

The Apocrypha

The Apocrypha in the Bible

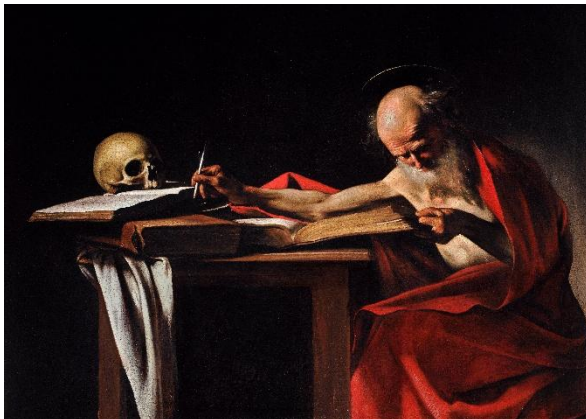
- The apocryphal books were preserved in the Greek Septuagint, though many were likely translated from Hebrew or Aramaic like the Old Testament (we know this through ancient fragments such as the dead sea scrolls).
- Our oldest manuscripts of the Septuagint are actually Christian codices (we only have fragments from the pre-Christian period).
- The apocrypha are mixed into the order of the books and can be inconsistent across manuscripts
- The table on the next page shows a comparison between three major manuscripts of the Septuagint as well as the Latin vulgate (an early translation)
- Notice a few things:
 - The 39 books we are most familiar with are always included.
 - The books are consistent and familiar to us until 2 Chronicles. After that it becomes messier
 - There is always a poetic and prophetic section, along with additional (post-exilic) historical books.
 - The following additional books appear in all the examples above:
 - Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, 1 Maccabees, Epistle of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel and Esther
 - The following books sometimes appear and sometimes do not
 - 1 Esdras (Esdras A, Greek Ezra), 2 Esdras (Latin Ezra), 2-4 Maccabees, Baruch, Psalm 151, Odes
 - But what does this say about these books? What did the ancient Christians think of them? And how were they used?

Sinaiticus (4th c.)	Vaticanus (4th c.)	Alexandrinus (5th c.)	Latin Vulgate (4th c.)
Genesis – 2 Chronicles			
	*1 Esdras (Esdras A, Greek Ezra)		
Ezra-Nehemiah (Esdras B)	Ezra-Nehemiah (Esdras B)		Ezra-Nehemiah (1-2 Esdras)
	Psalms – Song of Songs		*Tobit + *Judith
	Job		Esther (with *additions)
	*Wisdom + *Sirach		Job
Esther (with *additions)	Esther (with *additions)		Psalms – Song of Songs
*Tobit + *Judith	*Judith + *Tobit		*Wisdom + *Sirach
*1 + 4 Maccabees			
	Minor Prophets	Minor Prophets	
Isaiah - Jeremiah			
	*Baruch	*Baruch	Lamentations
Lamentations	Lamentations	Lamentations	*Baruch
*Epistle of Jeremiah			
Ezekiel – Daniel (with *additions)			
Minor Prophets			Minor Prophets
		Esther (with *additions)	
		*Tobit + *Judith	
			*1-2 Maccabees
		*1 Esdras (Greek Ezra)	*1 Esdras (3 Esdras, Greek Ezra, appendix)
			*2 Esdras (4 Esdras, Latin Ezra, appendix)
		Ezra-Nehemiah	
		*1-4 Maccabees	
Psalms		Psalms (with intro material)	
*Psalm 151		*Psalm 151 + *Odes	
		Job	
Proverbs – Song of Songs		Proverbs – Song of Songs	
*Wisdom + *Sirach		*Wisdom + *Sirach	
Job			
		*Psalms of Solomon (appendix, probably along with other extra works)	

The Apocrypha in the New Testament

- We noted last week that when the New Testament writers speak of the Bible as a whole, they tend to speak using descriptions of the established Hebrew canon (law, prophets, psalms) which did not include the apocrypha.
- Similarly, the Lord Jesus spoke of “the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah”. Zechariah is possibly the guy mentioned in 2 Chronicles 24. In other words, Jesus takes us from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament (in the Hebrew book order, which did not include the apocrypha).
- Although the New Testament writers often quote from the Septuagint (because they are writing in Greek), they do not ever quote from the apocryphal books as authoritative (but they do show a knowledge of and familiarity with them!)
- The New Testament writers do extensively cite the Hebrew Old Testament (the only books not quoted are: Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Judges, Ruth, Ezra, Esther, Obadiah, Nahum, and Lamentations)

