



How God Delivered and Preserved His Word for Us

Part Five: Ersatz Books of the Bible
March 18, 2021 - Thursday Indepth
Bible Class of the Trilacoochee
church of Christ

Ersatz Books of the Bible

- Ersatz - “An artificial and inferior substitute or imitation for a genuine article” (Merriam-Webster)
- Apocrypha (sometimes called the Intertestamental Books) - “Writings or statements of dubious authenticity; books included in the Septuagint and Vulgate but excluded from the Jewish and Protestant canons of the Old Testament; early Christian writings not included in the New Testament” (Ibid)
- Origin of term - “Medieval Latin, from Late Latin, neuter plural of apocryphus secret, not canonical; Greek apokryphos obscure, hidden away” (Ibid)

The Apocrypha Consists Of 15 Writings

- 1 Esdras (Vulgate 3 Esdras)
- 2 Esdras (Vulgate 4 Esdras)
- Tobit
- Judith
- Rest of Esther (Vulgate Esther 10:4 – 16:24)
- Wisdom
- Ecclesiasticus (also known as Sirach)
- Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremy
- 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 Manasses (follows 2 Chronicles)
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees
- Psalm 151 and the Book of Odes

Apocryphal Books Generally Accepted By Liturgical Christianity

- Ecclesiasticus - written about 180 B.C., contains proverbs and practical observations of life two centuries before the birth of Christ. The work closely resembles the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. It is a record of early Rabbinical thought.
- Wisdom - considered one of the most valuable books of the Apocrypha. It was written by a Jew of the Dispersion about 65 B.C. It is similar to the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament. It was written especially to combat the materialistic tendencies of the book of Ecclesiastes. Sometimes referred to as the Wisdom of Solomon

Apocryphal Books Generally Accepted By Liturgical Christianity

- First Maccabees - written by a Jew in Palestine during the latter part of the 2nd century B.C., is a historical source on the period from 175 to 135 B.C. Represents insight into the root causes of the Maccabean rebellion and details the rebellion itself down to the death of Simon in 135 B.C. It gives detailed information on Antiochus Epiphanes and his desecration of the Jerusalem Temple, and outlines the origin of the Jewish feast of Hanukkah
- Second Maccabees - this work is a combination of history and fiction, and is an abridgment of a longer fictional writing. It was written in the latter part of the 2nd century B.C.

Apocryphal Books Generally Accepted By Liturgical Christianity

- Tobit - a work of fiction very popular among Jews and early Christians. It is a story of romance and legend from the Jewish Dispersion in Egypt. It was written in the 3rd century B.C., and was based on two well-known Egyptian stories. The purpose of this book was to teach moral lessons, and correct some superstitions. It features an angel Raphael.
- Bel and the Dragon - written about 100 B.C., story reveals Daniel's wisdom in exposing idolatry and those who promote it. It also promotes the existence of a dragon-god in Babylon.

Apocryphal Books Generally Accepted By Liturgical Christianity

- Judith - is a legendary tale of a Jewish widow reminiscent of Joan of Arc who succeeds in outwitting and slaying a great Assyrian general, thus bringing deliverance to her oppressed people. It was written in Palestine during the 2nd century B.C. by an early Pharisee
- The Rest of Esther - written about 100 B.C., consists of a number of additions to the Biblical book of Esther, added for detail and to make up for apparent spiritual deficiencies of the canonical book. It is filled with dragons, and other images that supported later false prophecies regarding the last days.
- Baruch - written in the first century A.D. The 6th chapter is known as the Epistle of Jeremias, sometimes considered a separate book

Apocryphal Books Not Generally Accepted By Liturgical Christianity

- The Prayer of Manasses - dates from the first century B.C. It was intended to be used in connection with the story of Manasseh's Babylonian captivity.
- The Song of the Three Holy Children - an addition to the Book of Daniel written about 100 B.C. and in the third chapter after the 23rd verse.
- The History of Susanna - written in the first century B.C., an addition to the book of Daniel, generally found prefixed to the book. The purpose of the story is to magnify Daniel's powers and the judgment.
- First Esdras - an abbreviated Greek version and reconstruction of the Ezra. It was written about 100 B.C. Some of the subject matter added is from the book of Nehemiah.

