

The Bible: What it is and How we got it

RCF Academy

Lesson 6: Old Testament Canon pt. 3

Noncanonical Works mentioned in OT

- Not preserved by God's providence
- Were not copied and cared for by Jews, so not regarded as scripture
- Contents
 - The Book of the Wars of Yahweh (Num 21:14)
 - The Book of Jasher (Josh 10:13)
 - The Book of Annals of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41)
 - The Book of Annals of the Kings of Israel (1 Kings 14:19; 15:31; 16:5; 2 Chron 20:34)
 - The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings 14:29; 15:7; 22:45; 2 Kings 8:23)
 - The Book of Annals of King David (1 Chron 27:24)
 - The Annals of Samuel the Seer, Nathaniel the prophet, and Gad the Seer (1 Chron 29:29)
 - The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the Visions of Iddo the Seer (2 Chron 9:29)
 - The Annals of Shemiah the Prophet and of Iddo the Seer (2 Chron 12:15)
 - The Commentary of the Prophet Iddo (2 Chron 13:22)
 - The Commentary of the Books of the Kings (2 Chron 24:27)
 - The Acts of Uzziah (2 Chron 26:22)
 - The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chron 32:32)
 - The Book of Annals (Nehemiah 12:23)
 - The Book of Annals (Persian version; Esther 2:23; 6:1)
 - The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Media and Persia (Esther 10:2)

Apocrypha

- Apocrypha = Hidden
- Athanasius made three fold distinction which continued in the Eastern Church
 - Canonical
 - Edifying (but not canonical)
 - Apocryphal (to be avoided)
- Jerome made twofold distinction continued in the Western church
 - Canonical
 - Non-canonical

Apocrypha

- Apocryphal books:
 - 1 Esdras (Vulgate 3 Esdras)
 - 2 Esdras (Vulgate 4 Esdras)
 - Tobit
 - Judith ("Judeth" in Geneva)
 - Rest of Esther (Vulgate Esther 10:4 – 16:24)
 - Wisdom (Wisdom of Solomon)
 - Ecclesiasticus (also known as Sirach)
 - Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremy ("Jeremiah" in Geneva) (all part of Vulgate Baruch)
 - Song of the Three Children (Vulgate Daniel 3:24–90)
 - Story of Susanna (Vulgate Daniel 13)
 - The Idol Bel and the Dragon (Vulgate Daniel 14)
 - Prayer of Manasseh (Daniel)
 - 1 - 4 Maccabees



Apocrypha

- Jewish Rejection

- Written in language other than Hebrew or Aramaic
- Written post-prophecy
 - “With the death of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi the latter prophets, the Holy Spirit ceased out of Israel. Despite this, they were made to hear through a bath kol”
 - Until then [the coming of Alexander the Great and the end of the empire of the Persians] the prophets prophesied through the Holy Spirit. From then on, ‘incline thine ear and hear the words of the wise”
 - “So they tore down the altar, and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until there should come a prophet to tell what to do with them.” (1 Maccabees 4:45b-46).
 - “Thus there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.” (1 Maccabees 9:27).
 - “And the Jews and their priests decided that Simon should be their leader and high priest for ever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise...” (1 Maccabees 14:41).

Apocrypha

- Jewish Rejection

- Apocryphal books assumed a closed canon

- “So in forty days were written fourscore and fourteen books. And it came to pass, when the forty days were fulfilled, that the Most High spake unto me, saying, ‘The first that thou hast written publish openly, and let the worthy and unworthy read it; but keep the seventy last, that thou mayest deliver them to such as be wise among thy people: for in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the stream of knowledge.’ And I did so” 2 Esdras 14:44-48

- Lack of Rabbinical disputes

- Rabbinical disputes have been recorded for the 5 disputed books (Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Esther, Proverbs, Ezekiel), but not for any of the Apocryphal books

Apocrypha

- Christian Rejection

- Proponent of the Apocrypha as scripture, O. E. Oesterley
 - “During the first two centuries, at least, the early church both east and west, as represented by Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, accepted all the books of the Apocrypha as inspired, i.e. as Scripture; the last two quote from almost every book.”
- These books lack divine qualities and contain many inconsistencies
 - 1 Esdras: Chronological issues with Darius, genealogy differs greatly with 1 Chronicles 3:17
 - 2 Esdras: Chronological issues for Ezra's life, Geographically incorrect, theologically inconsistent (says world was created for Israel, also suggests pre-existence of souls)
 - Tobit: Chronological issues of Tobit living through the division of the Jewish Kingdoms and through the Assyrian deportation. Geographically wrong regarding river and kingdom locations
 - Judith: Chronological issues with Nebuchadnezzar ruling in Nineveh.
 - Ecclesiasticus: Its theology teaches that kindness to parents and almsgiving atones for sins
 - 2 Maccabees: Teaches praying for the dead as well as a post death visit by Jeremiah.

