MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism · Christianity · Islam

DOCUMENT 246

Cush Shall Stretch Out Her Hands

A Covenant Deep Dive into the Ethiopian Bible, Its 81-Book Canon, and How It Compares to Other Bibles and to the Hebrew Text

What Is the Ethiopian Bible, Where Did Its Text Come From, and How Does It Measure Against the Written Tanakh? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
The Hebrew canon of twenty-four books never received 1 Enoch or Jubilees, though both were read at Qumran. The Beta Israel of Ethiopia kept a Ge'ez Torah (the Orit) alongside Enoch and Jubilees for centuries. The ***Tanakh*** (Torah, Prophets, Writings) in Hebrew is the standard by which every translation is measured.	The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church holds the largest canon in Christendom, commonly counted as 81 books. Its Old Testament was translated from the Greek Septuagint, not the Hebrew. The first African convert in Acts 8 was reading **Isaiah 53** — a Tanakh text — on the road home to Cush.	The first emigration of Muslims (c. 615 CE) went to the Christian king of Abyssinia, who received them. The Qur'an honors the Tawrat (Torah) and Zabur (Psalms). Islamic tradition identifies Idris (Q. 19:56–57) with Enoch, but no Book of Enoch is ever cited in the Qur'an as revelation.

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The

Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh**'s own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh**'s covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh* to a single question in three parts: what the Ethiopian Bible is, how its text and canon compare with other Bibles, and how both measure against the Hebrew text. **Yahweh (יהוה)** and **Elohim (אֱלֹהִים)** appear in bold throughout. Tanakh book names are given in English only. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold. Verse numbers follow the English version; where the Hebrew numbering differs, it is given in brackets on first citation. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Historical and manuscript claims are graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as corroborated, partially corroborated, or not corroborated. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic commentary, New Testament texts, the Qur'an, and the additional books of the Ethiopian canon are cited as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Cush in the table of nations; the Name; the command not to add or take away; the revealed and the secret things

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Joshua, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Zephaniah	Cush in the prophets; Ebed-melech; the testimony test; sample textual differences
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Esther, Daniel, Nehemiah, 2 Chronicles	Cush stretching out her hands; the named angels; reading with the sense given; the Ark's last placement

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Ethiopian canon books	1 Enoch; Jubilees; 1–3 Meqabyan; 4 Baruch; 4 Ezra; Josippon; church-order books (Sinodos, Books of the Covenant, Ethiopic Clement, Didascalia)	The books that distinguish the Ethiopian Bible, tested against the Tanakh
Dead Sea Scrolls	4QEn(a–g); 4QJub; 4QDeut(j); 4QExod(b); 4QSam(a); 4QJer(b, d); 11QPs(a)	Hebrew and Aramaic witnesses older than any Greek or Ge'ez manuscript
New Testament	Acts 8:26–39; Jude 14–15; Romans 3:2	The Ethiopian reader of Isaiah; the Enoch quotation; the entrusted oracles
Qur'an and Islamic history	Q. 5:44; 5:82–83; 19:56–57; the first emigration to Abyssinia	The Tawrat honored; Idris; the Negus who received the emigrants
Rabbinic and Ethiopian tradition	Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1; Mishnah Yadayim 3:5; Kebra Nagast; Fetha Nagast	The "outside books"; the canon debate; the Ark legend; Ethiopian canon lists

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — WHAT PEOPLE MEAN BY "THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE"

I-A. The Question as It Is Usually Asked

Few subjects travel faster on social media than the Ethiopian Bible. It is said to be the oldest Bible in the world, the most complete Bible, the Bible that kept what Rome removed, the Bible that preserves the Book of Enoch, and the Bible of a nation that holds the Ark of the Covenant. Some of these claims are true, some are half true, and some are not true at all. Many sincere seekers meet them together, in one short video, with no way to separate them.

This document separates them. It does not begin with the popular claims, and it does not begin with the councils of any church. It begins where Miqdash Bethel begins every study — with the Written Tanakh — and it asks three plain questions.

First: what is the Ethiopian Bible, as a matter of history and manuscripts?

Second: how does its canon and its text compare with the other Bibles in use today?

Third: how does it measure against the Hebrew text that all three covenant traditions recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**?

I-B. The Question in the Tanakh's Own Terms

The Tanakh supplies its own standard for any book that claims to carry **Yahweh**'s word. Four texts set that standard, and each governs a different part of this study.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	MEANING	KEY TEXT
lo tosifu (לֹא תֹסִפוּ, you shall not add)	H3254	Do not add to the word **Yahweh** commands; its companion ***lo tigre'u*** (תִגְרְעוּ, you shall not diminish), H1639, forbids taking away	**Deuteronomy 4:2**; compare **12:32** [Hebrew 13:1]
ha-nistarot (הַנִּסְתָּרֹת, the hidden things)	H5641	What **Yahweh** has not revealed belongs to Him alone	**Deuteronomy 29:29** [Hebrew 29:28]
ha-niglot (הַנִּגְלֹת, the revealed things)	H1540	What He has revealed belongs to His people and their children forever, to be done	**Deuteronomy 29:29**

