**Jamaican Culture, Rastafari Origins & Beliefs**

http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/index.shtml



[Video footage of Emperor Haile Selassie’s 1966 visit to Jamaica](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/visittojamaicavidoefootage.shtml) Video footage of Emperor Haile Selassie’s April 21, 1966  historic visit to Jamaica. Over 100,000 Rastafarians from all over descended on the airport, having heard that the man whom they considered to be the Messiah was coming. Selassie told the Rastafarians they should not immigrate to Ethiopia until they had found freedom in Jamaica.

[Introduction](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/introduction.shtml) An introduction to Rastafari & the goal of these series of articles.

[The Origins Of Rastafari](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/orgins.shtml) Learn about the origins of Rastafari and the environment that influenced its origins.

[What Do Rastafarians Believe](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/believe.shtml) A brief overview to the basic belief system of Rastafari.

[Rastafari Comparison to Christianity And Judaism](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/rasta_comparison.shtml) A brief comparison to the religions of Rastafari to Christianity and Judaism.

[Important Books In Rastafarian Theology](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/important_books.shtml) An overview of the books, including the Holy Piby, that have shaped Rastafari.

[The Key Figures](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/keyfigures.shtml) Even though His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) Haile Selassie is probably the most prominent figure, there are other players.

[The Marcus Garvey's Statement called Rastafari "Prophecy"](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/MarcusGarveyProhecy.shtml) Here is the article many Rastafarians Refer to as the Prohecy by Marcus Garvey. It was Published November 8, 1930 in his Jamaican newspaper, The Blackman:

[Editorial "THE FAILURE OF HAILE SELASSIE AS EMPEROR" by Marcus Garvey](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/MarcusGarveyeditorial.shtml) Here is the main article many Garveyites quote on why Marcus Garvery never endorsed Haile Selassie as the Black Messiah.

[About H.I.M. Haile Selassie](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/abouthim.shtml) An overview of the central figure in Rastafari, His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) Haile Selassie, including his denial of deity in an interview with CBS.

[H.I.M. Haile Selassie's Visit to Jamaica](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/visittojamaica.shtml) An overview of His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) Haile Selassie's historic visit to Jamaica.

[Emperor Haile Selassie's Denial Of Being The Messiah](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/interview_popup.shtml)

[The Rastafarian Orders/Sects](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/rasta_sects.shtml) There are 3 main Rastafarian sects/orders. Learn the similarities & differences of these sects/orders.

[Marijuana And Other Rasta Symbols](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/ganja.shtml) Learn more about Rastafarian use of Marijuana (Ganja) and other symbols.

[The Dreadlocks Hairstyle](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/dreadlocks.shtml) Learn about the origins of dreadlocks & the use of it by some for monetary.

[Interviews with Abunda Yesehaq who Baptised Bob Marley](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/interview_AbundaYesehaq.shtml) Here are media "clips" from two interviews with Archbishop Abuna Yesehaq on Bob Marley's Christian baptism before his death.

[The Ethiopian Orthodox Church & Bob Marley's Baptism And The Church](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/ethiopian_church.shtml) The Ethiopian Orthodox Church which was established by order of His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) Haile Selassie, has had a very turbulent relationship. Learn more about this church, including the baptism of Bob Marley.

[Rastafari & Jamaican Culture](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/culture.shtml) An overview of the influence of Rastafari on Jamaican culture.

[Rastafari's Future](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/rasta_future.shtml) Where is Rastafari going and what are some of the trends.

[Reggae Music And Rastafari](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/reggae.shtml) Jamaica is known worldwide for Reggae music. Learn how Rastafari took Reggae music to the world.

[Ital Food](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/ital_food.shtml) Diet plays a very important role in Rastafari. Learn about Ital & how it relates to relates to Rastafari.

[Race & Women In Rastafari](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/race_women.shtml) Learn about the roles race and women in Rastafari.

**Introduction**

Published Jun 1, 2003

Rastafari is the most famous religious movement of the Caribbean. It has affected the culture and society of the Caribbean. Our goal is to provide information on Rastafari in Jamaica and to assist in understanding Rastafari. After reading these series of articles, one should be able to differentiate between the many individuals who are dreadlocked but not a Rastafarian and Rastafari. You should also gain a broader understanding of the beliefs of Rastafari, its origins and its effects on Jamaica society.

Rastafari, with its mixture of [Christianity and Black Messianic Judaism](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/rasta_comparison.shtml), has been called by many things; a religious cult, a religion, a sect. Please note that Rastafarians do not consider themselves to be a religion or social/political group and many despise any type of classification. This is one of the reasons why cult or religious sect is the terminology most use when referring to Rastafarians. After reading these articles and references to the many resources we have provided, one should be closer to answering the question "What is Rastafari?"

Special Thanks: Rastafarian Fekade Selassie, Dr Clinton Chisholm and ex-Rastafarian Christopher Daley for the extensive information they provided for this series of articles. Please also see list of references and resources at the end of each article.

**The Origins Of Rastafari**

Published May 31, 2003

The name Rastafari, which is derived from Ras, is the title given to Amharic Royalty in Ethiopia and Tafari, which is the pre-coronation name of [His Imperial Majesty (HIM) Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/abouthim.shtml) (1898-1975). A severe depression, racism and class discrimination during 1930 was the perfect environment for the rural and poor Jamaicans to embrace a new religion.

This Poverty and disenchantment in the inner cities of Kingston gave way in the early 1930's to the black power movement through [Marcus Garvey's](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/keyfigures.shtml) "Back To Africa" movement. This movement is what eventually led to the emergence of Rastafari.

In 1930, when Ras Tafari was crowned Emperor Haile Selassie and was given the ancient title given to all Ethiopian Kings " The King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Conquering Lion of Judah", the prophecy was said to have been fulfilled.



[Revelations 5:5](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=rev&chapter=5) and [Ezekiel 28:25](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=eze&chapter=28) are references used by Rastafarians as proof of the deity of Emperor Haile Selassie. He was seen as the deliverer who would take his people back to their promised land as stated in [Ezekiel 28:25](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=eze&chapter=28). This, however did not happen. Rastafarians compare their exile from Africa via the means of slavery with the Israelites exile to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar ([2 Chronicles 25](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=2ch&chapter=25)). Hence the word Babylon is used for any [system](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/orgins.shtml) that oppresses. There is also a comparison to the Israelites who were enslaved in Egypt before they went to the Promised Land.

Rastafari use references such [Revelations 19:16](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=rev&chapter=22) and [5:2-5](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=rev&chapter=5) as biblical prophecy to Haile Selassie's deity.

Here are more Bible verses used by Rastafarians to claim the deity of Emperor Haile Selassie as Savior and Messiah: [Revelations 22 :16](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=rev&chapter=22), [Ezekiel 30](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=eze&chapter=30), [Epistle to Timothy](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=1ti&chapter=1), [Psalms 9](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=psm&chapter=9), [18](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=psm&chapter=18), [68](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=psm&chapter=68), [76](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=psm&chapter=76), [87:4](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=psm&chapter=87), [Isaiah 9](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=isa&chapter=9), [Revelations 17:14](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=rev&chapter=17) (a reference used for his return to Ethophia in 1941 from exile).

