

The Apocrypha

- I. This study sets forth academic information and scriptural arguments, the latter being most reliable.
- II. apocrypha: A writing or statement of doubtful authorship or authenticity; *spec.* those books included in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions of the Old Testament, which were not originally written in Hebrew and not counted genuine by the Jews, and which, at the Reformation, were excluded from the Sacred Canon by the Protestant party, as having no well-grounded claim to inspired authorship.
- III. The official Catholic Bible is the Latin Vulgate of Jerome, completed in 405 A.D.
 - A. There was previously a Latin Bible called *Itala* (157 A.D.) of which the Catholic bishop and philosopher, Augustine, said, “Now among translations themselves the Italian (*Itala*) is to be preferred to the others, for it keeps closer to the words without prejudice to clearness of expression.” (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Christian Lit. Ed., Vol. II, p. 542)
 - B. The English version is the Douay-Rheims (1582-1610 A.D.). The Douay has been continually updated to keep pace with the King James Version. Catholic Cardinal Wiseman acknowledges this. ('Douay Bible', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*)
 - C. Besides textual differences in the books held in common with the KJV, the Catholic Bible has extra books they consider to be part of the O.T. Canon: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, First & Second Maccabees.
 1. These and other shorter works were aggregated and segregated as a body between the O.T. and N.T. in the AV1611 (KJV) Bible, and called *Apocrypha*.
 2. The KJV translators included them as writings of historical interest only, they apparently being written during what is called the *intertestamental period* between the close of the O.T. Canon and the beginning of the N.T.
 3. The controversy of their inclusion in the KJV finally resulted in their removal many years later.
 - D. The Catholic Council of Trent in 1546 A.D. declared the above-named books as sacred and canonical (implying divine inspiration) and pronounced a solemn curse against all who do not receive them as such.
 1. Causeless curses are harmless. **PRO 26:2; 1SAM 17:43.**
 2. Merited curses such as **DEU 27:15, 18** are a different matter.
 3. “Curses, like young chickens, always come home to roost.” (Old English proverb)
 - E. In his prologue to his O.T. translation, Jerome gave an accurate account of the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures and added, “This prologue to the Scriptures may suit as a helmed preface to all the books which we have rendered from Hebrew into Latin, that we may know that whatever book is beyond these must be reckoned among the Apocrypha.” (*Prologus Galeatus*)
 1. Jerome was one of the first to use this term to designate certain books included in the Greek Septuagint (a supposed pre-Christ Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) as never having been part of the Hebrew scriptures.
 2. “As the Church reads the books of Judith and Tobit and Maccabees but does not receive them among the canonical Scriptures, so also it reads Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus for the edification of the people, not for the authoritative confirmation of doctrine.” (Jerome, *Pref. ad Libros Sol*)
 3. Is the curse of Trent retroactive?
 - F. Other notables like Origen (182-251 A.D.) and Eusebius (275-340 A.D.) also favored only the Hebrew O.T. as Canon, although Origen added the Apocrypha in his Greek translation

of the O.T. (now called the LXX or Septuagint).

- G. “Augustine (354-430) at first defended the canonicity of the Apocrypha but later came to a position not much different from Jerome’s. There should be a distinction, he came to feel, between the books of the Hebrew canon and the ‘deuterocanonical’ books accepted and read by the churches. Pope Gregory the Great (540-604) also adopted Jerome’s position in regard to the Apocrypha, and so did Cardinal Ximenes and Cardinal Cajetan at the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Hence, the decree of the Council of Trent canonizing the Apocrypha is contrary to the informed conviction of the early and medieval Church.” (E.F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 98)

1. In commenting on the books of Esdras and the books of Maccabees, Augustine wrote: “From this time when the Temple was rebuilt, down to the time of Aristobulus, the Jews had not kings but princes; and the reckoning of their dates is found, not in the Holy Scriptures which are called Canonical, but in others, among which are also the books of the Maccabees. These are held as canonical, not by the Jews, but by the Church, on account of the extreme and wonderful sufferings of certain martyrs...” (Augustine, *The City of God*, book 18, par. 36)
2. Augustine gives more attestation of this in other places in *The City of God*.

- H. The inspired O.T. scriptures came by the Jews. **ROM 3:1-2.**

1. The Hebrew Canon consists of the same body of knowledge that comprises the 39 books of the KJV O.T., differing only in compilation.
 - a. The Hebrew Canon was a lesser number of books which the KJV translators separated into more components.
 - b. The Hebrew Canon’s last book was Chronicles, an important point.
2. “...the Jews not only rejected the Apocrypha, but after the overthrow of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., they went so far as to ‘destroy, systematically and thoroughly, the Semitic originals of all extra-canonical literature,’ including the Apocrypha.” (E.F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 97)
3. “And additional evidence that the Jews did not recognize the Apocrypha as canonical is supplied by the Talmudic tract Baba Bathra (2nd century) and by the famous Jewish historian Josephus (c. 93 A.D.) in his treatise *Against Apion*. Neither of these sources make any mention of the Apocrypha in the lists which they give of the Old Testament books.” (Ibid.)
4. “But how did Eastern Judaism bear itself towards this Apocryphal literature? We find it described by a term which seems to correspond to our ‘Apocrypha,’ as ‘*Sepharim Genuzim*,’ ‘hidden books,’ i.e., either such whose origin was hidden, or, more likely, books withdrawn from common or congregational use. Although they were, of course, carefully distinguished from the canonical Scriptures, as not being sacred, their use was not only allowed, but many of them are quoted in Talmudical writings.” (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 59)

- I. NOTE: The Apocrypha is the source of the doctrines of purgatory, prayers for the dead, and the meritoriousness of good works.