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	MEANING	KEY TEXT
torah (תּוֹרָה, instruction) and ***te'udah*** (תְּעוּדָה, testimony)	H8451 / H8584	The written instruction and the attested witness against which every later voice is tested	**Isaiah 8:20**
sefer (סֵפֶר, scroll / book)	H5612	A written record; the Tanakh cites many ***sefarim*** (scrolls / books) it does not itself contain	**Numbers 21:14**; **Joshua 10:13**

> **"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim which I command you"** (**Deuteronomy 4:2**).
>
> **"The hidden things belong to Yahweh our Elohim, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Torah"** (**Deuteronomy 29:29**).
>
> **"To the Torah and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no dawn in them"** (**Isaiah 8:20**).

A fourth text governs translation itself. When **Ezra** read the Torah to the returned exiles, the Levites

"read in the book, in the Torah of Elohim, distinctly, and gave the sense, so that they understood the reading" (**Nehemiah 8:8**).

Explaining **Yahweh**'s word in the language of the hearers is therefore not a departure from the covenant; it is covenant practice. But the book they read from was the Hebrew Torah, and the explanation served it. **A translation is a witness to the text. It is not the text**. That principle is the key that opens every section below.

This study builds on three earlier documents of the Library. Doc 6 and Doc 71 ("The Lost Books of the Bible") sorted the so-called lost books into categories and gave the Institution's verdicts on 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and the circulating "Book of Jasher." Doc 228 ("Of Making Many Books There Is No End") applied **Ecclesiastes 12:12** to the multiplication of books. The present study does not repeat those verdicts. It asks the question they leave standing: what is the Ethiopian Bible as a whole, and how does its text compare with the Hebrew?

II. CUSH IN THE WRITTEN TANAKH — THE NATION BEFORE THE BOOK

II-A. The Word *Kush* (Cush)

Before there was an Ethiopian Bible, there was Cush in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew name is ***Kush*** (כּוּשׁ, Cush), H3568. When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, the translators usually rendered ***Kush*** (Cush) as *Aithiopia*, and from the Greek the name "Ethiopia" entered the English Bible. A precise reader must hold two facts together.

First, the Cush of the Tanakh generally lies south of Egypt along the upper Nile — the region of ancient Nubia, in what is now Sudan — rather than the highlands of the modern nation of Ethiopia.

Second, the Ethiopian and Eritrean churches have long read the Tanakh's Cush texts as their own heritage, and the name "Ethiopia" itself carries that reading. The Tanakh speaks of Cush often, and never with contempt.

TEXT	WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS OF CUSH	WHAT IT ESTABLISHES
Genesis 2:13	The river Gihon encircles the whole land of Cush.	Cush is named in the first geography of the Torah.
Genesis 10:6–8	Cush is a son of Ham; Cush fathers Nimrod.	Cush has a place in the table of nations descended from Noah.
Numbers 12:1–10	**Miriam** and **Aharon** speak against **Mosheh** because of the Cushite woman he married; **Yahweh** rebukes them, not him.	The Cushite wife of **Mosheh** is defended by **Yahweh**'s own judgment.
2 Kings 19:9; **Isaiah 37:9**	Tirhakah, king of Cush, marches out against Assyria.	Cush appears as a real power in the history of Judah.
Jeremiah 38:7–13; **39:15–18**	Ebed-melech the Cushite rescues **Jeremiah** from the cistern; **Yahweh** promises to deliver him **"because you trusted in Me."**	A Cushite is saved by trust while the princes of Judah perish.
Psalms 68:31 [Hebrew 68:32]	**"Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to Elohim."**	Cush is foreseen turning toward **Elohim**.
Psalms 87:4	Cush is named among the nations of whom it is said, **"this one was born there."**	Cush is enrolled in Zion's register of the peoples.

TEXT	WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS OF CUSH	WHAT IT ESTABLISHES
Isaiah 18:7	A gift is brought to **Yahweh** of hosts from a tall and smooth people, to Mount Zion.	Cush brings its offering to the place of the Name.
Amos 9:7	**"Are you not like the sons of the Cushites to Me, O sons of Israel?"**	Israel's election is not a claim of superior blood.
Zephaniah 3:10	**"From beyond the rivers of Cush My worshipers... shall bring My offering."**	The worshipers of **Yahweh** come from beyond Cush in the latter restoration.

The Tanakh also records one caution about Cush that is often misused.

"Can the Cushite change his skin, or the leopard its spots?" (**Jeremiah 13:23**).

The verse is a proverb about Judah's hardened habit of evil, not a judgment on Cush; the point is that a thing ingrained cannot be removed by one's own effort. It says nothing against the Cushite, and the same prophet records the Cushite Ebed-melech as the one man at court who acted with courage and trust.

The Writings also mark Cush as the far edge of the known world: the Persian king reigned **"from India to Cush"** (**Esther 1:1**). Cush was distant, but it was never outside the horizon of Scripture.