**What Do Rastafarians Believe**

Published May 30, 2003



Below are some of the main foundational beliefs of Rastafarians. The other articles will provide some of the other beliefs and standards

* Rastafarians believe that God is a spirit and that this spirit was manifested in King H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I.
* Rastafarians believe that Jesus was a direct descendant of King David and was black.
* Rastafarians believe that the Ethiopian Solomonic Dynasty is a direct representation of King David.
* Rastafarians believe that they are the original Lost Tribes of Israel that were once scattered by Babylon until the appearance of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I.
* Rastafarians believe that God will return them to Zion (Rastafarians refer to Ethiopia as Zion).
* Rastafarians believe that Ethiopia is the Promised Land and that it is Heaven on Earth.
* The White Man took them away from the Promised Land (Ethiopia/Zion) as slaves to Babylon and a Babylonian [system](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/believe.shtml). (Please note that some Rastafarians will say Pink people vs. White people)
* **Rastafari Comparison to Christianity And Judaism**
* Published May 29, 2003

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Rastafari** | **Christianity** | **Judaism** |
| **Key Person (s)** | [His Imperial Majesty(HIM) Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/abouthim.shtml) (1888 - 1975) | Jesus | God and Abraham of the bible. |
| **Founder** | Founder - [Joseph Hibbert, Leonard Percival Howell](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/keyfigures.shtml) | Jesus Christ | Abraham of the bible. |
| **Date**  | 1930 | A.D. 30-33 | 2000 B.C. |
| **Location** | Jamaica | Middle East | Middle East |
| **Key Writings** | [Bible (New and Old Testament), The Holy Piby, "The Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy".](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/important_books.shtml) | The Bible (New and Old Testament) | The Tanakh (Old Testament). The first 5 books of the Old Testament called the Torah are especially important. |
| **Who is God?** | Haile Selassie is the living God and black Messiah.  | God is Triune (One God in three Person, not three gods) | God is a spirit. |
| **Who is Jesus?** | He is the son of God. Because there is no set Rastafarian Theology, there are varied views on who Christ is. One thing that Rastafarians agree on is that Christ was Black. Someone say he is a prophet. He is called Eyesos Christos (Christ in Latin). Some say Emperor Haile Selassie is the reincarnated Christ. | Jesus is the second person of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) and is coequal with them all. | To some Jesus is the false Messiah and to others he is a martyred Jewish Rabbi. Some say he never existed. |
| **Who is the Holy Spirit?** | Some say Emperor Emperor Haile Selassie is the Holy Spirit in flesh. | The third person of the Trinity. | Some Jews believe it is God's love and power. |
| **Salvation** | Believe in Emperor Emperor Haile Selassie. Follow most of Rastafarian version of Jewish Law. | Salvation is by God's grace once you believe in your heart the death and resurrection of Jesus. | Prayer, repentance and adherence to Jewish law. |
| **What Happens After Death** | Most Rastafarians believe that Ethiopia was Eden. After death you go to Heaven which will be the new Eden. | Physical Resurrection at the final judgment. Those who believe in Jesus will live with him forever. | Physical Resurrection for the obedient who will live forever with God |

**Important Books In Rastafarian Theology**

Published May 28, 2003

**The Holy Piby And Other Important Books In Rastafari Theology**
The Holy Piby is probably the most important book in Rastafarian Theology. Other books that are important for Rasta Theology are the "King James's Bible" ; "The Royal Parchment Scroll Of Black Supremacy", "The Promised Key" and the "Kebra Negast". Below are brief descriptions of all these books.

**The Holy Piby**
The Holy Piby, published in 1924 (Newark, New Jersey), is an occult bible which was allegedly translated from "Amharic". The Piby emphasizes the destruction of white "Babylon" and the return of the Black Israelites to Africa which is the true Zion. It is also known as the "Black Man's Bible". It was quickly adopted by Rastafarians as one of their foundation books for Theological references in the sect.



One Chapter of the book also pays tribute to Marcus Garvey who was one of the most prominent black men fighting for civil rights during the time of publication.

The "Holy Piby" was complied 1913-1917 by its author Robert Athlyi Rogers (Shepherd Robert Athlyi Rogers), who was born in Anguilla. He committed suicide on 24th August 1931. Many Rastafarians say he "took himself away from this life" versus saying he committed suicide when referring to his death.

Below is an excerpt from the Holy Piby Chapter 2.

"Holy Piby Chapter 2 page 23 First Paragraph -"And it came to pass that God gave his name Elijah, and he called upon the name of the Lord God even though he himself was God. Now when the time had appeared for God to return, the supreme angel commanded the chariot of heaven to meet him. And when the chariot appeared unto Elijah, he ascended and returned to his throne in heaven where he reigned from the beginning and shall unto the end, King of kings and God of gods."



**King James Bible**
The King James Version of the Bible is the most popular Holy Bible and is the one used by Rastafarians. It was published in 1611 and has been the Standard English version for nearly 400 years. They believe that all other versions are corrupt and this version is the closest to the original manuscripts. Like Christians, the Rastafarians believe that the 66 books of the bible tell the account of God's actions, purpose for creation and man's redemption. However their interpretation of many of the books, passages and prophecies in the Bible are very different. Many passages are attributed a reference to the Emperor Haile Selassie. Rastafarians are avid daily Bible readers.

The Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy
"The Royal Parchment Scroll Of Black Supremacy" by Rev. Fitz Balintine Pettersburgh was first published in Kingston, Jamaica in 1926. The book professes Black Supremacy and self-determination under "Afro Centric Ethiopian constructs". Many claim that Leonard Percival Howell's "Promised Key" is a plagerized version of this book, that was modified to fit Rastafari.

**The Promised Key**
"The Promised Key" (published under the Hindu name Gangunguru Maragh which means "teacher of famed wisdom") by Leonard Percival Howell. It contains the foundations for Rastafari and used many of the same concepts found in The Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy (some have accused him of plagiarizing from this book due to the many similarities) and the Holy Piby.

**Kebra Negast**
The "Kebra Negast" which literally translates to "Glory Of The Kings" in Amharic, (the Ethiopian national language), is the National Epic of the Ethiopia State. Rastafarians see it as Prophecy. This is one of the main contentions between Rastafarians and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as they see it as a historical epic of Ethiopian Royalty.

**The Key Figures**

Published May 27, 2003

**Leonard P. Howell**
The first propagator of Rastafari was Leonard P. Howell. He also founded the Pinnacle Encampment in an abandoned estate between Kingston and Spanish Town, where the followers of this new religion found a safe haven. Howell was the Chief of the village and was rumored to have taken thirteen wives for himself. The village was run similarly to the [Maroons in Accompong](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/info/maroons.shtml) in the hills of Jamaica. Howell eventually proclaimed the he should be the one who should be worshiped and not Haile Selassie. He was confined to a mental institution in 1954 and the Pinnacle was closed down.

Below are the 6 foundations by Leonard P. Howell for Rastafari. Please note that not all Rastafarians hold some of these beliefs:

* Hatred for the White race
* The superiority of the Black race
* Revenge on Whites for their wickedness
* The negation, persecution and humiliation of the [government](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/keyfigures.shtml) and legal bodies of Jamaica
Preparation to return to Africa
* Acknowledgment of Emperor Haile Selassie I as the Supreme Being and the only ruler of the Black people.



**Marcus Garvey**
Rastafarians claim that [Marcus Garvey](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/info/heroes.shtml)foretold the rise of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie when in 1927 he told a church congregation, in a Kingston church, they should "look to Africa when a black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is at hand". There are no official records or writings on this and many "Garveyites" have disputed this claim as being a mis-interpretation of an article written by Marcus Garvey that appeared in his Jamaican newspaper, The Blackman (Also the New York-based Negro World newspaper) on November 8, 1930.

Rastafarians regard Marcus Garvey as a prophet similar to John the Baptist, who foretold Christ's coming. "Garveyite" historians and also some of Garvey writings show that he saw H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie as an African man who could influence the world and not as a God. Garvey has even harshly criticized Emperor Haile Selassie about his conduct in Ethiopia's war with Italy in 1935. Marcus Garvey and his organization, Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) also had a few disagreements with Leonard P. Howell on his teaching of Emperor Haile Selassie being the Messiah. In one case Leonard P. Howell was not allowed to sell pictures of Emperor Haile Selassie at the UNIA headquarters in Kingston.

Marcus Garvey played a role in the ideation with his Return to Africa movement at the turn of the 20th Century.

