

Introduction to the Apocrypha

I. Introduction to the Holy Scriptures

A. Names and Definitions

1. Bible - *Greek "biblos"* - a book - *Matthew 1:2*
2. Canon - *Greek "kanon"* - rule or standard
3. Septuagint - "seventy" - Old Testament in Greek - 180 BC
4. Vulgate - "common" - Old Testament in Latin - 4th Century AD

B. Process

1. Revelation - God directly communicates truth not known
2. Inspiration - Spirit-moved people to produce Spirit-breathed readings
3. Illumination - influence of the Holy Spirit for understanding

C. Divisions

1. Old Testament - *Covenant* - 39 books
 - a. The Law - Pentateuch or Torah
 - b. The Prophets - Major/ Minor (*Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*)
 - c. The Writings
 1. Historical - *Joshua thru Esther*
 2. Poetical - *Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*
2. New Testament - 27 books
 - a. Gospels
 - b. *Acts of the Apostles*
 - c. Pauline Epistles
 - d. Pastoral Epistles - *1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*
 - e. General (Hebrew) Epistles
 - f. Prophetic - *Revelation*

D. Canonicity

1. Apostolic - Was the book written by an Apostle or someone who knew an Apostle?
2. Spiritual Content - Proven a means of edification? (grace/justification/ holiness)
3. Doctrinal Soundness - Did the book conflict with the other books?
4. Usage - Was the book universally recognized and quoted by the Church Fathers?
5. Divine Inspiration - Did it give true evidence of Divine inspiration? - *II Timothy 3:16*

II. Introduction to the Apocrypha Books (Old Testament)

A. Development

1. None of these books is included in the Hebrew canon of Holy Scriptures
2. Written some time between 300BC and 100AD - *Septuagint* - inclusive
3. Especially popular with Hellenistic Jews in Alexandria, Egypt
4. Used by the early church as Scripture and included in the Vulgate (400AD)
5. Acceptance
 - a. Protocanonical - the entire church accepts
 - b. Deuterocanonical - certain churches accept

B. Usage

1. Roman Catholics - **some** are a part of the Old Testament Canon
2. Eastern Orthodox - **all** are a part of the Old Testament Canon
3. Lutherans - included in Bible as "useful and good to read"
4. Geneva Reformers (Calvinists) - a value for "knowledge of history and godly instruction"
5. Church of England (Anglicans) - read them for example of life and instruction
6. Puritans - not inspired - to be rejected and held in suspicion
7. Free Methodists - not listed as Scripture, but not prohibited

Apocryphal Old Testament

Tobit

Judith

The Additions to the Book of Esther

(contained in the Greek version of Esther)

The Wisdom of Solomon

Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach

Baruch

The Letter of Jeremiah

The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews

Susanna

Bel and the Dragon

1 Maccabees

2 Maccabees

1 Esdras

The Prayer of Manasseh

2 Esdras (not contained in the Septuagint)

3 Maccabees

4 Maccabees

Psalms 151

Apocryphal New Testament

Coptic Gospel of Thomas

Gnostic The Gospel of the Ebionites

Gnostic Gospel of Philip

Gnostic The Infancy Gospel of Thomas

Gnostic Gospel of Peter

Gnostic Gospel of Nicodemus

Dialogue of the Redeemer

Apocryphon of John

Orthodox Testament of Our Lord in Galilee

Protevangelium

Book of James

History of Joseph the Carpenter

Leucian Acts

Acts of Peter

Acts of Paul

Acts of John

Acts of Andrew

Acts of Thomas

The Acts of Paul

The Acts of Paul and Thecla

Clement

Barnabas

Paul to the Corinthians

Paul to the Laodiceans

Tobit and Judith

I. The Book of Tobit

A. History

1. Tobit exists in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Aramaic and Hebrew versions
2. Written around 200BC with a focus on the Assyrian city of Ninevah
3. A copy was found with the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1948
4. Considered Jewish historical with some Persian folklore
5. Frequently quoted by the Church Fathers/Mothers and used in burial/funeral art