II-B. Sheba and the Queen

Ethiopian tradition relates its national story to the Queen of Sheba, who came to **Shelomoh** to test him with hard questions (**1 Kings 10:1–13**; **2 Chronicles 9:1–12**). The Tanakh records her visit, her gifts, and her blessing of **Yahweh** for setting **Shelomoh** on the throne of Israel (**1 Kings 10:9**). It does not name her, it does not locate Sheba on a map, and it records no child and no journey of the Ark. The table of nations lists a Sheba descended from Cush (**Genesis 10:7**) and another Sheba descended from Shem through Joktan (**Genesis 10:28**), which is why scholars have placed the kingdom of Sheba in southern Arabia, in the Horn of Africa, or across both shores of the Red Sea. Section VII tests the later Ethiopian account of the Queen's son against the text.

II-C. Finding on Cush

Ten witnesses from the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings establish that the Tanakh regards Cush as a nation known to **Yahweh**, included in His promises, and destined to bring worship to His Name. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard is exceeded. Whatever is concluded below about the Ethiopian

Bible's canon and text, it is not a verdict on the people of Cush or of modern Ethiopia. The Tanakh itself forbids that reading (**Amos 9:7**).

III. HOW THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE CAME TO BE — HISTORY AND TRANSMISSION

III-A. Aksum and the Coming of the Faith

The Ethiopian Bible was born in the kingdom of Aksum, in the northern highlands of present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea. Christianity became the faith of the Aksumite court in the fourth century under King Ezana, through the work of Frumentius, a Syrian Christian who was later consecrated the first bishop of Aksum by the patriarch of Alexandria. From that time the Ethiopian church looked to Alexandria for its bishops, a bond that lasted until the twentieth century. Royal inscriptions of Aksum were written in both Greek and Ge'ez before the kings turned increasingly to Ge'ez alone, and the translation of the Scriptures into Ge'ez is generally placed in the period that followed. Ethiopian tradition credits much of the work to the "Nine Saints," monks from the eastern Roman provinces who arrived in the late fifth century.

III-B. From What Was It Translated?

This is the question on which every comparison with the Hebrew depends, and the scholarly answer is clear on the main point. The Ge'ez Old Testament was translated from the **Greek Septuagint**, not directly from the Hebrew. Scholars debate which form of the Greek was used and how much Syriac influence the translators brought, but the Greek source of the Old Testament is the settled finding of the field. The New Testament was likewise translated from Greek. Beginning in the fourteenth century, Ethiopian scholars revised parts of the text against Arabic versions, and later scholarship has detected occasional revision toward the Hebrew as well. The Ge'ez Bible is therefore not one layer but several.

The consequence is simple to state. For the books that the Tanakh contains, the Ge'ez text stands two steps from the Hebrew: Hebrew into Greek, Greek into Ge'ez. It is a daughter of a daughter. Where the Greek follows the Hebrew closely, the Ge'ez usually does too. Where the Greek differs from the Hebrew, the Ge'ez generally follows the Greek.

III-C. The Manuscript Record

The oldest surviving Ge'ez biblical manuscripts are the two volumes of the Garima Gospels, preserved at the monastery of Abba Garima in Tigray. Radiocarbon testing at Oxford placed their parchment between roughly 330 and 650 CE, far earlier than the eleventh-century date once assumed, and they are

among the earliest illuminated gospel books in the world. For the Old Testament the picture is different. Almost all surviving Ethiopic Old Testament manuscripts date from the thirteenth or fourteenth century or later. The Ethiopian text of the Tanakh's books is therefore known from copies made many centuries after the translation, which themselves passed through the revisions described above.

PERIOD	EVENT	WITNESS STRENGTH
c. 7th–6th century BCE	Ketef Hinnom silver amulets inscribed with the priestly blessing (**Numbers 6:24–26**) — the oldest known physical witness to words of the Tanakh	Corroborated (Hebrew)
3rd century BCE – 1st century CE	Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew copies of every Tanakh book except Esther; Aramaic 1 Enoch; Hebrew Jubilees	Corroborated
3rd century BCE onward	Greek translation of the Torah, then the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Septuagint)	Corroborated
4th century CE	Complete Greek Bibles: Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. Aksum adopts Christianity under Ezana; Frumentius bishop	Corroborated
c. 5th–6th century CE	Ge'ez translation of the Scriptures from Greek; tradition credits the Nine Saints	Partially corroborated (date approximate)
c. 330–650 CE	Garima Gospels copied (radiocarbon range)	Corroborated (range, not exact year)
c. 930 CE	Aleppo Codex, the oldest near-complete Masoretic Hebrew Bible	Corroborated
1008–10 CE	Leningrad Codex, the oldest complete Masoretic Hebrew Bible	Corroborated
13th–14th century CE onward	Most surviving Ethiopic Old Testament manuscripts; revisions against Arabic texts; the Kebra Nagast compiled	Corroborated
1986 CE	81-book Amharic Bible of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church published	Corroborated

III-D. Finding on Transmission

Three independent lines of evidence — the scholarly study of the Ge'ez text, the history of the Aksumite church, and the dates of the surviving manuscripts — agree that the Ethiopian Old Testament is an early and honorable translation of the Greek Septuagint, carried by manuscripts that are mostly medieval. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard is met. The Ethiopian Bible deserves respect as one of the oldest Christian translations in the world. It is not, and does not claim to be, the Hebrew original.