Apocryphal Books Not Generally Accepted By Liturgical Christianity

- Second Esdras - is an apocalypse, especially chapters 3-14. It is composite in origin, dating from 65 B.C. to 120 A.D. It focuses on Jewish thought regarding the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- Psalm 151 and the Book of Odes - Psalm 151 is the name given to a short psalm found in most copies of the Septuagint but not in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible. This Psalm is ascribed to David when he slew Goliath in single combat.
- Odes is a book found only in Eastern Orthodox Bibles and included after Psalms in some editions of the Septuagint. The chapters are prayers and songs from the Old and New Testament times. The first nine of them form the basis for the songs sung during Catholic matins and other services.

Apocryphal Books Not Generally Accepted By Liturgical Christianity

- The Catholic church accepts 12 of the books and calls them “deutero-canonical” books.
- The books rejected by the Catholic church are I and II Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, giving the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible a total of seven extra books plus additions to five canonical books.

How Did Those Books Come To Us?

- Some later translations of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) contained some of these books in an appendix. They were considered useful reading, but not inspired.
- Augustine influenced the councils of Hippo (393 A.D.) and Carthage (397 A.D.) to accept these extra books. He made sure that any opposition to these books was suppressed. However, these writings continued to hold a secondary position to the rest of the Bible.
- The Council of Trent (1546 A.D.), in reaction to the growing Protestant movement, resolved “if anyone receives not as sacred and canonical the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, let him be anathema!”

How Did Those Books Come To Us?

- The reason for the Catholic's interest in these books is that some of their unusual beliefs and practices are justified by these writings.
 - 2Maccabees 12:39-45 talks of praying for the dead which leads to the Catholic teaching of purgatory.
 - Ecclesiasticus 3:30 speaks of gaining salvation by almsgiving.
- The reason all 15 writings were not included was because some contradicted Catholic teachings
 - 2Esdras 7:105 speaks against praying for the dead.

How Did Those Books Come To Us?

- It should be noted that all of these books only exist in Greek copies; none of them in Hebrew or Aramaic.
 - They were never written down by the inspired writing prophets of the post exile who copied, compiled, and preserved the writings of other inspired Old Testament writers in Hebrew and Aramaic.
 - That they only exist in Greek implies that they were written after Old Testament inspiration ceased.

How Did Those Books Come To Us?

- None of these writings have been accepted by the Jews as inspired. They failed the tests of authenticity and inspiration.
- They were not written by recognized, inspired prophets, who:
 - Pointed people toward the truth; their words did not conflict with God's previous revelations - Deut. 13:1-5
 - Made predictions about the future that always came true - Deut. 18:20-22

How Did Those Books Come To Us?

- Ecclesiasticus, sometimes called Sirach, written by Jesus son of Sirach; nowhere in the book is a claim of prophecy, such as “The Lord said”
- His grandson who copied and wrote the book for him said that his grandfather got it by reading the law and prophets until he became proficient and then wrote the book.

How Did Those Books Come To Us?

- Baruch is supposed to have been written by Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch, yet it contains several errors.
 - Baruch is in the wrong place. Baruch 1:1 says he wrote it in Babylon. Jeremiah 43:6-7 says it was written in Egypt
 - Conflicts with Ezra and Nehemiah about the return of the temple items. Baruch 1:8 says he brought back the temple vessels. Ezra 5:14-15 says Sheshbazzar the governor was sent by Cyrus to bring them to Jerusalem

How Did Those Books Come To Us?

