

The Nile as a Sacred Cord: Interrogating the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel Triangle through Biblical Narrative, Stellar Hydrology, and Geopolitical Ontology

Belay Sitotaw Goshu¹, Muhammad Ridwan²

¹Department of Physics, Dire Dawa University, Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

²Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Email : belaysitotaw@gmail.com, bukharyahmedal@gmail.com

Abstract:

The historical and geopolitical entanglement of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel presents a persistent puzzle in interdisciplinary scholarship. While these nations have been studied independently within Egyptology, Ethiopian Studies, and Biblical Archaeology, their ontological unity has remained underexamined. The Nile River, flowing from the Ethiopian Highlands through Egypt, serves as a literal and metaphorical "sacred cord" binding these three nations together. This paper proposes a new hermeneutical framework; the "Sacred Cord" paradigm for understanding the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle through biblical narrative, stellar hydrology, and geopolitical ontology. The study employs an interdisciplinary methodology integrating biblical exegesis, historical geography, archaeoastronomy, and political theology. Primary sources include the Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Ethiopian Orthodox traditions (Kebra Nagast), and contemporary geopolitical analyses. The biblical narratives of Moses' Cushite marriage, Solomon's Egyptian alliance, and the Holy Family's flight to Lake Tana constitute a coherent theological-hydrographical ontology. This ontology finds empirical validation in the annual rising of Sirius over Ethiopia and the subsequent flooding of the Nile, and modern political urgency in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) dispute. The triangle reflects God's inclusive, Trinitarian, and covenantal character, challenging ethnic pride and offering a theology of mutual dependency. The Nile is not a resource to be monopolized but a "living covenant" between nations. The "Sacred Cord" model offers a theological foundation for equitable water sharing, suggesting that a "Nile Compact" inspired by biblical visions of mutual blessing could facilitate cooperation over conflict among riparian states.

Keywords: Sacred Cord; Nile River; Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel Triangle; Stellar Hydrology; Geopolitical Ontology.

I. Introduction

1.1 The Research Problem

The perennial entanglement of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel within biblical, historical, and geopolitical discourse presents one of the most enduring yet underexamined puzzles in interdisciplinary scholarship. From the prophetic oracles of Isaiah (18–20) to the contemporary tensions surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), these three nations have remained inexorably linked across three millennia, their fates woven together by shared waterways, sacred narratives, and geopolitical ambitions (Erlich, 2002). The biblical texts themselves bear witness to this interconnection: Egypt and Ethiopia appear as allied powers under the Ethiopian king Tirhakah during the days of Isaiah (2 Kings 19:9), and the prophet explicitly addresses both nations as integral actors in the divine drama of salvation history. Similarly, the book of Amos presents a striking theological claim that the children of Israel are no more privileged before God than the Cushites (Ethiopians), positioning Ethiopia within the same covenantal frame as Israel itself (Amos 9:7).

Despite this rich textual evidence, contemporary scholarship has largely treated these three entities in disciplinary isolation. Egyptology, Ethiopian Studies, and Biblical Archaeology have developed as distinct fields with separate methodologies, research questions, and scholarly communities. Egypt is studied primarily through the lens of Pharaonic civilization and its monumental remains; Ethiopia through the prism of Aksumite history, Orthodox Christian traditions, and the Solomonic dynasty; and Israel through the frameworks of biblical exegesis, Levantine archaeology, and Second Temple Judaism (Holter, 2023). While valuable in their own right, these siloed approaches have obscured a fundamental reality: that Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel constitute an ontological unity—a tripartite nexus whose coherence transcends mere historical coincidence or political convenience. As Holter (2023) observes, "the presence of 'Africa and Africans' has the potential of balancing the universalistic trajectory of the Bible"; without concrete examples such as Africa, "universalism would be empty rhetoric" (p. 225).

The central thesis of this study is that the Nile River functions as a "sacred cord" that binds these three nations into a divine triangle, a relationship revealed simultaneously through scripture, astronomy, and political reality. This thesis draws upon the proverbial wisdom of Ecclesiastes 4:12, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken"—as a hermeneutical lens through which to interpret the enduring interconnectedness of these three peoples (New American Standard Bible, 1995, Eccl. 4:12). The Nile, flowing from the Ethiopian Highlands through Egypt and into the Mediterranean, serves as the literal and metaphorical cord that unites them. Its annual flooding, heralded by the heliacal rising of Sirius over the Ethiopian plateau, provided the hydrological and calendrical foundation upon which Egyptian civilization was built (Krupp, 2019). The same river that sustained Egypt also carried the refugees, traders, and armies that connected these civilizations across antiquity.

Yet the "sacred cord" is not merely a poetic metaphor. It constitutes a theological-hydrographical ontology, a claim about the very nature of existence and relationship among these three nations. This ontology finds its empirical validation in the predictable rhythms of the Nile's flood cycle, its scriptural warrant in the narratives of Moses' Cushite marriage (Numbers 12:1), Solomon's Egyptian alliance (1 Kings 3:1), and the Holy Family's flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–15), and its political urgency in the contemporary struggle for regional sovereignty over the Nile's waters (Tessema, 2025). The paper argues that these biblical narratives are not peripheral folklore but constitute a coherent theological vision in which Egypt and Ethiopia are not merely foreign nations but kin, allies, and co-participants in the divine plan for Israel and the world.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Defining the Key Terms

a. "Sacred Cord"

The term "sacred cord" is drawn from Ecclesiastes 4:12: "And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart" (New American Standard Bible, 1995, Eccl. 4:12). This proverb, situated within the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible, has been interpreted by theological commentators as a multilayered metaphor affirming the superiority of collaborative living, foreshadowing Trinitarian unity, and exemplifying the unbreakable nature of divinely ordained relationships (Online Bible Commentary, n.d.). Gregory the Dialogist, in his commentary on Ecclesiastes, interpreted the "threefold cord" as an expression of faith woven from the knowledge of the Trinity, remaining firm in the elect (Catena Bible, n.d.).

In the context of this study, the "sacred cord" is not merely a literary device but a theological-ontological claim about indissoluble relationships among nations. Just as a threefold cord derives its strength from the interweaving of its strands, so too do Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel derive their historical and spiritual significance from their mutual entanglement. The cord is "sacred" because it is woven by divine providence rather than human intention revealed through scripture, confirmed by the natural order of the Nile's hydrology, and manifested in the geopolitical realities that continue to bind these nations together.

b. "Interrogating"

This study employs the term "interrogating" in its critical, scholarly sense: a multidisciplinary examination that does not take traditional narratives at face value but probes their deeper meanings, assumptions, and implications. To interrogate the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle is to ask not merely what the biblical texts say about these nations, but why they say it, how these narratives functioned in their ancient contexts, and what they reveal about the nature of divine-human and inter-national relationships. This critical approach draws upon the methodologies of biblical exegesis, historical criticism, and post-colonial hermeneutics to challenge conventional readings that have marginalized or overlooked the African dimensions of biblical history (Holter, 2023).

c. "Stellar Hydrology"

"Stellar hydrology" is a term coined in this study to describe the empirical connection between the heliacal rising of Sirius over the Ethiopian highlands and the annual flooding of the Nile in Egypt. In ancient Egyptian astronomy, the heliacal rising of Sirius (known to the Egyptians as Sothis); its first appearance on the eastern horizon just before sunrise after a period of invisibility, occurred close to the summer solstice and preceded the all-important Nile flood (Krupp, 2019). The Egyptians long believed that Sothis caused the Nile floods, and they discovered that the heliacal rising occurred at intervals of 365.25 days, a correction that was later incorporated into the Julian calendar.