IV. THE 81-BOOK CANON — WHAT IS IN IT

IV-A. How the Books Are Counted

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church speaks of its Scriptures as "the 81 books," usually divided into 46 books of the Old Testament and 35 of the New. That makes it the largest canon in traditional Christendom. But the number 81 is reached in more than one way. Ethiopian canon lists vary between manuscripts; the Fetha Nagast (the traditional law code) gives a shorter list; and Western scholars, following R. W. Cowley's study of 1974, speaks of a "narrower" and a "broader" canon. The narrower canon consists mostly of books familiar to other churches plus a handful of distinctive ones. The broader canon adds a history (Josippon) and several books of church order. Some count separate books that others combine, which is why some lists reach 88. The church's concept of canon is looser than that of the Western churches, and no single council ever fixed the list.

IV-B. The Distinctive Books

BOOK	WHAT IT IS	EARLIEST KNOWN FORM
1 Enoch (Henok)	A compilation of five works attributed to Enoch: the Watchers, the Parables, the Astronomical Book, the Dream Visions, and the Epistle	Aramaic at Qumran (all parts except the Parables); complete only in Ge'ez
Jubilees (Kufale, "Division")	A retelling of Genesis and the opening of Exodus, arranged in forty-nine-year jubilee periods, presented as revealed to **Mosheh** on Sinai	Hebrew at Qumran (about fifteen copies); complete only in Ge'ez
1, 2, and 3 Meqabyan	Three books preserved only in Ge'ez. Despite the name, they are not the Greek books of Maccabees; they contain narrative and exhortation on covenant faithfulness, reward, and judgment. Their date and origin are debated	Ge'ez only

BOOK	WHAT IT IS	EARLIEST KNOWN FORM
4 Baruch (Paralipomena of Jeremiah)	An expansion of the fall of Jerusalem in which Abimelech — the Ebed-melech of **Jeremiah 38** — sleeps through the exile	Greek, commonly dated to the early 2nd century CE
4 Ezra (Ezra Sutuel)	An apocalypse written in the name of **Ezra** after the destruction of the Second Temple	Late 1st century CE; preserved in Latin, Syriac, Ge'ez and other versions
Josippon (broader canon)	A history of the Jewish people based on Josephus, composed in Hebrew in southern Italy in the 10th century CE and reaching Ge'ez through Arabic	Hebrew, 10th century CE
Church-order books (broader canon)	Sinodos (four parts), two Books of the Covenant, Ethiopic Clement, and the Didascalia — rules of worship and church life	Greek and Coptic-Arabic church-order traditions, 3rd century CE onward

The Ethiopian Old Testament also contains the books that Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Bibles include beyond the Hebrew canon — Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, and the Greek additions to Esther and Daniel — because these came with the Septuagint from which it was translated.

IV-C. The Canons Side by Side

TRADITION	COUNT	OLD TESTAMENT / TANAKH CONTENT	SOURCE LANGUAGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
Hebrew Tanakh (Judaism)	24 books	Torah, Prophets, Writings — the same content Protestants count as 39	Hebrew (with Aramaic portions in Daniel and Ezra)
Protestant	66 books	The Hebrew canon only (39 books), plus 27 of the New Testament	Hebrew
Roman Catholic	73 books	Hebrew canon plus Tobit, Judith, 1–2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, and Greek additions	Hebrew (Latin tradition via Jerome)

TRADITION	COUNT	OLD TESTAMENT / TANAKH CONTENT	SOURCE LANGUAGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
Eastern Orthodox	Varies (about 76–79)	Catholic list plus books such as 1 Esdras, 3 Maccabees, the Prayer of Manasseh, and Psalm 151	Greek Septuagint
Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo	81 books (by the church's count)	Septuagint books plus 1 Enoch, Jubilees, 1–3 Meqabyan, 4 Baruch, 4 Ezra; broader canon adds Josippon and church-order books	Greek Septuagint, translated into Ge'ez
Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews)	Orit plus other books	The Orit (Genesis through Ruth) and other Tanakh books in Ge'ez, with Enoch and Jubilees also revered	Ge'ez

IV-D. Finding on the Canon

The Ethiopian Bible contains every book of the Hebrew Tanakh. Nothing **Yahweh** gave in the Hebrew Scriptures is missing from it. What distinguishes it is not what it lacks but what it adds. Measured by **Deuteronomy 4:2**, the question is not whether the Ethiopian church kept too little, but whether the books it added carry the same authority as the Tanakh. Section VI takes up that question book by book.

