes relied heavily on typological and allegorical readings of the Old Testament texts, not simply in their plain sense but pointing to Christ and making them relevant to their context.[44] Modern critical interpretation, on the other hand, focuses on trying to rediscover what the human author may have intended by the words he wrote and what the original hearers and readers would have understood by them, believing that the original intent of the biblical authors is the main constituent of the text's single and inherent meaning.[45] In turn, post-modern hermeneutical theorists believe that texts possess an independence that continues to communicate and speak to later readers' contexts. For them, the meaning of the text is what the interpreter says and readers need to search anew for the text's continued meaning. The biblical text's legitimate meaning and its literary, social, or religious value is not only confined to what the author had in mind but also must be understood in terms of what the text can still speak to our present context. Based on

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[42] John Collins, *Encounters with Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 2; and see more discussion and definition of Historical-Criticism in Edgar Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1975), 6−8.

[43] Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays, *The Art of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 70.

[44] Davis and Hays, *Art of Reading Scripture*, 71.

[45] Davis and Hays, *Art of Reading Scripture*, 72.

what the author meant to say to the original readers of the text, we need to find what the text speaks to our context now.

The Ethiopian orthodox tradition incorporates patristic texts into the *Ge'ez* language and contextualizes it within the EOTC religious context. One of the oldest patristic writings is *Qirillos,* which contains the collection of homilies and extracts from the writings of the early church fathers, such as St. Cyril of Alexandria, Theodotus of Ancyra, Severus of Sinnada, and Juvenal of Jerusalem.[46] For example, St. Cyril of Alexandria's theological teaching regarding the divine and human nature of Christ, which he believed represented one nature instead of two natures (as the Council of Chalcedon confessed) was the primary source and tradition of the theological idea of *tewahedo* in the EOTC which rejected the Chalcedonian definition. Another example is that as soon as its establishment, the EOTC stood with St. Athanasius in the fight against Arianism and accepted the Nicene Council as binding between the two churches, a position that determined the dogmatic choices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.[47]

Therefore, we may argue that the earliest Ethiopian religious tradition, the Jewish tradition, the early apostolic tradition, the Syriac, and the Egyptian Coptic traditions have been adopted into the Ethiopian context and tradition. Keon-Sang An notes, "Once these foreign inspirations have been absorbed and transformed, the resulting contents and styles are quickly canonized.

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[46] Philip F. Esler, *Ethiopian Christianity: History, Theology, Practice* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 108.

[47] As we have discussed in chapter two of this dissertation, the EOTC is a *miaphysite* church just like its mother church in Egypt, along with the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Syriac Orthodox (Jacobite) Church, and the Malankara Orthodox Church of India, whom all rejected the teaching of Chalcedon that Christ had two natures, one human and one divine joined in a hypostatic union. According to Harry Hyatt, "The theology of the Abyssinian Church is the theology of the first three Ecumenical Councils and to this nothing had been added." See Hyatt, *Church of Abyssinia*, 85; and Abuna Yesehaq, *The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church: An Integrity African Church* (New York: Vantage, 1989), xxi. Therefore, the EOTC's members are proud that their faith, theology, tradition, and culture have been inherited and handed down to them from the legitimate apostles and the early fathers. Their theological traditions have a significant influence on the EOTC's biblical interpretation and theology.

They become part of a tenaciously conserved native tradition."[48] Similarly, Donald Levine concludes that "Whatever the stimuli, Ethiopian responses reveal a recurrent pattern that includes neither nativistic rejection nor slavish adherence to imported forms, but a disposition to react to the stimulation of exogenous models by developing and then rigidly preserving distinctive Ethiopian versions."[49]

In sum, the existing tradition and context of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are the foundations on which the scriptural interpretation of the Church has been shaped, as these traditions and context continue to play a critical role in the Church's biblical interpretation. Based on this knowledge, in the following pages we will explore the most significant traditions in Christian history that characterize the biblical interpretation of the Church within its non-Chalcedonian history. This was foregrounded in the introduction of this dissertation where it was implied that the EOTC has a non-Chalcedonian nature, implying that the Church is much closer to St. Cyril of Alexandria's approach even as they also have recognizable Antiochene influences.

Antiochene-Alexandrian Influence

The Antiochene and Alexandrian 'schools' are well known for the two interpretative traditions of the Scripture.[50] Traditionally, it is believed that the school of Antioch utilized the literal interpretation of the Scripture but rejected the allegorical interpretation; whereas the Alexandrian school only accepted the allegorical interpretation but did not care as much about the literal meaning of the Scripture. In chapter three of this dissertation, however, we have

[48] An, *Biblical Reading in Ethiopia*, 108.

[49] Donald Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago: Chicago University, 1974), 65. Levine stated that the seventeenth-century Portuguese attempted to dominate and subordinate the EOTC Christianity, which resisted and resulted in war between the Portuguese and the Ethiopians.

[50] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*, 176.

argued against such a conclusion. Although the Antiochene tradition focused on the literal and/or historical and the Alexandrian on the allegorical meaning of the text, neither tradition need contradict the other; instead, both interpretative traditions looked for the deeper spiritual meaning of the Scripture but from different interpretative approaches.

On the one hand, some scholars believe that the overall interpretation of the AC follows the use of the literal works of the Antiochene Church fathers. For example, Roger Cowley, based on his thorough studies, concluded that the EOTC biblical interpretation and exegetical tradition stands "in fundamental continuity with earlier commentaries, especially those of the 'Antiochene' tradition ... associated principally with the names of Lucian, Paulinus, Diodore, Eustathius, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia."[51] For example, Theodore of Mopsuestia's influence is apparent in the commentary on the Book of Psalms, without his name being mentioned in the AC, perhaps due to his condemnation at Constantinople.[52] Similarly, Kristine S. Pederson did outstanding work tracing the origins of the Ethiopian tradition and particularly the Psalms tradition back to the Antiochene fathers, among whom Theodore of Mopsuestia was an icon.[53]

According to these scholars, the Antiochene interpretative tradition is more conceptual and more interested in explaining the text's historical context, which is evident in the AC. For

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[51] Cowley, *Ethiopian Bible Interpretation*, 375; and see also Mohammed Girma's argument against Cowley's conclusion that the Ethiopian interpretive tradition has a close tie with the Antiochene interpretative tradition over against the Alexandrian interpretative tradition. Please see Mohammed Girma, "Whose Meaning?: A Critical Look at Wax and Gold Tradition as a Philosophical Foundation for A Unique Ethiopian Hermeneutics." *Sophia*, no. 50, vol. 1 (2011), 183−84.

[52] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 132; and see also Kristine S. Pederson, *Traditional Ethiopian Exegesis of the Book of Psalms* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 199), 294. The Book of Psalms is one of the famous prayer books among followers of the EOTC. For the laity, ዳዊትን መድገም (dawītini medigemi), meaning 'reciting the Psalms,' is vital to establish almost direct communication with God; and it is considered to be the significant stage of literacy in the traditional Ethiopian system of education for many years.

[53] Pederson, *Traditional Ethiopian Exegesis*, 8, 22−24, 58−61.

Cowley, therefore, there is more literary continuity and commonality with the Antiochene interpretative tradition and interpretation in the AC than the Alexandrian. He further argues, "there is no comparable link with Origen, Clement of Alexandra, and other Alexandrines, it is also evident that Antiochene (and Alexandrine) discussions of allegoria, theoria, and tupos (to say nothing of paradeigma, ainigma, skoposetc) have not reached Ethiopia in intelligible form; the exegetical fruit has been transmitted, but the root of its theoretical basis has been detached and lost."[54] According to Cowley, we find several likely allegorical types in the commentary, but "the presence in the AC of materials of allegorical type may be felt to weaken the exclusiveness of its Antiochene connections."[55] Thus, for Cowley, and those who agree with his view, there is a belief that the AC acknowledges the historical narrative of the Scripture, and the commentary does present the literal biblical history concerning the historical situation of the biblical authors and the historical context in which the Scripture was written.

On the other hand, however, the present writer has found that the AC does indeed move beyond Antiochene exegesis in employing extensively the Alexandrian way of exegesis, which mainly employs allegorical readings of the Scripture. For example, the narrative techniques utilized in the AC to First Corinthians are guided by the communicative environment in which the commentary is formulated and casts an identifiable framework for the retelling of the source material. In other words, the AC on First Corinthians uses its Ethiopian context to elucidate the biblical text, thus developing a new narrative situation that is different from the clearly stated first-century environment. While a further example of allegorical interpretation employed in the

[54] Cowley, *Ethiopian Bible Interpretation*, 375 (and see n9 for further explanation about the term *theoria*, and *tupos* on page 376; and Ralph Lee also observes lack of direct association of the *Andemta* Commentary with Alexandrian figures such as Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and other writers from this tradition. Please see Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopian,* 37.

[55] Cowley, *Ethiopian Bible Interpretation*, 376.

AC is to follow, let us now look at one of the examples from Paul's argument against the man of lawlessness stated in 1 Cor. 5:1−12. The 'outsiders' Paul mentioned in this text is translated and interpreted in the AC as Muslims and shows that even the Muslim culture and tradition condemn the kind of sexual immorality found among Christians in Corinth.[56]

Although Origen's name is not explicitly stated in the AC, perhaps due to his condemnation at the fifth ecumenical council in Alexandria, we see Origen's idea imprinted in the history of the EOTC. Like Origin, the EOTC believes that behind every literal word of the Holy Scripture, there is a spiritual sense. Therefore, it must be interpreted allegorically to find the hidden spiritual meaning of the text.[57] For example, Gebre Amanuel states that the *Ge'ez* text translation of 2 Cor. 3:6 reads, "መጽሐፍ: ይቀትል: ወመንፈስ: የሃዩ" meaning "the letter kills but [allegorical] interpretation saves," and other texts such as Deut. 32:11 reads, "God carried His people in His wings," and Matt. 5:29−30 reads, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away."[58] The EOTC believes that unless such texts are interpreted allegorically, their literal meaning does not make sense.[59] This is the main reason that the EOTC scholars worked hard to allegorically interpret and unveil the hidden spiritual meaning of a given text through the AC in accord with the doctrine and traditions of the Church.

Similar to Origin, which saw vital biblical figures as examples for allegorical interpretation of the text,[60] the EOTC believes that allegorical interpretation of the AC has a clear biblical

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[56] The Ethiopican Orthodox Church, *የቅዱስ: ጳውሎስ: መጽሐፍ: ንባቡ: ከትርጓሜው: Saint Paul's Book: Its Reading with Interpretation*. 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam, 2007), 137.

[57] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ,* 176.

[58] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ,* 176.

[59] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ,* 176.

[60] Froehlich, *Sensing the Scriptures*, 52−53; see Elowsky, "With a View to the End," 68−70.

foundation. Every word or phrase in the Scripture has an allegorical meaning and more than one interpretation.[61] Aba Gebre Amanuel thoroughly argues that the EOTC's history points out to some examples of allegorical interpretations used by key biblical authors to communicate the spiritual meaning of the Scripture to their audience.[62] He mentioned, for example, that in Gal 4:21−24 the Apostle Paul speaks of Hagar and Sarah as the symbol of the two testaments, 1 Cor. 10:1−5 speaks about the rock from which Israelites drank water in the wilderness as a symbol of Christ who is the life-giving water, and 1 Cor. 9:9−12 speaks about not muzzling an Ox when it treads out the grain. The AC itself interprets the Ox as a symbol for a messenger of the Gospel. The Alexandrian tradition found its interpretive schema in Scripture and thus felt justified in its allegorical approach; likewise, the EOTC believes Christ himself set examples of allegorical interpretation that can be considered foundational for the AC allegorical interpretative tradition.[63] For example, the Church believes that, in Matt. 13:1−47, Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of heaven in six different symbols or examples that are interpreted allegorically so that the audience may understand the spiritual nature of God's Kingdom.[64]

Girma criticizes Cowley for ignoring the presence of allegorical interpretation in the AC.[65] He notes, "Cowley's blatant denial of the presence of allegory in the AC tradition seems to be clearly short of hiding the presence of allegory in the EOTC interpretive philosophy."[66] Girma further notes that in addition to the long-lasting historical and traditional influence of the

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[61] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*, 175.

[62] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*, 176.

[63] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*, 175.

[64] GebreAmanuel, *የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሀዶ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ*, 175.

[65] Girma, "Whose Meaning?" 182−83.

[66] Girma, "Whose Meaning?" 184.

Alexandrian Church upon Ethiopia, "the EOTC has espoused major theological positions–such as on Christology–that are directly imported from the Alexandrian tradition. Hence, even though it might have undergone a considerable amount of indigenization in order to fit the Ethiopian context, the influence of the Alexandrian tradition on the EOTC's allegorical interpretive philosophy seems to be incontestable."[67]

As an example of these clashing traditions, both Cowley and Girma refer to the AC text concerning Isaac, the son of Abraham, in Gen. 22:5−8 to make a case for their argument. The commentary reads,

> Isaac is a likeness (messale) of this world, the sheep is a likeness of the Lord. Isaac is the likeness of the godhead, the sheep is a likeness of manhood, the knife is a likeness of the authority of God, and the blade is a likeness of suffering and death. The thought of Abraham is a likeness of the grave; Isaac is a likeness of the Lord. The fire is a likeness of the Holy Spirit, the wood is a likeness of the cross, and the two servants are likenesses of the two brigands.[68]

Referring to the exact text, Girma argues that this text in the AC uses extensively allegorical exegesis,[69] whereas Cowley takes it as "examples of homiletic application, not allegory proper."[70] While Cowley could be correct in his own context, this particular text, however, seems to be more of an allegorical exegesis as we do not see any straightforward hermeneutical application "relating ethical and religious principles (of the scriptures) to the daily life of the

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[67] Girma, "Whose Meaning?" 183. In his argument against Cowley's generalization, Girma notes, "It seems absurd to think that acquiring interpretive rules always hinges on explicitly constructed systems. For that matter, until recently, the EOC has been said to have a very few or no systematically constructed theological treatise at its disposal. This is because liturgy (which is based on careful precision) and the lifestyle of the believers (i.e., prayers, fasting, and helping the poor) were and are the main theological documentations. Therefore, it would be interesting to ask if this absence of systematically construed theology would be a good reason to portray the EOC as a church without theology and/or philosophy. Liturgy and lifestyle are indeed two prominent media that have maintained the theology of the EOC for over one and a half millennia with very little alteration if any."

[68] Please see Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation*, 376; and see also Girma, "Whose Meaning?" 183.