H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie



Emperor Haile Selassie is regarded as the black Messiah. We have dedicated an extensive article to [H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/abouthim.shtml)

Prince Emanuel Charles Edwards
The late Prince Emanuel Charles Edwards is the central figure in the [Bobo Shanti](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/rasta_sects.shtml) sect of Rastafari. See Bobo Shanti for more information.

Related Articles, Resources and Links

Marcus Garvey
HON.RT.PRINCE EMMANUEL CHARLES EDWARDS declaration to Bill Clinton
Marcus Garvey and the Early Rastafarians: Continuity and Discontinuity

**The Marcus Garvey's Statement called Rastafari "Prophecy"**

Published May 27, 2003



**Below is the article many Rastafarians Refer to as the Prohecy by Marcus Garvey. It was Published November 8, 1930 in his Jamaican newspaper, The Blackman:**

Last Sunday, a great ceremony took place at Addis Ababa, the capital of Abyssinia. It was the coronation of the new Emperor of Ethiopia -- Ras Tafari. From reports and expectations, the scene was one of great splendor, and will long be remembered by those who were present. Several of the leading nations of Europe sent representatives to the coronation, thereby paying their respects to a rising Negro nation that is destined to play a great part in the future history of the world. Abyssinia is the land of the blacks and we are glad to learn that even though Europeans have been trying to impress the Abyssinians that they are not belonging to the Negro Race, they have learned the retort that they are, and they are proud to be so.

Ras Tafari has traveled to Europe and America and is therefore no stranger to European hypocrisy and methods; he, therefore, must be regarded as a kind of a modern Emperor, and from what we understand and know of him, he intends to introduce modern methods and systems into his country. Already he has started to recruit from different sections of the world competent men in different branches of science to help to develop his country to the position that she should occupy among the other nations of the world.

We do hope that Ras Tafari will live long to carry out his wonderful intentions. From what we have heard and what we do know, he is ready and willing to extend the hand of invitation to any Negro who desires to settle in his kingdom. We know of many who are gone to Abyssinia and who have given good report of the great possibilities there, which they are striving to take advantage of.

The Psalmist prophesied that Princes would come out of Egypt and Ethiopia would stretch forth her hands unto God. We have no doubt that the time is now come. Ethiopia is now really stretching forth her hands. This great kingdom of the East has been hidden for many centuries, but gradually she is rising to take a leading place in the world and it is for us of the Negro race to assist in every way to hold up the hand of Emperor Ras Tafari.2

**Editorial "THE FAILURE OF HAILE SELASSIE AS EMPEROR" by Marcus Garvey**

Published May 27, 2003



**Editorial by Marcus Garvey in the Black Man - London, March/April 1937**

**THE FAILURE OF HAILE SELASSIE AS EMPEROR**

When the facts of history are written Haile Selassie of Abyssinia will go down as a great coward who ran away from his country to save his skin and left the millions of his countrymen to struggle through a terrible war that he brought upon them because of his political ignorance and his racial disloyalty.

It is a pity that a man of the limited intellectual calibre and weak political character like Haile Selassie became Emperor of Abyssinia at so crucial a time in the political history of the world. Unfortunately, Abyssinia lost the controlling influence of a political personality of patriotic racial character like the late Menelik, whose loyalty to his race and devotion to his country excelled all his other qualities, to the extent that he was able to use that very strength to continuously safeguard the interests of the Ethiopian Empire. What he did so well to preserve, a cringing, white slave hero worshipper, visionless and disloyal to his country, threw away. This is the impression the serious minded political student forms of the conduct of the ex-Emperor of Abyssinia.

EVERY NEGRO ASHAMED

Every Negro who is proud of his race must be ashamed of the way in which Haile Selassie surrendered himself to the white wolves of Europe. These statements may be considered very severe, and in fact, they are. We could have been otherwise apologetic and sympathetic, but that would have been only if we were dealing with a Coptic Priest or a Religious Monk and not a[n] Emperor who held and presided over the political trust of twelve million people of his own country, and the political destiny of the entire Negro race. This little misguided Emperor could not realise that he held in his hands the political trust of the hundreds of millions of Negroes of the world, men and women, who were looking up toward the firm establishment of political sovereignty, and that Ethiopia, like Liberia and Haiti were to them prizes of glory to be perpetuated and strengthened in the maintenance of the dignity of that black race that other men have claimed to be incompetent, inferior and unworthy, which every black man must disprove.

LOOKED WITH HOPE

When the war started in Abyssinia all Negro nationalists looked with hope to Haile Selassie. They spoke for him, they prayed for him, they sung for him, they did everything to hold up his hands, as Aaron did for Moses; but whilst the Negro peoples of the world were praying for the success of Abyssinia this little Emperor was undermining the fabric of his own kingdom by playing the fool with white men, having them advising him[,] having them telling him what to do, how to surrender, how to call off the successful thrusts of his Rases against the Italian invaders. Yes, they were telling him how to prepare his flight, and like an imbecilic child he followed every advice and then ultimately ran away from his country to England, leaving his people to be massacred by the Italians, and leaving the serious white world to laugh at every Negro and repeat the charge and snare - "he is incompetent," "we told you so." Indeed Haile Selassie has proved the incompetence of the Negro for political authority, but thank God there are Negroes who realise that Haile Selassie did not represent the truest qualities of the Negro race. How could he, when he wanted to play white? how could he, when he surrounded himself with white influence? how could he, when in a modem world, and in a progressive civilization, he preferred a slave State of black men than a free democratic country where the black citizens could rise to the same opportunities as white citizens in their democracies?

TELL THE TRUTH

The truth must be told so that the white world will realise that it was not the pride of the Negro that surrendered in Abyssinia. It was the disloyalty of a single man who was too silly to take pride in his race, who played such a game as to disgrace the political integrity of a noble people. The Negroes of Abyssinia and of the world are satisfied however that Abyssinia was not conquered by Italy and the European forces of Mussolini. Abyssinia was only conquered by the black levies of Italy. The Askaris have really been the victors in Abyssinia. [Rodolfo] Graziani only marched into Addis Ababa after he had made sure of the advanced guard of the Askaris. Every battle that the Italians won in Abyssinia resulted from the advanced charge of the Askaris. It was black men fighting black men, and this was made possible in Abyssinia because the regime of Haile Selassie had given a bad taste to the mouth, not only of the blacks of Abyssinia but of those of the surrounding territories. They felt that they had a cause against the Amharic white loving Emperor who liked to chain and flog black men, and whose brutality to them gave Mussolini the cause to fool the world that he was bestowing a blessing upon the people of Abyssinia by freeing them.

NO SLAVES

It was a piece of impertinence to suggest that black men should be held as slaves. We must admit that we glorified Haile Selassie when the war started, fought his battles to win international support, but we ever felt deep down in our hearts that he was a slave master. We had hoped that if Abyssinia had won that we would have forced the [Government](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/MarcusGarveyeditorial.shtml) of Abyssinia to free the black whom they held as slaves. We would have preferred this than seeing the country taken by Mussolini or any European power; but now that the country is temporarily lost and the Emperor has cowardly exiled himself, the truth must be told.

WHAT RIGHT HAS HE?