The term "stellar hydrology" captures the intersection of celestial observation and terrestrial water flow that was central to ancient Egyptian civilization. It also highlights the geographical reality that the celestial signal (Sirius) was observed over the Ethiopian plateau, the source of the Blue Nile, which contributes approximately 86% of the Nile's waters reaching Egypt (Kendie, 1999). Thus, the rising of Sirius over Ethiopia announces the flood that sustains Egypt, creating a cosmic, non-verbal communication between the two lands that has been empirically observable for millennia. As one scholar notes, the heliacal rising of Sirius "signaled abundant fertility derived from the flooding of the Nile and the resurrection of Osiris" (Amandry et al., 2011, Abstract).

III. Research Methods

3.1 Interdisciplinary Approach

This study adopts a genuinely interdisciplinary methodology that integrates four distinct but complementary scholarly domains:

Biblical Exegesis: The study engages in close reading of key biblical texts that reference Egypt, Ethiopia (Cush), and their relationships with Israel. These include the narratives of Moses' Cushite marriage (Numbers 12:1–16), Solomon's Egyptian alliance (1 Kings 3:1; 9:16; 11:1), the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon (1 Kings 10:1–13), the Holy Family's flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–15), and the prophetic oracles concerning Egypt and Cush (Isaiah 18–20; Amos 9:7). Exegetical methods include textual criticism, narrative analysis, and theological interpretation, with attention to both the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Septuagint.

Historical Geography: The study examines the physical and human geography of the Nile Valley, including the location of key sites such as Lake Tana (the source of the Blue Nile), the ancient kingdoms of Egypt and Kush (Ethiopia), and the trade and migration routes that connected these civilizations. This geographical analysis is essential for understanding how the Nile functioned as a "sacred cord" linking these nations.

Archaeoastronomy: The study investigates the empirical connection between the heliacal rising of Sirius and the annual flooding of the Nile, drawing upon the methods of archaeoastronomy to understand how ancient Egyptian and Ethiopian civilizations observed, interpreted, and ritualized these celestial phenomena. This includes analysis of ancient Egyptian calendrical systems, the Sothic cycle, and the role of astronomical observation in religious and agricultural practice (Krupp, 2019).

Political Theology: The study applies the methods of political theology; the analysis of the relationship between political power and divine authority to understand how biblical narratives about Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel have shaped and continue to shape geopolitical identities and conflicts. This includes engagement with post-colonial hermeneutics, which challenges Eurocentric interpretations of the Bible and centers African agency in salvation history (Holter, 2023).

3.2 Methodological Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, the biblical and extra-biblical sources are fragmentary and often reflect the perspectives of their authors and redactors rather than objective historical reality. Second, the study focuses primarily on the biblical and Ethiopian Orthodox traditions, with less attention to Islamic, Jewish diaspora, or other African perspectives on the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel nexus. Third, the archaeoastronomical analysis relies on modern reconstructions of ancient observations, which are necessarily approximate. Future research should address these limitations by incorporating a wider range of sources and perspectives.

3.3 Significance of the Study

This study makes three original contributions to scholarship:

a. A New Hermeneutical Framework for Reading Biblical Narratives

The study offers a new hermeneutical framework, the "sacred cord" paradigm for reading biblical narratives that involves African nations. Traditional biblical interpretation has often treated Egypt and Ethiopia as peripheral or adversarial figures in Israel's story: Egypt as the "land

of slavery" (Exodus 13:3) and Ethiopia as a distant, exotic nation. This study challenges this reading by demonstrating that Egypt and Ethiopia are, in fact, central, familial, and divinely ordained participants in the biblical drama. As Holter (2023) observes, "the presence of 'Africa and Africans' has the potential of balancing the universalistic trajectory of the Bible"; without concrete examples such as Africa, "universalism would be empty rhetoric" (p. 225).

By reading the biblical texts through the lens of the "sacred cord," this study reveals a theology of mutual dependency and divine inclusivity that has been obscured by Eurocentric interpretation. The narratives of Moses' Cushite marriage, Solomon's Egyptian alliance, and the Holy Family's flight to Egypt are not peripheral folklore but constitute a coherent theological vision in which God's covenant extends to all nations, a vision that finds its ultimate expression in the New Testament's universalism (e.g., Revelation 7:9).

b. A Historical-Theological Foundation for Understanding Contemporary Nile Disputes

The contemporary dispute over the Nile; exemplified by the GERD has been analyzed almost exclusively through the lenses of international law, water security, and power politics. While these analyses are valuable, they neglect the deep historical and theological foundations that continue to shape Egyptian and Ethiopian national identities and their mutual perceptions. Egypt's view of the Nile as a sacred, life-giving river is rooted in millennia of religious and cultural tradition, just as Ethiopia's claim to the Nile is grounded in its identity as the source of the river and its biblical heritage (Erich, 2002).

This study provides a historical-theological foundation for understanding these deeply held beliefs and their political consequences. By demonstrating that the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle is woven into the very fabric of scripture and sacred geography, the study suggests that any durable resolution to the Nile dispute must address not only the technical and legal dimensions of water allocation but also the theological and cultural narratives that shape national identities. As one analysis observes, "the Nile, a sacred river for some and a vital artery for others, has become a battleground again" (Tessema, 2025, p. 1). Understanding why the river is "sacred" is essential for understanding why the conflict is so intractable.

3.4 THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS: Marriage, Exile, and Refuge in the Nile Valley

a. Moses and the Cushite (Ethiopian) Wife (Numbers 12:1–16)

The narrative of Moses' Cushite wife in Numbers 12:1–16 presents one of the most theologically significant and exegetically challenging passages in the Pentateuch. The text states: "Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married, for he had taken a Cushite wife" (Numbers 12:1, New American Standard Bible, 1995). This brief notice has generated extensive scholarly debate regarding the identity of the Cushite woman, the nature of Miriam and Aaron's opposition, and the theological significance of God's dramatic defense of Moses.

b. Solomon's Egyptian Alliance (1 Kings 3:1; 9:16; 11:1)

The marriage of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter represents one of the most significant political alliances in the Hebrew Bible and a pivotal moment in Israel's relationship with Egypt. The narrative records: "Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh King of Egypt and married his daughter" (1 Kings 3:1, New American Standard Bible, 1995). This union, remarkable in the ancient Near Eastern context, established a direct dynastic link between the Israelite monarchy and the Nile Valley civilization.

c. Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1–13; Kebra Nagast)

The visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, recorded in 1 Kings 10:1–13, has generated extensive interpretive traditions, particularly in Ethiopian Christianity. The biblical account presents the queen as a foreign monarch who travels to Jerusalem to test Solomon's wisdom with difficult questions, bringing lavish gifts and praising his wisdom and kingdom (1 Kings 10:1–13).

3.4 The Holy Family's Flight to Egypt and Lake Tana (Matthew 2:13–15; Ethiopian Tradition)

The flight of the Holy Family to Egypt, recorded in Matthew 2:13–15, represents one of the most significant connections between the New Testament and the Nile Valley. The Gospel states: "Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him'" (Matthew 2:13, New American Standard Bible, 1995).