[69] Girma, "Whose Meaning?" 184.

[70] Cowley, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation*, 376.

readers."[71] Homiletic applications usually draw moral implications of a text which is then placed in the context of the implied audience. Therefore, the above text is a product of clear allegorized text even if the allegorical message itself needs further explanation to help the audience understand the message.

The AC gives two further allegorical interpretations concerning the origin of the ram, which was sacrificed instead of Isaac. The *andemta* on Gen. 22:5 notes,

> The ram is a symbol of the Lord, Isaac is a symbol of the believers. The ram became a substitute for Isaac, and the Lord became a substitute for believers. They say the ram descended from heaven, and the Lord was to descend from the heaven of the heavens. That they say, it was found from the wood of the Thicket, that he would be born from sealed virginity, from our Lady. It is a symbol that because he came from the flock of Abraham, he would be born from the tribe of Abraham.[72]

The AC does not give a definitive answer as to whether the ram appeared miraculously or was taken from Abraham's flock; instead, it gives multiple allegorical interpretations; however, the commentary does not deny that the actual event did happen in time and space, "rather the commentary [AC] allows that actual events may also have a deeper spiritual significance"[73] that needs to be interpreted allegorically.

We may then conclude that the EOTC's biblical interpretation embraces both Antiochene and Alexandrian interpretative traditions, as provided to readers in the AC. When one looks at the AC carefully, one can observe interpretative traditions of the two schools combined with typical Ethiopian culture, tradition, and context. It is evident that early church fathers from both traditions were mentioned by name, and their homilies were cited in the AC. For example, St. John Chrysostom was cited in the commentary on Rev. 20:4: "Behold, John Chrysostom

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[71] Girma, "Whose Meaning?" 183.

[72] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopian*, 52.

[73] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopian*, 52.

commented in his homily which is read on the day of Palm Sunday that he sat on the clothes which were upon the ass and her foal without being held by a strap or binding."[74] We also see other Greek patristic sources such as St. Basil of Caesarea, Severus, Mar Yeshaq, and Ephraim, along with a translation of Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic sources original *Ge'ez* compositions as well.[75] Thus, these multiple references show that the AC draws its interpretative traditions and legitimacy from *Chalcedonian* and *Miaphysite* traditions.

The EOTC's attempt to embrace both interpretative traditions of biblical interpretation in the AC challenges the interpretative hostility drawn superficially between the Antiochene and the Alexandrian traditions. Both traditions had clear doctrinal distinction mainly regarding Christology; however, it is unprecedented to make a sharp distinction between the two traditions based on the use of allegory as a critical standard to distinguish their interpretation. After all, both schools have used allegory, figurative languages, and symbolic interpretation of the Scriptures as they seek to apply the text into the context of their readers.

Other than Christological differences, Keon-Sang An posits a possible difference between the two traditions based on their understanding of the goal of biblical interpretation. He notes, "The Alexandrians were concerned with the spiritual formation of believers. Human life was a spiritual journey to God. Their understanding of anagogy is "the movement upward from the bodily level to a spiritual sense." Here the Bible is a means to an end, a guide for the soul on its way upward."[76] On the opposite end, "The Antiochenes had a strong moral, ethical orientation. The anagogy of Antiochene *theoria* was to lead people into a truly moral life which continued

[74] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopian*, 35.

[75] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopian*, 35.

[76] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 140.

into eternity as an existence free of sin. The Bible provided a map of the battle for the salvation of humans and a guideline for human education."[77]

In its use of the Alexandrian fathers (and the rabbinic tradition), the AC text has remarkable flexibility.[78] In other words, the meaning of a passage may be stretched to fit any subject the wording will bear. Early references to the Scripture materials are even more numerous and pervasive. The Church believes that meaning is not determined and/or confined by the literal and historical context of the text, though it does not deny the historical fact. Ralph Lee argues, "The original sources were interpreted to such an extent in the *Andemta* that often their literary affinities cannot be identified."[79] Similarly, although Cowley does not doubt the originality of ancient sources used in the AC, after his thorough studies of the materials, he was convinced that "the named sources are typical of all the actual sources, although the AC has usually digested them to the points at which analysis of the precise literary affinities is impossible."[80]

Thus, we may conclude that the AC adopted both Alexandrian and Antiochene interpretative traditions even while developing its own exposition based on the basic teachings of the EOTC, which were influenced by Judaism. The EOTC commentators developed their indigenous style of interpretation in service of the Church's doctrine. This interpretive tradition allows for as many spiritual meanings of a given text as possible, the only exception being not contradicting the Church's dogma and traditions. This commentary's interpretative tradition, therefore, continues to influence the central, formative, and ecclesial practice of preaching

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[77] An, *Ethiopian Reading of the Bible*, 140, and see also Froelich, *Biblical Interpretation*, 63.

[78] Taddesse Tamrat, *Ethiopian and the Bible*, 78.

[79] Lee, *Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopian*, 40.

[80] Cowley, *Traditional Interpretation*, 41.

because the EOTC's preachers' homiletical concern begins with pastor's drawing on this historical exegetical tradition in accord with the Church's doctrine.

Ἀναξίως in the *Andemta* Commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:27

The *Andemta* Commentary (AC) offers the most current commentary on the question of worthiness in the communion liturgy and the various interpretations of the word ἀναξίως in 1 Cor. 11:27 as it mainly relates to the sacramental obligations and rituals within the tradition of the EOTC. The AC presents allegorical *teregwame* (extended interpretation) regarding the worthy admission to the Eucharist in accord with the doctrine of the EOTC (as Judaism mainly influences it) and the context of the implied readers, who inhabit the historic Ethiopian Orthodox religious context and traditions. Predominantly, this prestigious commentary interprets 1 Cor. 11:27−29 in such a way that many members of the EOTC understand ἀναξίως to mean that if adherents consider themselves 'unclean,'[81] they should not partake lest they incur the wrath of God.

Therefore, for many readers and churches in Ethiopia, the word ἀναξίως is interpreted outside of its original context. In other words, the AC interprets the term ἀναξίως as an adjective implying that the task of being 'clean' and 'pure' is the responsibility of those who intend to partake of the Eucharist.[82] Based on this indigenized interpretation and translation, the understanding has been developed that the adherents should or could be ritually clean and pure before the service of the Eucharist, a conviction in which many Christians in Ethiopia consider themselves personally unworthy and thus reject partaking of the Lord's Supper altogether.

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[81] Chapter two of this dissertation described how the concept of cleanness and purity is related to cultic rituals of good deeds such as fasting, prayer, almsgiving, sexual abstinence between couples, and others.

[82] Ethioian Orthodox Church, *የቅዱስ: ጳውሎስ: መጽሐፍ: ንባቡ: ከትርጓሜው: Saint Paul's Book: Its Reading with Interpretation*. 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa: BerhanenaSelam, 2007), 250−55.

The EOTC's interpretation, for instance, mirrored in the various local dialects, into which, the Bible has been translated, translates ἀναξίως as an adjective. The ancient *Ge'ez* language, which is closely related to Hebrew and Aramaic, is central for the study of late ancient Christianity because it was the language of some of the earliest Judeo-Christian writings. The Old Testament and the New Testament were translated in the fourth century by St. Abuna Salama from the original languages of the Septuagint and New Testament Greek into ancient *Ge'ez*. This translation of the Old and the New Testaments in the AC accompanies their allegorical *teregwame*. The *term teregwame* in the EOTC context refers to the *Ge'ez* traditional exegesis that displays several readings and interpretations that are intentionally imposed on the biblical text for doctrinal reasons.[83]

Remarkably, the AC first presents the *Ge'ez* text as a primary source, then offers the Amharic translation, and finally offers the extended allegorical teregwame. For example, 1 Cor. 11:27 in *Ge'ez* text reads, "ወይእዜኒ: ዘበልዖ: ለዝንቱ: ኅብስት: ወዘሰትዮ: ለዝንቱ: ጽዋዕ: እንዝ: ኢይደልዎ: ዕዳ: ይትሃሰስዎ::" The Amharic text reads, "እንዲህም: ከሆነ: ሳይበቃ : ሰጋውን: ደሙን: የተቀበለ: ፍትሁ: ርቱዕ: ሥላሴ: በፍዳ: ይመራመሩታል::" An equivalent English translation can be, therefore, if a person receives the body and the blood of the Lord without qualifying, the Trinity of justice will judge him in afflictions.[84] The AC specifically translates and interprets the Greek word ἀναξίως in *Ge'ez* as እንዘ: ኢይደልዎ (inize: īyideliwo) having the meaning 'being unqualified.' This translation only makes sense in reference to one's moral cleanness, purity, and

[83] Kidana-WaldKefle, *Mauuafa Sawasewwa-Geuwa Mazgaba Qalatuaddis: A Book of Grammar and Verb, and a New Dictionary* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie University, 1948), 17−25.

[84] Ethiopian Orthodox Church, *የቅዱስ: ጳውሎስ: መጽሐፍ: Saint Paul's Book,* 254. (I translated verse 27 from the *Ge'ez* language to English, and emphasis is mine).

total commitment to the sacramental obligations within the context of the EOTC.[85] This implies that an individual member of the Church should make his body clean and pure by maintaining the cultic rituals before, during, and after receiving the Eucharist.[86] However, the Scriptures themselves reveal to us that we are all ἀνάξίος because of the fall. However, the good news of the Gospel is what makes us ἀξίος of the Sacrament, and our remembrance in the Lord's Supper is the recognition of the grace of God in Christ as manifested for us in the Gospels. The gifts in the Sacrament become ours by God's grace through faith in Christ by which we receive the gift of forgiveness and salvation through the sharing of the actual body and blood of the Lord.

The further interpretation of ἀναξίως in the AC is linked to verses 28 and 29. It gives an affirmation that those who take the body and the blood of Christ ሳይነፁ (sayinet̲s'u), meaning being ritually unclean are those who fail to make their body clean through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving; fail to separate their body from sins and the world; fail to differentiate the body and the blood of Christ from the everyday meal; and those who fail to keep for themselves the Eucharistic obligations of the Church.[87] The AC's explanation further defines and explains the word ἀναξίως as ነጽቶ: ካልተቀበለዉ (nets'ito: kalitek'ebelewu), meaning if one receives the body and the blood of the Lord being ritually unclean, he will be quickly destroyed by a plague visited on him by God because he partook of the Holy Sacrament being ritually unclean.[88]

The word እንዘ: ኢይደልዎ (inize: īyideliwo), which is the ancient *Ge'ez* translation of the

[85] Please refer to chapter one of this dissertation where we offered the detail teaching of the EOTC regarding purity laws taken over from Judaism.

[86] In chapter two of this dissertation, we have explained further how individual members must make themselves clean for the Eucharist prior, during, and after partaking.

[87] Ethiopian Orthodox Church, *የቅዱስ: ጳውሎስ: መጽሐፍ:: Saint Paul's Book*, 250−55.

[88] Ethiopian Orthodox Church, *የቅዱስ: ጳውሎስ: መጽሐፍ:: Saint Paul's Book*, 187.

Greek word ἀναξίως, has become the source for other subsequent Bible translations in Ethiopian languages and has influenced the interpretation of the text. For instance, the latest two Amharic Bible versions (in 1962 and 1989 by the United Bible Society, UBS) translate the word ἀναξίως in verse 27 incorrectly. The former translation reads, "ስለዚህ: ሳይገባው: ይህን: እንጀራ: የበላ: ወይምየጌታን: ፅዋ: የጠጣ: ሁለ: የጌታ: ስጋና: ደም: ዕዳ: አለበት::" Similarly, with a slight difference, the later translation reads, , "እንግዲህ: ማንም: ሳይገባው : ይህን: እንጀራ: ቢበላ: ወይም: የጌታን: ፅዋ: ቢጠጣ: የጌታ: ስጋና: ደም: ባለ: ዕዳ: ይሆናል::" In both translations the Amharic word ሳይገባው (sayigebawi) is translated as an adjective rendering two different meanings. When the accent rests on the letter 'ገ', it is taken as an adjective, having the meaning ἀναξίως referring to the moral life of a person in order to distinguish whether or not the individual is personally clean and pure. Nevertheless, without putting the accent on the letter 'ገ', the meaning becomes 'discerning' or 'understanding,' referring to the partaker's cognitive understanding of the mysterious nature of the Sacrament. In both cases, the word ἀναξίως is translated and interpreted adjectivally referring to an individual's quality of life in order to meet the criteria for partaking in the Eucharist. Other Bible versions such as the Afaan Oromo Bible translation reads ἀναξίως as "utuugargarhin basin," and the Tegregna version reads it as ሽይተገብዖ (*shiyitegebi'o*). Thus, both translations render a meaning that any participator in the Lord's Supper who does not make himself clean and pure will be eternally condemned.

Since all translation is interpretation, each of these translations implies that anyone who does not make himself ἀξιος ('worthy' in its adjectival sense) before partaking of the Eucharist will drink and eat judgment upon himself (v. 29), experience illness and death (v. 30), and even eternal condemnation (v. 31). The onus for the worthiness in these translations lies primarily

with the ones who desire to participate in the Sacrament, looking to their worthiness and their efforts in doing good works, in addition to Christ's work on their behalf. These translations and their interpretations seem to require almost unattainable preconditions for making members worthy for the sacrament. This is likely what has led most of the members to choose not to partake in the Eucharist at all, as to avoid God's judgment. Such understanding of the text is even more serious than mistranslating a text because, from this understanding, readers make false interpretations and assumptions about the text, looking for worthiness in their own efforts as opposed to the worthiness evident in Christ's work on their behalf. This contradicts the very message of the Gospel.

For the EOTC, therefore, failure to be worthy and recognize the sacramental nature of the elements is highly linked with failure to observe the sacramental obligations that must be observed prior to, during, and after partaking of the Eucharist; this failure is believed to make the attendees ἀνάξιοί ('unworthy' in its adjectival sense). This is evident in the admission of infants to the Eucharist because infants, according to the Church's doctrine, are one of the few who would have very minimal sin, or at least no evident sin or actual sin observed in their lives. Further, this practice is probably because the EOTC considers infants and small children incapable of committing mortal sins compared to adults. Thus, they may not need most of the rituals because of their innocence.