V. THE ETHIOPIAN TEXT AGAINST THE HEBREW — WHERE THEY AGREE AND WHERE THEY DIFFER

V-A. The Direction of the Witnesses

Because the Ge'ez Old Testament descends from the Greek, comparing it with the Hebrew is largely a comparison between the Septuagint and the Hebrew. The Dead Sea Scrolls changed this comparison in the twentieth century. They showed that in the last centuries before the Common Era more than one Hebrew form of some books was in circulation, and that some Septuagint readings once dismissed as translators' errors actually preserve an older Hebrew wording. They also showed that the Hebrew tradition later standardized by the Masoretes was already the majority form and was copied with remarkable care; the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran agrees closely with the medieval Masoretic text across a gap of a thousand years.

The Institution's standing rule decides how these witnesses are weighed. The earlier witness governs the later, and the witness in the original language governs the translation. A Ge'ez reading can therefore point back to an old Greek reading, and an old Greek reading can point back to a Hebrew reading preserved at Qumran. But the Ge'ez cannot overturn the Hebrew by itself. Where it helps, it helps as a witness to the Hebrew, not as a rival to it.

V-B. The Name — What Is Lost in a Chain of Translation

The most important difference between the Hebrew text and every translation descended from the Greek is not a verse. It is the Name. The Hebrew Scriptures write the Name of **Yahweh** — **יהוה** — more than six thousand times. The Greek translators, following the Jewish reverence of their day, rendered it ***Kyrios***, **"Lord."** The Ge'ez translators rendered the Greek ***Kyrios*** with ***Egzi'abeher***, **"Lord of the land"** or **"Lord of the world,"** and they rendered **Elohim** with ***Amlak*** **(God)**. Each is a title of honor. Neither is the Name.

> **"Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel: Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers... has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations" (Exodus 3:15).**

A reader of the Ethiopian Bible alone would not learn from its pages that **Elohim** has a personal name, just as a reader of most English Bibles would not. This is not a fault peculiar to Ethiopia; it is the inheritance of every Bible translated through the Greek. Doc 210 examined the Tetragrammaton in full. Here the point is narrower: on the single most important word of the covenant, the Hebrew text is the only one of these witnesses that preserves what **Yahweh** Himself said.

V-C. Sample Differences Tested Against the Hebrew and the Scrolls

The table sets out seven well-documented places where the Greek tradition — and the Ge'ez, which generally follows it — differs from the Masoretic Hebrew, together with what the Dead Sea Scrolls show. Individual Ge'ez manuscripts vary, and the table describes the Greek family to which the Ge'ez Old Testament belongs.

PASSAGE	MASORETIC HEBREW	GREEK (AND GE'EZ, WHICH GENERALLY FOLLOWS IT)	DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND VERDICT
Exodus 1:5	Seventy persons of Ya'akov's house came to Egypt	Seventy-five persons	4QExod(b) reads seventy-five. Both numbers are ancient Hebrew readings; the difference is in how the household is counted.

PASSAGE	MASORETIC HEBREW	GREEK (AND GE'EZ, WHICH GENERALLY FOLLOWS IT)	DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND VERDICT
Deuteronomy 32:8	He fixed the borders of the peoples by the number of ***bene Yisra'el*** (**בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**, sons of Israel)	By the number of the angels (some manuscripts: sons) of God	4QDeut(j) reads ***bene Elohim*** (**בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים**, sons of Elohim). The Greek preserves an older Hebrew wording here.
1 Samuel 17:4	Goliath's height six cubits and a span	Four cubits and a span	4QSam(a) reads four cubits. The Greek again reflects a Hebrew text.
Jeremiah (whole book)	Longer text; oracles against the nations at chapters 46–51	About one-eighth shorter; the oracles against the nations placed after 25:13	4QJer(b) and 4QJer(d) are Hebrew copies of the shorter form. Two Hebrew editions of Jeremiah circulated.
Genesis 5 and 11	Ages of the patriarchs at the birth of their heirs as in the Hebrew	Many begetting ages about a hundred years higher, lengthening the chronology	No Qumran support for the longer Greek chronology in these chapters; the Hebrew stands.
Isaiah 7:14	***almah*** (**עַלְמָה**, young woman of marriageable age), H5959	*Parthenos* (virgin); the Ge'ez tradition follows the Greek sense	1QIsa(a) reads ***almah*** (young woman), as the Masoretic text does. The Hebrew word is the governing witness.
Psalms	150 psalms; 9 and 10 separate	Psalms 9 and 10 joined (so numbering runs one behind); a Psalm 151 added	11QPs(a) contains a Hebrew form of Psalm 151 in a liturgical collection; it was never in the Hebrew canon.

V-D. Finding on the Text

Three witnesses — the Masoretic Hebrew, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Greek tradition that the Ge'ez follows — establish three findings.

First, for the great majority of the Tanakh's books the Ethiopian Old Testament conveys the same history, commandments, and prophecies as the Hebrew.

Second, where it differs, the difference almost always comes from the Greek, and in a small number of places the Greek (and so the Ge'ez) preserves an old Hebrew reading that the Scrolls confirm.