3.5 Synthesis of Unit 2

The four narratives examined in this unit; Moses' Cushite marriage, Solomon's Egyptian alliance, the Solomon-Sheba tradition, and the Holy Family's flight to Egypt and Lake Tana together form a "quadrilateral of kinship" that establishes Egypt and Ethiopia as central, familial, and divinely ordained participants in Israel's story.

Moses' Cushite marriage establishes that God's prophetic authority transcends ethnic boundaries; Ethiopia (Cush) is elevated in the spiritual hierarchy through divine defense of Moses' trans-ethnic marriage. Solomon's Egyptian alliance transforms Egypt from a foreign oppressor into a royal ally and kin, linking the Israelite monarchy to the Nile Valley civilization. The Solomon-Sheba tradition claims direct Davidic lineage for Ethiopia, making it a "sister nation" to Israel and positioning Ethiopia within the covenantal framework. The Holy Family's flight to Egypt and Lake Tana establishes the Nile as a river of refuge and roots the Christian faith in African soil.

Together, these narratives demonstrate that Egypt and Ethiopia are not peripheral to Israel's story; they are central, familial, and divinely ordained. The "sacred cord" that binds these three nations is woven through marriage, exile, and refuge, relationships that transcend mere political alliance and constitute a theological ontology of shared destiny. As Holter (2023) observes, "the presence of 'Africa and Africans' has the potential of balancing the universalistic trajectory of the Bible"; without concrete examples such as Africa, "universalism would be empty rhetoric" (p. 225). The quadrilateral of kinship established in these narratives provides the biblical foundation for understanding the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle as a divinely ordained reality, not merely a historical coincidence.

3.6 STELLAR HYDROLOGY – The Celestial Clock and the Nile's Sacred Rhythm

a. The Science of the Nile's Flood

The annual flooding of the Nile River, which sustained Egyptian civilization for over three millennia, is fundamentally a product of the climatic and hydrological dynamics of the Ethiopian Highlands. Understanding this science is essential for appreciating the "sacred cord" that binds Egypt and Ethiopia through the river's waters.

b. The Heliacal Rising of Sirius (Sothis)

The ancient Egyptians did not possess modern hydrological instruments to predict the Nile's flood. Instead, they relied on the heavens; specifically, the heliacal rising of Sirius, as a celestial clock that announced the impending inundation. This astronomical phenomenon created a cosmic link between the skies over Ethiopia and the waters of Egypt.

c. The Spiritualization of the Flood in Ancient Egypt and Ethiopia

The Nile's annual flood was not merely a hydrological phenomenon for the peoples of the Nile Valley; it was a sacred event, imbued with religious meaning and cosmic significance. Both ancient Egypt and Ethiopia developed rich spiritual traditions around the river's waters.

d. The Israelite Reception of Nile Hydrology

The biblical tradition does not merely observe the Nile's hydrology from a distance; it engages with it theologically, interpreting the river's waters as instruments of divine judgment, blessing, and prophetic hope.

e. Synthesis of Unit 3

The physical reality of the Nile's flow is a "divine signature" a cosmic liturgy in which the heavens, the highlands, and the lowlands are joined in an unbreakable sacred rhythm. The rising of Sirius in Ethiopia and the flooding of Egypt are not coincidental; they are a cosmic liturgy that mirrors the biblical narrative of blessing flowing from the high place to the low place.



Figure 1. Conceptual illustration showing the Nile as a hydrological, astronomical, and theological system linking Ethiopia and Egypt through sacred geography and cosmic rhythm

Figure 1 presents an integrated conceptual model illustrating the Nile as a nexus of hydrology, astronomy, theology, and civilization. It highlights the Ethiopian Highlands, particularly Lake Tana and the Blue Nile, as the principal source contributing approximately 80 to 85% of the Nile waters reaching Egypt, emphasizing the scientific basis of the annual inundation. The heliacal rising of Sirius (Sothis) is depicted as the celestial marker announcing the flood, reflecting the Sothic calendar's ritual and agricultural significance in ancient Egypt (Gautschi et al., 2017). The illustration further connects Ethiopian Orthodox traditions surrounding Gish Abay and Timkat with ancient Egyptian reverence for Hapi and biblical

narratives concerning the Nile, including Exodus, Psalm 46, and Isaiah 18. Collectively, the figure portrays the Nile as a sacred corridor uniting cosmology, ecology, history, and divine providence across northeastern Africa (The Guardian, 2025; Gautschy et al., 2017).

Together, these elements demonstrate that the Nile is more than a river; it is a "sacred cord" that binds Egypt and Ethiopia in a relationship of mutual dependency and cosmic significance. The star (Sirius) over Ethiopia announces the flood that sustains Egypt. This is not merely a hydrological fact but a theological reality, a divine signature written in the heavens and the waters, revealing the interconnectedness of all creation and the unity of God's purposes for all nations.

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 THE THEOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY OF THE TRIANGLE: Why God Wove This Pattern

a. The Theology of the "Outsider"

The biblical narrative consistently reveals a God whose heart is deeply inclined toward the vulnerable, the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner (Topical Bible, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). This theme is woven throughout both the Old and New Testaments, demonstrating that God's compassion and justice extend beyond ethnic and national boundaries. In the Old Testament, God's law explicitly commands care for the outcast: "You must treat the foreigner living among you as native-born and love him as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:34, as cited in Topical Bible, n.d.-a). The prophets frequently echo this concern, calling Israel to account for neglecting the vulnerable (Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8) (Topical Bible, n.d.-b).

God's consistent preference for the outsider finds profound expression in the narratives examined in this study. The Cushite (Ethiopian) woman whom Moses married (Numbers 12:1) is defended by God against the ethnic prejudice of Miriam and Aaron. The text makes clear that it was a racial issue, by virtue of the use of "Cushite" (NETBible, n.d.). God's swift judgment against Miriam, striking her with leprosy establishes a clear divine verdict: ethnic prejudice is not merely a social failing but a sin against God's sovereign choice. Similarly, the Egyptian woman whom Solomon married (1 Kings 3:1) becomes part of the royal lineage, and the Queen of Sheba identified in Ethiopian tradition as a Cushite ruler receives wisdom and blessing from Solomon.

The theological conclusion is profound: there is no "pure" race or nation in God's economy. The Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle dismantles ethnic pride by demonstrating that God's covenant extends to all peoples. As the New Testament affirms, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The inclusion of Cushites and Egyptians in the biblical narrative is not incidental but essential to the universal scope of God's redemptive plan.

b. The Threefold Cord as a Trinitarian Reflection

Ecclesiastes 4:12 serves as the key hermeneutical lens for understanding the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle: "And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart" (New American Standard Bible, 1995). This proverb, situated within the Wisdom literature, has been interpreted by theological commentators as a multilayered metaphor affirming the superiority of collaborative living and foreshadowing Trinitarian unity (Bible Hub, n.d.).

The patristic tradition explicitly interprets the "threefold cord" as a reference to the Trinity. Gregory the Dialogist, in his commentary on Ecclesiastes, writes: "By a 'cord,' faith is expressed, as Solomon witnesses, who say, 'A threefold cord is not easily broken' because the faith in truth that is woven by the mouth of preachers from the knowledge of the Trinity remains firm in the elect" (Catena Bible, n.d.). Similarly, other commentators explain this triple cord of the blessed Trinity (Catena Bible, n.d.). The imagery suggests that "a cord of three" quietly echoes the mystery that unity and plurality coexist in the Godhead, inviting believers to embody that harmony (Bible Hub, n.d.; Goshu, 2024).