B. Content

1. Tobit - a pious Jew taken captive to Ninevah after the fall of Samaria - *Tobit 1:10*
2. Assyrians resettle the Samaritan territory after 721BC
3. Tobit pursues good works - becomes blind and poor - *Tobit 2:7-10*
4. Tobit asks God to deliver him - prayer of faith - *Tobit 3:1-6*
5. Tobias (Tobit's son) rescues his kinswoman (Sarah) from a demon - *Tobit 8:1-4*
6. Raphael the angel helps Tobias and heals Tobit - *Tobit 11:7-8*
7. Tobit was buried in Ninevah with honor - *Tobit 14:1-2*

II. The Book of Judith

A. History

1. Written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin around 350BC
2. Used by Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria and Origen as devotions
3. *Hymn of Judith* recited in prayer in the Roman Catholic Church
4. Historically inaccurate - Jewish folklore connected to history

B. Content

1. Nebuchadnezzar wants to punish the nations who rebelled including Israel - *Judith 2:1-3*
2. The Jewish people resist - *Judith 5:1-4*
3. Judith a widow, promises deliverance for Israel - *Judith 8:12-17*
4. Judith is captured and brought before General Holofernes - *Judith 10:20-23*
5. Judith beheads Holofernes - *Judith 13:1-9*
6. The Jews celebrate and the Assyrians flee - *Judith 15:8-12*
7. Judith offers hymn of praise and thanksgiving - *Judith 16:1-17*

III. Application - *Ephesians 3:20-21*

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

1. God is able to do more than we ask - we need to ask
 - a. Tobit's prayer for healing
 - b. Judith's prayer for deliverance
2. God is able to do more than we imagine
 - a. God can use an angel to bring help - *Tobit*
 - b. God can use a woman to bring help - *Judith*
 - c. God likes to surprise us with His grace
3. God is at work in us - for His glory in us and in Jesus Christ

Tobit Gives Instructions to His Son *Tobit 4: 5-11*

5 “Revere the Lord all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Love uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing; 6 for those who act in accordance with the truth will prosper in all their activities. To all those who practice righteousness 7 give alms from your possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. 8 If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. 9 So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. 10 For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from going in to the Darkness. 11 Indeed, almsgiving, for all who practice it, is an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High.

Judith Offers Her Hymn of Praise *Judith 16:1-17*

1 And Judith said,
Begin a song to my God with tambourines, sing to my Lord with cymbals. Raise to him a new psalm; exalt him and call upon his name. 2 For the Lord is a God who crushes wars: He sets up his camp among his people; he delivered me from the hands of my pursuers. 3 The Assyrian came down from the mountains of the north; he came with myriads of his warriors; their numbers blocked up the wadis, and their cavalry covered the hills. 4 He boasted that he would burn up my territory, and kill my young men with the sword, and dash my infants to the ground, and seize my children as booty, and take my virgins as spoil.

5 But the Lord Almighty has foiled them by the hand of a woman. 6 For their mighty one did not fall by the hand of the young men, nor did the sons of the Titans strike him down, nor did the giants set upon him; but Judith daughter of Merari with the beauty of her countenance undid him.

7 For she put away her widow's clothing to exalt the oppressed in Israel. She anointed her face with perfume; 8 she fastened her hair with a tiara and put on a linen gown to beguile him. 9 Her sandal ravished his eyes, her beauty captivated his mind, and the sword severed his neck! 10 The Persians trembled at her boldness, the Medes were daunted at her daring.

11 Then my oppressed people shouted; my weak people cried out, and the enemy trembled; they lifted up their voices, and the enemy were turned back. 12 Sons of slave-girls pierced them through and wounded them like the children of fugitives; they perished before the army of my Lord.