The future freedom of Abyssinia must be built upon the highest principles of democracy. That is why it is preferable for the Abyssinian Negroes and the Negroes of the world to work for the restoration and freedom of the country without the assistance of Haile Selassie, because at best he is but a slave master. The Negroes of the Western World whose forefathers suffered for three hundred years under the terrors of slavery ought to be able to appreciate what freedom means. Surely they cannot feel justified in supporting any [system](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/MarcusGarveyeditorial.shtml) that would hold their brothers in slavery in another country whilst they are enjoying the benefits of freedom elsewhere. The Africans who are free can also appreciate the position of slaves in Abyssinia. What right has the Emperor to keep slaves when all the democratic sections of the world were free, when men had the right to live, to develop, to expand, to enjoy all the benefits of human liberty[?]
The Emperor who has been exiled in Europe must have seen the civilization of Europe. In England where he [lives](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/MarcusGarveyeditorial.shtml) he sees that men are not flogged and chained and kicked because of their colour or because of their condition, but where true human liberty guarantees to every man the happiest pursuit he can bring to himself. It has been reported that he is leaving England for Syria, where a large number of Abyssinian refugees are living. There is an interpretation that the decision to leave England and to live among "his people?" in Syria is to perpetuate his divine majesty in the presence of that king worship that he doesn't get in England, where men look at others as equals and not as masters by divine right. In truth, the Emperor is out of place in democratic England. He wants to be once more in the environment of the feudal Monarch who looks down upon his slaves and serfs with contempt. Except he changes the attitude of thinking himself better than the Negro who constitutes the larger number of Ethiopia and profit by the experience he has gained, he should not be a fit person to be in authority in the very country in which he was born. After all, Haile Selassie is just an ordinary man like any other human being. What right has he to hold men as slaves? It is only the misfortune of the slaves that causes him to be a slave master. Negroes who have the dignity of their race at heart resent the impertinence of anyone holding the blacks as slaves. Haile Selassie ought to realise this and abolish his foolish dream of being an Emperor of slaves and serfs and try to be an Emperor of noble men, and for him to be that he must himself be the noblest of them all. He hasn't proved his nobility in the war between Italy and Abyssinia. [Ras Desta](http://afronord.tripod.com/~afronord/him/page8.html) proved to be the Lord, the Nobleman of Ethiopia whilst Halle Selassie proved a cringing coward!

**About H.I.M. Haile Selassie**

Published May 26, 2003

**King Solomon and Queen Sheba**



Rastafarian hold King Solomon and Queen Sheba in the highest regard. King Solomn is the son of King David in the Bible and its part of the lineage that leads to Jesus (Read 1 [Kings 10:1-13](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=1Ki&chapter=10)). Ethiopian history says that Kings Solomon of Israel and Queen Sheba of Ehtopia had a son Menelik. He was given direction to take the take the Ark of the Covenant which is a Jewish and Christian symbol of "God With Us". Haile Selassie is said to be of this bloodline and to Rastafarians the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

1892: Born near Harar
1928: Ascends to throne of Shoa
1930: Ascends to Imperial Throne
1936: Exiled after Italian invasion
1941: Returns to Addis Ababa
1966: Visited Jamaica
1962: Attempted coup by son
1962: Wife, Empress Menen dies
1974: Deposed by Mengistu
1975: Dies while in custody

Haile Selassie was born Tafari Makonnen and is said to be a a descendent of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba who are from biblical time. He was the grandnephew of Emperor Menelik II and his father, Ras Makonnen was a general in the Ethiopian Army. His father was also the Emperor's trusted adviser. Tafari also grew to gain the trust and respect of the Emperor.

Emperor Menelik II's throne was succeeded on to his grandson Lij Yasu. His successor, Lij Yasu's interest in Islam upset Ethiopians as they were a Christian majority nation. Tafari Makonnen deposed him in 1916 and placed Menelik II's daughter, Zauditu on the throne. He was given the title Ras by Zauditu and would now be Ras Tafari. He served under Zauditu until 1928 when he became King. He was given the coronation name King Negus Negusta. He became Emperor in 1930 just after Zauditu died. It was at this point he was given the name Haile Selassie, which is Amharic for "Power of the Trinity". He was also given the traditional title "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah" which is given to all Ethiopian Kings.

Emperor Haile Selassie I and Empress Menen with their children and grandchildren at the time of the 20th Anniversary of their Coronation November 1950, all dressed in national costume.

Before he became 20 years of age, Haile Selassie married Woizero Menen Asfaw, a granddaughter of King Michael of Wollo.

During his reign as king he established numerous [schools](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/abouthim.shtml), hospitals, banks, an airline, abolished slavery in his country (March 31, 1924) and modernized the overall infrastructure of Ethiopia. During his reign, Ethopia was seen as a powerful civilized independent African nation. His contribution made his country known throughout the world as a powerful nation and was a model many African nations hoped to achieve. He is especially admired by these African nations because of his fight against the Italian colonial invasion in the 1930's. He is also one of the founding fathers of the OAU.



Italy, in 1935, invaded the country. Led by Haile Selassie, the troops went to battle against the Italians. The Italians were too strong and defeated the Ethiopian army and Emperor Selassie was forced to go into exile.

The Emperor went before the League of Nations to appeal for help from the Italians. He gained some sympathies from the League but no one assisted him in his efforts to regain control of his country. He attracted worldwide sympathy, but failed to spur the League to action. Emperor Haile Selassie eventually regained power in 1941 with the help of Britain. Haile Selassie in battle - Artist Unknown



In 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie was detained and overthrown by the Marxist dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam in a 1974 coup (In 1960 Selassie's son, Asfa Wossan lead an unsuccessful coup against his father. His dad forgave him but all the other leaders of the coup are executed.)

He was detained by soldiers loyal to the new [government](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/abouthim.shtml) in his palace and died a year later. The circumstances of his death were mysterious but many believe he was murdered by his captors. In 1992 after the Marxist government was overthrown, the remains of Emperor Haile Selassie were found buried under a toilet in the Imperial Palace. The body was exhumed and moved to a mausoleum in Addis Ababa.



**H.I.M Haile Selassie's Funeral**

The Emperor Haile Selassie Foundation, pushed years for an officical burial for the Emperor Haile Selassie . This "push" came to an end when the remains of Emperor Haile Selassie were buried at Holy Trinity Church, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on November 5, 2000. This date is the anniversary of the late Emperor's coronation date of 1928. What was supposed to be a final send off for the last King of Ethiopia was overshadowed by a statement made days before the funeral by the Ethiopian government denouncing him as a tyrant who exploited the people of Ethiopia and the "brutality and extreme oppression" of his reign.



Even though many Rastafarians condemned the funeral, a few attended. The most prominent Rastafarian to attend was Rita Marley. Many of Rastafarians who attended insisted their presence was to observe the proceedings and not to participate, as they did not think it was the body of Emperor Haile Selassie. Princess Tenagnework, his only surviving child, was present at the funeral, as were many of his grandchildren.

**Rastafarians Belief In HIM Haile Selassie**

Rastafarians belief of H.I.M. Haile Selassie I being the Messiah has not changed even though he and his family have denied it. Neither the coup, nor his death in a small room in his former palace, has deterred them from their belief. As with many religious sects the followers of Rastafari refuse to accept the death of Emperor Haile Selassie, they say that he has moved on to another "higher plane". In various public statements made by Emperor Haile Selassie and his family, they state that they are members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and followers of Jesus Christ. The church considers all Ethiopian kings to be direct descendants of King Solomon.

Many Ethiopians denounce the worship of Emperor Haile Selassie as God. Some despise the use of their flag as a symbol of Rastafari. Emperor Haile Selassie was a member of Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as all past Kings in Ethiopia.

**H.I.M Haile Selassie's Gift of land to blacks**
When Emperor Haile Selassie was restored to his throne he set aside 500 acres of his personal land in Shashemene, Ethiopia as a "thank you" gift. This gift was for blacks who either helped in the war against Italy or supported his efforts to rid his country of the invaders. Over 2200 blacks, mainly Rastafarians, accepted the offer and moved to Shashemene during the 1960's. Poverty, a reluctance by the surrounding Ethiopian population to accept Rastafari belief of Emperor Haile Selassie being God and disputes with the govenment that overthrew HIM has caused that population to dwindle. Recent reports estimate the population at 250.

