

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE

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Social media is full of claims that the Ethiopian Bible is the “first Bible,” the “most complete Bible,” or the only Bible that contains all the books God wanted us to have. Some even claim that Christians have had God-breathed books taken away from them.

Many sincere people believe these claims. Should they?

This booklet isn’t about criticizing Ethiopian Christians. It’s about answering an important question: **Did God really divinely inspire the extra books found in the Ethiopian Bible?**

If He did, every Christian should treat them as Scripture. If He didn’t, no Christian should.

Throughout this booklet, the term “**66 consensus books**” refers to the 66 books accepted as Scripture by Protestants, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, **and** Ethiopian Orthodox Christians.

Whatever disagreements Christians have about additional books, these 66 books are the books everyone agrees belong in the Bible.

The most well-known extra in the Ethiopian Bible is **1 Enoch**. Many people today are fascinated by it. Some believe the church unfairly removed it from the Bible or deliberately hid the truth. The evidence tells a different story.

This booklet will answer some of the most common claims about the Ethiopian Bible. It will also urge Christians to devote themselves to the 66 consensus books God has clearly given instead of chasing books that were never widely recognized as Scripture.

OBJECTION 1: “THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE IS THE FIRST BIBLE.”

It isn’t. The books of the Bible were originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek **long before** they were translated into Ge’ez, the ancient language of Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Bible is therefore a translation of earlier biblical books, not the first or original Bible.

The **Codex Sinaiticus** and **Codex Vaticanus** from the 300s A.D. are the two oldest and most complete Greek Bibles that are known to exist. They are **older** than the earliest Ethiopian Bible manuscripts and neither Codex contains the Ethiopian extras, including 1 Enoch.

The Ethiopian Bible was produced well **after** the Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus, and the original biblical books it translated. It therefore cannot be the first Bible.

OBJECTION 2: “THE EXTRA ETHIOPIAN BOOKS ARE SCRIPTURE.”

The strongest evidence against this claim is that the overwhelming majority of God’s people have never accepted these extra books as Scripture.

The Jews were entrusted with the OT Scriptures (Rom. 3:2), yet they never included 1 Enoch or the other Ethiopian extras in their Scriptures.

Jesus referred to the OT as “the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44 ESV), which does not include 1 Enoch or the like.

The wider Christian church didn’t accept them either. Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox Christians have never embraced the Ethiopian extras, including 1 Enoch, as God-breathed Scripture.

One small regional tradition doesn’t outweigh the broad witness of God’s people across the nations and many centuries.

OBJECTION 3: "THE BOOK OF ENOCH SHOULD BE IN THE BIBLE."

The Book of Enoch claims to have been written by Enoch, the man who "walked with God" before the Flood (Gen. 5:24). But it couldn't have been.

Bible scholars believe that 1 Enoch was written between 300 and 100 B.C., thousands of years **after** the real Enoch lived. That means someone else wrote the book and falsely attached Enoch's name to it.

God's prophets and apostles didn't borrow someone else's name to give God's Word. Isaiah wrote Isaiah. Jeremiah wrote Jeremiah. But the Book of Enoch claims to come from a man who had been dead for thousands of years.

It bears repeating that the Jews, Jesus, the apostles, and the overwhelming majority of Christians throughout history have never accepted 1 Enoch as Scripture.

OBJECTION 4: "BUT JUDE QUOTED ENOCH."

He did, but that doesn't make the Book of Enoch Scripture. Quoting a small portion of a book isn't the same as declaring that the whole book is the Word of God.

The apostle Paul quoted Greek poets when speaking to the people of Athens (Acts 17:28). He also quoted the Cretan poet Epimenides (Titus 1:12). Yet no one believes those poems became Scripture because Paul quoted them.

Jude did the same thing. In Jude 14–15, he quoted a true statement preserved in 1 Enoch because it supported the point he was making. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Jude affirmed that statement. He didn't declare that the entire Book of Enoch was inspired Scripture.

The NT sometimes refers to people, events, and writings familiar to its readers. That doesn't make every source it mentions the Word of God.

OBJECTION 5: "THE CHURCH TOOK BOOKS OUT OF THE BIBLE."

The church didn't decide which books were Scripture. God did that when He inspired them. The church simply recognized the books God had already given.

Long before church councils met, Christians were already reading the four Gospels, the book of Acts, Paul's letters, and the other NT books. The Muratorian Fragment from around 170 A.D., for example, shows that Christians already recognized the same four Gospels we read today, over 1,800 years later.

Later councils didn't create the Bible. They simply recognized the books God's people had already accepted as Scripture and used for generations. In 367 A.D., Athanasius listed the same 27 NT books found in every Christian Bible today.

The same is true of the OT. Jesus and His apostles accepted the Scriptures already recognized by the Jewish people. They didn't include 1 Enoch or the other Ethiopian extras to that collection.

The claim that the church removed books from the Bible turns history upside down. The historical record shows that God's people recognized His Word. They didn't rewrite it, vote it into existence, or take books out of it.

"WHY IS THE BOOK OF ENOCH SUDDENLY SO POPULAR?"

The book of 1 Enoch promises what many people find hard to resist. It talks about giants, fallen angels, hidden mysteries, and secrets that seem to explain things the Bible doesn't.

But God never promised to answer every question we might have. Deuteronomy 29:29 (ESV) says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

For now, we “see in a mirror dimly” (1 Cor. 13:12 ESV). One day we’ll know far more than we know today. Until then, God calls us to trust what He has revealed instead of chasing what He has not.

The danger is that we can become so fascinated with questions God hasn’t answered that we neglect the answers He has given.

Don’t spend so much time reading books almost no one has recognized as Scripture that you neglect the 66 books that all Christians agree are Scripture.

In other words, master the 66 books that Christians agree are actually God's Word instead of spending your time on fringe extras.

CONCLUSION

The Ethiopian Bible isn’t the first Bible, and its extra books aren’t inspired Scripture. They weren’t accepted as God's Word by the Jews, by Jesus and His apostles, or by the overwhelming majority of Christians.

Importantly: Even if someone accepts 1 Enoch as Scripture, it doesn't change any doctrine taught in the 66 consensus books. All the more reason to focus on the 66 consensus books.