

THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE

The Secrets of Enoch

NOTEBOOK 5

Ten heavens and the secrets of creation



2 ENOCH · THE SLAVONIC TEXT

BLUSABOOKS



The Secrets of Enoch

THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE · NOTEBOOK 5 · 2 ENOCH (SLAVONIC)

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 is the fifth and last notebook of the series "The Ethiopian Bible" — and a different one.

The Ethiopian Bible and Enoch. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church keeps a wider canon than any other church, in Ge'ez, its ancient liturgical language. Among its treasures is the Book of Enoch — today called 1 Enoch — which has survived in full only in Ge'ez. The first four notebooks gave it in its five parts: the Book of the Watchers (1–36), the Parables (37–71), the Book of the Heavenly Luminaries (72–82), the Dream Visions (83–90) and the Epistle of Enoch (91–108).

An honest note. The Book of the Secrets of Enoch, usually called 2 Enoch or Slavonic Enoch, is *not* part of the Ethiopian canon and has not been preserved in Ge'ez at all. It has come down to us only in Old Church Slavonic manuscripts. We include it because it continues the same tradition about Enoch — his ascent through the heavens, his books and his last words to his sons — and because it stands in the English collection of Ethiopian Bible texts from which our series takes its English text.

The text. The English text is W. R. Morfill's translation from the Slavonic, edited by R. H. Charles (1896), now in the public domain. We give it word for word as it stands in that printing, only joining broken lines, correcting a few obvious misprints and removing the brackets around words the translators supplied. Explanatory glosses such as "visible (physical)" or "Mathusal (Methuselah)" are kept, and so are Morfill's forms of names — Mathusal and Methosalam, Aravoth, Adoil, Archas. The verse numbers follow the same printing, which gives some short chapters as a single verse.

How to read. Each chapter has four parts: *The ancient text*, complete and without cuts; *In plain words* — what happens in it; *Terms* — key words, gathered also in the glossary; and *What history and science say* — what scholars know about the book and its world.

The series. 1 · The First World 2 · The Parables of Enoch 3 · The Lights of Heaven and the Dream Visions 4 · The Epistle of Enoch 5 · The Secrets of Enoch

For some readers these pages are sacred; for others they are a window into the religious imagination of late antiquity. We present them with respect, keeping apart what the text says, what tradition has made of it, and what scholarship can show.

CHAPTER I

TWO MEN AT THE BEDSIDE

THE ANCIENT TEXT

✦ 2 ENOCH 1 ✦

¹ There was a wise man, a great artificer, and the Lord conceived love for him and received him, that he should behold the uppermost dwellings and be an eye-witness of the wise and great and inconceivable and immutable realm of God Almighty, of the very wonderful and glorious and bright and many-eyed station of the Lord's servants, and of the inaccessible throne of the Lord, and of the degrees and manifestations of the incorporeal hosts, and of the ineffable ministration of the multitude of the elements, and of the various apparition and inexpressible singing of the host of Cherubim, and of the boundless light. ² At that time, he said, when my one hundred and sixty-fifth year was completed, I begat my son Mathusal (Methuselah). ³ After this too I lived two hundred years and completed of all the years of my life three hundred and sixty-five years. ⁴ On the first day of the month I was in my house alone and was resting on my bed and slept.

⁵ And when I was asleep, great distress came up into my heart, and I was weeping with my eyes in sleep, and I could not understand what this distress was, or what would happen to me. ⁶ And there appeared to me two men, exceeding big, so that I never saw such on earth; their faces were shining like the sun, their eyes too were like a burning light, and from their lips was fire coming forth with clothing and singing of various kinds in appearance purple, their wings were brighter than gold, their hands whiter than snow. ⁷ They were standing at the head of my bed and began to call me by my name. ⁸ And I arose from my sleep and saw clearly those two men standing in front of me.

⁹ And I saluted them and was seized with fear and the appearance of my face was changed from terror, and those men said to me: ¹⁰ Have courage, Enoch, do not fear; the eternal God sent us to you, and lo! You shalt to-day ascend with us into heaven, and you shall tell your sons and all your household all that they shall do

without you on earth in your house, and let no one seek you till the Lord return you to them. ¹¹ And I made haste to obey them and went out from my house, and made to the doors, as it was ordered me, and summoned my sons Mathusal (Methuselah) and Regim and Gaidad and made known to them all the marvels those men had told me.

✦ 2 ENOCH 2 ✦

¹ Listen to me, my children, I know not whither I go, or what will befall me; now therefore, my children, I tell you: turn not from God before the face of the vain, who made not Heaven and earth, for these shall perish and those who worship them, and may the Lord make confident your hearts in the fear of him. And now, my children, let no one think to seek me, until the Lord return me to you.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The book presents Enoch as a wise man whom God chose to see the hidden world of heaven; then Enoch tells his own story. In his 365th year, resting alone on his bed, he weeps in his sleep. Two enormous men appear at his bedside, their faces shining like the sun and their wings brighter than gold. God has sent them, they say, to take him up to heaven that very day. Enoch calls his sons Mathusal, Regim and Gaidad, tells them what has happened and says farewell: do not turn away from God, and do not look for me until the Lord brings me back.

TERMS

Old Church Slavonic (Slav. *slověnišĭkŭ językŭ* "Slavic language") — the first written language of the Slavs, created in the 9th century for the mission of Cyril and Methodius; 2 Enoch has survived only in manuscripts in this language and its later church forms.

Pseudepigraphon (Gr. *pseudepigraphon* "falsely ascribed writing"; pl. *pseudepigrapha*) — an ancient book written in the name of a famous figure of the past, such as

Enoch, Abraham or Moses; the word describes a literary form and is not meant as an insult.

Longer and shorter recension (Lat. *recensio* "revision") — the two main forms in which 2 Enoch has come down to us; the longer one contains passages missing from the shorter one, and scholars still debate which is closer to the original.

Regim and Gaidad — two of Enoch's sons named in 2 Enoch beside Methuselah; Genesis says only that Enoch "had other sons and daughters", and these names are not known from the Bible.

Incorporeal hosts — the bodiless armies of angels; in 2 Enoch the heavenly world is full of ranked orders of such beings, arranged like a royal court and army.



ILLUSTRATION 1

A painted reconstruction: at night Enoch sits up on his bed in a stone room, facing a winged being of golden light.

● WHAT HISTORY AND SCIENCE SAY

The text presents itself as Enoch's own account, written for his sons. It builds on the few verses of Genesis 5:21–24: Enoch lived 365 years, fathered Methuselah at 65, "walked with God" and "was not, for God took him". 2 Enoch fills this silence with a whole story — a heavenly journey, a return to earth to teach, and a final departure.