*Image Sources:* [*Imperial Ethiopia Home Page*](http://www.angelfire.com/ny/ethiocrown)*,* [*Sound Judgment*](http://www.princekollie.com/)

**H.I.M. Haile Selassie's Visit to Jamaica**

Published May 25, 2003

H.I.M. Haile Selassie I's visit to Jamaica was the 2nd stop in a trip to the Caribbean, on a three-nation tour of Trinidad-Tobago, Jamaica and Haiti. In the summer of 1965, Dr. Eric Williams, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago visited Ethiopia. Dr. Williams invited H.I.M. Haile Selassie I to visit Trinidad, which he did on April l8, 1966 and was greeted by thousands of people lined along the airport route. His tour of this nation included a visit to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Trinidad, The House of Parliament and functions arranged by the Prime Minister, he and his official party. He also visited Tobago and then left for Jamaica enroute to Barbados



H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie arrived in Jamaica on April 21, 1966. On arrival at the Norman Manley Airport, he exited the plane but then retreated when he saw the marijuana smoke filled air with thousands of Rastafarian chanting [Jah Rastafari](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/ganja.shtml). Some were carrying signs such as "Selassie is Christ", "King of Kings" and "God Anointed". He refused to leave the plane until his security was assured. He eventually exited and with heavy security was quickly hurried into a waiting car and rushed to a reception arranged by Prime Minister Sir Alexander Bustamante. During his visit he met with [Prime Minister Sir Alexander Bustamante](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/info/heroes.shtml) who was 82 at the time and was going blind due to cataracts. He also visited the University of the West Indies where he was awarded a honorary degree. He also addressed the Jamaican Parliament.

**Emperor Haile Selassie's Denial Of Being The Messiah**

Published May 25, 2003

Rastafarians worship Emperor Haile Selassie despite his many denials of being God.

[**Listen to Emperor Haile Selassie**](http://www.jamaicans.com/music/audio/rasta.wav) **denial of deity in an interview in Canada in 1967 aboard the royal train.**

Below is a portion of the transcript of the first personal radio interview granted by Emperor Haile Selassie. CBC reporter Bill McNeil conducted the interview with Emperor Haile Selassie while in Canada 1967 aboard the Royal train.

Questioned by Bill McNeil: "there are millions of Christians throughout the world, your Imperial Majesty, who regard you as the reincarnation of Jesus Christ."

**Selassie's answer:** "I have heard of that idea. I also met certain Rastafarians. I told them clearly that I am a man, that I am mortal, and that I will be replaced by the oncoming generation, and that they should never make a mistake in assuming or pretending that a human being is emanated from a deity."

**Narrator:** But, despite this clear declaration, millions of Ethiopians still believe that he is the reincarnation of Jesus Christ.

(Please Note the Narrator made a categorical mistake. Millions of Ethiopians do not consider Selassie to be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. Ethiopia is one of the oldest Christian nations. In fact The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is said to be one of the oldest churches in the world and actually may be the first established church. - See [Acts 8:27-39.](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=act&chapter=8))

**The Rastafarian Orders/Sects**

Published May 24, 2003

There are 3 distinct Rastafarian orders/sects, with different beliefs and symbols. These groups however, agree on two common principles; the exalted status of Haile Selassie I and the rejection of white Eurocentric images of divinity.

**Bobo Shanti**
The word Bobo Shanti is derived from Bobo, which stands for Black and Ashanti, which is the fierce African tribe from Kumasi, Ghana. It is believed that most of the slaves brought to Jamaica were from the Ashanti tribe and are the ancestors of many Jamaicans. The late Prince Emanuel Charles Edwards founded the Bobo Shanti order in Jamaica in the 1950's. The new he Bobo Shanti order leader is Trevor Stewart. The Bobo Shanti use Revelations 5 to justify Prince Emmanuel as the re-incarnate of the Christ. He is regarded as the reincarnate Black Christ in a priestly state. He is called by most members of the Bobo Shanti as Prince Emmanuel Charles Edwards, without Mother or Father, a Priest of Melchezidek, the Black Christ in the Flesh. He, along with his descendants and Haile Selassie are seen as Gods. Marcus Garvey is regarded as a prophet. The Bobo Shanti believe in Black supremacy and that there should be repatriation of all black people to Africa. In addition the Bobo Shanti order also believe that black people should be reimbursed monetarily for slavery.

The members of the Bobo Shanti "house" are sometimes called Bobo Dreads. Members of this order dress very differently from all the other orders. They wear long robes and very tightly wrapped turbans. They also live separate from society and the other Rastafarian orders in their current base in the Nine Miles area of Bull Bay, Jamaica. They function similarly to the [Accompong Maroons](http://www.jamaicans.com/info/maroons.shtml), even though it is not official, like an independent nation within Jamaica with their own constitution. They do not accept the values and lifestyle of the general Jamaican society. Their lifestyle closely emulates those of the Old Testament Jewish Mosaic Law, which includes the observation of the Sabbath from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday, hygiene laws for menstruating women and special greetings amongst themselves. No [work](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/rasta_sects.shtml) is allowed during the Sabbath and the consumption of salt and oil is avoided.

The Bobo Shanti are a self-sufficient group that make and sell straw hats and brooms to support the community and grow their own produce. The members of this order do not smoke marijuana in public as it is only reserved for worship among members.

**Nyahbinghi Order/Theocratic Priesthood and Livity Order of Nyabinghi**
The Nyahbinghi order is the oldest of all Rastafarian orders. The name Nyahbinghi is derived from Queen Nyahbinghi who ruled Uganda in the 19th Century. She fought against the colonialists in Uganda.

All other orders came from this sect. Members of this sect focus mainly on Emperor Haile Selassie and they proclaim that he is the incarnation of the Supreme deity.

The Nyahbinghi order pushed for their repatriation to Ethiopia, from where they believe all black people came. Ethiopia plays a major role in this sect and is represented in all their symbols including their flag.

Their [flag](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/ethiopian_church.shtml) is a little different from others as the placement of the colors is different: Green (top), ­ the vegetation of Ethiopia, Gold (middle), ­ mineral wealth of Ethiopia and Red (bottom), ­ the blood of Ethiopians.

**Twelve Tribes**
This sect was founded in 1968 by Dr. Vernon "Prophet Gad " Carrington and is the most liberal of all the other Rastafarian orders. The members of this sect are free to worship in a church of their choosing or within the privacy of their house.

Members of Twelve Tribes sect consider themselves the direct descendants of the 12 Sons of Jacob. The 12 Sons are divided into 12 Houses which are determined by your birth month. Each House also has a color.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tribe**  | **Month**  | **Color**  |
| Napthali  | January  | green  |
| Joseph  | February  | white  |
| Benjamin  | March  | black  |
| Reuben  | April  | silver  |
| Simeon  | May  | gold  |
| Levi  | June  | purple  |
| Judah  | July  | brown  |
| Issachar  | August  | yellow  |
| Zebulon  | September  | pink  |
| Dan  | October  | blue  |
| Gad  | November  | red  |
| Asher  | December  | grey  |

**Marijuana And Other Rasta Symbols**

Published May 23, 2003

**Ganja (Marijuana)**
Ganja was brought to Jamaica in the late 1800's by indentured East Indians, who were brought to [the Island](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/ganja.shtml) to work after slavery ended. Eventually it was outlawed and made [illegal](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/tourist/overview/drugs.shtml). The Jamaican environment and climate was the perfect place for the plant to grow.

The use of ganja in Jamaica is not unique to Rastafarians. Before Rastafari began, ganja was used by herbalists in Jamaica as a [medicine](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/articles_culture/bush.shtml) in teas. It was also mixed with tobacco for smoking.

Ganja is considered the "wisdom weed" by Rastafarians, as its use helps one to gain wisdom. Rastafarians use it as a part of a religious rite and as a means of getting closer to their inner spiritual self, Jah (God) and Creation.



Ganja is also seen by Rastafarians as the herb of life mentioned in the Bible. Rastafarians use of ganja is justified by the following Psalms 104:14 that says, "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth." Rastafarians also say it was found growing at the grave of King Solomon in the Bible.

Rastafarian consume it through smoking and eating (not recomended). The smoking of Ganja is a part of a religious ritual. When there is a large "reasoning" gathering of Rastafarians, a Chalice, which is a large smoking pipe, may be passed around and smoked. This is similar to the passing around of a communion cup by some Christian denominations. These gatherings are also called Nyahbinghi (also the name of a [Rastafarian sect: Theocratic Priesthood and Livity Order of Nyahbinghi](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/rasta_sects.shtml)).