Third, where the Greek departs from every Hebrew witness — as in the lengthened chronology of **Genesis 5**, the added psalm, or the rendering of **Isaiah 7:14** — the Hebrew governs. The Ethiopian Bible is a valuable witness to the Old Greek. It is not a better witness than the Hebrew to what Yahweh spoke to Israel. As the Psalmist says,

"He declares His word to Ya'akov, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not dealt so with any nation" (Psalms 147:19–20).

VI. THE ADDED BOOKS — ENOCH, JUBILEES, MEQABYAN, AND OTHERS TESTED

Doc 71 gave the Institution's verdict on 1 Enoch and Jubilees. This section does not overturn it. It adds the manuscript evidence, applies the Tanakh's tests to the remaining distinctive books, and records one correction to Doc 71.

VI-A. 1 Enoch

The whole record of Enoch in the Tanakh is seven verses of genealogy that end in one sentence:

"And Enoch walked with Elohim, and he was not, for Elohim took him" (Genesis 5:24)

The Hebrew name is ***Chanokh*** (חֲנוֹךְ, ***dedicated / trained***), H2585. Everything else that is said about Enoch comes from later books.

1 Enoch is not one book but five, composed across roughly three centuries before the Common Era. Qumran Cave 4 yielded fragments of eleven Aramaic manuscripts of parts of 1 Enoch, covering perhaps a fifth of the Ethiopic text, together with manuscripts of a related "***Book of Giants***" that is not part of 1 Enoch at all. The section called the Parables (chapters 37–71) has never been found at Qumran and survives only in Ge'ez. The Scrolls confirm both how closely the Ge'ez follows its Aramaic ancestor in some places and how it differs in others. The New Testament letter of Jude quotes 1 Enoch 1:9 (**Jude 14–15**), which shows the book was read among some first-century believers. As Doc 71 established, quotation is not canonization.

Tested against the Tanakh, 1 Enoch fails on three counts that Doc 71 set out: **it claims an author who did not write it, it relocates the root of human evil from human choice to the descent of angels, and it presents a body of hidden cosmic knowledge that Deuteronomy 29:29 assigns to Yahweh alone**.

A correction to Doc 71. Doc 71 stated that the entire Tanakh names four angels. The written Tanakh names two: ***Mikha'el*** (מִיכָאֵל, who is like El?), H4317, in **Daniel 10:13, 21** and **12:1**; and ***Gavri'el*** (גַּבְרִיאֵל, mighty one of El), H1403, in **Daniel 8:16** and **9:21**. Raphael is named only in Tobit, and Uriel only in 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra. The correction strengthens Doc 71's argument: the Tanakh's restraint is greater than stated, and the contrast with 1 Enoch's crowded angelology is sharper.

VI-B. Jubilees

Jubilees was composed in Hebrew in the second century BCE. About fifteen copies were found in five of the Qumran caves, more than for most books of the Tanakh, which shows that the community there valued it highly. It retells Genesis and the opening of Exodus as a revelation given to **Mosheh** on Sinai through an angel. Doc 71 recorded its two decisive departures. It retrojects the Sinai commandments onto the patriarchs, adding to what the Torah records (**Deuteronomy 4:2**). And it insists on a fixed calendar of 364 days that disregards the moon, against the Torah's lunar months (**Exodus 12:1–2**; **Numbers 28:11–15**). Doc 240 showed that the month is the covenant's clock; Jubilees sets that clock aside.

VI-C. Meqabyan, 4 Baruch, 4 Ezra, and Josippon

The three books of Meqabyan are preserved only in Ge'ez and share only a name with the Greek books of Maccabees. They have no Hebrew or Aramaic ancestor that has been found, no witness at Qumran, and no place in any Jewish canon. 4 Baruch is a Greek work of the early second century CE that expands the story of **Jeremiah** and Baruch; its charming account of Abimelech sleeping through the exile is built on the Cushite Ebed-melech of **Jeremiah 38**, but it adds what **Jeremiah** never records. 4 Ezra was written after the Temple fell in 70 CE — more than five centuries after **Ezra** — and bears his name as a literary device. Josippon is a tenth-century Hebrew history based on Josephus; it is a medieval chronicle, and its presence in the broader canon shows how loosely the Ethiopian church draws the boundary of Scripture.

VI-D. Grading the Distinctive Books

BOOK	OLDEST FORM	AT QUMRAN?	IN ANY HEBREW CANON?	VERDICT UNDER THE TANAKH'S TESTS
1 Enoch	Aramaic, 3rd–1st century BCE	Yes, except the Parables	No (revered by Beta Israel)	Valuable Second Temple witness; not Tanakh authority

BOOK	OLDEST FORM	AT QUMRAN?	IN ANY HEBREW CANON?	VERDICT UNDER THE TANAKH'S TESTS
Jubilees	Hebrew, 2nd century BCE	Yes, about fifteen copies	No (revered by Beta Israel)	Adds to the Torah; solar calendar contradicts the Torah's months; not Tanakh authority
1–3 Maccabees	Ge'ez; date debated	No	No	Ethiopian devotional literature; not Tanakh authority
4 Baruch	Greek, early 2nd century CE	No	No	Later expansion of **Jeremiah**; not Tanakh authority
4 Ezra	Late 1st century CE	No	No	Pseudonymous apocalypse; not Tanakh authority
Josippon	Hebrew, 10th century CE	No	No	Medieval history; not Scripture of any kind

Each of these books fails at least one of the tests of **Deuteronomy 4:2**, **Deuteronomy 18:20–22**, and **Isaiah 8:20**. None carries a Hebrew or Aramaic witness from the time of the prophets, and none was received by the Jewish people to whom the Hebrew Scriptures were entrusted. The Ethiopian church has kept them with great faithfulness, and the world owes it the survival of 1 Enoch and Jubilees in complete form. Preservation is a gift to scholarship. It is not a warrant of inspiration.