13 I will sing to my God a new song; O Lord, you are great and glorious, wonderful in strength, invincible. 14 Let all your creatures serve you, for you spoke, and they were made. You sent forth your spirit, and it formed them there is none that can resist your voice. 15 For the mountains shall be shaken to their foundations with the waters; before your glance the rocks shall melt like wax. But to those who fear you you show mercy. 16 For every sacrifice as a fragrant offering is a small thing, and the fat of all whole burnt offerings to you is a very little thing; but whoever fears the Lord is great forever.

17 Woe to the nations that rise up against my people! The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day of judgment; he will send fire and worms into their flesh; they shall weep in pain forever.

The Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus

I. The Wisdom of Solomon

A. History

1. A blending of Jewish faith and Greek philosophy written around 100BC
2. Ascribed to Solomon but probably written by an Alexandrian Jew in Egypt
3. Great influence on the Apostle Paul's writings:
 - a. *Romans 9:21-23* see *Wisdom 12:12-18*
 - b. *Ephesians 6:11-17* see *Wisdom 5:17-20*
4. Also used in *Hebrews 1:3 (7:26)*; *James 2:6 (2:10)*; *1 Peter 1:6 (3:5)* and *John 17:3 (15:3)*
5. The term "Divine Wisdom" is freely applied to Christ in Christian theology
6. Last of the Old Testament books to be written

B. Content

1. Divided into three sections:
 - a. Eternal destinies (righteous/wicked) - *Wisdom 1:1-6:8*
 - b. Meditation on Wisdom (friend of God) - *Wisdom 6:9-9:18*
 - c. Historical review of Israel - *Wisdom 10-19*
2. Encourages the Jews to keep their faith despite hardships
 - a. Order - God has a plan for humanity
 - b. Cause and effect - good and evil actions have their rewards
 - c. Suffering - consequences of evil/discipline/testing
 - d. Gifts - wisdom is a gift from God

II. Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach

A. History

1. Written in Palestine into the Hebrew language
2. Translated into Greek around 132BC and then Syriac
3. Most quoted Apocryphal Book by Church Fathers and theologians
4. Jerome translated from the Hebrew into the Latin Vulgate
5. Small fragments of text found in Cairo (1896) and Qumran (1948)

B. Content

1. Divided into two major parts:
 - a. Proverbs, essays, hymns and reflections - *Ecclus 1-24*
 - b. Character, heroes, priests and prayers - *Ecclus 25-51*
2. Traditional Wisdom writing on use of speech, self control, evil friends and the value of work
3. Stresses the ethical aspects of everyday life - fulfill our everyday duties
4. Recognizes a God of compassion and justice - world not always fair and just

III. Application - *James 3:17-18*

"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."

1. Earthly wisdom: envy and selfish ambition which leads to evil and disorder
2. Heavenly wisdom: pure, peaceful, considerate submissive, merciful fair and sincere
3. Wisdom should lead to righteousness - the right thing at the right time
4. Wisdom is proved by the actions of the wise

The Wisdom of Solomon

The Final Judgment *Wisdom of Solomon 4:20 - 5:4*

20 They will come with dread when their sins are reckoned up, and their lawless deeds will convict them to their face.

5 Then the righteous will stand with great confidence in the presence of those who have oppressed them and those who make light of their labors. 2 When the unrighteous see them, they will be shaken with dreadful fear, and they will be amazed at the unexpected salvation of the righteous. 3 They will speak to one another in repentance and in anguish of spirit they groan, and say, 4 “These are persons whom we once held in derision and made a byword of reproach—fools that we were!” We thought that their lives were madness and that their end was without honor.