True Rastafarians do not smoke cigarettes as it is seen as un-natural and dangerous to one's health. Marijuana is not the only plant or herb used by Rastafarians. They use a wide variety of herbs, plants for medicinal and dietary purposes, however, ganja is the most popular.

**The word Jah**
Contrary to what you may read in many [patois dictionaries](http://www.jamaicans.com/speakja/index.shtml) or Jamaican related books, the word Jah is not derived from the word Jehovah. It is not "short hand" for Jehovah. Jah is from the King James Bible as another name for God like Elohim, El Shaddai and other names. It can be found in Psalm 68 vs 4 and can also be found in other verses depending on the Bible translations. In some translations Jah Jehovah is used.

This name for God has been popularized by Rastafarians and is now used by many in the mainstream Jamaican populations. Its use has become somewhat of a marketing ploy, as many use the term in songs and language to appeal to the general public because it can be portrayed as either the God of Rastafarians or Christianity. Evoking the name "Jah" can bring legitimacy to reggae artists, being that Rastafarians are associated with the music.

**The Star Of David**



It is used to symbolize the lineage between H.I.M. Haile Selassie and King Solomon.

**The Conquering Lion And The Lamb**



Symbolizes the lamb of God and the lion of Judah, which are both mentioned in the Bible.

**Original Rasta Flag**
The original flag of Rastafarians was Red, Black and Green. Red represented the blood of blacks that died in struggle to fight off their white oppressors. Black represented the color of black Africans [skin](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/ganja.shtml). Green represented the vegetation of Jamaica and Jah's (God) earth.



**Current Rasta Flag**

The current flag is the old Ethiopian flag with the Lion of Judah symbol. The meaning of the colors in the Ethiopian flag is: red for the blood, gold for the minerals & resources and green for the land.

**The Dreadlocks Hairstyle**

Published May 22, 2003

**Dreadlocks And True Rastafarian**
A discussion on the popular "dreadlooks" [hairstyle](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/dreadlocks.shtml) cannot begin without highlighting that probably 90% of the 'dread locked individuals' you may meet in Jamaica who may call themselves a Rastafarian, are not true Rastafarians. The mysticism, ability to use ganja under the religious justification defense and all the monetary benefits one may get from this has caused this to become a 'fad' and many Jamaican men wore dreadlocks and called themselves Rastafarians when they are not. The "rent a dread" stereotype is true in many cases. Many men see Rastafari as a way out of poverty or a means to migrate to a country with better opportunities. Stereotyping has caused everyone with dreadlocks to be viewed as a Rastafarian. A true Rastafarian is peace loving, kind, very Afro centric and shuns all "schemes" used for monetary gains.

**History of Dreadlocks**
Dreadlocks are not unique to Jamaica and Rastafarians. The dreadlocks hairstyle originated in Africa and was worn by various tribes there. The earliest tribe this hairstyle can be attributed to is the Masai tribesmen of Kenya. Many of the warriors of this tribe wore this hairstyle. These men sometimes dyed their hair red with root extracts.

**Dreadlocks in Jamaica**
The dreadlocks hairstyle first appeared in Jamaica during post emancipation. It was a means of defiance for ex-slaves to rebel against Euro-centrism that was forced on them. The hairstyle was originally referred to as a "dreadful" hairstyle by the Euro centric Jamaican society. It later evolved to the term now used: Dreadlocks. Jamaicans also use the term Natty Dreadlock.

**Dreadlocks and Rastafari**
Rastafarians grow their hair into dreadlocks because it is a part of the Nazarite Vow. (Also their dietary rules are part of the law) All Rastafarians take this vow and claim it is commanded by the Bible (Leviticus 21:5 "They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard nor make any cuttings in their flesh").

Samson is believed to be a Nazarite with dreadlocks. Many Rastafarians believe that like Samson, their hair is their strength and also their weakness if it is cut off . The belief in the weakness of cutting of the dreadklocks was used as a way to intimidate Rastafarians in Jamaica in the past, as they would be arrested and their hair cut off. This was one of the reasons many of the early Rastafarians moved to isolated areas (bush) of [the Island](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/dreadlocks.shtml).

To many Rastafarians, dreadlocks also symbolizes the mane (locks) of the lion in the Lion of Judah, which is one of titles given to all Ethiopian Kings. Emperor Haile Selassie was also very fond of lions and had them as pets around his palace. The lion is also seen as an animal that is gentle but powerful when provoked. He is the "King" of the jungle.

**Interviews with Abunda Yesehaq who Baptised Bob Marley**

Published May 21, 2003

Interviews with Abunda Yesehaq who Baptised Bob Marley

Below are "clips" from two interviews with Archbishop Abuna Yesehaq on Bob Marley's Baptism that appeared in the Jamaican Media.

Gleaner Interview
In a newspaper interview with Archbishop Abuna Yesehaq done by Barbara Blake Hannah,November 25, 1984, in the Gleaner's Sunday Magazine (pages 2,3,11), titled 'Abuna Yesehaq Looks Back on 14 Years of Ministry in Jamaica' the following was said about Bob Marley's baptism.

"Bob was really a good brother, a child of God, regardless of how people
looked at him. He had a desire to be baptised long ago, but there were
people close to him who controlled him and who were aligned to a different
aspect of Rastafari . But he came to Church regularly. I remember once while
I was conducting the Mass, I looked at Bob and tears were streaming down his face...When he toured Los Angeles and New York and England, he preached the Orthodox faith, and many members in those cities came to the Church because of Bob. Many people think he was baptised because he
knew he was dying, but that is not so...he did it when there was no longer
any pressure on him, and when he was baptised, he hugged his family and wept, they all wept together for about half an hour." (This section below is from p. 11.)

JBCTV Interview
In an Interview the following year (9th July, 1995) on the JBCTV (now called TVJ) program "Profile" he was asked by host Ian Boyne about the bapistim of Bob Marley. Below is a clip from that interview

Ian: You baptized Bob Marley?
Yesehaq: I did baptize Bob Marley in the presence of his wife Rita Marley and his children. Only the family, because he was not so willing to have it officially, it was difficult for him...which I don't want to describe.

**The Ethiopian Orthodox Church & Bob Marley's Baptism And The Church**

Published May 21, 2003

**Rastafari And The Ethiopian Orthodox Church**
The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is one of the oldest organized churches (If not the oldest) in the world and dates back to biblical times (Read [Acts 8:27-39](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=act&chapter=8) to learn more). Even though the church has made many statements on "heresy of Emperor worship" and "[herbal](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/ethiopian_church.shtml) sorcery" in regards to the Rastafarian, they also have been brought to the forefront by the Rastafari and have used it to branch outside of Ethiopia. The church in Jamaica was commissioned by [Emperor Haile Selassie.](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/abouthim.shtml)

There are major differences between the sect and the church. The first being the worship of Emperor Haile Selassie as the Messiah/Savior. The church has stated many times that their commission from Emperor Haile Selassie was to lead Rastafarians away from worshiping him and turn to the worshipping of the God he worshipped. It is said that upon his return to Ethiopia from [Jamaica,](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/visittojamaica.shtml) the Emperor spoke to [Abuna Yesehaq,](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/interview_popup.shtml) the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and declared "There is a problem in Jamaica.... Please, help these people. They are misunderstanding, they do not understand our culture.... They need a church to be established and you are chosen to go."

Initially many in the Rastafarian community welcomed the church however when it became clear that to be baptized in the church, a Rastafarian had to renounce the divinity of Haile Selassie, the problems started. The church today has continued to maintain the stance that it would only baptize in the name of Jesus Christ and not Haile Selassie.