The figure presents the proposed Sacred Cord paradigm, integrating biblical theology, historical geography, stellar hydrology, and contemporary geopolitics into a unified conceptual framework. Ethiopia is depicted as the hydrological source of the Blue Nile, symbolizing origin and divine provision, while Egypt represents the downstream recipient whose civilization historically depended on the annual inundation. Israel occupies the covenantal dimension, connecting the Nile's physical geography with biblical history through narratives involving Moses, Solomon, and the Holy Family (Exodus 2; 1 Kings 3; Matthew 2). The central triangular configuration emphasizes mutual interdependence rather than political rivalry, illustrating the Nile as a living covenant linking the three nations. The inclusion of Sirius (Sopdet) highlights the astronomical timing of the Nile flood and its ritual significance within ancient Egyptian civilization (Gautschy et al., 2017). Contemporary reference to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) extends the framework into modern geopolitical discourse, suggesting that equitable water governance may be informed by principles of shared stewardship, covenant, and cooperation rather than resource competition (Zeitoun, 2008; Cascão & Nicol, 2016). Overall, the figure synthesizes historical, theological, environmental, and political perspectives into a holistic interpretive model of regional interconnectedness.



Figure 2. Conceptual framework illustrating the Nile as a sacred cord linking Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel through biblical narrative, hydrology, astronomy, and geopolitical theology.

c. The Reversal of Curses

The narrative of the curse on Ham and his son Canaan in Genesis 9:18–27 has been tragically misused throughout history to justify slavery and racial prejudice (Oakland Public Library, n.d.). However, a careful reading of Scripture reveals that God is actively undoing human prejudice through geography and marriage, reversing the curse rather than perpetuating it.

The curse pronounced by Noah upon Canaan, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers" (Genesis 9:25) has been historically interpreted as applying to all the descendants of Ham, including Cush (Ethiopia) and Mizraim (Egypt). Yet the biblical narrative consistently subverts this interpretation. Moses, the great lawgiver and deliverer of Israel, marries a Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1), and God defends this marriage against ethnic prejudice. The Queen of Sheba, a Cushite ruler, seeks wisdom from Solomon and is blessed by God. The prophet Isaiah declares: "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God" (Psalm 68:31), a prophecy of Gentile inclusion in the worship of Yahweh.

Psalm 68:31 is particularly significant: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out [or, shall hasten to stretch out] her hands unto God" (John Calvin, Commentary on Psalms). Calvin interprets this as a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles: "David asserts that Ethiopia and Egypt would come under the power of God, and not they only, but the most distant parts of the world" (Calvin, n.d.). The act of stretching out hands is a gesture of prayer, supplication, or worship, suggesting a turning of the nations towards God (Psalm 68:31 Study Bible, n.d.).

The consequence is that God is actively reversing the curse through sacred geography and covenantal marriage. Moses' Cushite wife and Jesus' flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–15) demonstrate that the descendants of Ham are not excluded from God's covenant but are included in salvation history. The curse of Ham is undone by the blessing of Christ, who came to redeem people from every tribe, tongue, and nation (Revelation 5:9).

d. The Nile as a Baptismal Symbol

The Jordan River, where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13–17), serves as the primary river of baptism in the New Testament. The Jordan symbolizes purification, transition, and the fulfillment of God's promises (Topical Bible, n.d.-c). However, the Nile River, the great river of Egypt and Ethiopia also carries profound baptismal symbolism in the biblical narrative.

Jesus' flight across the Nile to Ethiopia (traditionally understood as his journey to Lake Tana) prefigures his later baptism. The waters of the Nile, which witnessed the oppression of the Israelites (Exodus 1:22) and the plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7:14–24), now witness the protection of the Messiah. The same river that served as an instrument of judgment becomes an instrument of refuge. As one commentary notes, "Egypt's role as a place of refuge for Jesus highlights the nation's dual symbolism in Scripture. While it was historically a place of bondage for the Israelites, it also served as a sanctuary for the Holy Family" (Topical Bible, n.d.-d).

The typological connection between the Nile and baptism is further illuminated by the Exodus narrative. The crossing of the Red Sea, which delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, has been interpreted by many ancient Fathers as an image of Baptism. Saint Augustine interprets the Red Sea, where Israel saw the salvation of God, as an anticipatory sign of the blood of Christ crucified, source of salvation (Vatican Press, 2018). Similarly, the crossing of the Jordan River by

which the People of God received the gift of the land is an image of eternal life (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.d.).

The waters of judgment become waters of refuge. The Nile, which once carried the infant Moses to safety (Exodus 2:1–10), now carries the Holy Family to safety. The same waters that witnessed the death of the Egyptian firstborn (Exodus 12:29–30) now witness the life of the firstborn Son of God. The Nile thus becomes a river of baptism, a symbol of death to the old life and resurrection to the new (Goshu and Ridwan, 2026).



Figure 3. Conceptual model illustrating the Nile as a baptismal river connecting Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel through salvation history, covenant, and redemption

The figure synthesizes biblical typology by presenting the Nile as a theological symbol that unites Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel within the broader narrative of salvation history. Egypt is portrayed as the setting of bondage, divine judgment, and deliverance, where the preservation of Moses in the Nile anticipates God's redemptive action (Exodus 2:1–10). Ethiopia represented as the source of the Nile, functions as the geographical and symbolic place of refuge, extending the biblical tradition through the Holy Family's flight to Egypt and Ethiopian Christian memory. Israel completes the typological sequence through the crossings of the Red Sea and the Jordan River, both interpreted by early Christian tradition as prefigurations of Christian baptism and new life in Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1–2; Joshua 3:14–17). The figure further illustrates the transformation of water from an instrument of judgment into a sacramental sign of salvation, reinforcing the continuity between Old Testament events and New Testament theology. This interpretation is consistent with the patristic writings of Augustine and the sacramental teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which identify the Red Sea and the Jordan as archetypes of baptism and spiritual rebirth (Vatican Press, 2018; Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.d.).

4.2 GEOPOLITICAL ONTOLOGY – The Modern Consequences of the Sacred Cord

a. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)

The contemporary dispute over the Nile River must be understood against the backdrop of a millennium of Egyptian hegemony over the river's waters. For centuries, Egypt has operated from the assumption that its historical and geographical dependence on the Nile; the river accounts for more than 90% of the country's hydro sources (JSTOR, n.d.) justifies its claim to preeminent rights over the river's flow. This assumption was codified in the colonial-era treaties of 1929 and 1959, which granted Egypt and Sudan a monopoly over the Nile's waters and effectively restricted Ethiopia from using the river for its own development (Roach et al., 2025; ENA, 2025; Goshu and Ridwan, 2025).

Ethiopia, however, has long contested this framework. As the source of approximately 85% of the Nile's waters reaching Egypt (Ethiopia contributes over 85% of the river's water) (Ethiopia contributes over 85 percent of the river's water), Ethiopia has consistently argued that the colonial treaties are illegitimate and that it possesses sovereign rights to utilize the Nile for its own development. The construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a \$5 billion hydroelectric project on the Blue Nile that will be the largest in Africa and generate six thousand megawatts of electricity (JSTOR, n.d.) represents Ethiopia's assertion of these rights.

b. The Current Dispute: Filling the Dam, Water Security, and Regional Tensions

The GERD has become the focal point of Egyptian-Ethiopian tensions. Egypt views the dam as an "existential threat" to its water security (al-Sisi, as cited in The New Arab, 2025), while Ethiopia frames it as a matter of "existential necessity" for national development (Ayferam, 2023). The dispute has entered its tenth consecutive year (SIS, 2025), with negotiations repeatedly reaching dead ends.