God is Sovereign *Wisdom of Solomon 12:12-18*

12 For who will say, “That have you done?” or will resist your judgment? Who will accuse you for the destruction of nations that you made? Or who will come before you to plead as an advocate for the unrighteous? 13 For neither is there any god besides you, whose care is for all people, to whom you should prove that you have not judged unjustly; 14 nor can any king or monarch confront you about those whom you have punished. 15 You are righteous and you rule all things righteously, deeming it alien to your power to condemn anyone who does not deserve to be punished. 16 For your strength is the source of righteousness, and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all. 17 For you show your strength when people doubt the completeness of your power, and you rebuke any insolence among those who know it. 18 Although you are sovereign in strength, you judge with mildness, and with great forbearance you govern us; for you have power to act whenever you choose.

The Reward of the Righteous *Wisdom of Solomon 5:17-20*

17 The Lord will take his zeal as his whole armor, and will arm all creation to repel his enemies; 18 he will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet; 19 he will take holiness as an invincible shield, 20 and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with him to fight against his frenzied foes.

Ecclesiasticus

Prayer of Jesus Son of Sirach *Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 51:1-12*

I give thanks. O Lord and King, and praise you, O God my Savior. I give thanks to your name, 2 for you have been my protector and helper 3 and have delivered me from destruction and from the trap laid by a slanderous tongue, from the lips that fabricate lies. In the face of my adversaries you have been my helper and delivered me, in the greatness of your mercy and of your name from grinding teeth about to devour me, from the hand of those seeking my life, from the many troubles I endured, 4 from choking fire on every side, and from the midst of fire that I had not kindled, 5 from the deep belly of Hades from an unclean tongue and lying words—6 the slander of an unrighteous tongue to the king. My soul drew near to death and my life was on the brink of Hades below. 7 They surrounded me on every side, and there was no one to help me; I looked for human assistance and there was none. 8 Then I remembered your mercy, O Lord, and your kindness from of old, for you rescue those who wait for you and save them from the hand of their enemies. 9 And I sent up my prayer from the earth, and begged for rescue from death. 10 I will praise your name continually, and will sing hymns of thanksgiving. My prayer was heard, 12 for you saved me from destruction and rescued me in time of trouble. For this reason I thank you and praise you and I bless the name of the Lord.

Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah

I. The Book of Baruch

A. History

1. Author claims to be the secretary of Jeremiah - *Jeremiah 36-45*
2. Written in Greek but uses many Hebrew expressions
3. Probably written around 200BC to encourage Jews living in Egypt
4. Used in Sabbaths commemorating national disasters or tragedies as a liturgy
5. Became very popular after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD

B. Content

1. Introduces Baruch as a disciple of Jeremiah living in exile - *Baruch 1:1-1:14*
2. Celebrates the promises of God in Babylonian exile - *Baruch 1:15-3:9*
3. Encourages the observance of the Law and traditions of Moses - *Baruch 3:9-4:5*
4. Calls the exiles to trust in God through prophetic oracles - *Baruch 4:5-5:9*

II. The Letter of Jeremiah

A. History

1. Inspired by Jeremiah's letter in *Jeremiah 29:1-23* to encourage the exiles
2. Originally written in Greek around 317BC
3. Sometimes called the sixth chapter of Baruch - only 73 verses long

B. Content

1. The Jews will see gods of gold and silver in Babylon - worship Yahweh - vv.4-6
2. Even the idol worshippers are not very faithful - v.10
3. Do not fear the idols - v.29
4. False gods produce false living - avoid idol worship v.44

III. Application - *Jeremiah 31:33b-34*

A. History

1. Jeremiah - born around 627BC and died in Egypt around 587BC
2. Speaks against Judah and Jerusalem for their unfaithfulness - *Jeremiah 1:4-20:18*
3. Speaks against other nations for their pride - *Jeremiah 25:15-38*
4. Portions were dictated to his secretary Baruch - *Jeremiah 32:13*
5. Baruch writes his memoirs about Jeremiah - *Jeremiah 26-35*
6. The book of Jeremiah is not in chronological order - written in Hebrew and Greek
7. Contains a series of laments: struggling with God and His judgment on Israel - *Jer. 11:18*
8. Jeremiah dies while in exile in Egypt. - *Jeremiah 44*