VII. POPULAR CLAIMS TESTED BY THE TWO-OR-THREE-WITNESS STANDARD

The Tanakh forbids establishing any matter on one witness (**Deuteronomy 19:15**) and condemns the false report (**Exodus 23:1**). The claims that circulate about the Ethiopian Bible are therefore graded here, each on its own evidence.

CLAIM	WHAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS	GRADE
"The Ethiopian Bible is the oldest Bible in the world."	The oldest physical witnesses to Tanakh words are Hebrew (Ketef Hinnom; the Dead Sea Scrolls). The oldest complete Bibles are Greek codices of the 4th century. The Ge'ez translation began after that, and most Ethiopic Old Testament manuscripts are medieval. The Garima Gospels are among the earliest illuminated gospel books, which is a real and remarkable distinction.	**Not corroborated** as stated; the Garima Gospels claim is **partially corroborated**
"It is the most complete Bible."	It is the largest canon in traditional Christendom and contains every book of the Tanakh. "Complete" in the covenant sense is measured by **Deuteronomy 4:2**, which forbids adding as well as taking away.	**Corroborated** as "largest"; **not corroborated** as "more complete than the Tanakh"
"Rome or the Council of Nicaea removed Enoch and Jubilees."	Neither book was ever in the Hebrew canon, and neither appears in the great Greek codices. The Council of Nicaea (325 CE) did not issue a canon list. The books were not removed; they were never received outside Ethiopia.	**Not corroborated**
"The Ethiopian Bible was translated from the original Hebrew and Aramaic."	The Ge'ez Old Testament was translated from the Greek Septuagint. 1 Enoch reached Ge'ez through Greek from Aramaic; Jubilees through Greek from Hebrew.	**Not corroborated**
"Enoch was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, so it is Scripture."	Aramaic 1 Enoch at Qumran proves the book is ancient and pre-Christian. Qumran also kept many community writings no one regards as Scripture. Presence in a library is not canonization.	**Corroborated** as ancient; **not corroborated** as Scripture
"The Ark of the Covenant rests in Aksum, so Ethiopia holds the true covenant."	The account comes from the Kebra Nagast, a 14th-century compilation that is not part of the 81 books. No independent witness has examined the object. The Tanakh last places the Ark under **Yoshiyahu** (**2 Chronicles 35:3**) and foretells a day when **"they shall no more say, The ark of the covenant of Yahweh"** (**Jeremiah 3:16**).	**Not corroborated**

On the last claim the Tanakh speaks for itself. The covenant was never held by an object. **Jeremiah**, writing of the restoration, says the Ark

"shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they miss it" (Jeremiah 3:16),

because Jerusalem itself will be called the throne of **Yahweh**. The covenant is held by the written word and by the heart that keeps it (**Deuteronomy 30:11–14**), not by the possession of a relic in any nation.

VIII. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION STANDS TOWARD THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE

The table sets the three traditions against the findings above. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only, in keeping with the standing rule of this document.

ELEMENT	✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Primary Question	Which books defile the hands, that is, carry holy status? Mishnah Yadayim 3:5 records the debate over Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes and affirms both; Enoch and Jubilees never entered the discussion.	Which books belong to the Old Testament? Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Tewahedo churches answer differently, and the Tewahedo answer is the widest.	How do the earlier Scriptures stand? The Qur'an calls the Tawrat guidance and light (Q. 5:44) and names Idris (Q. 19:56–57), whom tradition identifies with Enoch.
Covenant Strength	Received and guarded the Hebrew text itself. The Beta Israel kept the Orit in Ge'ez for centuries in isolation; Israel's Sephardi Chief Rabbi recognized them as Jews in 1973, and most emigrated to Israel in the airlifts of 1984 and 1991.	The Ethiopian church kept the Tanakh's books in its own tongue from late antiquity, preserved 1 Enoch and Jubilees for the world, and kept practices the Torah commands — among them eighth-day circumcision and abstention from pork.	Abyssinia gave refuge to the first Muslim emigrants (c. 615 CE); the Negus heard Ja'far ibn Abi Talib recite Surah Maryam. Tafsir traditionally links Q. 5:82–83 to Christians who wept at the Qur'an's recitation.

