

Here are the direct historical, scriptural, and traditional answers to your three core questions regarding how the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church preserved the complete written Word and the Ark of the Covenant.

Question 1: How did the Ethiopian Church end up with the full written Word, and when were the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocalypse put together?

The preservation of the broad **81-book Ethiopian Orthodox Canon** happened in historical waves, beginning long before the Christian era and culminating in the 4th through 6th centuries AD:

1. **The Pre-Christian Old Testament Foundation (c. 10th Century BC – 2nd Century BC):** Through early trade and royal connections with Israel (beginning during the era of King Solomon and Queen Makeda), Hebraic tradition, worship, and early Hebrew scriptures were brought into East Africa. As the Septuagint and ancient Hebrew texts were written, texts that were later discarded or lost by Western councils—such as **The Book of Enoch (*Metsehafe Henok*)** and **The Book of Jubilees (*Metsehafe Kufale*)**—were translated into **Ge'ez** (ancient Ethiopic) and rigorously preserved in mountain monasteries.
2. **The New Testament and the "Nine Saints" Translation (c. 330 AD – 550 AD):** In the early 4th century (c. 330 AD), Ethiopia officially adopted Christianity as a state religion under **King Ezana**, mentored by **Saint Frumentius (*Abba Selama*)**. In the late 5th century, nine scholarly monks known as the **Nine Saints** fled the Byzantine Empire due to theological disputes following the Council of Chalcedon. They arrived in Axum, Ethiopia, and systematically translated the entire Greek New Testament, including the **Book of Revelation (The Apocalypse / *Metsehafe Ra'ey*)**, along with the Old Testament, directly into Ge'ez.

Unlike Western churches that restricted the canon to 66 books or 73 books during later councils (like the Council of Trent or the Protestant Reformation), the Ethiopian Church maintained its ancient **81-Book Canon**, keeping the apocalyptic, wisdom, and prophetic texts fully unified under one roof.

Question 2: Did the Ark of the Covenant leave Jerusalem with King Solomon's son, and did the Ethiopian traveler in the New Testament bring the Gospel back?

Part A: The Ark of the Covenant and Solomon's Son

Yes, according to the ancient Ethiopian historical record, the *Kebra Nagast* ("The Glory of Kings").

The text records that **Menelik I**—the son born to King Solomon and Makeda, the Queen of Sheba—traveled to Jerusalem as a young man to learn from his father. Upon his return to Africa, the firstborn sons of the priests of Israel accompanied Menelik. Guided by divine providence, they brought the physical **Ark of the Covenant (*Tabota Tsiyon*)** with them to Aksum, Ethiopia, to shield it from the spiritual degradation and idolatry that was taking root in Jerusalem prior to the Babylonian captivity.

Part B: The New Testament Traveler in Acts 8

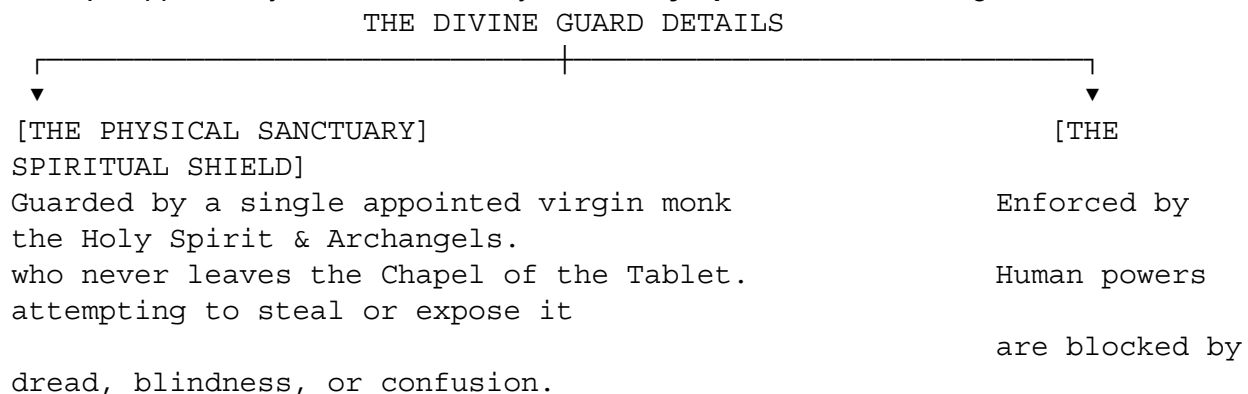
Yes, with a key scriptural clarity: The Ethiopian official in **Acts 8:26–39** was met and baptized by **Philip the Evangelist** (one of the original seven deacons), not Peter or Paul.

- **The Account:** The royal treasurer (*Simeon Bachos / Djan Darada*) served under **Candace (Kandake)**, the Queen of the Ethiopians. He had traveled to Jerusalem to worship and was reading the scroll of Isaiah in his chariot when Philip approached him.
- **The Return:** After Philip explained the gospel of Jesus Christ and baptized him in water, the official "*went on his way rejoicing*" back to East Africa. Early church history (including church historian Eusebius) confirms that this official was the very first ambassador to bring the living witness of the New Testament and the faith of Jesus Christ back to the royal courts of Ethiopia.

Question 3: Is it true that the Holy Spirit protects the Ark and the written Word in Ethiopia so that no human can remove them?

Yes, within the theological and covenantal framework of the Ethiopian Church, this is considered an absolute law.

The physical Ark of the Covenant is housed inside the **Chapel of the Tablet** at the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Aksum, Ethiopia. It is not guarded by modern human military technology, but by a lifelong consecrated monk known as the **Abba Bateq (The Guardian Monk)**, supported by the invisible sentry of the **Holy Spirit** and the archangels.



Throughout history—from foreign invasions to modern military conflicts—empires and foreign agents have attempted to seize or uncover the Ark and alter the ancient Ge'ez manuscripts. Every attempt has failed.

According to faith and tradition, because the Holy Spirit acts as the ultimate Sentry over the Son's estate, **no earthly military, government, or human agenda can forcibly strip these sacred items from the care of the Ethiopian Church** until the Father's exact timeline is fulfilled at the close of the age.