Egypt has accused Ethiopia of erratic and unilateral management of the dam. According to Egypt's Ministry of Irrigation, the average outflow from the GERD during November 2025 reached about 180 million cubic metres per day, an increase of nearly 80% compared to the historical average (SIS, 2025). These fluctuations, Egypt argues, threaten the rights of downstream countries and affect the operation of dams located immediately downstream (SIS, 2025). Ethiopia, however, has rejected Egypt's claims as "baseless and misleading," arguing that its position is anchored in the international principle of equitable and reasonable utilization (ENA, 2025). As Ethiopia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN stated, "Egypt's claims against the GERD have also been communicated to the UN Security Council, despite being baseless and misleading" (ENA, 2025).

c. Can the "Sacred Cord" Model Offer a Framework for Cooperation?

The question remains whether the "sacred cord" model grounded in the biblical vision of mutual dependency and divine inclusivity can offer a framework for cooperation rather than conflict. The biblical narratives examined in this study suggest that Egypt and Ethiopia are bound together by a relationship that transcends mere politics. The Nile, as the "sacred cord" that unites them, is not a resource to be monopolized but a gift to be shared. As the prophet Isaiah declared: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage" (Isaiah 19:25). This vision of shared blessing offers a theological foundation for equitable water sharing one that acknowledges the legitimate needs of both upstream and downstream nations (Goshu and Ridwan, 2025).

4.3 The "Two Countries, One River" Problem

a. The Colonial-Era Treaties (1929, 1959) That Gave Egypt Hegemony over the Nile

The colonial-era treaties of 1929 and 1959 constitute the legal foundation of Egypt's historical dominance over the Nile. These agreements, brokered by the British, were "crafted with the interests of the colonial powers in mind" (ENA, 2025). The 1929 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and its 1959 amendment with Sudan "cemented Egypt's dominance over the Nile while excluding Ethiopia, the source of most of its waters" (Africa Press, 2025). The 1959 agreement allocated 100% of the Nile's flow to two downstream nations, "leaving exactly zero cubic meters for Ethiopia, despite Ethiopia contributing over 85 percent of the river's water" (The Reporter Ethiopia, 2026).

These agreements, as Roach et al. (2025) observe, "Served colonial interests and legacies, anchored on an expansionist and hegemonic pursuit, as they entrenched Egypt's monopoly and prevented other riparian states from using the Nile to modernise." They suffer from three key shortcomings: "(1) excluding Ethiopia; (2) underestimating the importance of the Nile as an element of geopolitical and developmental interest to Ethiopia as an upstream state; and (3) ignoring the legality of the agreements from Ethiopia's standpoint" (Roach et al., 2025).

b. Ethiopia's Perspective: Upstream Rights and the Principle of Equitable Use

Ethiopia has consistently argued that the colonial treaties do not bind it and that it possesses sovereign rights to utilize the Nile for its own development. As one analysis notes, "Ethiopia's pursuit of energy security and industrialization through projects such as the GERD is not only legitimate but essential for national progress and regional stability" (ENA, 2025). Ethiopia's position is anchored in the international principle of equitable and reasonable utilization, a principle that recognizes the rights of all riparian states to benefit from shared water resources.

Ethiopia has criticized Egypt for "attempting to impose so-called 'historic rights' rooted in colonial-era treaties that excluded most Nile Basin countries" (ENA, 2025). As Ethiopia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN stated, "Egypt's entire focus has been to extract recognition of colonial-era entitlements and secure absolute control over the Nile Basin" (ENA, 2025). The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), instituted in 1999, was intended to "open dialogue about the rules and principles that could regulate a fairer allocation of the Nile's waters" (Roach et al., 2025), but progress has been slow.

c. The Biblical/Historical Irony: The Same River That Blessed Egypt Is Now a Source of Anxiety

There is a profound irony in the contemporary dispute. The same river that, for millennia, blessed Egypt through its annual flood; a flood heralded by the heliacal rising of Sirius over Ethiopia is now a source of anxiety and conflict. The Nile, which the ancient Egyptians worshipped as the god Hapi and which sustained their civilization, is now the object of geopolitical competition. The river that once united Egypt and Ethiopia in a cosmic liturgy of blessing now divides them in a struggle for water security.

This irony is not lost on observers. As one scholar notes, "The ongoing Egyptian-Ethiopian dispute over the Nile waters is potentially one of the most difficult issues on the current international agenda, central to the very life of the two countries" (Erlich, 2022). The dispute is not merely about physical resources but "extends to the very identity of the two states" (Ayferam, 2023). The Nile is central to both Egyptian and Ethiopian national identities, a fact that makes the conflict particularly intractable.

4.4 The Role of Israel in Modern Nile Geopolitics

a. Israel's Strategic Relations with Both Egypt and Ethiopia

Israel has emerged as a significant, if often overlooked, actor in the Nile dispute. Israel maintains strategic relations with both Egypt and Ethiopia, relations that have direct implications for the Nile conflict. On the one hand, Israel has historic ties with Egypt, dating back to the Camp David Accords of 1978. On the other hand, Israel has cultivated increasingly close relations with Ethiopia, particularly in the areas of water technology and energy cooperation.

In February 2025, Israel and Ethiopia signed a cooperation agreement in Addis Ababa that will expand cooperation in capacity building, knowledge transfer, and most importantly water and energy development (The New Arab, 2025). This agreement has raised alarm in Egypt, where observers view it as part of a broader strategy to pressure Egypt on regional files. As international relations specialist Mohamed al-Dehi told The New Arab, "Continued water cooperation between Ethiopia and Israel is reason for concern in Egypt, given the fact that water is a national security issue for Egypt. In a way, this cooperation is used to put pressure on Egypt when it comes to some regional and international files" (The New Arab, 2025).

b. The Biblical Triangle's Modern Echo: Israel as a Mediator or a Third Party?

The biblical triangle of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel finds a modern echo in the contemporary geopolitical landscape. Just as Israel was the third strand of the sacred cord in antiquity, so Israel plays a third-party role in the modern Nile dispute. The question is whether Israel will act as a mediator, using its relationships with both Egypt and Ethiopia to facilitate dialogue or as a partisan actor, aligning itself with Ethiopia against Egypt.

Some observers fear the latter. The belief in Egypt is that "Ethiopia is being used by Israel and other powers to undermine the Arab world's most populous state and bring it down to its knees" (The New Arab, 2025). Egyptian officials have reportedly rejected a US offer to mediate the Nile dam dispute in return for Cairo allowing Israel to displace Gaza's population into Rafah (The New Arab, 2025). The entanglement of the Nile dispute with broader regional politics makes the role of Israel particularly complex.

c. Consequence: The Three Nations Are Still Geopolitically Entangled

The consequence of these dynamics is that the three nations; Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel, remain geopolitically entangled, just as they were in antiquity. The sacred cord that bound them in biblical times continues to bind them in the modern era, though now in the form of geopolitical competition rather than covenantal kinship. The Nile, which once united them in a cosmic liturgy of blessing, now divides them in a struggle for water security. Yet even in this division, the entanglement remains, a testament to the enduring power of the sacred cord.