As we have indicated in the previous chapters, the influence of Judaistic teaching upon the EOTC and the strict adherence to purity laws connected to the sacrifice being offered on the altar, both in Judaism and the EOTC, contributed to the erroneous interpretation of the term ἀναξίως in 1 Cor. 11: 27. Due to the rigorous requirement of the rituals, many believers in the EOTC have developed a feeling that they are ἀνάξιοί to partake of the Sacrament at all. Because

of this they prefer to wait until they become more ἀξιος (mostly towards their older age) and are better prepared to celebrate the Eucharist; otherwise, they think they might expose themselves to eternal damnation. It is essential, therefore, that there should be a correct understanding of the passage historically, contextually, syntactically, and traditionally, as it has been translated and interpreted in the EOTC's documents.

In sum, these authoritative documents we have examined so far have led many people in Ethiopia to erroneously interpret the term ἀξίως as if ἀξιος, is in reference to their quality of life and their strict observance of the sacramental and ritual obligations rather than in reference to the manner of how the Sacrament is administered in the Church. We, therefore, argue that the word ἀναξίως in verse 27, as we shall see in the following chapter of this dissertation, is an adverb and not an adjective, qualifying the manner of observing the Eucharist in the congregation as opposed to interpreting personal holiness and/or quality of life to meet the sacramental obligations set by the Church and/or erroneously generated by the members.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that the AC corpus mainly traces its interpretative roots to both the Antiochene and Alexandrian traditions and is placed in the context of the Ethiopian tradition, Christian doctrine, and culture which is heavily reliant on Judaism with its sacrificial cult and ritual purity laws. The overall interpretation of the AC follows the use of the literary works of both the Antiochene (Syrian) and Alexandrian fathers by reinterpreting them to fit the basic teachings and culture of the Church; however, the AC is not a product of simple passive reception of these traditions and sources; rather the indigenous authors of the AC creatively incorporated and assimilated the sources and the varied ancient interpretive traditions into the commentary corpus which in turn buttressed their Judaistic character and reliance on ritual purity

in order to participate in the sacrifice taking place at EOTC altars.

The question of what it means to be ἀξιος in this commentary has been interpreted allegorically in relation to the rituals that the Church adopted from Alexandria's interpretative tradition combined with the purity laws and regulations found in Judaism that are adopted into the EOTC. The doctrinal tradition of the Church substantially informs all stages of the EOTC's preacher's interpretative work.

The AC and the EOTC's readings and interpretations of the text, therefore, shift the primary exhortation of Paul against factions between the poor and rich Christians, who gathered to proclaim the Lord's death through their celebration of the Eucharist, to be understood from the individual's effort in making themselves ἀξιος for the Lord's Supper by keeping the Old Testament rituals. All the current Ethiopic Bible versions (similar to some English translations as well) alter the Greek term ἀναξίως into an adjective, thus requiring certain rituals and regulations that those who intend to partake of the Lord's Supper must perform before the celebration of the Eucharist.

Today, most members of the Church understand that they cannot make themselves worthy, and the solution to escape from God's temporal punishment and eternal condemnation is to avoid partaking in the life-giving Sacrament altogether. Thus, it is important to discuss whether the term ἀναξίως is an adverb and/or an adjective, how it should be interpreted within the immediate and larger context of the text, and how we should properly appropriate the text into our own context, especially for those of us living in Ethiopia. These things are thoroughly addressed in the following exegetical chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

ἈΝΑΞΊΩΣ IN LIGHT OF SOCIAL AND THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN 1 COR. 11:17−34

Introduction

Interpreting the term ἀναξίως depends greatly on one's understanding of the exact nature of the problem in Corinth. Until the contributions of Gerd Theissen, most scholars assumed the main problem in Corinth to be essentially theological in nature mainly affecting their vertical relationship with God. Theissen and other scholars, however, shifted the focus from the theological to the sociological aspects of the problem, which has shed new light in understanding the horizontal nature of the problem, a problem that primarily affects their relationship with fellow believers.[1] Nonetheless, the two arguments are not mutually exclusive; but rather, both problems are inseparably interrelated to each other, making the Corinthians guilty of eating the body and drinking of the blood of the Lord ἀναξίως.

In what follows, we will first describe the historical and socio-cultural nature of the problem in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:17−22, 33−34). Then we explore how Paul develops his argument against the Corinthians theologically (vv. 23−32). In this section, for the sake of the argument of this thesis, detailed exegetical work is dedicated to verses 27−29 in which we closely explore what it means to be ἀναξίως (v. 27) in light of Paul's exhortation for 'self-examination' (v. 28) and 'discerning the body' (v. 29). Finally, we conclude the argument showing how the social and theological problems in Corinth are interrelated and how those problems led the Corinthians to celebrate the Lord's Supper ἀναξίως.

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[1] Gerd Theissenand John H. Schutz, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 17−22; see the entire book of John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1992), 83; and see James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 609−10.

Contextual and Socio-Historical Analysis

Unity and Structure

The problem addressed in 1 Cor. 11:17−34 primarily concerns the abuse of the Lord's Supper and the act of despising God's Church which risks the unity of all believers. Paul had to correct against divisions and factions which took place in the context of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Although the discussion of the Eucharist in this text focuses on a single theme such as the abuse of the Lord's Supper, it can possibly be divided into four major sections. In the first section (vv. 17−22), Paul analyzes the specific offense in Corinth from the socio-cultural point of view. He notes that there were schisms among the believers and for that reason the meal they ate and drank was not the Lord's Supper; rather, they celebrated a private meal which left some gluttonous and drunk but others hungry (vv. 20−21). Paul begins by saying, "But in the following instructions I do not commend you" (v. 17a), and then ends with a rhetorical question in chiastic form, "Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not." Instead, Paul declined to commend the Corinthians because only those who partake of the Lord's Supper in a 'worthy manner' deserve praise.

Then, in the following section (v. 23−26), Paul describes the tradition of the Lord's Supper, adding his own theological comment (specifically on v. 26). The institution of the Lord's Supper begins with a Greek conjunction γάρ (v. 23a) to bind or develop the sense of continuation of the second section (v. 23−26) from its previous section (v. 17−22). As a result of their divisions and abuse of the body and the blood of Christ, the Corinthians stood against the tradition of the Lord's Supper. The gathering indicated their failure to grasp what the gift of the Eucharist meant for them.

Similarly, in the third section (v. 27−32), Paul used another conjunction, ὥστε (therefore), in the beginning of verse 27a, showing how the problem stated earlier resulted in unavoidable

consequences upon the Christians in Corinth. The sharing of the Eucharist in an 'unworthy manner' (v. 27) brought God's judgment upon them. This is the background for understanding God's inescapable judgment that resulted in sickness and death among the Corinthians. Once again Paul used another conjunction, ὥστε, in verse 33a, which builds a strong tie between the sections and ends the final section by providing pastoral and practical instructions (v. 33−34).

Some scholars such as Simon J. Kistemaker, and Ellingworth and Hatton, however, separate 1 Cor. 11:23−32 from the immediate context (vv. 17−22 and 33−34) and interpret it as a 'general statement' or 'theological principle' implying that its interpretation and application may not be governed by the specific social and historical problem in Corinth.[2] Paul might have made a general/theological statement especially in verses 27−29; however, it is less convincing to conclude that the general statement derives its *deep spiritual meaning* independent of and/or contrary to the specific social and historical situation of first century Corinth and the syntactical context of the text. Therefore, looking closely at the particles written at the beginning of each section (γὰρ in v. 23, ὥστε v. 27, and v. 33) we can see that the themes of each section are interrelated and strongly correspond to each other.[3] Any definitions and/or interpretations which are derived out of this text must be framed within the overall historical and syntactical context of the text that is surrounded by the situation of first century Corinth.[4] The basic literal meaning of

[2] Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 400; and Paul Ellingworth and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians,* 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 265. Among the reformers John Calvin also falls into this category. Please see John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 385, 394.

[3] See more on Wallace for the grammatical explanation of the Greek conjunctions. Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 335−36.

[4] For the sack of this thesis' limitation, we will not take further the tension between the historical criticism and traditional exegesis theories of interpretation. However, it is good to mention that the historical criticism attempts to see biblical texts in their own place and time, while traditional exegesis read earlier parts of the Bible in the light of later developments. Please see more on Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays, *The Art of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 71−86.

the text must be clearly established before one makes homiletical or practical applications, which should emerge out of the text rather than being read into the text.

Historical and Socio-cultural Setting

The social stratification, which was prevalent in Corinth, manifested itself in divisions and factions among Christians in Corinth. Most scholars agree that the house church was the norm in Corinth, and Christians used to meet in individual's houses as a community of believers for worship. For example, Ben Witherington believes that the rich Christian patrons who were providing their houses for worship were included in the celebration of the Eucharist.[5] They were accustomed to such meal fellowship where the rich gathered for entertainment with people of similar social class.[6] The great majority of Christians in the Corinthian church, nonetheless, were among the category of the poor and those of low status. This is seen from several facts. For example, they hardly appear as individuals by name in 1 Corinthians and Paul was impressed how God chose the worldly insignificant persons (1 Cor. 1:28). Those few people Paul mentioned by name were from the high social status group. For instance, Chloe had slaves and dependent workers and was a patron to her clients (1 Cor. 1:11). Likewise, Priscilla and Aquila were rich persons who ran their own business in tent making and provided hospitality even for Paul (1 Cor. 16:19). Stephanus had a household (1 Cor. 1:16; 16:15) and people like him used to provide a meeting place for worship and possibly for the celebration of the Eucharist within their own private homes (1 Cor. 16: 15−19). The names we read about in 1 Cor. 1:14−16, Crispus,

[5] Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 30−32.

[6] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 182−92. Smith has pointed out extensively about the meal practice of various kinds of clubs for first century Corinth. Please see Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 87−125.

Stephanus, and Gaius, were among the upper strata of society and Paul himself initially had a strong attachment to such persons, probably for hospitality. But in many ways Paul distanced himself from the high-status members later on in his ministry by refusing to accept money from them and being afraid of their influence upon his service (1 Cor. 9:1−18).

This shows that among Christians in Corinth the minority in number were from the upper classes. Although they were few, they were the most influential, active, and important members in the congregations and can be called the dominant minority. They were dominant not only because of their wealth but also because of their family lineage. Fee writes, "It was not simply a matter of the community being divided along socio-economic lines into the 'haves' and the 'have nots'; but rather it is an individualistic self-indulgence which is predicated on distinctions of status, kinship and wealth."[7]

In the Greco-Roman world, those with lower status submitted to those with higher status because the money was given to the poor by the powerful and influential. This is evident from the social custom known us *"patron-client-relationship"* (a friendship between un-equals in relation to exchange of gifts).[8] John K. Chow notes, "Social relationships in Roman Corinth, from emperor to freedman, may be seen as networks of patron-client ties through which power, honors and favors were exchanged, and that patronage can be found at work in different levels of the society."[9] The money always trickled down from the high social strata to the lower social strata. The poor were thus forced to honor, and at times were enslaved by, the upper influential

[7] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 534.

[8] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 41; Theissen, "Social Stratification in the Corinthian Community: A Contribution to the Sociology of Early Hellenistic Christianity." In *Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 69−102, 107; see also John K. Chow for seven different kinds of *patron-client-relationship* that he presented. Chow, *Patronage and Power,* 30−33.

[9] Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 83. Please see the entire book for more explanation of the 'Patron-client-relationships' in First Century Greco-Roman World.

classes.[10] This is clearly seen in 1 Cor. 5:1−13 where the lowly congregants were not able to react against the wealthy incestuous man who sexually misbehaved among Christians in the church at Corinth.

In the given text, the Corinthians administered the Eucharist as a private meal adopted from the Greco-Roman eating practice. According to Rachel McRae, the quest of honor, rank and status of someone at a private meal was apparent because "Roman society was extremely status conscious, and the distinction between the various strata was scrupulously observed."[11] Paul criticized them (vv. 20−21) by contrasting the Lord's Supper over against the Corinthian's supper. His criticism for eating not "the Lord's Supper" but "one's own meal" may also express concern regarding the idea of ownership and who provides the meal. This is the question of the provider being the Lord or the host. Thiselton confirms this fact and notes, "so the dynamics of the celebrations of the Lord's Supper in house groups in all probability generated the same spirit of focusing on a patron or host to a group rather than exclusively on Christ."[12] Similarly, Theissen argues that the adjectival use of the term ἴδιον in verse 21 depicts the source (their own) meal and the manner in which the meal was consumed in Corinth.[13] Such a secular and social custom of the Greco-Roman world, which was adopted by the Corinthians into the service of the Eucharist, is one of the factors for divisions and factions in Corinth which was also expressed in dining customs, as we shall read in what follows.

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[10] Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1−6* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 85−88; and Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 130−41.

[11] Moyer Hubbard, *Christianity in the Greco-Roman World: A Narrative Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2010), 144; and see also Rachel McRae, "'Eating with Honor' The Corinthian Lord's Supper in Light of Voluntary Association Meal Practices," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 1 (2011): 165−81.

[12] Anthony C. Thiselton, The *First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 850.

[13] Theissen, "Social Integration," 148.

Discriminatory Dining Convention

The Corinthian's supper practice was shaped after the design of the very hierarchical dining convention around them. The design of the house church by and large discriminated against the poor in its dining arrangement. Smith says, "Whom one dines with defines one's placement in a larger set of social networks."[14] He goes on to say, "The guests were placed on the couches according to their social rank, since each position at the table had an imputed ranking attached to it."[15] The food taking position indicated who was a free person or slave, and created both the social boundaries and bond which left women and children to the lowest positions.[16] Such dining positions became a means of showing one's social status and an occasion for gaining honor therefore determining one's exclusion or inclusion at the table. Such discriminatory dining conventions, and the hurt it caused during the fellowship meal were articulated in Martial, "Since I am asked to dinner, why is not the same dinner served to me as to you? You take oysters fattened in the Lucrine lake, I suck a mussel through a hole in the shell; you get mushrooms, I get hog funguses golden with fat, a turtledove gorges you with its bloated rump; there is set before me a magpie that has died in its cage. Why do I dine without you although, Ponticus, I am dining with you? Let us eat of the same fare (Martial, *Epigram* 3.60)."[17] The writings of Pliny the Younger (AD 61), who was from the upper classes but expressed sympathy with lower classes, rejected such class distinction. He says:

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[14] Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 9.

[15] Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 33−34.

[16] Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 42; and Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 244.

[17] Eric Svendsen, *The Table of the Lord: An Examination of the Setting of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament and Its Significance as an Expression of Community* (Atlanta, GA: New Testament Restoration, 1996), 45. The same text was also cited in Smith's writing. Please see Smith, *From Symposium to the Eucharist,* 45.