Apocrypha

- Christian Rejection

- Church fathers did not use them as scripture
 - “Where the actual language of the apocryphal book is adopted, or a distinct reference to the book is made, one can be sure of dependence, and can assume that the book used in this way was respected. But the mere adoption of the language of a book, without the use of one of those standard formulas for quoting Scripture [it is written] which the Fathers inherited from the NT, should not be taken as implying that the book was canonical. It could at least as naturally imply that the book, though respected, was uncanonical.”
 - two books are never quoted at all, 3-4 Maccabees. Three books are only quoted as historical sources, Judith and 1-2 Maccabees. Two books are only used in the eastern church, Tobit and Ecclesiasticus, which held great doubt in Asia according to Melito of Sardis. And only one book was widely used, Wisdom of Solomon.
- Formulaic opening “it is written” is never used with any Apocryphal book

Pseudepigrapha

- Pseudepigrapha = writings done under a false name
- Written between 200 BC - 200 AD
 - 1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch (Jewish, c. 200 BCE–50 BCE)
 - 2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch (Jewish, c. 30 BCE–70 CE)
 - 3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch (Jewish, in present form from c. 108 CE-135 CE)
 - Sibylline Oracles (both Jewish and Christian, c. 2nd cent. BCE–7th cent. CE)
 - Treatise of Shem (c. near end of first cent. BCE)[3]
 - Apocryphon of Ezekiel (mostly lost, original form c. late 1st cent. BCE)
 - Apocalypse of Zephaniah (mostly lost, original form c. late 1st cent. BCE)
 - 4 Ezra (original Jewish form after 70 CE, final Christian additions later)
 - Greek Apocalypse of Ezra (present form is Christian c. 9th cent. CE with both Jewish and Christian sources)
 - Vision of Ezra (a Christian document dating from 4th to 7th cent. CE)
 - Questions of Ezra (Christian, but date is imprecise)
 - Revelation of Ezra (Christian and sometime before 9th cent. CE)
 - Apocalypse of Sedrach (present form is Christian from c. 5th cent. with earlier sources)
 - 2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch (Jewish, from c. 100 CE)
 - 3 (Greek Apocalypse of) Baruch (Christian utilizing Jewish sources, c. 1st–2nd cent. CE)
 - Apocalypse of Abraham (Jewish primarily, c. 70–150 CE)
 - Apocalypse of Adam (Gnostic derived from Jewish sources from c. the 1st cent. CE)
 - Apocalypse of Elijah (both Jewish and Christian, c. 150–275 CE)
 - Apocalypse of Daniel (present form c. 9th cent. CE, but contains Jewish sources from c. 4th cent. CE).

Pseudepigrapha

- Pseudonymity was done either to pay homage to the person attributed to or to gain a larger audience
 - “They did not simply attribute their writings to other inspired writers, but to ancient inspired writers, and this involved them in the use of deceitful devices...which were seriously misleading.”
- Using a pseudonym undermines any divine claim
- Essenes
 - “Almost always the Pseudepigrapha are influenced by the so-called OT: many supply revelations reputed to have been received by persons prominent in the OT; others are rewritten versions or expansions of biblical narratives; some are psalms that are occasionally modeled on the Davidic Psalter; and a few are compositions shaped by Jewish Wisdom Literature. Although these writings were composed long after Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezra, and other famous men, they were often intentionally but incorrectly attributed to one of them.”
 - Believed to receive true interpretations of the Law of Moses and wrote works to enforce this interpretation

Pseudepigrapha

- Christian influence
 - Utilization in Jude
 - “And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—” Jude 1:6 ESV
 - “It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones,” Jude 1:14 ESV
 - “But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” Jude 1:9 ESV
 - Converts bringing them in