- IV. When Jesus Christ referred to the O.T., He was thinking of a Hebrew O.T. written in *jots and tittles*. **MAT 5:17-19.**

- A. Greek writing like the LXX/Septuagint w/ Apocrypha does not use jots and tittles. Note the O.E.D. definition of Apocrypha: “...which were not originally written in Hebrew...”
1. Jesus fulfilled a Hebrew O.T.
 2. The Hebrew O.T. had a major command of not adding to God’s word. **DEU 4:2.**
 3. If breaking a “least commandment” was wrong, what about breaking a major

- commandment of adding to a true “jot and tittle” O.T.?
- B. “The LXX translators made some palpable mistakes; their knowledge of Hebrew was often inadequate; they occasionally interpreted as well as translated, and they sometimes introduced local colour.” (*Ency. Brit., 14th edition*, vol. 20, p. 336)
 - C. Jesus relied upon unbroken Scripture written in Hebrew that could be searched to find Him. **JOH 10:34-35; 5:39.**
 1. “The silence of the Apocrypha about the Person of the Messiah is so strange...” (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 193)
 2. All Scripture is inspired. **2TI 3:16.**
 3. Scripture testifies of Jesus Christ. **JOH 5:39.**
 4. The Apocrypha does not. How therefore can it be inspired Scripture?
- V. Jesus Christ recognized only three divisions of the O.T. scriptures. **LUK 24:44-45.**
- A. These are the historically recognized divisions of the Hebrew Canon: the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms/Writings (*Hagiographa* or sacred writings).
 1. The *Hagiographa* are Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles. (per O.E.D.)
 2. Daniel was formerly included in the Prophets, but later Talmudic rabbis bumped that book into the *Hagiographa* to avoid the implications of Daniel’s clear prophecies of the time of Messiah’s appearing before the temple’s destruction in 70 A.D. (See John Gill, Matthew Henry and Adam Clarke commentaries on Daniel)
 - B. These three divisions all wrote of Christ but He never mentioned a fourth division, and especially not a fourth division like the Apocrypha which doesn’t speak of Him. If the Apocrypha was scripture, would not Christ have included it as a proof of Himself?
- VI. Jesus Christ noted the list of martyred prophets as stretching from Abel to Zacharias. **LUK 11:50-51.**
- A. Abel was slain in the first book of the Hebrew Canon. **GEN 4:8.**
 - B. Zacharias was slain in the last book of the Hebrew Canon. **2CH 24:20-21.**
 - C. Christ was in essence saying, “From Genesis to Malachi.” The Apocrypha was not even a consideration.
 1. Malachi only prophesied of one more prophet before Messiah’s appearing: John the Baptist. **MAL 3:1; 4:5 c/w MAT 17:12-13.**
 2. This certainly does not imply prophets between Malachi and John (the Apocryphal years). No prophets means no inspired scripture.
- VII. The apostles are the standard of truth and practice. **1JO 4:6.**
- A. They quoted or referenced the Law, Prophets and Psalms copiously but there is no clear quotation of the Apocrypha in their writings.
 - B. They were guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit (**JOH 16:13**) and Christ opened their understanding of the Scriptures (**LUK 24:45**), yet they omitted the Apocrypha.
 - C. What guidance “inspired” others to deem the Apocrypha scripture? There is a *spirit of error* (**1JO 4:6**) and sometimes folks err from pride, ignorance or willing ignorance.
- VIII. The Apocrypha is disqualified as the word of God because it disagrees with the Scripture.
- A. 2 Maccabees 12:41-45 teaches the offering of money and prayers for the forgiveness of the dead. ct/w **DEU 26:12-14.**
 - B. Ecclesiasticus 3:30 teaches forgiveness of sins through almsgiving. ct/w **PSA 49:6-8; EPH 1:7; ROM 11:6.**

- C. Wisdom 7:25 presents wisdom as an emanation from God.
1. This is the pagan/gnostic doctrine of emanations: deities or principles emanating from God as offshoots from a sea of energy.
 2. Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. **1CO 1:24, 30.**
 3. Jesus Christ is not an emanation of God; He is God. **JOH 1:1-3, 14.**

IX. If the writings of certain Hebrew prophets did not make it into the Hebrew Canon (**2CH 9:29**), how much less the non-Hebrew works of the Apocrypha?