

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

After the Muslims were established in Abyssinia and practiced their religion safely under the protection of the African Christian king a letter was delivered to the king. The English translation is as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّجَاشِيِّ عَظِيمِ الْحَبَشَةِ سَلَامٌ عَلَى
مَنْ إِتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى أَمْ بَعْدَ: فَإِنِّي أَحْمَدُ إِلَيْكَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ
الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّمِنُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رُوحِ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتِهِ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ الْبَتُولِ
الطَّيِّبَةِ الْحَصِينَةِ فَحَمَلَتْ بِعِيسَى فَخَلَقَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ رُوحِهِ وَنَفَخَهُ كَمَا خَلَقَ آدَمَ بِيَدِهِ وَإِنِّي
أَدْعُوكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَالْمُؤَالَاةَ عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ وَأَنْ تَتَّبَعَنِي وَتُوقِنَنَّ بِالَّذِي
جَاءَنِي فَإِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ وَجُنُودَكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ وَ
نَصَحْتُ فَأَقْبَلُوا نَصِيحَتِي وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مَنْ إِتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى

"In the name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful. It is from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah - to the Great King of Abyssinia. Peace to he who follows the Guidance. As to what follows; Verily, for you I praise Allah whom there is no God except Him, the King, the Holy One, the Source of Peace, the Trustee, the Protector, the Guardian. I bear witness that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the spirit belonging to Allah and His Word that He cast to Mary, The Noble, Chaste, Virgin, who then became pregnant with Jesus, then Allah created him from His Spirit and His Breathing. He was created in the same way that He created Adam with His Hand. Verily, I invite you to Allah the One who has no partner and I invite you to protected friendship with Allah, continuity and continuous governance in accordance with the will of Allah in obedience to Him. I invite you to follow me and to have absolute certainty in all that I come with. For truly, I am the Messenger of Allah and I invite you and your government forces to Allah, The Mighty, The Majestic. I have delivered the message and have given sincere advice - so accept my advice. Peace on him who follows the Guidance."

One of the clearest proofs of Allah's confirmation of Africa and its people can be seen in the truths which are established in the letter of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to the African Emperor. This letter does not in any way reflect the threat and intimidation that are implicit in the letters to the leaders of other kingdoms. In fact, the letter is testimony to the monotheistic beliefs of Abyssinia and its justice. The letter is full of praise and confirmation of the strength of the African kingdom and is written in the spirit of a Prophet addressing a spiritual student and pious follower. Clearly in this letter is the greatest affirmation which a community or nation can receive from a Prophet.

Due to the fact that this letter was sent to the African king, it is intended for everyone of African descent. When a Prophet writes to a king, he is not only writing to the king himself, but he is writing to all of the people that king represents. At that time Abyssinia was not only where the Negus was located but all of the lands beyond that i.e. Black Africa – as we have mentioned earlier.

The letter of our beloved Messenger to the King of Abyssinia was an affirmation of the exalted status of the Emperor, when he said, “**ila n-Najaashi ‘Adheemi l-Habashati (the great king of Abyssinia)**”. The key adjective used in this phrase is ‘Adheem, which means great. This adjective is key because *Al-‘Adheemi*[1] is an attribute of Allah (God).

This letter also proves that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, considered that these particular Christians are the real Christians and the true inheritors of the legacy of Jesus - the forerunner to Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. After praising Allah (God) he said, “**I bear witness that Jesus, son of Mary, is the spirit belonging to Allah and His Word that He cast to Mary, The Noble, Chaste, Virgin, who then became pregnant with Jesus from His Spirit and His Breathing. He was created in the same way that He created Adam with His Hand.**” Usually after the introduction he would say “**aslim wa taslim (accept Islam and you will be safe.)**” He wrote this to Hercules, the Caesar or King of the Roman Empire and the Bishop of Alexandria – both of who claimed to be Christians.ii[2] Again, in his letters to other ‘Christian’ rulers and leaders he didn’t clarify his beliefs regarding Jesus, upon whom be peace, in the fashion that he did with the African Emperor because they (Ethiopians) practiced a purer form of Islam. In other words, every Prophet sent by God came with the same religion – Islam; which means complete submission to God. The only thing that varied was the particular laws that the individual Prophets came with. One example of this is the slight difference in the dietary laws. All Prophets taught their followers to worship one God alone and not to associate partners with Him. The Ethiopian Christians followed every Prophet that came to them. When Moses came they followed him. When Solomon came they followed him. And when Jesus came they followed him. The Romans (Europeans) were the ones who oppressed Jesus and his followers. The Romans only accepted Jesus’ teachings after it was mixed with various pagan beliefs. The Christianity practiced by the Africans was devoid of most of the Roman paganism.

