

OLD TESTAMENT BIBLICAL LITERACY

THE APOCRYPHA – Part One

Lesson 52

Biblical-Literacy.com

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What Is the “Apocrypha?”

Easy Answer: 14 or 15 Books in Some Old Testaments but not Others

But There’s More:

New Testament Apocrypha

Pseudepigrapha

New Testament Apocrypha

- Not “Canon” by Any Recognized Christian Group

Necessary Theological Term

“Canon”

Collection of Authoritative Works that
Comprise “Scripture”

New Testament Apocrypha

- Not “Canon” by Any Recognized Christian Group
- Gospel of Thomas, etc. Written AFTER New Testament Books

Pseudepigrapha

- “Pseudo” = “False”
- “Grapha” = “writing / author”

Collection of Writings under “Fake” Names,
Not Considered Canon, But Fairly Well
Known By First Century

(Quoted and Referenced by Jude)

Why “Apocrypha?”

- “Apo” = “From / Away”
- “Crypha” = “Hidden”
- “Hidden Away” - Positive / Negative Term
 - Hidden for Those Wise Enough
 - Hidden Because False

What is The OT Apocrypha? (RSV)

- 1 The First Book of Esdras
- 2 The Second Book of Esdras
- 3 Tobit
- 4 Judith
- 5 The Additions to the Book of Esther
- 6 The Wisdom of Solomon
- 7 Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach

OT Apocrypha

- 8 Baruch*
- 9 The Letter of Jeremiah*
- 10 The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men
- 11 Susanna
- 12 Bel and the Dragon
- 13 The Prayer of Manasseh
- 14 The First Book of the Maccabees
- 15 The Second Book of the Maccabees

Why Do Some Believe Canonical but not Others?

First Ask: How Did Old Testament Become
Canonized?

Old Testament Canon

- Much is Unknown
- Jews Great Respect for Scripture
- Major Test For Prophets with Major Results
- Canon From Prophets in Writing & Grouping
- Prophet Age Moses - Malachi

Old Testament Canon

- The Torah / Law / Five Books of Moses
 - Josiah Temple (630ish)
- The Prophets (As Written?)
 - Grouped by 219 B.C.
- The Writings
 - Early and 90 A.D.

Council of Jamnia 90 A.D.

- Temple Burned 168 B.C.
- Temple Burned 70 A.D.
- Already Recognized
- Discussion Over Ezekiel, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes and Esther

History and The Apocrypha

Septuagint

- Diaspora (Dispersion of Jews among Nations) = Loss of Hebrew
- Alexandria as a Center Point
- Ptolomy II (285 - 246 B.C.)
- 70 (LXX) Scholars to Translate
- Translate Canon and More
- Put in Scrolls

Septuagint (LXX)

- Scrolls used by Jews
- Christians - Codex (Books)
- Some Codexes With “Extra” Books
- Jews Quit using LXX
- We Have Codexes, not Scrolls

History Unfolds

- Church Fathers 100 - 200s
 - Hebrew Scholars (Origen, Melito of Sardis)
 - Non-Hebrew Scholars
- 300's
 - Augustine / Greek Fathers
 - Jerome

Jerome

- Translate OT and NT into Latin (Vulgate)
- No Apocrypha
 - But 2 Sneak in!

Middle Ages

- List of “Yes” and “No”
- Vulgate Expands

Reformation Movement

- Luther - Examine and Correct Corruption
- Debate Purgatory & Mass for Dead
 - II Macc. 12:43-45
 - BUT Book of Wisdom 3:1ff
- Merit Issues

Luther

- Translates all but I and II Esdras
- “They contain absolutely nothing which one could not much more easily find in Aesop or in even more trivial books”
- All Set Apart in Translation
- Followed by Reformers

English Translations

- Miles Coverdale (1535) -- Set Apart

*They are “not iudged amonge the doctours to
be of like reputacion with the other
scripture”*

- Thomas Matthew (1537) -- Set Apart All
- Geneva Bible (1560 - 1630)
 - Shakespeare, Bunyan, Pilgrims
 - Text into Verses

Geneva Gives Introduction

These books that follow in order after the Prophets unto the New Testament, are called Apocrypha; that is books, which were not received by a common consent to be read and expounded publicly in the Church, neither yet served to prove any point of Christian religion...but as books proceeding from godly men, were received to be read for the advancement and furtherance of the knowledge of history, and for the instruction of godly manners.

King James Version 1611

- “Apocrypha” but no Introduction

Meanwhile ...

- Catholic Council of Trent (1546)
- Canon EXCEPT Prayer of Manessah and I and II Esdras
- Not All Agree, But Still Position

Church of England

- Not Doctrine, but Profitable for Moral Instruction
 - British Bible Society
 - Edinburgh Bible Society (1825)
- “replete with instances of vanity, flattery, idle curiosity, affectation of learning and other blemishes; with frivolous, absurd, false, superstitious and contradictory statements”

Uses of Apocrypha

- History Between the Testaments
- Context for New Testament
 - Taxes
 - Origins of Pharisees / Sadducees
 - Messiah / Angels / Demons
- New Testament Forms
- Writings of Paul, et al.

Points for Home

- More to Apocrypha than Meets the Eye
- Scripture not an Afterthought
- Study for Beliefs
- Great Tools for Bible Understanding