> I happened to be dining with a man—though no particular friend of his—whose elegant company, as he called it, seemed to me a sort of stingy extravagance. The best dishes were set in front of himself and a select few, and cheap scraps of food before the rest of the company. He had even put the wine into tiny little flasks, divided into three categories, not with the idea of giving his guests opportunity of choosing, but to make it impossible for them to refuse what they were given. One lot was intended for himself and for us, another for his lesser friends (all his friends are graded) and his and our freedmen.[18]

Modern biblical scholars have argued for and associated the discriminatory dining conventions with the situation in 1 Corinthians. In the first century it was common to divide participants of the feast according to their social status. Theissen notes, "The Hellenistic congregations of early Christianity, as we find them in Corinth and Rome, display a marked internal stratification."[19] According to the Greco-Roman dining custom, only the highest and wealthiest people had the access to eat at the dining room.[20] The various conflicts within the first century church had been socially conditioned, and the disparity between the wealthy and the poor guests was not only one of seating; rather it was also of the qualities and quantities of the meal. This privileged place was reserved for the host and a few chosen guests of the same status in order for them access the best quality foods and drinks apart from the ordinary people, so that they consume as much as they like.

Archeological evidence testifies that the Corinthians utilized house churches which were

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[18] Pliny, Letters 2.6 cited in Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 50 (Waco, TX:Word Books, 1983), 109−11. The same text is also cited in Fee. Please see Fee, *First Corinthians*, 542. According to some scholars, another factor that divided the Corinthians was the famine which took place in the middle of the first century which caused social inequality of meal observance in Corinth. Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 7:26 is evidence indicating the stress which the famine had caused upon the Corinthians. Please see further on this Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 157, 216−25; See also Bradley Blue, "The House Church at Corinth and the Lord's Supper: Famine, Food Supply, and the Present Distress," *Criswell Theological Review* 5, no. 20 (1991): 221−39.

[19] Theissen and Schutz, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 146. They attest further how the then social gathering was discriminatory even in its religious association. Please see more on pp. 147−162. See also Edwin A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale, 1960), 60−63.

[20] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 861; and Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 196.

composed of two different rooms. One, called a *triclinium* (a dining room consisting of three couches around the meal table), and the other one was called an *atrium*, (a larger room without couches outside the dining room).[21] The privileged used to sit in a laid back position, making the act of reclining during the meal a social marker between the rich and poor and free and slave.[22] According to Smith, the category of guests based on status was customary to the Corinthians in which people of higher status ate with the host in the *triclinium*, while the rest of the church members ate in the *atrium*.[23] Both Murphy-O'Connor and Hays argue that in the old Roman villas, it was impossible for more than nine persons to comfortably dine in the *triclinium* at a time.[24] Witherington argues that the maximum number that could have met in the *triclinium* of the rich homes in Corinth was about ten to fifteen persons who could comfortably dine all at once.[25] Such distinction of rooms with different luxuries must have also contributed to divisions among the believers.

Thus, the Corinthian gathering was colored by the social values of rank, status, and honor, and the related seating and food arrangement that made a sharp distinction between the poor and

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[21] Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 178.

[22] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 115.

[23] Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 42.

[24] Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 178−80. After comparing various excavator findings in Ancient Corinth, O'Connor gave extensive measurements of the villas during Paul's time. According to him, the *triclinum*- 5.5 x 7.5 meters having 41.25 square meters for a floor area and the *atrium* - 5 x 6 meters where no more than 20 to 40 persons could tighten together. See also O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians*, 182–85; and see also Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archeology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983), 153−64, and 180; and see also Hays, *First Corinthians*, 196.

[25] Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 30; Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 24−25; and see also Moyer Hubbard, *Christianity in the Greco-Roman World: A Narrative Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 222. Other scholars have proved the possibility of rented dinning space in a barn or tent which could have possible included a hundred people who would have gathered at the same time and place. Please see Edward Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (London: T&T Clarks, 2014), 26–30; and Mark Seifrid, "Gift of Remembrance: Paul and the Lord's Supper in Corinth," *Concordia Journal* 42, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 122−23.

the rich. The social divisions indicated in discriminatory dining arrangements of guests in separate rooms further contributed to the factions among the Corinthians which was reflected in the context of sharing the Lord's Table together at the Corinthian church. Such abuse of the gathering led Paul to warn the Corinthian to bring their communion meal practice into harmony with the path of the Gospel.

Contextual and Socio-Historical Analysis

Paul starts this text with sharp criticism against the Corinthians. He explains why the communion meal is not worthy of his praise, because their coming together did more harm than good. Paul repeated the verb συνέρχομαι (come together) five times in this pericope, and the repetition of the key word gives emphasis on the gathering of God's people as a church for the service of the Lord's Supper.[26] Further, Paul made use of strong language stating that the assembling of the church caused more harm which led him to sharply criticize them.

Paul tells the reason why the Corinthians' meeting as a church was more harmful in verse 18 where he urges them to avoid σχίσματα. Division among Christians was Paul's chief concern since the beginning of the Epistle (1 Cor. 1:10), which is a possible thesis statement of the whole book. The nature and the context of division in 1 Cor. 1:10−12 and the factions mentioned in this pericope are different. The former schisms seemed to reflect "tensions between different ethnos of different house groups," and the splits were somehow external to the groups, "although internal to the whole church of Corinth."[27] However, in this text the very house meeting itself reflects σχίσματα between the rich and the poor members of the church when they gathered at

[26] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 536; for a similar argument see Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 856.

[27] Thiselton, *First Corinthians,* 857; and see also Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 248.

the same place for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Paul detects that such a gathering that divided the body of Christ was worse than no assembly at all because the σχίσματα abolished the very purpose of the gathering at the church for worship. The gathering contradicted what the Lord's Supper proclaims, which is Christ's sacrificial giving of his life for others. Although what Paul is saying in verse 19 is not as clear given the context, perhaps he used the term δεῖ necessitating the σχίσματα in relation to the eschatological judgment. Fee and Barrett believes that there appears to be some divine purpose in the divisions necessitating that these factions occur to separate true and false believers.[28]

Consequently, Paul sharply rebukes by using the emphatic and comprehensive term οὖν (verse 20a) which directs his previous rebukes of σχίσματα at the church. The repetition of the term συνερχομένων ὑμῶν (when you come together) signifies a church assembly, and this genitive absolute is modified by the phrase ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ or having the idea of "meeting together at the same place."[29] Their divisive gathering is emphatically implied by the negative word οὐκ (v. 20b). The church should have been gathered to partake of the Lord's Supper and share the agape meal being formed by the self-giving love of Christ for sinners, but their gathering was not to eat the Lord's Supper but their own meal. The term κυριακὸν is a possessive adjective in accusative singular form, giving the idea that the host of the Supper is the Lord, not the rich patrons. For Fee, the word could be more honorific, having the connotation of "consecrated to the Lord."[30] The δεῖπνον which was supposed to belong to the Lord had become a private meal used for a

[28] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 538; C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 262. Pauline uses of the term δεῖ elsewhere in the Corinthian correspondence conveys an eschatological connotation (see 1 Cor. 15:25, 53; and 2 Cor. 5:10).

[29] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 862.

[30] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 540.

show of status for the rich. Their problem mostly lies in their broken relationship in the body of Christ, as their act stood at odds with the teaching of the Lord's Supper tradition (vv. 23−26).

The debate on the sequence of the meal depends on the translation of the Greek term προλαμβάνει (take beforehand) in verse 21. The argument concerns what could be the exact meaning of the term lexically, and scholars propose various views on how the Corinthian meal was structured. For some scholars, the term προλαμβάνει refers to the act of beginning the meal practice beforehand which is what Paul is criticizing.[31] In this case the term could carry a temporal idea in reference to the fact that when the wealthy members arrived at the house church with better means of transportation and with food of great quality, while the slaves who were engaged in hard labor arrived late with no food, or food of a lesser quality.[32] By the time the church completely assembled, there was little food and wine left for the poor while the wealthy members had already overindulged. Those who argue for the temporal meaning of the word think that Paul's final advice ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε (v. 33) should be also translated as 'wait for one another' in its temporal sense.[33]

The way the Corinthians adopted *eranos* (a Greco-Roman meal custom translated as 'potluck dinner') extends the σχίσματα into different food sizes and qualities, different starting

[31] Arndt William, Bauer Walter and F. Wilbur Gingrich Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 872.

[32] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 31; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Text and Archaeology*, ed. Schutz John H (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 160−61; see Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament,* trans. and ed. Daniel P. Bailey, and Jostein Ådna (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 403−4.

[33] Gunther Bornkamm, "Lord's Supper and Church in Paul:" In *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 123−51; and Richard C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg,1963), 457−58; Please see Lenski's argument for the same (meal-bread-cup) order while having different understanding on the termπρολαμβάνει.

points, and separate seating for the fellowship.[34] Thus, the offense which occurred at the Corinthian Lord's Supper happened when the wealthy started eating their private meal prior to the arrival of the 'have-nots,' and when the temporal interpretation of the verb is in force.[35]

However, an argument can be made against the temporal translation of προλαμβάνει which mainly argues for a different starting point for the common meal before the arrival of the poor. The temporal view falls short to adequately explain itself because, if the Corinthians consumed the meal before the arrival of the poor, one must ask why Paul asked them if they had homes to eat and drink in beforehand (v. 22a). If the rich patrons were consuming prior to the arrival of the poor, what upsets Paul that much (vv. 17, 22c)? It is less probable for Paul to critically challenge the Corinthians if the rich had consumed their own private meal in the absence of the whole gathering of the church. Instead, the offence at Corinth took place while the whole congregation assembled as a church at the same time and place. This is evident in the text συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν (when you come together) and ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ (in the same place) for table fellowship (v. 20).

The Greek word προλαμβάνει should not be simply translated as 'prior to' or 'goes ahead with' to refer to a past action of the rich before the arrival of the poor. Instead, προλαμβάνει can possibly be translated non-temporally to mean "begin with," in reference to the act of eating and drinking while the poor keep watching the rich hoping for the leftovers (v. 22b).[36] The

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[34] Peter Lampe, "The Eucharist: Identifying with Christ on the Cross," *Interpretation*: *A Journal* o*f Bible and Theology* 48, no. 1 (1994): 38−39. Read Lampe for an extended explanation about *eranos* meal custom as a Greco-Roman cultural setting that explains the Corinthians' behavior better.

[35] For example, Lietzmann explains two possibilities. First, each participant brings his own food and the rich contribute their share and consume together with their kind, while the poor wait until the rich finish and then they all celebrate the sacrament together. Or else, each high-status participant consumed privately without waiting for late-comers and by the time the poor arrived the rich had already overindulged and gotten drunk. See Hans Lietzmann, *Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy*, trans. by Robert Douglas Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 185. Lietzmann argues that in both cases the Corinthian had such fellowship in the table setting which was a violation of church unity when excluding fellow Christians from the table fellowship.

[36] Andrew Das prefers the non-temporal reading of προλαμβάνω and translates it 'eating in front of' based on

humiliating act of the rich against the poor is best seen in the context of both parties being gathered in the same worship setting. It is in this context that Paul holds rich patrons accountable for despising the church of God and humiliating the poor (v. 22). Likewise, Hofius has translated προλαμβάνω non-temporally, having the meaning of 'take,' such that it is identical in meaning to the simple λαμβάνω (to take). According to both Fee and Winter, the translation 'devour' builds on the non-temporal translation but takes the prefix (προ) to be intensive in force, such that προλαμβάνω coupled with δεῖπνον does not mean simply 'to eat' but rather 'to devour.'[37] The gathering of both parties at the same time and place for the purpose of sharing the divine gift fits best with Paul's critical warning in the context.

The text itself (vv. 24 and 25) supports the non-temporal argument because Paul mentions that Jesus took the bread first and after celebrating the supper then he took the cup. This is clear enough for one to argue for the bread-meal-cup sequence which took place in the presence of the rich and the poor at the same time and place. Both Paul's and Luke's context follows the bread-meal-cup sequence. In verse 25a Paul testifies that Jesus' institution of the cup follows the eating of the supper. The Greek grammatical structure of μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι could possibly mean 'when they had eaten the supper,' which refers then to the common/agape meal of the congregants being placed in the middle of the sacramental elements.[38]

The problem at Corinth was that the 'haves' irresponsibly consumed the meal and become drunk while the poor stayed hungry after partaking of the bread. Then, the 'have nots' waited for the 'haves' to finish their common meal and got drunk so that the entire body could then partake

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the context of the poor being ashamed by the rich. See Andrew Das, "1 Corinthians 11:17−34 Revisited," *Corcordia Theological Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (July 1998):190.

[37] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 542; Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 147; and see also Bruce Winter, "The Lord's Supper at Corinth: An Alternative Reconstruction," *Reformed Journal of Theology* 37, no. 3 (1978): 74−78.

[38] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 882.

of the cup altogether. In this case, the rich and poor could come together and then the 'sacramental' bread would be blessed and eaten first. After this the communal meal and drink began, wherein the rich who sat in the *triclinium* got the best quality food and drink with larger quantities and consumed it first while the poor had to wait at the *atrium* for the leftovers.[39] Then the cup was blessed with the entire congregation present at the end.

Paul's pastoral response in verse 33 confirms the above interpretation when he seeks to conclude his argument urging the rich and high-status Christians at Corinth to "welcome" and "receive" the poor as a beloved part of the body of Christ. Scholars who translate προλαμβάνει temporally have also interpreted ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε temporally, implying that one must avoid a premature starting point for the rich Christians at Corinth. However, the historical, contextual, and exegetical effort presented above questions a mere temporal interpretation of ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε to simply mean "to wait for one another." Instead, Paul attempts to solve the root cause of the problem by urging them 'to welcome' and 'receive' other parts of the body when they came together to eat and drink the Lord's Supper.[40] His command to 'wait for one another' makes little sense to the overall context; rather the alternative translation, 'welcome one another' and/or 'share with one another' (as over against 'devouring your own meal') fits the specific problem in Corinth conveying a message that those who have the security of an abundance of food during a difficult period such as a famine should share with those who could have otherwise contributed to the common meal according to their means.[41] Paul's instruction to eat privately at

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[39] Mark P. Surburg, "The Situation at the Corinthian Lord's Supper in Light of 1 Corinthians 11:21: A Reconsideration," *Concordia Journal* 32, no 1 (2006): 33−37; Similarly, Lampe and Hofius have argued for bread-meal-cup order. See more on Lampe, "The Eucharist," 37 and 134; and Otfried Hofius, "Lord's Supper and the Lord's Supper Tradition: Reflections on 1 Corinthians 11:23b−25.," In *One Loaf, One Cup: Ecumenical Studies of 1 Cor. 11 and Other Eucharistic Texts* (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), 88.