- The Letter of Jeremiah: Baruch 6:3 says that Judah will be in captivity for seven generations (210 years); Jeremiah 25:11 says 70 years
- 1 & 2 Maccabees states that there were no prophets in the land, thus voiding its own inspiration - 1Maccabees 4:46, 9:27, 14:41

How Did Those Books Come To Us?

- Tobit contains many historical and geographical errors; most telling is the claim that Tobit's was a youth when the ten tribes revolted (B.C. 925) and lived to see the Assyrian conquest (B.C. 725) – a period of 200 years, yet it says Tobit died at the age of 158.
- Judith contains many historical and geographical errors. Judith 1:1 says Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Assyrians and ruled in Nineveh. Daniel says Nebuchadnezzar was the King of Babylon - Dan. 1:1

Apocrypha And The New Testament

- The New Testament recognizes the Law, Psalms, and writings of the prophets as inspired of God.
- Jesus refers to the Law and the Prophets on several occasions
 - Matt. 26:56 - “But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled”
 - Luke 24:44-45 - “Then He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

Apocrypha And The New Testament

- The apostles concurred
 - 2Peter 1:20-21 - “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Apocrypha And The New Testament

- We don't know who wrote the books of Esther and Chronicles, but they are always listed with the prophets. The authorship of the rest is well known
- The New Testament quotes from every book of the Old Testament as inspired scripture, except for Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.
- This does not mean these five books were not inspired, just that it was not necessary to use them in the New Testament

Apocrypha And The New Testament

- Unlike the books of the Old Testament, none of the apocryphal books are quoted or referred to in the New Testament, and their content often contradicts it
- Jesus and the Apostles never quoted from these books, even though they existed in some later Septuagint versions.
- These books were never accepted by the Jews as inspired writings
- The early church apostolic fathers and writers never referred to these writings as inspired, though they obviously knew of their existence.

The Latter Writings Of The Apostolic Or Ante-Nicaean Fathers

- Non-canonical books written after the New Testament was complete are often called the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, Ante-Nicean Fathers, or Early Christian Fathers.
- They are not inspired scripture.
- The Apostolic Fathers were a group of early Christian leaders and authors who lived shortly after the apostles.
- Their writings are typically dated between 80 to 180 AD; however, there is no sound evidence that any were written in the first century, and some of them may have been written as late as 250 to 400 AD.

The Latter Writings Of The Apostolic Or Ante-Nicaean Fathers

- The writings of the Apostolic Fathers are in a number of genres: letters, sermons, apocalyptic prophecy, a biography of a martyr, and a guide to moral and worship practices.
- Many of the opinions expounded by the Apostolic Fathers are no longer considered orthodox by contemporary Christianity.
- It must be understood that these were written by uninspired and, in many cases, erring men.