The other big dispute is the Rastafarians way of taking a tradition, in this case the Ethiopian Solomonic Kings and the National Epic, the " Kebra Negast " and applying it to the Rastafarian cause. The "Kebra Negast" which literally translates to "Glory of the Kings" in Amharic, the Ethiopian national language, is the National Epic of the Ethiopia State. It is viewed by the church as historic record rather than Prohectic record which is the view held by Rastafarians.

**Bob Marley's Baptism in Ethiopian Orthodox Church**
The incident that probaly caused the major divide between many in the Rastafarian community and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the baptism of Bob Marley into the church before he died. He was baptized by the Head of the church Archbishop Abuna Yesehaq. What was most upsetting to the Rastafarian community was when this became public knowlegde and the statements ([see media interviews](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/interview_AbundaYesehaq.shtml)) made by the church in regards to an "Orthodox conversion" by Bob Marley. His close friend, [Tommy Cowan](http://www.gospelreggae.com/articles/all/78dab30400003a003a/detail.html), has also has stated that Bob Marley converted to Christianity before he died.

No one really knows what this baptism meant but is has caused some controversy as both Rastafarian and Christians claim Bob Marley as their "own".

**The Jamaican Church**
Many of the early founders of Rastafari were from elders & preachers in the church, however there is distrust between Rastafarians and the church. The main opposition, which many would deem credible, is that the church today has strayed away from the teaching of Christ, which is to care for and be the voice of the downtrodden and oppressed. Rastafarians, through their music and [life](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/ethiopian_church.shtml) style, try to speak for and to the downtrodden, poor and oppressed.

Adding to the tension in the earlier 2000’s are songs by Capelton & Sizzla condemning what many perceive as the Jamaican church to burn with ‘fire’. There are some signs of reconciliation, as the upswing in spiritual reggae music has become a small bridge to this process.

*Image source: African Studies WWW*

**Rastafari & Jamaican Culture**

Published May 20, 2003

**The Arts and Music**
The Arts in Jamaica is influenced by "Rastafari ". Some of Jamaica's top artists, poets and writers are influenced by Rastafarian culture. These artists have produced brilliant painting and magnificent wood sculptures in Jamaica vibrant Visual Arts community. Rastafarians pushed Reggae music to the forefront when [Bob Marley](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/ethiopian_church.shtml) became an internationally known artist. Read more about this in the article on [Reggae Music.](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/reggae.shtml)



**Language**
[Miss Lou](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/people/missloubio.shtml) was one of the early pioneers trying to preserve Jamaican culture especially 'patois'. [Jamaican patios](http://www.jamaicans.com/speakja/index.htm) is now sprinkled with 'rasta' terminology. The Rastafarian culture has helped to galvanize the use of Jamaican patois as a means to rebel against a society where the dialect is sometimes looked upon as being "un-cultured". The use of the word "I" and 'I-an-I" is sprinkled across Rastafarian terminolgy and has its roots in the self emphasis which many black people were denied during oppression and slavery. The use of the word Jah (Psalm 68 vs 4) for God which is used by Rastafarians is now used by many Jamaicans. Other examples are the use of the word "babylon" for any type of establishment and "Idren" for children.

**Red, Green and Gold (Yellow)**
The colors of the Ethiopian flag (red, green, yellow) are now popularly identified with Rastafarians. Ironically many foreigners associate these colors with Jamaica and are sometimes surprised when they realize that these are not the colors in the [Jamaica flag.](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/info/road_to_flag.shtml) The original colors adopted by Rastafarians were Red, Black and Green.

**Dreadlocks**
The dreadlocks [hairstyle](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/culture.shtml) popularized in Western culture by Rastafarians has become universally identified with Jamaica and Reggae. People from all walks of [life](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/culture.shtml) use it as a symbol of protest or as "going natural". Read more about this in the article on [Dreadlocks.](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/dreadlocks.shtml)

**Herbs**
Medicinal use and [study of herbs](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/articles_culture/bush.shtml) has been advanced by the Rastafarian movement. Once only reserved to "Herbalist" in the countryside of Jamaica, the Rastafarian movement took the practice of using herbs to all aspects of the Jamaican population. Their adherence to natural medication and their many uses of marijuana has provided a stepping stone for many scientific [studies](http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/rasta/culture.shtml) of many of the herbs in Jamaica. They have been at the forefront of the legalization of Ganja worldwide for use in their religion and also for medical purposes.





**Food**
Natural food and drinks called 'Ital' food by Rastafarians has influenced Jamaica's culinary arts. For more information please go to the articles on [Ital Food.](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/ital_food.shtml) The name [LINK:]Ital is derived from the word vital.

**Rastafari's Future**

Published May 20, 2003

Rastafarians have always been at the frontline of social changes in Jamaica, as the voice of the under privileged and under represented. They have molded the identity of Jamaica worldwide, as the images many have of Jamaica is that of the colors "Red, Green and Gold", dreadlocks and Bob Marley. The future of the Rastafarian looks mixed based on the developments in the past few years.

**Recognition**
Recently Jamaican courts have recognized the rights of Rastafarians in prison to practice their religion within the limits of the law.

In February 2003, the Constitutional Courts of Jamaica recognized Rastafari as a religion for the very first time in an out-of-court agreement. This out-of-court agreement states under the Constitution of Jamaica, that Rastafarian prisoners are entitled to have their church conduct acts of worship with them.

Also included in this agreement was the stipulation that the recently formed Church of Haile Selassie I has the right to have access to inmates and conduct acts of worship with them. The agreement gives Rastafarian prisoners the same rights afforded to inmates of other religions. The agreement does not allow the use of marijuana as a sacrament.

The Rastafarians in Jamaica at the turn of the century, have gained a major new ally in Government. Jamaica's first Public Defender Howard Hamilton, Q.C., since being in office in 2000 has been an advocate of the rights of Rastafarians and the right for them to be recognized as a religion.

**Divisions**
There are also some divisions on the worship of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I as the Messiah within the three main Rastafarian sects. This was evident in a1997 interview on IRIE FM in Jamaica when, Vernon 'Prophet Gad' Carrington, founder of the premiere Rastafarian sect, the Twelve Tribes, declared that they are shifting their faith to Jesus Christ.

Vernon is quoted as saying. "And even after His Majesty say, him saved not by the man character but by the blood of Jesus Christ."

In recent years many of the more prominent Rastafarians have left Rastafari and now follow Orthodox Christianity. Those include music promoter Tommy Cowan, I-Three singer that backed up Bob Marley and the Wailers, Judith Mowatt and singer Carlene Davis.

There are also many disputes between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Rastafarians. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was commissioned by Emperor Haile Selassie after his visit to Jamaica. The goal was to convert Rastafarians to Orthodox Christianity and redirect them from their worship of Emperor Haile Selassie. The Rastafarians and the church have had some major differences, including their refusal to baptize in the name of Emperor Haile Selassie. This led to the formation of a church by Rastafarians called the Church of Haile Selassie. Many Rastafarians still remain members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

**Politics**
The first Rastafarian political party was launched in October 2001 by Ras Astor Black. His campaign platform was to rid Jamaica of "economic and political terrorists" and abolish the current constitution and colonial monarchy. The goal was to create a government with greater allegiance to Africa and Jamaica. Even though his candidacy for the North West St. James Constituency fell short, it paved the way for the next Rastafarian political party. In 2002 members from the Church of Haile Selassie formed the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Incorporated Political Party IEWFIPP. Rastafarians face an uphill battle in politics, as the majority of their most likely support base, the Rastafarian community, does not vote. Being active in politics to most Rastafarians is seen as accepting Babylon. The formation of political parties has been criticized by some in the Rastafarian communities. One of the most well-known Rastafarian to oppose this was entertainer Beenie Man. He, however, has been criticized by others as not being a true Rastafarian because of statements he made in support of another Jamaican political party.

Rastafarians held their first International conference on July 17th, 2003 to discuss issues affecting the group and to unite.