[40] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 568.

[41] Gunther Bornkamm, *Early Christian Experience* (London: SCM, 1969), 128.

home before they assembled together (v. 22) was not to command them to individually consume their food at home without considering the poor. Rather, in addition to sharing the God given resources to the needy, Paul commands the rich to respect and embrace the poorest part of the body by eliminating cultural, social, and economic barriers among the Christian community who partake of the same body and blood of the Lord.

Therefore, Paul made clear the harmony between the Lord's Supper and its manner of celebration because the partaking in a meal that undermines the fellowship of the believers has no value. The socio-cultural and economic inequality in Corinth, which undermines the *koinonia* aspect of the gathering, contributed to the divisions and factions among Christians, which made the celebration of the Lord's Supper ἀναξίως. The entire sociological problems we have presented above are the background for Paul's theological moves against the Corinthians in the section to follow.

Ἀναξίως and Self-Examination (vv. 27−28)

Paul criticized the Corinthians for eating and drinking the Lord's Supper in an "unworthy/careless manner," i.e., the way of eating and drinking in Corinth was the primary criticism. Alternatively, the adverb ἀναξίως could mean eating and drinking the Lord's Supper without acknowledging the unifying and purifying effects of the Meal. It could also mean partaking of the Lord's Supper irreverently,[42] greedily (in a way that dishonors Christ), and unrepentantly. The attitudinal quality of the word ἀναξίως, as opposed to a legalistic or pietistic tendency of the term, is much more compelling in the immediate context (1 Cor. 11:17−34). Martin Chemnitz says, "Paul is not speaking in a general way about guilt, but specifically about

[42] Living Bible translation translates ἀναξίως as 'without proper reverence.'

the way in which one draws guilt upon himself in the Supper, namely, unworthily eating inflicts upon the body of Christ injury and shame no less than those who beat and killed Him."[43] The rich Corinthians, who desecrated the Lord's Supper through their celebration in ἀναξίως, became guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Gordon Fee points out, "Unfortunately, this adverb was translated as "unworthily" in the KJV (unfortunately repeated in the NAB). Since that English adverb seems more applicable to the person doing the eating than to the manner in which it is being done, this word became a dire threat for generations of English-speaking Christians."[44] Fee instead prefers ἀναξίως to be translated as 'in an unworthy manner' rather than 'unworthily,' because this rendering may be less open to a legalistic or pietistic misinterpretation, for it mainly centers around the manner of eating and drinking rather than on the worthiness of an individual based on human works.

The term ἀναξίως is a ἅπαξ λεγόμενον in the entire New Testament;[45] however, other Pauline use of the adverbial term ἀξίως instructs Christians to live or to walk in a manner worthy of their calling, worthy of the Gospel of Christ, worthy of the Lord, and worthy of the God who calls them (Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27−30; Col. 1:10; and 1 Thess. 2:12) respectively. In none of these occurrences does the term ἀξίως have the sense of 'equal to in value or quality' or a legalistic/pietistic tendency; instead, the translation 'corresponding to' or 'appropriate to' fits the context better, as ἀξίως is used as the fruit and upshot of God's grace and calling.[46] In this text Paul is calling the Corinthians to partake of the meal in a manner worthy of or suitable to the

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[43] Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper: De Coena Domini* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1979), 131.

[44] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 619.

[45] Garland, *Firsts Corinthians*, 550. The term ἀναξίως occurs only in 2 Macc. 14:42 and 1 Cor. 11:27). However, latter scribes have added the adverbial Greek tern ἀναξίως on 1 Cor. 11:29.

[46] Mark P. Surburg, "Discerning the Body: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Cor. 11:17−34," (Master of Sacred Theology thesis, St. Louis Concordia Seminary, 2000), 123.

Sacrament.

In 1 Cor. 6:2, Paul used the term ἀνάξιοί in its adjectival form conveying the sense of 'not being qualified' or 'not being good enough.' In Rom. 1:32, Paul used the adjective ἄξιος to show how sinners are worthy (ἄξιος) of death because of their disobedience.[47] The writer of the Book of Revelation uses the adjective ἄξιος to mean 'deserving something' or 'being good enough for something' (Rev. 4:11). Also, the adjectival understanding of ἄξιος is common in Christian liturgy when praising Jesus saying that "you are *worthy*, O Lord, to receive praise, glory and honor, and power for you were slain."[48] Thus, it is imperative that we make a clear distinction between ἀναξίως and ἀνάξιοί when speaking about worthy admission to the Eucharist.

Regarding textual criticism, there is no ancient textual witness for ἀναξίως to be translated as ἀνάξιοί. All textual manuscripts render the term ἀναξίως as an adverb which qualifies the action verb, meaning the act of eating and drinking.[49] The point is then, the adverbial meaning of the original translation of the word ἀναξίως directly goes with the activity of those rich and influential Christians who abused the practice of eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper. Eating the Lord's Supper while divided as a community is abusing the Supper by nullifying the significance of Christ having died for others, because the message of the Lord's Supper requires one to be oriented towards other parts of the body.

The word Ὥστε is a strong inferential which tightly ties verse 27 with the previous sections of the text rendering the conclusion to be drawn from the preceding argument against the

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[47] Paul says, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom.1:32 KJV). Although those people whom Paul mentioned in Rom 1:32 know God's decree that those who do sin deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.

[48] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 889.

[49] See the Apparatus in Nestle-Aland 28 ed. David Trobisch, *A User's Guide to the Nestle-Aland 28 Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013).

Corinthians. Paul is now resuming the main discussion from the previous arguments. The Corinthians' egocentric manner which caused selfishness and schisms has both undermined the very character of the sacrament as 'grace' (a broken body for you) and undermined the Words of Institution, "This is my body." The question in verse 27 concerns what it means to eat and to drink in an 'unworthy manner.' To answer this question, we must understand ἀναξίως in line with the whole context of 1 Cor. 11:17−34.

Unfortunately, the term ἀναξίως has been taken out of context and seriously misinterpreted. It has often been misunderstood to mean that only those members who are ritually clean and do good works are entitled to partake of the Eucharist. Then the call to self-examination in verse 28 has been heard as a call for 'intense introspections.'[50] A close reading of this verse indicates, however, that the main concern for Paul is not that one should be personally sinless via rituals and/or good works as a precondition to qualify for the Lord's Supper. But rather, Paul's warning straightforwardly points to those rich patrons in Roman Corinth who disregarded those 'who have nothing' (v. 22b) and created divisions among God's community (v. 18) when celebrating the Eucharist. For Hays, "To eat the meal unworthily means to eat it in a way that provokes divisions, with contemptuous disregard for the needs of others in the community." For Garland, the term ἀναξίως could mean "doing something that does not square with the character or nature of something." Thiselton notes, "Paul's primary point is that attitude and conduct should fit the message and solemnity of what is being proclaimed."[51] Paul's accusation should be understood in the sense of the manner of eating and drinking the Sacrament.

[50] Hays, *First Corinthians*, 200; Alternatively, Marshall argues that the word 'unworthy' has to do with verse 29 where the person is failing to realize the representative nature of the elements and its implication sufficiently. See more on, Marshall, *Last Supper*, 114.

[51] Hays, *First Corinthians*, 200; Garland, *First Corinthians*, 550; and see Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 889.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper in Corinth was ἀναξίως because the sociological problem we presented earlier has caused a serious theological error which undermined the Sacrament itself. Thus, the Corinthian's bad treatment of their poorer members is the same as misusing of the Lord's Supper itself. Had the Corinthians recognized that treating fellow Christians selfishly is abusing the self-giving of Christ in the sacrament, they would have welcomed the poor. The Corinthians would have probably understood that in the celebration of the Eucharist believers eat and drink the body and the blood of Christ and thus become one body. In the preceding chapter, Paul had already told the Corinthians that when believers partake of the Eucharist they participate in the body and the blood of Christ which enables them to maintain their unity with all believers (1 Cor. 10:16−17).

Paul called them to abandon their arrogance, self-commendation, and self-praise, but instead to humble and examine themselves. The meal which the rich Corinthians wanted to use for their own arrogant commendation was instead meant to be used for the humble examination of the self. And those who eat without examining themselves through repentance and confession caused factions among the body of Christ. They are the ones who eat and drink in an 'unworthy manner' and inflict injury and insult not only on the gathering but also on the very body and blood of Christ.

Paul's advice for self-examination is not setting up an ecclesial practice in which only those with a certain level of spiritual virtues may become ἀνάξιος and can partake of the Eucharist, contra the EOTC. Indeed, virtue and holiness are crucial themes for Paul; however, the point of self-examination in this context does not refer to one's effort in doing good works to qualify for the Eucharist. Paul warned the Corinthians to mind their unity and examine themselves prior to partaking of the Eucharist; otherwise, it would have the opposite effect of the

primary desire of union with God and with the body of Christ. This is why Paul calls the Corinthians to repentance. The lack of repentance or proper self-examination yields bad results for both the individual as well as the whole congregation. This advice of Paul should be a call to be in a state of God's grace when receiving the Sacrament. The question is then what did the self-examination in the Corinthian specific situation entail? Did lack of self-examination make the partakers ἀνάξιος or ἀναξίως?

Unlike the EOTC's interpretation, Paul does not presuppose a sort of ritualistic precondition to be ἀνάξιος for partaking in the Eucharist; rather the appeal for self-examination within the immediate context is referring to the selfish act of the gluttonous Christians which dehumanized a part of the body of Christ as they celebrated the Lord's Supper. Those rich members of the church in Corinth are the ones who ate without examining themselves and became guilty of that which they violated by eating ἀναξίως. The self-examination in this verse then should refer to the high-status Corinthians who caused divisions among the body of Christ and humiliated the poor in the way they celebrated the Sacrament.

Paul's exhortation for self-examination does not change the adverbial reading of ἀναξίως into an adjective (ἀνάξιος), nor did it set the observance of rituals as a criterion and a precondition for partaking of the Eucharist. Rather the way the Corinthians celebrated the meal undermined and nullified their unity in Christ as well as the very essence of the Lord's Supper itself. The σχίσματα subverted their new covenant relationship in the Sacrament, because their selfishness against the brethren undermined the 'for you" dimension of the shed blood and the broken body of Jesus.

The self-examination should primarily be seen in terms of a call for repentance that enables believers to partake of the Eucharist in ἀναξίως. Tiews notes, "Therefore whoever, wants to

receive the Holy Supper in a 'worthy manner' and for his salvation must already have come to repentance and faith beforehand; he must already have received grace and become a true Christian beforehand, must already beforehand have been awakened to life through God and been born again."[52] But whoever partakes of the Holy Supper without repentance will not only not receive the grace which lies in it, but will also find wrath instead of grace, death instead of life, curse instead of blessing, and finally, the partaker will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

The call for self-examination is a warning that all partakers must solely depend on the grace of God as presented in and through the Sacrament rather than invoking social rank, status, human achievements, spiritual maturity and moral excellence or any other human works that become a cause for divisions, boasting, and self-commendation, such as occurs in the EOTC. Paul requires that the Corinthians surrender themselves to the humbling judgment of God and judge themselves to be undeserving recipients of God's grace who gather around the common table of grace.

Paul's Concept of Holiness in First Corinthians

The discussion of "holiness" in First Corinthians, which we need to analyze in the following section, is essential for the argument of the thesis and the question at stake in relation to the EOTC. The concept of holiness is one of the crucial theological themes in Pauline writings when dealing with the relationship between God and humankind. In Paul's writing, one can generally find *two kinds of holiness*: divine holiness, and human holiness. Whenever, Paul mentions holiness in his epistles, he either refers to the divine holiness which has been fully

[52] Christian Tiews, "C.F.W. Walther on Admission to the Lord's Supper." In *Closed Communion? Admission to the Lord's Supper in Biblical Lutheran Perspective* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2017), 295.

manifested to humankind through Christ or the holiness accomplished in humans.

Divine holiness describes God as being fully pure in thought and deed. This holiness is the characteristic which only God has by nature (being) which He makes manifest to us through His justice and righteousness, love, and faithfulness as expressed in the crucifixion of the Christ. Christ has become the center of God's plan of redemption and salvation and being delivered to death on behalf of sinners he demonstrates God's absolute holiness.

Human holiness is one of Paul's concerns insofar that Christians should pursue holiness in their daily lives as a necessary goal to their relationship with God and humankind. He notes, "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).[53] Paul exhorts believers to pursue a life of holiness, and to reorient themselves in their thoughts and actions by demonstrating and perfecting holiness as they reflect God's moral purity in their life and heart.[54]

Paul's appeal for human holiness, however, is enclosed within the doctrine of *sola fide* and *sola gratia*. He states that believers are made holy, and salvation has already been secured for them and a new humanity has been created in the likeness of God. Human holiness is the result of God's declaration; salvation which is a gift of grace made possible through the sacrificial death of the Lord grasped by faith alone. The foundation for human holiness is upon the work of God in Christ, and it is only afterwards that believers are sanctified by God and can pursue human holiness. Paul addressed believers as holy ones because they have already been sanctified by Christ. He notes, "To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord

[53] In 1 Thessalonians, Paul mentioned the purpose of believers' calling saying, "For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7).

[54] Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 413.

Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2 NIV, cf. Eph. 1:4). Believer's holiness becomes the very purpose of God's choice so that they may live God's demand of holiness (Gal. 5:22−25).

Paul preached both the gospel and told the Corinthians that Christians' behavior should correspond to the gospel. Stuhlmacher notes, Paul teaches about "not only the *obedience of faith* to the gospel ... but also the *obedience of deeds* to the Lord Jesus Christ and his instruction."[55] After Paul let Christians know about the saving content of the gospel, he urged them to live a life that corresponded to that gospel (Cf. Phil. 1:5, 7, 12 with Phil. 1:27−30). Stuhlmacher notes, "The Apostle's Paraclesis is an essential part of the gospel; it reveals Christ's saving act and his claims of lordship,"[56] referring both to the gospel and a life lived in the direction of the gospel.

In 1 Cor. 3:16−17, Paul clearly states that believers are God's holy temple. Just like the temple in the Old Testament was characterized as a holy place, believers are made holy and share in divine holiness because of the works of Christ. They spiritually become the temple of God in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells. God no longer dwells in the handmade building; rather the gathered community who begins to exercise their holiness is the true temple in whom God permanently dwells. After Paul mentions that the Christians' body is the temple of God, he then urges them to serve God with complete bodily devotion (Rom. 12:1−2).