ELEMENT	✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Covenant Departure	Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1 records R. Akiva's saying that one who reads the "outside books" has no share in the world to come — a later ruling that goes beyond the Tanakh, which nowhere forbids reading. The Tanakh itself cites books outside it (**Numbers 21:14**; **Joshua 10:13**).	The Tewahedo canon adds books to the Tanakh and treats them as Scripture, against **Deuteronomy 4:2**. Every Bible translated through the Greek, Western or Ethiopian, replaced the Name of **Yahweh** with a title.	Later doctrine that the earlier Scriptures were corrupted (tahrif) is sometimes pressed into a claim that no Bible can be trusted. The Dead Sea Scrolls show the Hebrew text carried faithfully across a thousand years.
Covenant Witness	**The Hebrew text is the governing witness, and the Scrolls confirm it**. The Beta Israel story fulfills **Zephaniah 3:10** in the eyes of many: worshipers from beyond the rivers of Cush.	The first African convert in the New Testament (Acts 8:26–39) was reading **Isaiah 53** — the Tanakh. The Ethiopian church's own foundation points back to the Hebrew prophets.	The Qur'an's own standard of a sound chain of transmission (isnad) favours the Hebrew text over any later translation or pseudonymous book.

IX. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no conclusion may stand on a single witness. Each declaration below is supported by more than one text of the written Tanakh or by more than one independent line of evidence.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	The Tanakh honors Cush. The Ethiopian people and their church stand within the promises of **Yahweh** to the nations, and nothing in this study is a verdict against them.	**Psalms 68:31**; **87:4**; **Amos 9:7**; **Zephaniah 3:10**; **Jeremiah 39:18**
II	The Ethiopian Old Testament is an early translation of the Greek Septuagint, carried mostly by medieval manuscripts. It is a daughter of a daughter of the Hebrew.	Scholarly study of the Ge'ez text; Aksumite history; manuscript dating (Section III)

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
III	The Ethiopian Bible contains every book of the Tanakh. Nothing **Yahweh** gave in the Hebrew Scriptures is missing from it.	Ethiopian canon lists; **Deuteronomy 4:2**
IV	Translation serves the text and does not replace it. Where any translation differs from every Hebrew witness, the Hebrew governs.	**Nehemiah 8:8**; **Psalms 147:19–20**; **Deuteronomy 19:15**
V	The Name of **Yahweh** is preserved only in the Hebrew text among these witnesses. Every Bible translated through the Greek replaced it with a title.	**Exodus 3:15**; **Isaiah 42:8**
VI	1 Enoch, Jubilees, Meqabyan, 4 Baruch, 4 Ezra, and Josippon are not Tanakh authorities. They may be read as historical witnesses, never as covenant law.	**Deuteronomy 4:2**; **18:20–22**; **29:29**; **Isaiah 8:20**; **Proverbs 30:6**
VII	The covenant is held by the written word and the keeping heart, not by a relic, a nation, or the size of a canon. The claim that the Ark in Aksum proves Ethiopia holds the covenant is not corroborated.	**Jeremiah 3:16**; **Deuteronomy 30:11–14**; **2 Chronicles 35:3**

X. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — HOW TO READ THE ETHIOPIAN BIBLE

Behind the question **"what is the Ethiopian Bible?"** there is usually another: **"has something been hidden from me?"** The Tanakh answers that fear directly, and its answer is fivefold.

First: Honor the keepers. For fifteen centuries, in mountain monasteries and in villages without printing, Ethiopian scribes copied the Scriptures by hand. Beta Israel kept the Torah of **Mosheh** in isolation from every other Jewish community. The Tanakh speaks of Cush with honor, and so should every reader.

Second: Know what you are holding. An English "Ethiopian Bible" bought today is a translation of a translation of a translation: Hebrew into Greek, Greek into Ge'ez, Ge'ez or Amharic into English. Some popular English editions are not translations of the church's own Ge'ez or Amharic Bible at all, but compilations of public-domain texts — such as R. H. Charles's early twentieth-century English versions of Enoch and Jubilees bound with the King James text. Read the title page and the translator's note.

Third: Go to Hebrew for doctrine. Yahweh declared His word to Ya'akov (**Psalms 147:19**). Where the Ethiopian Bible agrees with the Hebrew, it bears true witness; where it differs, test the difference against the Hebrew and the Scrolls, as Section V has done. **Where a doctrine rests on a book the Tanakh does not contain, it rests on no covenant ground at all** (**Isaiah 8:20**).

Fourth: Do not fear the hidden. Nothing necessary was lost.

"The hidden things belong to Yahweh our Elohim, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Torah" (**Deuteronomy 29:29**).

The revealed things are enough to keep, and they are in the Tanakh that every Bible — Ethiopian, Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant — already contains.

Fifth: Do not add.

"Every word of Eloah is refined; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you and you be found a liar" (**Proverbs 30:5–6**).

The size of a canon is not a measure of faithfulness. The measure is whether the word received is the word Yahweh gave.

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"For then I will turn to the peoples a pure lip, that they may all call on the name of Yahweh, to serve Him with one shoulder.

From beyond the rivers of Cush My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering."

Zephaniah 3:9–10 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh