

## THE APOCRYPHA

The books of the Apocrypha are mainly the product of the last three centuries BC, a time during which written prophecy had ceased. They were accepted as part of the sacred literature by the Alexandrian Jews and, with the exception of the Second Book of Esdras, are found interspersed throughout the ancient copies of the Septuagint.

The godly Jews under Ezra rejected the Apocrypha as having been inspired by the LORD when they formed the Old Testament canon. Josephus (c. AD 100) confirms that these books were not considered as “divine” in his day. He informs us that the canon was closed c. 425 BC [*Against Apion*, 1.8].

The Apocrypha gradually rose in esteem within the apostate Roman (Western) Church until finally the Council of Trent (AD 1546) affirmed the canonicity of the greater part. By considering the Apocrypha sacred, the Catholic Church sided with the heretics of Alexandria, Egypt. It was in Alexandria that Mary was revered as the second person of the Trinity by the so-called “Christians.” Although Jerome rejected it, the Apocrypha has now been incorporated into his Vulgate by the Roman Catholic Church.

The New Testament contains 263 direct quotes from the Old Testament and 370 allusions to the Old Testament. Though some have claimed for the Apocrypha several vague “allusions” in the New Testament, these are nebulous mirages. Not one time did anyone in the New Testament refer to or quote from the Old Testament Apocrypha.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus *never* referred to the Apocrypha. Had these books belonged in the Old Testament, why did the Lord not so

clarify? The Old Testament had been canonized long before Jesus was born.

Yet Origen’s fifth column includes the Old Testament Apocrypha. *Vaticanus B* and *Sinaiticus a* include the Apocrypha as part of the text of the Old Testament along with spurious “Apocryphal” books such as “Epistle to Barnabas” and “Shepherd of Hermas” in the New Testament. We are being told that *Vaticanus* is the most accurate Greek text that we have, yet it includes the Apocrypha and Apocryphal books, none of which were canonized.

How does one know that Tobit, for example, is not a God inspired book? In the story, Tobit was blinded by bird dung (2:10); his son, Tobias, went on a journey with an angel who lies about his name (3:17, cp. 5:4, 11–12); the angel instructed Tobias that a fish’s gall would heal his blinded father (which it does, 6:8; 11:4–13); and the book teaches that alms and works purge away all sins (12:9).

However, the Word of God teaches that Jesus purged away all sin and sins of all Adam’s offspring by His once for all finished work in His atoning death and resurrection. It affirms that man is saved by God’s grace (unmerited favor) through faith in Christ Jesus as a free gift (Eph.2:8), and not by works of righteousness which we have done (Titus 3:5)!

The book of Tobit also teaches that demons are to be cast out of a person by the smoke produced by burning the heart and liver of a fish (6:6–7, 16–17; 8:2–3). In the Scriptures, exorcism is obtained simply by the power and authority of the Name of Jesus (as is healing). Yet according to Origen, Tobit is “inspired” in the same sense as were the four gospels.

The only books of value among any of those in the Apocrypha are First and Second Maccabees. Although they do not

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<sup>1</sup> Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, rev. ed., (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), p. 75.

belong to the O.T. canon, unlike the mythological, spurious Bible contradicting material found in the other extra-biblical books, the data found in Maccabees does seem to be a fairly reliable historical account of the Seleucid oppression of the Jews and the revolt led by the Maccabean priesthood against that tyranny and persecution (171–37 BC).

Over the years, much has been said concerning the fact that the first edition of the King James Bible contained the Apocrypha. It is true that the *publisher* of the 1611 edition did insert the Apocrypha *between* the Testaments, but it was never included *within* the Old Testament text as was so done in the Hexapla, in *Vaticanus*, and *Sinaiticus*.

The Apocrypha section from the Cambridge Group of the 1611 translators rendered the entire work into English but for historical purposes only – not as inspired Scripture. The Apocrypha was removed even from the space between the Testaments in the second edition.

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