38 Volumes of the Latter Writings of the Apostolic or Ante-Nicæan Fathers

- 120 Didache
- 140 Gospel of Thomas
- 140 Oxyrhynchus Gospel
- 200 Sophia of Jesus Christ
- 120 Egerton Gospel
- 160 Gospel of Peter
- 160 Secret Mark
- 200 Fayyum Fragment
- 200 Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
- 200 Mara Bar Serapion
- 120 Epistle of Barnabas
- 140 1 Clement
- 150 Gospel of the Egyptians
- 150 Gospel of the Hebrews
- 250 Christian Sibyllines
- 100-150 Apocalypse of Peter
- 100-150 Secret Book of James
- 100-150 Preaching of Peter
- 100-160 Gospel of the Ebionites
- 100-160 Gospel of the Nazoreans
- 100-160 Shepherd of Hermas
- 100-200 Odes of Solomon
- 101-220 Book of Elchasai
- 105-115 Ignatius of Antioch
- 110-140 Polycarp to the Philippians
- 110-140 Papias
- 110-160 Oxyrhynchus 840 Gospel
- 110-160 Traditions of Matthias
- 120-130 Quadratus of Athens
- 120-130 Apology of Aristides
- 120-140 Basilides
- 120-140 Naassene Fragment
- 120-160 Valentinus
- 120-180 Apocryphon of John
- 120-180 Gospel of Mary
- 120-180 Dialogue of the Savior
- 120-180 Gospel of the Savior
- 120-180 2nd Apocalypse of James
- 120-180 Trimorphic Protynoia
- 130-140 Marcion
- 130-150 Aristo of Pella
- 130-160 Epiphanes On Righteousness
- 130-160 Ophite Diagrams
- 130-160 2 Clement
- 130-170 Gospel of Judas
- 130-200 Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus
- 140-150 Epistula Apostolorum
- 140-160 Ptolemy
- 140-160 Isidore
- 140-170 Fronto
- 140-170 Infancy Gospel of James
- 140-170 Infancy Gospel of Thomas
- 140-180 Gospel of Truth
- 150-160 Martyrdom of Polycarp
- 150-160 Justin Martyr
- 150-180 Excerpts of Theodotus
- 150-180 Heracleon
- 150-200 Ascension of Isaiah
- 150-200 Acts of Peter
- 150-200 Acts of John
- 150-200 Acts of Paul
- 150-200 Acts of Andrew
- 150-225 Acts of Peter and the Twelve
- 150-225 Book of Thomas the Contender
- 150-250 Fifth and Sixth Books of Esra
- 150-300 Authoritative Teaching
- 150-300 Coptic Apocalypse of Paul
- 150-300 Discourse on the Eighth & Ninth
- 150-300 Melchizedek
- 150-400 Acts of Pilate
- 150-400 Anti-Marcionite Prologues
- 160-170 Tatian's Address to the Greeks
- 160-180 Claudius Apollinaris
- 160-180 Apelles
- 160-180 Julius Cassianus
- 160-250 Octavius of Minucius Felix
- 161-180 Acts of Carpus
- 165-175 Melito of Sardis
- 165-175 Hegesippus
- 165-175 Dionysius of Corinth
- 165-175 Lucian of Samosata
- 170-175 Diatessaron
- 170-200 Dura-Europos Gospel Harmony
- 170-200 Muratorian Canon
- 170-200 Treatise on the Resurrection
- 170-220 Letter of Peter to Philip
- 175-180 Athenagoras of Athens
- 175-185 Irenaeus of Lyons
- 175-185 Rhodon
- 175-185 Theophilus of Caesarea
- 178 Letter from Vienna and Lyons
- 180 Passion of the Scillitan Martyrs
- 180-185 Theophilus of Antioch
- 180-185 Acts of Apollonius
- 180-220 Bardesanes
- 180-220 Kerygmata Petrou
- 180-230 Hippolytus of Rome
- 180-250 1st Apocalypse of James
- 180-250 Gospel of Philip
- 182-202 Clement of Alexandria
- 185-195 Maximus of Jerusalem
- 185-195 Polycrates of Ephesus
- 189-199 Victor I
- 190-210 Pantaenus
- 193 Anonymous Anti-Montanist
- 193-216 Inscription of Abercius
- 197-220 Tertullian
- 200-210 Serapion of Antioch
- 200-210 Apollonius
- 200-220 Caius
- 200-220 Philostratus
- 200-225 Acts of Thomas
- 200-250 Didascalia
- 200-250 Books of Jeu
- 200-300 Pistis Sophia
- 200-300 Coptic Apocalypse of Peter
- 203 Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas

Ersatz Books of the Bible

- We have all of the books of the Old and New Testaments that God wants us to have, read, and follow
- They have passed all of the tests of inspired, canonical scripture
- God in His wisdom and providence has seen to it that it is available to all men in all places
- Any other book or writing is not to be trusted, believed, and followed without risk to one's eternal salvation. Trust what we have.

Ersatz Books of the Bible

- 2 Tim. 3:14-17 - “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”