**Ganja**
Rastafarians has always been at the forefront of the legalization of marijuana. This is evident in the many songs by Rastafarian reggae artists. The have always pushed to show the benefits for medicinal uses, which is now being discovered by medical scientist worldwide. Many countries around the world have either decentralized the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes or have cases in court in favor of such legislation.

**Challenges**
There are also new challenges faced by Rastafarians as a group of Christian apologists in Jamaica led by Dr. Clinton Chisholm, who have been challenging many of the teaching of Rastafarians as it relates to the Bible and Emperor Haile Selassie. With the evidence now found in archeology on the dark skin color of many of the figures in Bible, many of these Christian apologists have been appealing to Rastafarians on the basis that there is no need to create a black Messiah and they should only worship the God worshipped by Emperor Haile Selassie.

**Summary**
The main goal of Rastafarians when it was formed was to be repatriated to Ethiopia. The population of Rastafarians repatriates who did move to Ethiopia has dwindle from over 2200 to just 250. As the times changed, Rastafarians have realized that this goal or repatriation is unrealistic and have begun to assimilate into Jamaican society. If recent actions are any indications of what is to come the trend of assimilation will continue.

Once Bob Marley died, the voice that brought the Rastafarian religion to the world was gone. The search for a leader to be the voice of the Rastafarians continues.

**Reggae Music And Rastafari**

Published May 19, 2003

Reggae music is what took Rastafari to the world and Rastafari took Reggae music to the world. Bob Marley and the Wailers were the vehicle to take [Reggae music](http://www.jamaicans.com/music/index.shtml) and Rastafari to the world. Today Rastafarian's most popular symbol is Bob Marley, who died of cancer in 1981 at age 36. His influence on the music is still strong and many members of his family are now reggae artists themselves. He is known as the King of Reggae.

Formed in the late 1960's the group was known as the Wailing Rude Bwoys. The original members were Bob Marley, Junior Brathwaite, Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston. The band gained popularity in the early 1970's and then broke up. Bob Marley changed the name to Bob Marley and the Wailers. The Bob Marley "syndrome" caught afire in Jamaica. The popularity of Bob Marley brought many imitators and changed the face of music in Jamaica. Musicians looking for Bob Marley type popularity, grew dreadlocks and started professing Rastafari. The lyrics of many songs were changed and sprinkled with references to Rastafari . It was how Reggae was seen by the world and so the musicians obliged.



These musicans automatically grew dreadlocks, called on the name ["JAH"](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/ganja.shtml) "Haile Selassie" and "Rasta". They professed Rastafari as a way to gain popularity and the perceived benefits. Many wanted to "piggyback" on the foundation laid by Bob Marley and use it as religious justification for smoking the [ganja (Marijuana).](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/rasta/ganja.shtml)

Bob Marley and many that try to follow in his footsteps, are the voice of the poor and downtrodden. The lyrics of the music speaks to the masses. The message in the music in most case are about oppression, poverty, slavery, apartheid and human rights. The music identifies with the struggles of day to day life of poor people.

**Ital Food**

Published May 18, 2003

Ital food is derived from the word "vital food" (Self-determination of the black race resulted in the Rastafarians usage of the word 'I" to replace the first letter of many words). Ital food means it is natural, pure and clean food. For a Rastafarian it means no salt, no chemicals, no flesh, no blood, no whites (called whiteblood), no alcohol, no cigarettes and no drugs ([herbs](http://www.jamaicans.com/moxie/culture/articles_culture/bush.shtml)are not considered drugs).

Rastafarians avoid salt, oil and meat. Their dietary laws are similar to the laws followed by Jews in [Leviticus 11](http://www.o-bible.com/cgibin/ob.cgi?version=kjv&book=lev&chapter=11). Fish must be less than a foot long. No shell fish or fish without scales. Pork is especially condemned amongst Rastafarians. It is so important to not put the wrong thing in your body that some Rastafarians never cook in aluminum pots as it is said to leave traces of metal in the food that can get in your body. Cooking in a clay pot is popular among Rastafarians.

Rastafarians see their food as a way to be one with nature and also as medicine for the body, as it builds your "strucha" ([Patois](http://www.jamaicans.com/speakja/index.shtml) or the word structure). There are also strict hygienic laws that Rastafarians follow.

Below is a example of an Ital Food Recipe provided by Jamaicans.com forum member Tuff Gong :

**ITAL SWEET POTATO PUDDING**

Ingredients:

* 1lb 8ozs to 1lb 14ozs sweet potato (I used 1lb 14ozs in this Pudding)
* 3 cups coconut milk
* ½ tsp cinnamon
* ½ tsp ground ginger
* ½ tsp grated nutmeg
* 1 ½tsp vanilla essence
* 1 to 1 ¼4 cup brown sugar
* 2 cups soaked raisins (I have mine soaked in Sherry for over 5 years now. I top it off with more Raisins, Prunes and Sherry every time it gets too low in the bottle.)
* ½ - 1 cup flour (More or less flour will make it firmer or less so I used half a cup)
* 5ozs Beet Root or Carrots (optional)

Method

1. Puree sweet potato and coconut milk in blender
2. Pour mixture into a bowl
3. Dice beet root
4. Add all the ingreidents to the bowl. Mix and pour into a well greased 8" or 10" round tin
(vegetable shortening to grease the tin)
5. Bake at 350F for 1 ½ hours then 300F for 25 mins
6. Remove from the oven immediately.
7. Best eaten the next day or at least 5 hours after cooking.
8. The pudding sets as it cools.
9. **Race & Women In Rastafari**
10. Published May 17, 2003
11. **Race**
In original Rastafarian doctrine, Babylon and white people were one and the same. Also, all other races were black except white people. White people were seen as the oppressors who took the Black man away from Africa. Some Rastafarians call white people pink, as they will say their pigmentation is not white. White (Pink) people were seen as evil as they have created the Babylon system and have constantly denied the rights of blacks. The denial of the Black man's rights, slavery, the images of a White Christ and Euro-centrism associated with Christianity in the past, is one of the main contentions of Rastafarians with White (Pink) people. As the archeological evidence in recent years continue to reveal a less Euro-centric biblical times, many have taken a moderate position to White people.
12. Three of the 6 foundations (see link) that were set forth by one of the founding fathers of Rastafari, Leonard Percival Howell (see link), are very Afro centric and racist.
13. 1) Hatred for the White race;
2) The superiority of the Black race;
3) Revenge on Whites for their wickedness;
14. 
15. There is also the writing in the Holy Piby (see link), also called the "Black Man's Bible", which is one of the most revered books of Rastafarians, that emphasizes the destruction of white "Babylonia" and the return of the black Israelites to Africa.
16. In recent years Whites have joined the sect and are judged on an individual basis and their sympathies to the Rastafarian cause. Today white (Pink) Rastafarians are acceptable but called "African at heart". The intermingling of white & black was taboo in the original Rastafarian movement but has now become acceptable. The majority of these interracial marriages are between black Rastafarian men and white women. Be aware that that many men who may appear to be Rastafarians are not and use the Rastafarian movement to marry foreign (mainly white) women in search of overseas visas.
17. **Roles of women**
The women in Rastafari are normally referred to as Queens. Many of the Rastafarian marriages are informal (common law). Even though things are changing, originally a woman's role in the Rastafarian sect is basically regulated to housekeeping, childrearing and to pleasing her King. A Rastafarian woman is a Queen and must keep different standards than the women in "Babylonial" society or Western culture. Some of the standards include, no make up, no dressing in short skirts and they cannot use chemicals in their hair. Many Rastafarian women cannot use any form of birth control, as it is not natural and also seen as a Euro-centric way to control the African population. Rastafarian women are expected to nurture the community but know her place. The Bobo Shanti order is the strictest when it comes to the role of women, as they adhere to the strict bible principles of the Old Testament. Abortion is also not an option for Rastafarian women as it is seen as murder as in many other world religions. Women play a very secondary role in the sect and are to stand by their King.

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