In 1 Cor. 7, Paul says that holiness can be transferred from a believing husband to an unbelieving wife or vice versa. He notes, "For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy" (1 Cor. 7:14). The holiness that counts for

[55] Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 415

[56] Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 410.

the unbelieving spouse, however, should not be understood in the Levitical and ritual sense of the Old Testament, where defilement or holiness transfers by touching objects such as a dead body,[57] as the EOTC might understand it. Paul's idea of holiness should be understood in a sense of "…the position in consecration in which the non-Christian spouse is at once placed by his determination to remain united to this Christian spouse,"[58] and that holiness counts for the non-Christian spouse so long as he or she remains in that consent and lives with the believing spouse.

Further, Paul notes that children born of such a family become holy by virtue of the bond which unites that baby with the faith of a believing parent. The state of holiness for those kinds of children becomes effective even if a believing spouse and an unbelieving spouse remain united in marriage. This may imply that children of a Christian parents are placed in the temporary situation of holiness where the benefit of becoming holy ones is already given to parents and passed to the children by virtue of the God-given family bond which may be effective until the child disbelieves in God and His redemptive work in Christ.[59]

In his writings, Paul intentionally exhibits both forensic and cultic images of holiness in order to explain the divine salvific act of holiness manifested in Christ. This divine holiness makes a believer ἄξιος of the body and the blood of the Lord by means of *faith in Christ*. In its cultic sense, Paul strongly urges believers to pursue holiness in their daily life and notes, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2).

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[57] Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), 38, 43.

[58] See further the discussion of Conzelmann on this verse. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 340. For similar argument see also Godet, *First Corinthians,* 338−40.

[59] Godet notes that those children's "fitness for baptism arises from the solidarity of life which unites them to their parents, and through them to the covenant of grace founded in Christ, and in which these live." Godet, *First Corinthians*, 346.

However, Paul did not say that mankind's attempt to live a holy life makes them ἄξιοί for the Lord's Supper. After all, human holiness is achieved by the help of the Holy Spirit because without God's help and his divine act in humans, holiness cannot be achieved by human works apart from faith and the help of the Holy Spirit. Christ delivered believers from the power of sin and the devil and now "In the Spirit Christ is with and in believers, helping them by their fulfillment of the law to realize the freedom given to them (cf. Rom. 8:4−11)."[60] This holiness is oriented by an eschatological reality that is awaiting Christians in the future (1 Cor. 1:8 and 5:5), because holiness in the sanctification of daily life must be understood in the framework of the imminent second coming of Jesus and the crown awaiting those who pursue human holiness. Stuhlmacher correctly says, "The ethical consequences of this Christological view of the future show themselves in the Apostle's call to *distance and detachment from the present world*."[61]

In sum, we are made holy already here and now without reserve or qualification by what God has done in Jesus; our life in holiness depends entirely on our grasping this truth, i.e., faith. Paul states that believers are called to be holy ones because they are already made holy in Christ and then, pursuing human holiness is God's will for them. Human holiness has been already accomplished by the divine plan and action, but at the same time Christians must stay in that state of holiness specifically through 'self-examination' and 'discerning the body' and exercising a life characterized by the gospel.

An Argument on Paul's Use of Σῶμα (verse 29)

Since Paul did not explicitly offer the definition of ἀναξίως in verse 27, his use of the term

[60] Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 414.

[61] Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 416.

σῶμα (verse 29) has been a matter of debate among modern scholars about what σῶμα exactly meant. Some interpret the term in reference to ecclesiology while others argue for the sacramental meaning of σῶμα. For example, Hays, Horrell, Fee, Witherington, O'Connor, Lampe, and others prefer the ecclesiological reading of σῶμα, meaning the Corinthians failed to recognize or receive one another as beloved brothers and sisters in Christ; instead, they treated the poor with contempt and not as part of the body of Christ.[62] Paul accused the Corinthians because they failed to 'discern the body' as part of the corporate body of Christ which is the church. For them, partaking of the Eucharist is not an individualistic matter; rather, it is a corporate body matter which requires Christians to commune as one body of the Lord. Paul is urging the Corinthians to "recognize what characterizes the body as different, i.e. to be mindful of the uniqueness of Christ, who is *separated* from others in the sense of giving himself for others in sheer grace."[63] Dale Martin notes that the primary problem in this text is failure to 'discern the body;' the unity of the body of Christ, which is the Church.[64] James Dunn, in support of the above argument, concluded that the Corinthians' problem is primarily social rather than theological.[65] Lampe notes, "The ethical implications of the Eucharist were far more vital than the later intricate theological discussions of how Christ might be present in the Lord's Supper."[66]

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[62] Hays, *First Corinthians*, 200−6; David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); Fee, *First Corinthians*; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 251−52; O'Connor, *First Corinthians*, 226−29; and see Lampe, "The Eucharist," 36−49.

[63] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 893.

[64] Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 195−96.

[65] James Dunn, *1 Corinthians*: *New Testament Guides* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 79.

[66] Lampe, "The Eucharist," 43. The text does not give any hint if the division in Corinth was between those who argue for the *real presence* against those who argue for *spiritual presence* of Christ in the Eucharistic elements.

The omission of the term αἷμα in verse 29, as well as the sociological and the historical context we have presented earlier, favors such understanding. If what the Corinthians had to correctly discern was meant to be understood sacramentally then Paul would have stated both 'the body' and 'the blood' not just 'the body.' Blomberg notes, "Probably [body] refers to the corporate body of Christ, the church, particularly since Paul does not refer to *both* body and blood."[67] Thus, the scholars I quoted above argue that the phrase διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα implies the need to recognize and welcome the community of believers as one corporeal body of the Christ rather than the Sacrament.

Other scholars such as Lietzmann, Dunn, Marshall, Das, Garland, Gibbs, Pfitzner, Lockwood, and others interpret τὸ σῶμα sacramentally, meaning the lack of judgement or discernment regarding the sacred nature of the Lord's Supper made the Corinthians partake of the Supper in an 'unworthy manner.'[68] One's failure to discern Christ's body and blood in the elements prevents a worthy reception and brings down God's judgment.[69] The term σῶμα therefore primarily refers to the body of Christ that is presented in and through the bread and the wine.[70] Paul mentioned just σῶμα in verse 29 as the short hand form of 'the bread' and 'the

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[67] Blomberg, *First Corinthians*, 231. (Emphasis mine).

[68] Hans Lietzmann, *Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy*, trans. Robert Douglas Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1953); James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 609−10; Marshall, *Last Supper*, 114−15. Alternatively, Marshall argues that the word 'unworthily' has to do with verse 29 where the person is failing to realize the representative nature of the elements and its implication sufficiently. Das, "1 Corinthians 11:17−34 Revisited," 198; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 561−62; Garland, *First Corinthians*, 552; Commission on Theology and Church Relations, *Admission to the Lord's Supper*, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church−Missouri Synod (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1999). https://www.lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations/documents; and Pfitzner, *First Corinthians*, 185.

[69] Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, 400.

[70] Evnie V. Lassman, "1 Corinthians 11:29: 'Discerning the Body." In *Closed Communion? Admission to the Lord's Supper in Biblical Lutheran Perspective*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison and Pless T. John (St. Louis: Concordia, 2017), 334; and Chemnitz, *Lord's Supper*, 129−35.

wine' because he had already used both 'the body' and 'the blood' in the previous verses and did not want to bore readers with unnecessary repetition. Likewise, in 1 Cor. 10:17, Paul had already used the term 'one loaf' as a shorthand for the 'one cup.'[71]

Paul's exhortation to 'discern the body' in verse 29, however, can possibly be interpreted both ways, referring to the *church* as signified by the breaking and distribution of the bread and Christ's real body and blood as presented in and through the Sacrament. The effect of both problems hindered the Corinthians reception of the Sacrament and even made them liable to God's judgment.[72] Das concluded that "Paul's advice, therefore, is to discern the Lord's body and blood. First, this means recognizing the objective reality, that Christ's body and blood are truly present. This should create a sense of reverence instead of a partisan spirit when the church comes together for worship. Second, Christians must equally recognize what the Sacrament is intended to nurture and represent, the oneness of believers in unity (1 Corinthians 10:17)."[73]

If the problem in Corinth was just the social or ecclesiological one, Paul would have told the rich to share their food with the poor and then the problem would have been solved. However, the problem was not just social but also theological. The judgment Paul predicted goes beyond their act of despising the poor because it was very serious, to the point of jeopardizing their lives leaving many among them sick, weak, and even fallen asleep or dead. They were liable to God's judgment because they despised the Lord's body and blood in their unworthy

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[71] Barrett, *The First Epistle*, 274−75; and see also Das, "1 Corinthians 11:17−34 Revisited," 200.

[72] See also Bornkamm for similar argument. Bornkamm, "Lord's Supper," 123−30. Das concluded that "Paul's advice, therefore, is to discern the Lord's body and blood. First, this means recognizing the objective reality, that Christ's body and blood are truly present. This should create a sense of reverence instead of a party spirit when the church comes together for worship. Second, Christians must equally recognize what the Sacrament is intended to nurture and represent, the oneness of believers in unity (1 Corinthians 10:17)." See Das, "1 Corinthians 11:17−34 Revisited," 203.

[73] Das, "1 Corinthians 11:17−34 Revisited," 203.

manner of partaking of the Eucharist. When the Corinthians came together in such a divisive manner, they were not actually eating and drinking the Lord's Supper. They were very much blinded, busy with their own social meal and ignorant in recognizing what participation in the body of Christ implies. The true body and blood of which they partook would have nurtured their unity both with God and with other parts of the body of Christ. To further justify this argument, we need to see both the immediate and wider contexts of the text.

Before we argue either for the sacramental or the ecclesiological reading of σῶμα, we must let the context determine its meaning. In 1 Cor. 11:27 and 10:16, Paul used σῶμα in reference to the sacramental body of Christ. Any time Paul uses σῶμα, its meaning must be primarily determined by the immediate context and then looked at from the viewpoint of its wider context. The immediate context (vv. 23−32), especially the verses containing the words of institution (vv. 23−26) proves that σῶμα refers to the Sacrament, the body and blood of the Lord. This immediate context has more influence on the meaning of σῶμα in verse 29 than forcing the text to adhere to the more distant context found in chapter 12.[74] If Paul had to use the term ἐκκλησία instead of σῶμα in verse 29, he would have used it because he had already used the same term (ἐκκλησία) in verses 16, 18, 19 and 22.

On the other hand, everything Paul is about to say concerning the guilt of the Corinthians follows not only from the Words of Institution (1 Cor. 11: 23−26), but also from the socio-cultural problems in Corinth. The Pauline analogy of σῶμα could possibly be taken as an ecclesiological organism, meaning a call for an organic unity in the community without necessitating uniformity. In 1 Cor. 11: 17−22, 33−34, we see the social problem in the

[74] Ernie V. Lassman, "Discerning the Body," *Closed Communion? Admission to the Lord's Supper in Biblical Lutheran Perspective*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison and John T. Pless (St. Louis: Concordia, 2017), 336−39.

background which jeopardized the Corinthians' unity as one church of Christ. The class division during the celebration of the Lord's Supper is the manifestation of their ignorance and inability to comprehend what sharing in one body implies about their unity. When we look at the wider context (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12−31), Paul used σῶμα in reference to the ecclesiastical body which is the church. [75] Paul notes, "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17). Theissen correctly notes that the term 'the body of Christ' in the wider Pauline writings is a reminder for social cohesion for the different classes within the community at Corinth.[76]

Both the sacramental and the ecclesiological aspect intersect when Christians eat and drink the body and the blood of the Lord. Robertson and Plummer have argued for such a reading of σῶμα and note, "No definition of 'unworthily' is given; but the expression covers all that is incompatible with the intention of Christ in instituting the rite. It is quite certain that selfish and greedy irreverence is incompatible. But what follows shows that not only external behavior but also an inward attitude of soul is included. There must be brotherly love towards all and sure faith in Christ."[77] Kent Brown argues against the tendency of overriding one view in opposition to the other and notes, "to fail to discern the body of Christ in the people for whom he died is tantamount to profaning the body of Christ in the bread."[78]

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[75] For the Lutherans, the frequent use of σῶμα in chapter 12 clearly refers to the church; however, since σῶμα in the later text was not written in the context of the Lord's Supper, it should not determine the use of σῶμα in chapter 11:29.

[76] Theissen, *Social Setting*, 36−37 and 96−99; see also Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1995), 92−96.

[77] Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1929), 250.

[78] Kent E. Brower, *Living as God's Holy People: Holiness and Community in Paul* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 72. Nash said, "Very probably, Paul means both Christ's' physical body given on the cross, as proclaimed in the bread and cup of the meal, *and* the church as his continuing body. For Paul, the two are joined together." See Nash, *First Corinthians*, 341−42.

The complete meaning of the text can only be grasped from an interpretation that combines both the immediate and wider context of the text. Recognizing the sacramental nature of the Eucharist is one part of the problem and another is the factions that risk their unity in the body of Christ. Looking at the immediate context, the term σῶμα primarily refers to Christ's physical body in the Sacrament; however, even if the term σῶμα does not directly refer to the congregation gathered in the immediate context, it certainly has "an echo of its meaning further away in the wider context, where it refers to the church (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12−27).[79]

We may conclude then interpreting ἀναξίως depends greatly upon what σῶμα refers to; however, given the immediate and wider context of the passage, Paul must have been referring both to Christ who is present in the element and to the church as his corporate body. The understanding of one alternative should never neglect the other reality. Perhaps Paul deliberately used the term in anticipation of its dual application of the expression. The divisions and lack of loving care for the poorer members of the body have the effect of tearing apart the body of Christ, nullifying its sacrificial character of Christ as presented in and through the elements.

Central to our thesis, neither the sacramental nor the ecclesiological reading of σῶμα enforces the EOTC's idea that the Old Testament's cultic rituals and purity laws are a decisive factor in making a partaker ἀξιος for the Eucharist. Thus, the text deals with two different issues that are interrelated and inseparable: first the divisions between Christians (vv. 17−22, and 33−34), and then failure to recognize Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament and what that implies in believer's lives (vv. 23−32). There is nothing here about any of purification or cultic ritual.

