

THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE

The First World

NOTEBOOK 1

Creation, the Watchers and the Flood

GENESIS 1-11 • 1 ENOCH 1-36 • JUBILEES

BLUSABOOKS



The First World

THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE · NOTEBOOK 1 · GENESIS 1–11 · 1 ENOCH
1–36 · JUBILEES 4, 5, 7, 10

Every chapter — four parts

THE ANCIENT TEXT

the complete text, verse by verse

IN PLAIN WORDS

what happens in this chapter

TERMS

names and words worth knowing

WHAT HISTORY AND SCIENCE SAY

*manuscripts, archaeology and ancient
parallels*

A sacred text for believers, a historical source for scholars.

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FOREWORD

This notebook opens the series "The Ethiopian Bible". Its subject is the oldest part of the biblical story: the world before the Flood and just after it.

What the Ethiopian Bible is. Christianity reached the kingdom of Aksum, in what is now northern Ethiopia and Eritrea, in the 4th century, when King Ezana accepted the faith and Frumentius became the first bishop of the land. From that time the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church has kept its Scriptures in Ge'ez, the ancient language of the Church, which is still used in its liturgy today. Its canon is counted at about 81 books, wider than that of any other church. Besides the familiar books, it contains writings that other churches set aside and gradually lost. Two of them are central to this notebook: the Book of Enoch and the Book of Jubilees. Both survive in full only in Ge'ez.

What this notebook contains. Genesis 1–11, from the creation to the tower of Babel; the first 36 chapters of 1 Enoch, known as the "Book of the Watchers"; and chapters 4, 5, 7 and 10 of Jubilees. From Jubilees we have chosen only the chapters that add something new to the story — the names of the patriarchs' wives, Enoch's writing, the binding of the angels, Noah's book of healing.

The translations. The English text of Genesis is the World English Bible. Enoch is given in R. H. Charles's translation from the Ge'ez (1912), and Jubilees in his translation of 1913. All three are in the public domain. We have reproduced them word for word, only restoring a few missing verse numbers, mending words broken in the old printing and removing Charles's scholarly brackets and marks. His headings in Enoch and Jubilees are kept as sub-headings.

How to read. Each chapter has four parts. *The ancient text* is the full passage without cuts. It is followed by three parts of our own: *In plain words* — what

actually happens in the chapter; *Terms* — the key words, also gathered in the glossary at the end; and *What history and science say* — what historians, archaeologists and scientists know about the world behind the text.

These pages are Holy Scripture for millions of believers and, at the same time, a precious source for historians. We present them with respect. The ancient text speaks for itself; in our own parts we try to keep apart what the text says, what tradition has made of it, and what scholarship can actually show.

CHAPTER I

THE CREATION

THE ANCIENT TEXT

✦ GENESIS 1 ✦

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was formless and empty. Darkness was on the surface of the deep and God's Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters.

³God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw the light, and saw that it was good. God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day", and the darkness he called "night". There was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶God said, "Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." ⁷God made the expanse, and divided the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. ⁸God called the expanse "sky". There was evening and there was morning, a second day.

⁹God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear;" and it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land "earth", and the gathering together of the waters he called "seas". God saw that it was good. ¹¹God said, "Let the earth yield grass, herbs yielding seeds, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with their seeds in it, on the earth;" and it was so. ¹²The earth yielded grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with their seeds in it, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. ¹³There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

¹⁴ God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs to mark seasons, days, and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth;” and it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light to the earth, ¹⁸ and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

²⁰ God said, “Let the waters abound with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the sky.” ²¹ God created the large sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind. God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³ There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

²⁴ God said, “Let the earth produce living creatures after their kind, livestock, creeping things, and animals of the earth after their kind;” and it was so. ²⁵ God made the animals of the earth after their kind, and the livestock after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind. God saw that it was good.

²⁶ God said, “Let’s make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ God created man in his own image. In God’s image he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them. God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁹ God said, “Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree, which bears fruit yielding seed. It will be your food. ³⁰ To every animal of the earth, and to every bird of the sky, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green

herb for food;” and it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. There was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

◆ GENESIS 2:1-3 ◆

¹The heavens, the earth, and all their vast array were finished. ²On the seventh day God finished his work which he had done; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. ³God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because he rested in it from all his work of creation which he had done.



ILLUSTRATION 1

A painted reconstruction: over the dark, heaving waters of the deep breaks the first shaft of light.