

2nd Canonical Books

I) Important Definitions

- Four "Canonical Gospels"
 - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - Dates: 1st century (60's – 90's)
 - Order? Mark probably first, then Matthew, Luke; John last
- "Non-canonical Gospels"
 - *Many* other short books
 - mostly from 2nd to 4th cent.
 - about Jesus' life and/or his teachings.



I) Important Definitions

- "Apocryphal" = "hidden, secret"
 - Cf. English "crypt," "cryptic"
 - MANY ancient Jewish or Christian books outside of HB or NT, overall called "Apocrypha"
 - Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Apocalypses
 - Not "canonical"; i.e., not in anyone's Bible
- Caution: Protestants refer to OT "Apocrypha":
 - Tobit, Judith, 1 & 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Eccl., Baruch
 - Called "Deutero-canonical" by Catholics & Orthodox
- Don't confuse with "Apocalyptic"
 - "Revelation"; lit. "uncovering, revealing, opening"

I) Important Definitions

■ "Pseudepigraphic"

- Writings "*falsely attributed*" to famous figures of the past (esp. biblical, but not only)
- Actual authors anonymous; written (much) later

■ "Gnostic"

- Religious systems related to Judaism & Christianity
- Dualistic: good vs. evil; spirit vs. matter; M vs. F !
- Human life = "divine spark" trapped in mortal body
- Salvation = freeing soul/spirit from its bodily prison, by attaining proper (secret/esoteric) "knowledge" of our divine origins & eternal destiny

- The title **Apocrypha** comes from a Greek word meaning *concealed* or *hidden away*. It was first applied by Jerome (c340-420AD) because the books concerned were not included in the original Hebrew canon of Scripture. Following Jerome, the Protestant Reformers took the view that they were of lesser value than those generally accepted as Scripture.

- At around the same time, the Roman Catholic Church fixed the number of books in the Old Testament Apocrypha at fourteen, and the coptic orthodox and other Eastern Orthodox at 16. These books are also sometimes referred to as the **Deuterocanonical books**, meaning second (or secondary) canon. This term is applied when they are inserted in the main body of the Old Testament, as is the general practice in Roman Catholic Bibles.

The following abbreviations are used in listing the
“Protestant omitted canonical Holy Books”:

Tob.....	Tobit
Jdt	Judith
Add Esth.....	Additions to Esther
Wis.....	Wisdom
Sir	Sirach
Bar	Baruch
I Esd.....	I Esdras
II Esd.....	II Esdras
Let Jer	Letter of Jeremiah
Song of Thr	Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Jews
Sus	Susanna
Bel.....	Bel and the Dragon
I Macc.....	I Maccabees
II Macc	II Maccabees
III Macc	III Maccabees
IV Macc.....	IV Maccabees

■ **History of the Apocrypha**

- Christians have disputed over this group of books since earliest times. Indeed, this dispute goes back to even before the Christian era. Although they never formed part of the original Hebrew canon of Scripture, they were gradually included in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures (the *Septuagint*), and, after some initial hesitation, also in the Latin version derived from it (the *Vulgate*).

- The Septuagint was a translation made initially for the benefit of the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria around 200 BC. The name is derived from the Latin for seventy as tradition holds it was prepared by a team of seventy-two translators, consisting of six elders from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Septuagint is particularly important to readers and students of the New Testament because not only is it the version of the Old Testament most frequently quoted by the writers of the New, but it also established many of the words used by the New Testament writers when referring to Old Testament institutions.

- The Vulgate became the official Latin version of the Scriptures in the Western Church until the Reformation. It was made by (or under the direction of) Jerome in consultation with Jewish teachers, and drew heavily on Jewish tradition. Although Jerome at first excluded the apocryphal books, as he called them, on the grounds that they did not appear in the Hebrew canon, he was later persuaded to include them. It was only from the thirteenth century onwards that, perhaps rather ironically, Jerome's translation became known as the Vulgate, deriving its name from the Latin word *vulgare* meaning "to make common", something it signally failed to do, since by that time Latin was the language only of the educated classes.

- At the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church decided (1546) to continue to include most of the Apocrypha in its Bibles. However, because of their rather uncertain pedigree, many of the Reformers thought the books were not truly Scripture in the same way as the Old and New Testaments. Others, including Luther and The Church of England, took a middle course. So for example, Article 6 of the Church of England's 39 Articles states that the books may be read for instruction of manners (that is, to determine Christian conduct) but not used to establish any doctrine.

- Although the Apocrypha was included in the Authorised Version of 1611, largely because of its familiarity, it was relegated to a separate section between the Old and New Testaments, and in those versions which include it, this has been its almost invariable position in Protestant Bibles ever since. In Roman Catholic Bibles the books are normally retained in the main body of the Old Testament, where they are referred to as the Deuterocanonical (= second canon [or secondary]) books.