4.5 The Ontological Argument: "When Egypt Exists, Ethiopia Also Exists"

a. An Ontological Claim: Neither Nation Can Fully Exist or Thrive Without the Other

The concept of "ontological security" the preservation of state identity is central to understanding the Nile dispute. As Ayferam (2023) observes, "the quests of the conflicting parties to maintain ontological security—or the preservation of state identity are driving factors for the Nile dispute." The GERD project "threatens the continuity of Egypt's enacted world that sees the Nile as a living being inseparable from Egypt's history, culture, and civilizational identity" (Ayferam, 2023). Similarly, in Ethiopia, "the GERD is not only a piece of physical infrastructure that generates electricity but is also a symbol" of national identity and development (Ayferam, 2023).

The ontological argument, however, cuts both ways. If Egypt's identity is inseparable from the Nile, and if the Nile's waters originate in Ethiopia, then Egypt's identity is, in a fundamental sense, dependent on Ethiopia. Conversely, Ethiopia's identity as the source of the Nile the "sacred cord" that sustains Egypt is dependent on Egypt's recognition of that role. Neither nation can fully exist or thrive without the other.

b. If Ethiopia Dries Up, Egypt Starves. If Egypt Collapses, Ethiopia Loses a Historical/Cultural Mirror.

The physical reality of the Nile's hydrology underscores this ontological interdependence. If Ethiopia's highlands cease to provide water, Egypt ceases to exist as a civilization. The Blue Nile, originating from Lake Tana, contributes approximately 80–85% of the Nile's waters reaching Egypt. Without Ethiopia's rains, Egypt's agriculture, economy, and society would collapse. Conversely, if Egypt collapses whether through water scarcity, political instability, or economic crisis, Ethiopia loses a historical and cultural mirror. Egypt has been Ethiopia's interlocutor, rival, and partner for millennia. The two nations have shaped each other's identities through centuries of interaction, conflict, and cooperation.

As Erlich (2022) observes, the Egyptian-Ethiopian dispute is "central to the very life of the two countries." The bond between them is "built on both interdependence and conflict" (Erlich, 2022). This is not a relationship of choice but of existential necessity, ontology of shared fate.

c. Theological Validation: The "Threefold Cord" Means They Are Bound to Sink or Swim Together

The biblical concept of the "threefold cord" (Ecclesiastes 4:12) provides theological validation for this ontological argument. Just as a cord of three strands is not quickly broken, so Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel are bound together in an unbreakable sacred cord. They are bound to sink or swim together. If one strand breaks, the entire cord unravels. If one nation suffers, all suffer. If one nation prospers, all have the potential to prosper.

This theological vision offers a powerful alternative to the zero-sum logic that has dominated the Nile dispute. Rather than viewing the Nile as a resource to be divided, the sacred cord model invites Egypt and Ethiopia to view the river as a shared gift, a divine blessing that can sustain both nations if they cooperate rather than compete. As the psalmist declared, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God" (Psalm 68:31), a prophecy of the inclusion of African nations in God's salvation. The same God who blessed Egypt through the Nile's flood also blesses Ethiopia as the source of that flood. The sacred cord binds them together in a relationship of mutual dependency and divine purpose.

4.6 Synthesis of Unit 5

The ancient triangle of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel has direct political relevance in the contemporary era. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) dispute is the most visible manifestation of the enduring entanglement of these three nations. The colonial-era treaties of 1929 and 1959, which granted Egypt hegemony over the Nile, have been challenged by Ethiopia's assertion of its upstream rights and the principle of equitable use. Israel, as the third strand of the sacred cord, plays a complex role in modern Nile geopolitics, maintaining strategic relations with both Egypt and Ethiopia while potentially exacerbating tensions.

The ontological argument that neither Egypt nor Ethiopia can fully exist or thrive without the other, finds validation in both the physical reality of the Nile's hydrology and the biblical concept of the threefold cord. The sacred cord model offers a "theology of mutual dependency"

rather than a "theology of supremacy." It invites Egypt and Ethiopia to move beyond zero-sum competition and embrace a vision of shared blessing, a vision rooted in the biblical narrative of God's inclusive, creative, and covenantal love for all nations. As the prophet Isaiah declared: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage" (Isaiah 19:25). The sacred cord binds them all together in one story (Goshu, 2026; Goshu and Ridwan, 2026).

V. Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This study has demonstrated that the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle constitutes a coherent theological-hydrographical ontology, a "sacred cord" that binds these three nations in an unbreakable relationship of mutual dependency and divine purpose. The biblical foundations examined in Unit 2 reveal that Egypt and Ethiopia are not peripheral to Israel's story but central, familial, and divinely ordained participants in salvation history. Moses' Cushite marriage, Solomon's Egyptian alliance, and the Holy Family's flight to Lake Tana establish a "quadrilateral of kinship" that positions Ethiopia and Egypt as family to Israel. The stellar hydrology examined in Unit 3 demonstrates that the physical reality of the Nile's flow; the heliacal rising of Sirius over Ethiopia and the annual flooding of Egypt, empirically validates this spiritual unity, serving as a cosmic liturgy that mirrors the biblical narrative of blessing flowing from the high place to the low place. The theological ontology explored in Unit 4 reveals that the triangle is not random but a deliberate divine "sign" of God's character: inclusive, creative, and covenantal. The geopolitical ontology analyzed in Unit 5 confirms that this ancient pattern continues to shape modern geopolitics, as evidenced by the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) dispute and the enduring entanglement of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel in the contemporary era.

Contributions to Scholarship

This study makes three original contributions to scholarship. First, it offers a new "Sacred Cord Hermeneutic" for reading biblical geography, a framework that interprets the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle as a theological ontology rather than a mere historical coincidence. Second, it provides an interdisciplinary bridge between biblical studies, hydrology, archaeoastronomy, and political science, demonstrating that the physical reality of the Nile's flow and the celestial rhythm of Sirius's rising are not separate from the biblical narrative but integral to it. Third, it contributes to post-colonial biblical studies by centering African agency in salvation history. Traditional biblical scholarship, shaped by European colonialism, has often marginalized or dismissed the African dimensions of the biblical text. This study challenges that marginalization by demonstrating that Egypt and Ethiopia are not merely passive settings but integral actors whose relationships with Israel are central to the biblical narrative. As Holter (2023) observes, "the presence of 'Africa and Africans' has the potential of balancing the universalistic trajectory of the Bible" (p. 225).

Implications for Contemporary Nile Governance

The theological vision of the sacred cord has direct implications for contemporary Nile governance. The river is not "Egypt's" or "Ethiopia's"; it is God's and it is shared. The biblical model offers a "theology of mutual dependency" rather than a "theology of supremacy," inviting Egypt and Ethiopia to move beyond zero-sum competition and embrace a vision of shared blessing. This vision finds expression in the prophetic declaration: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage" (Isaiah 19:25). The possibility of a "Nile Compact" inspired by the biblical vision of mutual blessing, offers a framework for cooperation that acknowledges the legitimate needs of both upstream and downstream nations.

As Erlich (2022) observes, the Egyptian-Ethiopian bond is "built on both interdependence and conflict" (p. 1). The sacred cord model offers a path from conflict to cooperation by recognizing that the three nations are bound to sink or swim together.