[79] Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, 408; see also Commission on Theology and Church Relations, *Admission to the Lord's Supper,* A Report of the Comminion on Theology and Chrurch Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1999), 17.

Σῶμα as Participation in Christ

On the contrary, when looking from a distance at the wider context, Paul's exhortation to 'discern the body of Christ' may not be restricted to the sacramental and/or ecclesiological aspects of the term; rather, discerning the body could possibly be a call to a full participation in the life of the incarnated *logos*. It is an invitation to participate in Christ's incarnation, life and ministry, crucifixion, resurrection and his second coming into which each believer is called. Further, it invites Christians to participate in the entire sacrificial life of Christ and his second coming. This is a far cry from fearing participation in the sacrifice of Christ, as the EOTC has interpreted the text. If anything, it is an invitation to a new sacrificial life by the very One who was sacrificed for us and we receive the benefits of his sacrifice through faith.

What is at issue then and how do Christians fully participate in Christ? Paul told Christians in Corinth that they are called and sanctified in Christ (1 Cor. 1:2) and have begun their new life journey in baptism. He notes, "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). Christians become partakers of the nature of God through the Holy Spirit and their participation in Christ is evident through their true baptism. Stuhlmacher correctly notes, "The body of Christ is a reality into which one is baptized (1 Cor. 12: 13), and Christ is as closely united with the church that forms his body as are a man and wife, who become one flesh in marriage (Cf. Gal. 3:27−28; 1 Cor. 6:13, 16−17; Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 5:29−33)."[80]

Paul notes that Christians are crucified and buried with Christ into death and gain a share in his resurrection (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). They identify themselves with the incarnated *logos* and perceive themselves as daily dying with him on the Cross. Rather than the sacrifice taking place

[80] Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament,* 393.

on the altar, the sacrifice occurs every time we die to self and live for Christ. Paul notes, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). From the time of their baptism, believers are subordinated to Jesus and called to no longer serve sin but the righteousness that conforms to the will of God. The faithful are no more slaves to sin, but rather they can overcome various temptations from the devil, their sinful nature, and the world through their *koinonia* with the risen Christ which enables them to ascend into a sanctified life.

Lampe correctly notes, "One only develops close contact with the risen Christ if one enters into communion with his death on the cross; and the risen Christ, with his saving power, is also a judging Lord to whose reign the Eucharistic participant is subjected."[81] In this sense then, Paul's attempt to connect the Eucharist with the Christians' ethical responsibilities makes much sense and echoes Chrysostom's homilies that we studied earlier. Through the sharing of the Sacraments (baptism and the Eucharist) the faithful become united with Christ and Christ implants his own life in the faithful who partake of his own flesh and blood. The reality of dying with Christ is not just an abstract concept but rather, it brings visible behavioral changed marked by altruism. Paul notes, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24).

The faithful partakers of the Supper are united with Christ and share both the divinity and the humanity of Jesus on a level befitting man (2 Pet. 1:4), but this should not be confused with human's becoming gods in the same way that Christ is God. Believers are united in another manner because they have become partakers of his divine nature through the Spirit. Through the

[81] Lampe, "The Eucharist," 46

sharing of the Lord's Supper the faithful members become con-corporal with Christ's life and ministry, which is also the foundation for being partners with other members as the result of their participation in the incarnated body of the Lord.

Christians' union in the body of Christ can be a boundary marker between believers and nonbelievers. Jerome Neyrey notes that Christ's body could be taken as a 'bounded system' in which schism is not allowed by the community among those who have been redeemed and have shared in the life and resurrected body of Christ.[82] Paul compares the Corinthians' identity before and after being Christian and compelled them to clean out the old leaven (1 Cor. 5:7) while urging them to live distinctively as people sanctified and justified in Christ. Their sins were washed away in Baptism (1 Cor. 6:11), they were sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:2), and by faith in Christ's atoning blood they are cleansed and sanctified so that they may become people who are dedicated to God. What they had become by faith (clean, sanctified, and holy), they also should become in practice by maintaining their unity in the body of Christ.

Paul's experience and call to 'die with Christ' (1 Cor. 15:31) is more than an individual experience of mystical spirituality; rather it has to do with sharing the experience of the destitute because the effects of participating in the death of Christ are not just spiritual but also physical, as Chrysostom exhorted his congregation. Paul's identification with Christ crucified ties his strong theology of dying with Christ to the sharing of that life with others in most unfortunate situations, a sharing that reflects a Christ-like attitude and commitment to live a way of life that is marked by dying.

The historic incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and the second coming of Christ, into

[82] Jerome Neyrey, *Paul, in Other Words: A Cultural Reading of His Letter* (Louisville: Westmenister, 1990), 116−17; see also Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 42−49, 281−97.

which Christians are called, therefore, unifies all members of the church regardless of their diversified situations. The union is both vertical and horizontal, meaning the faithful are incorporated into both a spiritual and physical union with Christ and with each other. The crucified Christ is the bond of union not only between believers and Christ in the sharing of the sacrament but also between other members of the body in sharing the need of each other.

In general, Paul's exhortation to 'discern the body' must be principally seen within the immediate context as primarily referring to the body and blood of Christ as presented in and through the elements. However, there is the possibility of considering the wider context where Paul implies an ecclesiological sense of the term σῶμα. Such understanding of σῶμα deconstructs the ideology of power and status through the picture of Christ crucified, which acknowledges the life of diversity within the Christian community. Besides, the call to 'discern the body' could mean that one can have a full share in the life of the incarnate, crucified, and resurrected logos as well as to be united to God and to the community of those who share in the same body and blood of the Lord. The fact that the Corinthians are sanctified and called into Christ describes a way of life which is participation in the body of Christ. The ἀξίως participation in the Lord's Supper is a witness to the resurrection and ascension of the human nature in Christ and the life and unity of the faithful nurtured by the actual eating of the body and drinking of the blood of the Lord that has no other meaning apart from being united in Christ.

Conclusion

The problem in Corinth could possibly be both sociological and theological in nature. Paul did not just condemn the Corinthians "on the basis of their lovelessness over against the spiritual body of Christ, against the fellow members of the community; at the same time, he was condemning them for having sinned against the gift, which was extended to them under the

special bread and the blessed wine."[83] The Corinthians most probably knew that what they were eating and drinking was the Lord's Supper. The text does not give any hint of the Corinthians skepticism that they were eating the true blood and body of Jesus; however, the way they related to each other exposed their ignorance of the fact that eating and drinking the Lord's body ἀναξίως was sinning against the gift itself.[84]

Whether one integrates the sociological or the theological aspects of the problem in Corinth, or prioritizes one over the other, does not alter the adverbial meaning of ἀναξίως (the manner of eating and drinking the Lord's Supper) into an adjective (worthiness achieved by human works). Those people who needed to discern the body of Christ were those rich Christians at Corinth who primarily became guilty of abusing the blood and the body of Christ in the manner they celebrated the Lord's Supper. The judgment that Paul predicted is towards the same Christians who had taken the gift of the Sacrament for granted and made use of the Lord's Supper for the benefit of their own social status and self-promotion. They became guilty of the body and the blood of Christ because by tearing apart the body of Christ into 'the haves' and the 'have nots' they undermined the self-giving presence of Christ in the Supper. The Corinthians needed to understand that it is Christ's body and blood that unites the poor and the rich Christians together as one body and one community of believers (1 Cor. 10:16−17), because one of the effects and purposes of the Eucharist is preservation of the unity of all believers.

The whole emphasis in Paul is upon 'eating and drinking' and upon the commandment not to celebrate the Lord's Supper in an 'unworthy manner.' Sinning against the brother in the

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[83] Albrecht Peters and Thomas Trapp, *Commentary on Luther's Catechisms* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2012), 188.

[84] Robert S. Nash, *First Corinthians* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2009), 341. Nash says, "Eating the meal 'appropriately' means embodying in their [the Corinthians'] own behavior the same selflessness the meal proclaims."

context of the celebration is sinning against the Sacrament and against Christ, because the sacramental food has the purpose and effect of uniting the many members into one body. In Paul's mind then, the deepest offense that the Corinthians committed was against the body and the blood of the Lord as manifested in the factions and divisions between parts of the one body.

The call to 'self-examination' is not primarily a call to deeply judge oneself as to whether one is ritually clean or not, contra the EOTC. The realities involved in the Eucharist are not created or altered by human achievement or even by the faith of those who are eating and drinking; rather, the efficacy of the forgiveness of sins is set forth for Christians in the Words of promise and can only be grasped by grace through faith. Those who do not 'examine themselves' thoroughly, 'discern the body' rightly, and honor the Sacrament by means of concrete actions still receive the Lord's Supper but in an 'unworthy manner' for their condemnation.

Therefore, reading the term ἀναξίως outside of the context leads one to assume incorrectly, as in the case of the EOTC, that Paul was primarily commanding an individualistic and introspective examination of one's commitment to observe cultic rituals to ensure one's worthiness. Paul's primary pastoral concern, however, was to reunite those divided parties and give humans value through the self-giving act of Christ as presented in and through the sharing of the Sacrament. Paul's final exhortation to accept or receive one another as beloved brethren in Christ (vv. 33−34) reflects the message of Christ's self-sacrificial offering implied in the eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper. It is into this self-sacrificial love that each Christian likewise is called to walk because in the sharing of the Sacrament, believers die with Christ.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In this conclusion, we shall first summarize the discussions of each chapter and then present the implications of the research findings. We shall demonstrate the implications of the findings by describing the proper relationship between the worthy admission to the Eucharist and the concept of *sola fide*. Finally, we shall offer our suggestion for a better and equivalent Amharic word for the adverbial term ἀναξίως so that the Bible Translation Society in Ethiopia may start the dialogue to include the proper term in the upcoming Amharic revised version of the Scripture.

Summary of the Research

We have argued in this thesis that ancient Ethiopian traditions and their broader context decisively shaped the way the EOTC has interpreted the Holy Scriptures across the centuries. The Church's biblical interpretation was shaped and developed under the substantial influence of the Church's ancient tradition in Ethiopian's historical and cultural context. To prove the fact, we first presented the pre-Christian historical affiliation between Israel and Ethiopia. Before the coming of Christianity in Ethiopia, the northern part of the country had already accepted the monotheistic belief of Judaism, and the Ethiopians had identified themselves as God's chosen people. The Ethiopians confirmed this when Menelik I brought the True Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia after the historic encounter between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. Later, when Christianity came to Ethiopia, the influence of Judaism was evident through the maintenance of certain rituals such as fasting and almsgiving, dietary laws, the practice of circumcision, the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and all of the Mosaic restrictions that pertained to clean and unclean people, animals, and even sacred spaces—essential teachings of

the Church up until today. More important to our discussion, the EOTC adapted Judaism to the doctrine and practice of its Eucharist teaching and defined worthy admission to the Eucharist in terms of the adherent's commitment to observe the rituals.

Then, we examined the EOTC *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast*, which are authoritative ecclesiastical documents in Ethiopia which inform its liturgy and church practice. We have argued that the EOTC's liturgy, which preserves the anaphoras of the early church fathers, reveals the impact and influence of the Coptic Egyptian and Syrian liturgical forms of teachings and traditions. The *Qeddassé* and the *Fetha Nagast* strictly teach that the Old Testament concept of holy things for holy people and the requirement of cleanliness and purity must be worked out by those who intend to partake of the Sacrament. In addition to the call for purity and cleanliness, both documents stress the danger of partaking of the Eucharist when ritually unworthy. Specifically, the parallel drawn between the 'Eucharistic sacrifice' and 'the coal of fire' causes fear and intimidation in those who intend to partake of the Eucharist. Thus, in addition to the rigorous obligation of observing the rituals, the picture of the Eucharist as a consuming fire that burns sinners for all of eternity terrifies the members, instead of welcoming them to celebrate God's love, forgiveness, and the life he promised for sinners through the sharing of the Sacrament.

To further justify the argument, we evaluated the interpretation of the term ἀναξίως in the EOTC's *Andemta* Commentary (AC) tradition. Since the Antiochene and Alexandrian interpretative traditions influenced the EOTC's interpretative tradition in AC, it was essential to identify the two school's interpretative traditions before examining the interpretative traditions of the commentary. Therefore, in chapter three, we argued against the conventional hostility drawn between the two schools regarding the Antiochene and Alexandrian interpretative traditions.

According to the conventional view, the Antiochenes held that the text gives the details of the historical event in the text seeking a single sense of the given text. But the Alexandrian interpretative tradition believes that the word of the text refers to the spiritual truth found outside of the text, which may also carry various spiritual meanings independent of the historical account of the text. Nevertheless, we argued that both schools understood that the interpretive task should account for the spiritual understanding of the text that is deeply rooted in the historical reality recorded in the text. On the bases of such understanding the early exegetes from both traditions tried to interpret the Eucharistic sacrifice, found in the Book of Hebrews, in light of the Old Testament sacrifices, which received their perfect fulfillment in the sacrificial death of Christ.

After we established the interrelatedness of the earlier exegetical traditions of both schools, we showed how those earlier biblical interpretative traditions were woven into the unique Ethiopian interpretative traditions preserved in the AC corpus. We demonstrated that the commentary was formed and developed under various theological and exegetical traditions and created a unique exegetical tradition that dwells within the Ethiopian context. While some scholars conclude that the AC follows the literal interpretive method, others have asserted that the allegorical interpretive methods should be employed in the commentary. However, we have argued the case that the influence of both the allegorical and literal interpretative methods are apparent in the Ethiopian interpretative tradition. Moreover, we have also shown how the EOTC's biblical interpretation has been extensively influenced by an allegorical approach combined with its own unique tradition sometimes deviating from the historical meaning of the text. This was exemplified in our study by looking at the interpretation of the term ἀναξίως in the *Andemta* Commentary and its subsequent versions of the Scripture in Ethiopian languages.

We discovered that the translation and interpretation of the term ἀναξίως in the Ethiopic

documents substitutes the adverbial meaning of the term ἀναξίως with an adjectival form that distorts the meaning of Paul's discussion of participation in the Eucharist in 1 Corinthians, leading to an emphasis on ritual purity rather than the evangelical intent Paul had in mind. We did this through an exegetical analysis of 1 Cor. 11:17−34. Detailed exegetical work was dedicated to 1 Cor. 11:27−29 in order to help us understand what the text meant by ἀναξίως in light of Paul's exhortation for self-examination and discerning the body. We have argued that Corinth's social and theological problems are inseparably interrelated, leading the Corinthians to celebrate the Eucharist in an unworthy manner. In other words, the term ἀναξίως in the Corinthian's context refers to the unworthy manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper rather than referring to the attendee's commitment to the Old Testament rituals, purity, and cleanliness codes as it has been the case in the EOTC.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study show that Ethiopian Christianity and culture have a substantial number of shared cultural and religious elements that are from Judaic, Greek, Syrian, and Coptic sources; however, in all periods of Ethiopian history, the receptivity of foreign religious and cultural traditions in Ethiopia has never been a passive and literal borrowing. Specifically, as it is the case for this dissertation, the EOTC is unique in the fact that it has retained several Judaic customs which pervade the Church's public life and have often resulted in the preservation of a characteristic of the Old Testament observance of rituals and worship, where religion and culture are viewed as indivisible elements of one unit.