Ancient Christians and the Apocrypha



- Jerome (AD c. 342 – 420) has been called “the greatest scholar of the early church”
- He was an important figure in the history of the western (later roman catholic and protestant) churches.
- He translated the Bible from the original languages into Latin. His Bible was called the Latin Vulgate and became the standard bible for many centuries.
- Jerome. Prologue Galeatus
 - Jerome gives an overview of the 22 books of the Hebrew canon, then says: “This prologue to the Scriptures may be appropriate as a helmeted introduction to all the books which we turn from Hebrew into Latin, so we may be able to know whatever is outside of these is set aside among the apocrypha. Therefore, **Wisdom.. Sirach.. Judith... Tobit, and The Shepherd** are not in the canon. I have found the First Book of the **Maccabees** (is) Hebrew, the Second is Greek...”
- Rufinus (AD c. 345 - 411). Exposition of the Creed

“there are also other books which our fathers call not Canonical but Ecclesiastical: that is to say, **Wisdom... Sirach... Tobit... Judith**, and the Books of the **Maccabees**.”

- Jerome, Letter 107 (written to a woman seeking advice about her daughter)

“Let her treasures be not silks or gems but manuscripts of the holy scriptures; and in these let her think less of gilding, and Babylonian parchment, and arabesque patterns, than of correctness and accurate punctuation. Let her begin by learning the **psalter**, and then let her gather rules of life out of the **proverbs** of Solomon. From the **Preacher** let her gain the habit of despising the world and its vanities. Let her follow the example set in **Job** of virtue and of patience. Then let her pass on to the **gospels** never to be laid aside when once they have been taken in hand. Let her also drink in with a willing heart the **Acts** of the Apostles and the **Epistles**. As soon as she has enriched the storehouse of her mind with these treasures, let her commit to memory the **prophets**, the **heptateuch**, the books of **Kings** and of **Chronicles**, the rolls also of **Ezra** and **Esther**. When she has done all these she may safely read the **Song of Songs** but not before: for, were she to read it at the beginning, she would fail to perceive that, though it is written in fleshly words, it is a marriage song of a spiritual bridal. And not understanding this she would suffer hurt from it.

Let her avoid all apocryphal writings, and if she is led to read such not by the truth of the doctrines which they contain but out of respect for the miracles contained in them; **let her understand that they are not really written by those to whom they are ascribed, that many faulty elements have been introduced into them, and that it requires infinite discretion to look for gold in the midst of dirt.** Cyprian's writings let her have always in her hands. The letters of Athanasius and the treatises of Hilary she may go through without fear of stumbling. Let her take pleasure in the works and wits of all in whose books a due regard for the faith is not neglected. But if she reads the works of others let it be rather to judge them than to follow them”
- While it is clear that the apocryphal books were contested and held an uncertain place in the Bible, it is also clear that many held them in high esteem, even considering them to be a second, lesser canon. But it can be hard to define exactly what people meant by this distinction. For some this meant the books should be read in the church, but not be used to establish doctrine.
- For the Eastern (Greek) churches, we might quote Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures

“Of the divine scriptures, read the 22 books, but have nothing to do with the apocryphal writings”

The Protestant Reformation and the Apocrypha

- Due to the fierce arguments over the authority of the Bible and the Church, protestants sought to emphasise the secondary, non-authoritative place of the apocrypha.
- Protestant bibles (including the KJV) moved the apocryphal books into a new section separate from the Old Testament.
- Catholics reacted strongly to this by officially affirming that the apocrypha were canon and equal in authority with scripture at the Council of Trent in 1540.
 - Yves Congar (a catholic priest and theologian) said:
"An official, definitive list of inspired writings did not exist in the catholic church until the council of Trent"
- Eventually, protestants stopped printing the apocrypha in their bibles all together, starting in at least 1782. The KJV began to be printed without the apocrypha from around 1885.