Limitations and Future Research

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, it is limited to the biblical canon and Ethiopian Orthodox traditions, with less attention to Islamic, Jewish diaspora, or other African perspectives on the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel nexus. Future research should incorporate these perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the sacred cord. Second, the study focuses on Egypt, Ethiopia, and Israel, leaving open the question of how other Nilotic nations; Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, and others, fit into this "sacred cord." The Nile Basin includes eleven countries, and a comprehensive framework for water governance must account for the needs of all riparian states. Third, quantitative hydrological studies could further validate the stellar-hydrological connections identified in this study, providing empirical data that supports the theological-ontological claims.

Concluding Reflection

The secret of God, as revealed through the Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle, is that He is a God of connection, not division. The Nile is not just water; it is a "living covenant" between nations, a sacred cord that binds them together in a relationship of mutual dependency and divine purpose. As Jesus declared: "I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also" (John 10:16, New American Standard Bible, 1995). The Egypt-Ethiopia-Israel triangle is a preview of that ultimate gathering, a foreshadowing of the day when people from every tribe, tongue, and nation will worship together before the throne of God (Revelation 7:9). The sacred cord that binds these three nations is not merely a historical curiosity but a living reality, a theological ontology that challenges us to see the interconnectedness of all peoples and the unity of God's purposes for all creation.

Final Opening Statement (for the Abstract)

This paper argues that the biblical narratives of Moses' Cushite marriage, Solomon's Egyptian alliance, and the Holy Family's flight to Lake Tana constitute a coherent theological-hydrographical ontology—one that finds its empirical validation in the annual rising of Sirius and the flooding of the Nile, and its modern political urgency in the struggle for regional sovereignty.

References

- Adankpo-Labadie, O. (2024). The reception of the books of Kings in Ethiopia. In S. L. McKenzie & M. Richelle (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the books of Kings* (pp. 473–490). Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhpb/9780197610374.013.34>
- Africa Press. (2025, September 11). Ethiopia rises, colonial Nile treaties crumble.
<https://www.africa-press.net>
- Amandry, M., Burnett, A., & Ripollès, P. P. (2011). Sirius rising 139 AD: Hadrian, Tivoli, and the Tazza Farnese. In *Proceedings of the XIV International Numismatic Congress* (Vol. 441, pp. 201–211). Astronomical Society of the Pacific Conference Series.
<https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2011ASPC..441..509A/abstract>
- Anaduaem, H.A. B.S. Goshu, (2023). Exploring the Interplay between Human Perception, Astrophysics, and the Nile River: Unraveling the Significance of Sirius, Harla J. Appl. Sci. Mater. 1(1): 43-77

- Ayferam, G. (2023, January 19). The Nile dispute: Beyond water security. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2023/01/the-nile-dispute-beyond-water-security>
- BBC. (n.d.). Death of the Nile. <https://www.bbc.co.uk>
- Bible Hub. (n.d.). How does Ecclesiastes 4:12 illustrate the importance of community and relationships in faith? <https://biblehub.com>
- Bible Hub. (n.d.). What is the theological significance of the Nile turning to blood in Exodus 7:18? <https://biblehub.com>
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-a). What does Numbers 12:1 reveal about racial and cultural tensions in biblical times? https://biblehub.com/q/Racial_tensions_in_Numbers_12_1.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-b). Why did Miriam and Aaron criticize Moses for marrying a Cushite woman in Numbers 12:1? https://biblehub.com/q/Why_criticize_Moses_for_Cushite_wife.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-c). Numbers 12:1 Study Bible: Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cushite woman. <https://biblehub.com/study//numbers/12-1.htm>
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-d). Why did Miriam and Aaron question Moses' authority in Numbers 12:2? https://biblehub.com/q/Why_did_Miriam_Aaron_doubt_Moses.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-e). Why did God choose leprosy as a punishment for Miriam in Numbers 12:10? https://biblehub.com/q/Why_did_God_choose_leprosy_Miriam.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-f). Numbers 12:1 Study Bible. <https://biblehub.com/study//numbers/12-1.htm>
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-g). What significance does Pharaoh's daughter have in Solomon's spiritual and political life? https://biblehub.com/q/Pharaoh_s_daughter_s_role_in_Solomon_s_life.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-h). Topical Bible: Solomon: Marries One of Pharaoh's Daughters. https://biblehub.com/topical/s/solomon_marries_pharaohs_daughter.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-i). 1 Kings 3 - Clarke's Commentary. <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/acc/1-kings-3.html>
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-j). What spiritual dangers might arise from Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter? https://biblehub.com/q/Spiritual_dangers_Solomon_marriage.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-k). What role does Pharaoh's daughter play in Solomon's spiritual decline in 1 Kings 11? https://biblehub.com/q/Pharaoh_s_daughter_in_Solomon_s_decline.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-l). 1 Kings 10:1 Commentaries. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_kings/10-1.htm
- Bible Hub. (n.d.-m). Bible Commentaries 1 Kings 10. <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/bcc/1-kings-10.html>
- Britannica. (n.d.). Canis Minor | Brightest star, Sirius, Ursa Major. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Canis-Minor>
- Britannica. (n.d.). Hapi | Nile River, floods & fertility. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hapi>
- Brunelleschi.imss.fi.it. (n.d.). The Egyptian sky. <https://brunelleschi.imss.fi.it/galileopalazzostrozzi/section/TheEgyptianSky.html>
- Calvin, J. (n.d.). Commentary on Psalms – Volume 3. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. <https://ccel.org>
- Cambridge University Press. (2009). The beginnings (Chapter 1). In *A history of the church in Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cascão, A. E., & Nicol, A. (2016). GERD: New norms of cooperation in the Nile Basin? The Water Security Learning Centre. (For a journal citation, see below.)
- Cascão, A. E., & Nicol, A. (2016). GERD: New norms of cooperation in the Nile Basin? *Water International*, 41(4), 550–573. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1180763>
- Catechism of the Catholic Church. (n.d.). Baptism in the economy of salvation. Vatican.va.