The most important part of the letter is its affirmation of the political authority of the government of Abyssinia and the call to a theocratic foundation based upon divine law and justice. The evidence is in the words, “*Verily I invite you to Allah who is unique without partner and to **al-muwaalaati `ala ta`aatih** . . .*” The word *muwaalaat* has a myriad of meanings. Among them are: [1] (*waliy*) the implication of friend and guardian

and sainthood; [2] (*wilaayah*) the implication of power and sovereignty; [3] (*tawaalin*) and the implication of continuance and uninterrupted sequence. This points to the fact the Messenger of Allah was calling the people of Abyssinia - and by extension the Africans in general - to guardianship over the oppressed Muslims, friendship and intimacy with Allah and His Messenger, blessed government with power and sovereignty which would be continuous and follow an uninterrupted sequence - **government after government** - an unbroken chain of independence based upon *ta`aat* (obedience) and *yaqeen* (absolute certainty) in what Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brought.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then underlines this affirmation of the sovereignty of the Abyssinians by saying, "*I invite you and your **junuud** to Allah, The Mighty, The Majestic.*" There can be no doubt that our beloved Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, invited the whole of Abyssinia to theocratic government whose base would be the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and whose principles would pervade the whole of the society and government structure. This is what the meaning of *junuud* (forces) implies. The word *junuud* means military forces, army and government officials, administration or every sector of authority by which the mandates of government are executed and discharged. This is the final proof of Allah and His Messenger's invitation of the Africans to independent government based upon the theocratic principles of Islam and nothing else.

Therefore, if the African Emperor responded positively to the invitation of Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, everything promised to the Africans would have been manifested by Allah.

[1] With the definite article 'al', meaning 'The'.

[2] The Letter of the Prophet to the Roman Emperor: "*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful. This is from Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, to the leader of Rome, Heraclius. Peace be upon those who follows the path of salvation. After this, O King, I invite you to accept Islam. Become a Muslim, Allah will protect you from all afflictions, and your reward will be twofold. If you deny it, then the sin of your disbelief and that of your subjects will be on your head. Say, O People of the Book! Come to a word which is fair between us and you - that we worship none except Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him and that we not take others among us as Lords besides Allah. But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'*"

The Romans ruled lower Egypt, all of the Mediterranean regions including the lands of Syria and the holy lands of Jerusalem and Hebron. One of the major centers of Roman hegemony was in Alexandria in Egypt. Many Arab tribes in the peninsular were clients and allies with the Bishop of Alexandria and paid them a yearly tax, which guaranteed the sale of their goods throughout the Holy Lands. The Roman Empire had for the past six hundred years professed the religion of Christianity, albeit a mythical paganistic version of the religion of Jesus. The Romans were afflicted at that time with the worst cases of injustice known to man. Among these injustices included the deification of Jesus, the saints and the mother Jesus; the enslaving of women; incest and homosexuality was the norm. Clearly, Rome was afflicted with the same conditions - even worse than the conditions that prevailed in Makkah. Rome would not be nor has it ever been a place of hijrah for true believers in Allah. An examination of the letter of Prophet Muhammad to Heraclius, the king of Rome is quite revealing:

This letter from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, clearly establish the fact that the Christians of Rome were considered as disbelievers and that their king would not accept Islam in spite of the clear warning of the Prophet. Clearly, Rome was not to be the location of the *hijrah* of the young Muslim servants of Allah.