These findings show that Christianity in the EOTC's context is not only a personal adherence to a particular creed, but it is also an all-inclusive way of life strongly tied to various rituals and aspects of national identity and communal life. In other words, the practice and the

life of faith in Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity emphasizes the religious customs of rituals and social conventions, not just the custom of doctrine.

Therefore, we conclude that the integration of Judaism and Christianity in the EOTC is a unique experience of non-Hellenized Christianity that manifests itself through the peculiar Hebraic-Jewish character of the Ethiopian religious assimilation, which is uncommon to the rest of the world. Since the encounter with Christianity does not abandon all Jewish forms of spiritual practices and traditions, on the one hand, there are some elements that are unique to EOTC Christianity that can be celebrated for their distinct contribution to the Ethiopian way of life and her piety which is, in many ways, tied up with her continuation of any number of Jewish rituals that cement a living connection between the people of the Old Covenant and those of the New.

However, the strict enforcement of observing the Old Testament rituals in the EOTC is problematic when the value of observing such rituals becomes a formative factor of one's worthy admission to or rejection from the service of the Eucharist, turning what was meant to be Gospel into Law. In other words, some of the rituals tied to the worthy admission to the Eucharist in the EOTC can be a helpful external discipline of the body; however, it is unsupportive when it becomes a barrier for Christians to come to the Lord's Table. In the Old Testament, God required the Jews to observe certain rituals before worship and offering sacrifices in the temple. However, in the New Testament, Christ is the true and holy sacrifice who offered himself on behalf of sinners (Col. 2:9).

It should be clear that a Christian is not under any obligation to do as the laws require of him in order to make himself clean and righteous before the service of the Eucharist. If Christians think that they need to be sinless to partake of the Eucharist, then not only do they have a works-based view of God and salvation, but they also have disqualified everyone from

ever participating in the Eucharist. In other words, when Christians judge worthiness based on human works, instead of completely trusting and depending on Christ's work on their behalf, they put the Gospel itself at stake.

On the other hand, the Gospels and the early church fathers have emphasized the need for Christian virtue after one becomes saved and becomes a Christian, not just from time to time before partaking of the Eucharist, but as a way of life. It should be underlined that living a life worthy of the Eucharist is not the same as making oneself worthy to partake in the Eucharist, though the two should not be separated from each other. In other words, living in a 'worthy manner' [ἀξίως] of the Eucharist is not the same as making oneself 'worthy' [ἄξιος] for the Eucharist by mean of good works. Therefore, the EOTC teaching about the need for good works in relation to the worthy admission to the Eucharist must be understood within the notion of *sola fide*, which is the center of good works.

Jesus and the Unclean

Jesus's treatment of the so-called 'unclean people' differs from the EOTC's treatment. Similar to the EOTC, during Jesus' time, the concept of purity was a binary opposite as evidenced by the systematic structures, classifications, and evaluations of a group of people which made external boundaries in order to distinguish clean and unclean people, just as the EOTC make boundaries between a worthy and unworthy member of the church prior to admitting them to the Eucharist. During Jesus' time, Pharisees, scribes, the chief priest, and all other religious leaders strictly observed the purity laws and defined their rank of holiness in terms of their commitment to the Old Testament purity system.

Nevertheless, the synoptic gospels tells us that Jesus' meal fellowship with the unclean people of the community was a radical experience contrary to the existing norm. He had table

fellowship with sinners, the poor, tax collectors, sick people, prostitutes, Samaritans, and with those who were considered ceremonially unclean (Luke 1:46−55; 5:27−32; 7:36−50). Such radical meal customs are greatly emphasized much in Luke's gospel. Such customs also contributed to Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees and the high priests.[1] The gospels also clarify the ignorance, failure, weakness, and sins of even the disciples participating in the Lord's Supper. The disciples' failure before and after the Last Supper celebration is emphatically stressed in Mark's gospel.[2] Their ignorance regarding the cost of discipleship is shown in their argument about who will be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven (Mark 9: 33−34). Jesus told the disciples about his crucifixion at Jerusalem (Mark 8:32−38; 9:32−37; 10:35−45); however, in all the cases, they misunderstood and even rejected his mission.

In the Last Supper context, Jesus predicted the failure of all the disciples, saying, "You will all fall away" (Mark 14:27). Especially to Peter, "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today-yes, tonight-before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times" (Mark 14:30). Towards the end of Jesus' life, all the disciples denied Jesus and turned from their mission (Mark 14:32−72). Mark ends the gospel with no one among the disciples at the cross of Jesus. Even the young man following Jesus to the end fled naked (Mark 14:51−52). Mark says that the (eleven) disciples were not the first persons who saw the empty tomb; instead, the women were the first witnesses (Mark 16:1−8), but even then, they did not believe (Mark 16:13). That is why even after the resurrection, Jesus rebuked the disciples for not believing and recalling what Jesus' told them during his earthly ministry (Luke 24:25).

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[1] Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 21−24, 577−86; and see D. A. Carson, and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 119−21.

[2] Francis J. Moloney, *A Body Broken for a Broken People: Eucharist in the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 34−35.

Especially, but not only, Markan theology of the Eucharist is also closely related to his view on the weakness and falling character of the original disciples indicating their unworthiness. Likewise, a Christian community gathers fallen and failing people looking forward to their healing as they share the Eucharist. That is why Jesus never excluded any of the disciples from celebrating the Last Supper, although he already knew their weakness and failure in advance. Moloney correctly says, "the vocation to live through the mystery of failure, depending only upon the greater mystery of the love and power of God shown to us in Jesus, stands at the heart of the message of the Gospel of Mark."[3]

Looking back to the passion narrative, we observe the contrast between Jesus' self-offering unto death and the failure of the disciples to recognize him and his mission. Moloney rightly notes, "The failure of the disciples is a message about the overpowering need for dependence upon Jesus and trust in God's saving power through him,"[4] rather than being confident in making themselves clear and pure through observing rituals. It should be underlined that the shed blood and broken body of Jesus, offered on behalf of sinners, is the only thing that cleans and makes Christians worthy to partake in the Lord's Supper.

Even though Jesus had contact with people characterized as unclean, in all of His contacts with unclean people He did not bring uncleanness or impurity upon Himself. Instead, He imparted cleanness to them. An example of this is when the menstruating woman who touched Jesus was healed from her bleeding (Mark 5:28−29). When he touched the leper, Jesus was not made unclean; but rather Jesus being "moved with pity, He stretched out His hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately leprosy left him, and he was made

[3] Moloney, *Body Broken for a Broken People*, 56.

[4] Moloney, *Body Broken for a Broken People*, 36.

clean" (Mark. 1:41−42). Likewise, when Jesus touched the corpse of Tabitha, He did not become unclean; instead, the dead body was made alive again (Mark 5:41−42).

Thus, while the gospels present Jesus as a figure who challenged the Jewish purity system, the gospels also describe Jesus as a reformer who was in favor of other core values which were more inclusive. These core values insist that Jesus alone makes sinners holy, the sick whole, and the ritually unclean clean. Jesus' incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection are to reform the unclean and make them clean through faith alone. According to Jesus, purity does not reside on the lips or hands but in the heart; purity is measured by one's faith in Christ and in what He did, not by the traditional codes of men. Thus, pollution does not come by violating dietary rules or eating without washing hands (Matt. 15:1−20), but by the lack of faith in Christ and in what He has done on our behalf.

Ἀναξίως vs. *Sola Fide*

The implication of this finding leads us to question whether *sola fide* is the proper preparation for one to worthily partake of the Eucharist. Our research indicates that it is wrong to conclude that *sola fide* is enough preparation for partaking in the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. Instead, one must demonstrate that faithful Christian living matches the implication of the Eucharist. Paul's final exhortation and solution to the problem of eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner in verses 33 and 34 never suggests *sola fide* to be the sole solution. Instead, Paul's primary pastoral concern was to exhort and reunite those divided parties and give human value through the self-giving act of Christ as presented through and in the sharing of the Sacrament. Moreover, the love principle that Paul proposes at the end of the text is the reflection of Christ's self-sacrificial character for others which is meant to be displayed among the Christian community in a welcoming, respecting, and sharing of their resources.

Martin Luther interprets the lexical word ἀναξίως as an adjective, and this is evident in the way he sought to solve the problem by insisting on *sola fide* as the solitary means to be worthy for the Sacrament. Although Luther seems to have read the Greek lexical form of ἀναξίως as an adjective, he correctly tries to solve the problem (of personal struggles to be worthy) by insisting on *sola fide* as the only condition to make a Christian ἀξιος (in its adjectival sense) and for one to benefit from God's grace offered through the Sacrament. Unlike Paul's context in 1 Cor. 11:17–34, Luther, being influenced by the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of salvation by faith plus good works, correctly argued for the sufficiency of *sola fide* to be admitted to the Lord's Supper.

Therefore, neither Paul nor Luther believes *sola fide* is enough preparation for the partaking of the Eucharist ἀξίως (in its adverbial sense). For both of them *sola fide*, or faith in Christ, is the foundation and the primary focus for the question of worthiness in its adjectival sense. Based on this foundation, Paul uses the adverbial term ἀναξίως in its secondary sense, meaning about how the Lord's Supper was being shared communally in Corinth. Likewise, Luther's interpretation of 1 Cor. 11:17–34 and his teaching about worthiness are informed by Pauline theology. Besides, a solid biblical and Lutheran understanding of the term ἀναξίως never enforces cultic rituals as a decisive factor in answering the question of what it means to be ἀξίως. For example, Luther knew it was essential to offer a clear-cut answer concerning the condition for worthiness when the very heart of the Gospel was at stake. Luther correctly sought to solve the individual's struggle to be personally worthy by insisting on the adequacy of *sola fide* as opposed to works righteousness in the 16th century Roman Catholic Church. However, Luther agrees with Paul that the concept of *sola fide*, in its primary sense, as opposed to works righteousness, is not within the scope of Paul's specific criticism of eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner in Corinth.

Amharic Term for Ἀναξίως

The finding of the research requires us, finally, to offer an equivalent translation of the term ἀναξίως in the Ethiopian language. In addition to the Judaic influence that we explored earlier, the idea that no 'unworthy' Christian must take part in the Eucharist in the EOTC has been generated from misinterpretation and mistranslation of the word ἀναξίως in the AC and the subsequent Ethiopic Bible versions, which mainly depend on the ancient *Ge'ez* translation and interpretation of the Scripture preserved in the commentary.

Therefore, በማይገባ ሁኔታ or አግባብ ባልሆነ መንገድ, meaning in an unworthy manner or inappropriately, is possibly a more comparable Amharic word for the Greek term ἀναξίως than the current term, which we have stated in chapter five of this dissertation. Moreover, it is most likely accurate to the specific historical context in Corinth and the overall syntax of the text. The Amharic root word for ἀξίως is ግቡ (worth or appropriate), and its various dictionary meanings are የሚገባ, ደንብ, አገባብ,[5] which carries an adverbial meaning modifying an action verb than referring to the subject of a sentence.

The alternative Amharic word, therefore, supplies a better equivalent translation determining ἀναξίως to be read as an adverb primarily qualifying the action of eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper in a communal setting. Unlike the Ethiopic Bible translations and its interpretation of the word ἀναξίως that lead Christians to trust in and depend on their careful observance of the rituals, we may argue that the external preparation distinctively adopted from Judaism and practiced in the EOTC can be taken as an outward discipline of the body which is the result of the inner faith of the heart.

[5] Aba Yohanse Geber Egeziabehar, Mezegeb Kalat: *Ethiopian Dictionary Tigrigna-Amharic* (Asemera: Bete Mahetem Areti Gerafik, 1948), 744.

The Scripture tells us that all Christians were strangers alienated from God and could be brought into the new covenant only through the costly act of God's radical grace and granted to them through faith (Rom. 3:23−25). Therefore, the Church should teach and correct those who are proud of themselves for being personally worthy based on their good works and judge others as unworthy for failing to keep one or more of the required rituals. Likewise, the Church should encourage those members troubled by the thought of the preconditions that make them worthy by emphasizing the significant role of confession and absolution before the Sacrament and the forgiveness of sins and salvation offered in and through the sharing of the Eucharist. Therefore, both groups—the so-called 'worthy' and 'unworthy'—must depend on the works of Christ on the cross and believe in God's grace and mercy so that they may have perfect unity with one another and live a life worthy of the Sacrament.

Moreover, those who voluntarily and frequently withdraw themselves from partaking of the Eucharist should understand that they are dividing themselves from the corporal body of Christ, which is the Church. When they intentionally and frequently withdraw from participating in the Lord's Supper, they also risk their identity as Christians. They should know that the Lord's Supper is, first of all, an offer of grace, not condemnation, and realize that in any case, they cannot ultimately avoid accountability to God by staying away from the gift of the Sacrament which is given for them for the forgiveness of their sins (1 Cor. 11:23−26).

Dividing the body of Christ, which is the Church, into the worthy and unworthy group based on one's commitment to the rituals stands against the unity of all believers. It also leads the Church to suffer from a lack of Christian unity from within. Thus, there is evident paradoxical tension displayed in the EOTC's liturgy and traditions between the call to worthiness and God's declaration of worthiness through confession and absolution in the liturgical prayer.

We have also observed the unintended consequences and misapprehension that faulty interpretation, translation, and understanding of worthiness can perpetuate if left unchecked, as it has indeed been among the members of the EOTC. They erroneously rejected the whole service of the Sacrament to avoid God's judgment. Therefore, we argue that the EOTC's unity of all believers is most likely at stake (like the Corinthian Church) when the attendees' good works determine their reception to the Holy Altar. As the unity of all believers was the primary concern of Paul's advice and warning to the Corinthians, the current writer also has the same concern for the unity of all believers, which is at stake within the EOTC.

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