- Catena Bible. (n.d.). Ecclesiastes 4:12 – Gregory the Dialogist. <https://catenabible.com>
- Constable, T. L. (n.d.). Solomon's attitudes 3:1–3 – Expository notes on the Bible. <https://bible.sabda.org>
- Conway, D. (2000). The climate and hydrology of the Upper Blue Nile River. *The Geographical Journal*, 166(1), 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4959.2000.tb00006.x>
- Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature. (n.d.). Nile. StudyLight.org. <https://www.studylight.org>
- Dialogue Across Borders. (2026, March 27). Al-Muḥarraḡ Monastery and the Holy Family tradition. <https://www.dialogueacrossborders.com>
- Dissertations.se. (n.d.). Celestial cycles: Astronomical concepts of regeneration in the ancient Egyptian coffin texts. <https://www.dissertations.se>
- ENA. (2025, September 14). End of colonial roots. Ethiopian News Agency. <https://www.ena.et>
- ENA. (2025, September 28). Ethiopia rejects Egypt's unfounded claim on GERD at UN General Assembly. Ethiopian News Agency. <https://www.ena.et>
- Eresources.nlb.gov.sg. (2011). Sothic cycle. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>
- Erlich, H. (2002). *The Nile: Histories, cultures, myths*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Erlich, H. (2022). *The cross and the river: Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Nile*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781588269607>
- Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. (2024). Zemene Tsigie / "The season of flowers." <https://www.eotcstgabriel.org>
- Gautschy, R., Bickel, S., & Schoch, R. (2017). The Egyptian Sothic cycle and the heliacal rising of Sirius: Astronomical and historical perspectives. *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 48(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021828616682857>
- Gautschy, R., Habicht, M. E., Galassi, F. M., Rutica, D., Rühli, F. J., & Hannig, R. (2017). A new astronomically based chronological model for the Egyptian Old Kingdom. *Journal of Egyptian History*, 10(2), 143–172. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18741665-12340035>
- Goshu, B.S. (2024). Miracles of Numbers, 3, 6, And 9 Numbers, *Britain International of Humanities and Social Sciences (BIOHS) Journal* 6 (3), 1-14
- Goshu, B.S. and M. Ridwan (2026). Beyond the Zero-Sum Game: A Paradigm Shift from Hydro-Politics to Hydro-Economics in the Eastern Nile Basin, *Economit Journal: Scientific Journal of Accountancy, Management and Finance*, 6(1), 32-57.
- Goshu, B.S. and M. Ridwan, (2025), Quantum Leaps over the Nile: Rethinking the Ethiopia-Egypt Dispute through a Quantum Lens, *Konfrontasi: Jurnal Kultural, Ekonomi dan Perubahan Sosial* 12 (4), 279-299
- Goshu, B.S. and M. Ridwan, (2026). Sacred Sounds and Waters: Sonic and Scientific Dimensions of Divine Connection in Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, Oromo Irreecha, and Global Traditions, *Lakhomi Journal: Scientific Journal of Culture*, 7(2), 84-97
- Goshu, B.S., (2026), Pi as Cosmic Fingerprint: A Multidisciplinary Review of a Mathematical Constant in Science, Scripture, and the Argument from Design, *Britain International of Exact Sciences (BIOEx) Journal*, 8 (2), 166-178
- Holter, K. (2023). The theological significance of Africa and Africans in the Bible. *Old Testament Essays*, 36(1), 220–234. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2023/v36n1a13>
- Hubbard, D. A. (1956). *The literary sources of the Kebra Nagast* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of St Andrews.
- Iri.columbia.edu. (n.d.). Nile River flow. <https://iri.columbia.edu>
- Jerusalem Post. (2026, March 4). How Israel is stuck between Ethiopia-Egypt clash over Nile. The Jerusalem Post. <https://www.jpost.com/jerusalem-report/article-888720>

- Journals.sub.uni-hamburg.de. (n.d.). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Nile. <https://journals.sub.uni-hamburg.de>
- JSTOR. (n.d.). The dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. <https://www.jstor.org>
- Kendie, D. (1999). *Egypt and the hydro-politics of the Blue Nile*. Michigan State University Press.
- KPBS. (2010, September 26). Ethiopia claims high ground in right-to-Nile debate. <https://www.kpbs.org>
- Krupp, E. C. (2019). Egyptian astronomy: A tale of temples, tradition, and tombs. In *Archaeoastronomy and the Maya* (pp. 123–145). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429049224-7>
- La Razón. (2024, December 24). Tras las huellas de la Sagrada Familia... en Etiopía. <https://www.larazon.es>
- Mereja Forum. (n.d.). Does the Ethiopian orthodox teach Jesus visited Ethiopia? <https://mereja.forum>
- Ncesc.com. (2024, May 13). What happens to the Nile river every summer? <https://www.ncesc.com>
- NETBible. (n.d.). Cushite woman; Ethiopian woman. <https://classic.net.bible.org>
- New American Standard Bible. (1995). The Lockman Foundation. (Original work published 1971)
- Nikov, N. (2012). Heliacal rising of Sirius and flooding of the Nile. *Bulgarian Astronomical Journal*, 18, 53–62. <https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2012BlgAJ..18c..53N/abstract>
- Oakland Public Library. (n.d.). Africa and the Bible. <https://oaklandlibrary.bibliocommons.com>
- Oestigaard, T. (2014). *The source of the Blue Nile: Water rituals and traditions in the Lake Tana region*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Online Bible Commentary. (n.d.). Ecclesiastes 4:12 KJV – And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him. <https://www.onlinebiblecommentary.com/ecclesiastes-4-12-kjv.php>
- Only One Africa. (2025, February 26). Adventures on Lake Tana: Discovering Ethiopia's forgotten monasteries. <https://onlyone.africa>
- Princeton Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Egyptian Miracles of Mary Project. (n.d.). Book of Dersana 'Ura'el: Part 07: The Holy Family goes to the island of Lake Tana. <https://pemm.princeton.edu>
- Psalms 68:31 Study Bible. (n.d.). Envoys shall come out of Egypt. Ethiopia shall hurry to stretch out her hands to God. <https://biblehub.com>
- Roach, S. C., Hudson, D. K., & Demerew, K. (Eds.). (2025). *Nile Basin politics: From coordinated to cooperative peace*. Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803927176>
- Schneider, S. (n.d.). Moses in Cush: Development of the legend. *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, 47(2), 113–118. https://jbqnew.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/472/jbq_472_schneidercush.pdf
- SIS. (2025, November 27). Ministry of Irrigation: Erratic management of the GERD poses genuine risks to Egypt. State Information Service. <https://sis.gov.eg>
- Stern, P. D. (2023, October 24). Did Solomon really take an Egyptian bride? *Biblical Archaeology Review*. <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/did-solomon-really-take-an-egyptian-bride/>
- Sweeney, M. A. (2025). YHWH's defense of Moses in Numbers 12. *Hebrew Studies*, 66, 65. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hbr.2025.a976430>
- Taylor & Francis. (2013). *The source of the Blue Nile: Water rituals and traditions in the Lake Tana region*. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com>

- Tessema, D. (2025, August 20). How the Nile River shaped ancient civilizations and hydro-politics. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com>
- The Holy Bible, New American Standard Bible. (1995). The Lockman Foundation.
- The New Arab. (2025, February 10). As Ethiopia and Israel forge closer water cooperation, alarm bells ring in Egypt. <https://www.newarab.com>
- The Reporter Ethiopia. (2026, January 3). The legal fallacy of Cairo's "red lines" – Why Ethiopia's sovereignty is not up for negotiation. <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com>
- Theopolis Institute. (2004, August 28). Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter: A Pauline interpretation. <https://theopolisinstitute.com>
- Topical Bible. (n.d.-a). God's care for the outcast. <https://biblehub.com>
- Topical Bible. (n.d.-b). God's heart for the marginalized. <https://biblehub.com>
- Topical Bible. (n.d.-c). The river. <https://biblehub.com>
- Topical Bible. (n.d.-d). Egypt: The country of: Joseph takes Jesus to. <https://biblehub.com>
- Ullendorff, E. (1968). Ethiopia and the Bible. Oxford University Press.
- Vatican Press. (2018). Solemnity of the Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle – Celebration of the Second Vespers. <https://press.vatican.va>
- Vijverberg, J., Sibbing, F. A., & Dejen, E. (2009). Lake Tana: Source of the Blue Nile. In H. J. Dumont (Ed.), *The Nile: Origin, environments, limnology and human use* (pp. 317–342). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9726-3_9
- Wikipedia. (n.d.). Kebra Nagast. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kebra_Negast
- World History Encyclopedia. (n.d.). Solomonic descent in Ethiopian history [Audio article]. <https://www.worldhistory.org/audioplayer/en/2-1875/>
- Zeitoun, M. (2008). Power and water in the Middle East: The hidden politics of the Palestinian-Israeli water conflict. I.B. Tauris.