B. Content - *Jeremiah 31:53b-34*

1. Sin must be held accountable in judgment - all have sinned and fall short
2. Israel broke the old covenant and forsook their relationship with God - unfaithful
3. God promises a "new" covenant - working in and through people - a right relationship
4. Everyone will have access to God through forgiveness - Jesus Christ - paid the price

"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Jeremiah 31:33b-34

Confession of Sins *Baruch 1:21-2:10*

21 We did not listen to the voice of the Lord our God in all the words of the prophets whom he sent to us, 22 but all of us followed the intent of our own wicked hearts by serving other gods and doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord our God.

2 So the Lord carried out the threat he spoke against us: against our judges who ruled Israel, and against our kings and our rulers and the people of Israel and Judah. **2** Under the whole heaven there has not been done the like of what he has done in Jerusalem, in accordance with the threats that were written in the law of Moses. **3** Some of us ate the flesh of their daughters. **4** He made them subject to all the kingdoms around us, to be an object of scorn and a desolation among all the surrounding peoples, where the Lord has scattered them. **5** They were brought down and not raised up, because our nation sinned against the Lord our God, in not heeding his voice. **6** The Lord our God is in the right, but there is open shame on us and our ancestors to this very day. **7** All those calamities with which the Lord threatened us have come upon us. **8** Yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord by turning away, each of us, from the thoughts of our wicked hearts. **9** And the Lord has kept the calamities ready, and the Lord has brought them upon us, for the Lord is just in all the works that he has commanded us to do. **10** Yet we have not obeyed his voice, to walk in the statutes of the Lord that he set before us.

The Promise of God *Baruch 5:5-9*

5 Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look toward the east, and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. **6** For they went out from you on foot, led away by their enemies but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. **7** For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. **8** The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. **9** For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

The People Face a Long Captivity *Jeremiah 1-7*

A copy of a letter that Jeremiah sent to those who were to be taken to Babylon as exiles by the king of the Babylonians, to give them the message that God had commanded him.

2 Because of the sins that you have committed before God, you will be taken to Babylon as exiles by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonians. **3** Therefore when you have come to Babylon you will remain there for many years, for a long time, up to seven generations; after that I will bring you away from there in peace. **4** Now in Babylon you will see gods made of silver and gold and wood, which people carry on their shoulders, and which cause the heathen to fear. **5** So beware of becoming at all like the foreigners or of letting fear for these gods possess you **6** when you see the multitude before and behind them **worshiping** them. But say in your heart, "It is you, O Lord, whom we must worship." **7** For my angel is with you, and he is watching over your lives.

The Song of the Three Jews and Susanna

I. The Song of the Three Jews

A. History

1. Sometimes referred to as *The Song of the Three Children/Young Men*
2. Considered a part of the Book of Daniel inserted after *Daniel 3:23*
3. Written in Hebrew and then later in Greek around 200BC
4. Used in early Christian worship and liturgy to show the power of God

B. Content

1. "The Prayer of Azariah" - a petition for deliverance from persecution - vv.1-22
2. "A Report from the Fire" - God delivers the three young men - vv.23-27
3. "A Hymn/Song from the Furnace" - praise and glory to God - vv.28-68
4. Last section called the "Benedicite" or the Blessings of God

II. The Story of Susanna

A. History

1. Portions of the story are in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic
2. Added to *Daniel* as *Daniel 13* - contains 63 verses
3. Used by early Christians as the symbol of the saved souls under persecution
4. Used in art especially the bathing scene painted by Rubens and Rembrandt - vv.15-22

B. Content

1. Susanna - a married woman living in exile in Babylon who was beautiful and blameless - vv.1-4
2. Two older men lust after Susanna - v.8
3. The men trap Susanna and try to seduce her - vv.19-22
4. Susanna chooses not "to sin in the sight of the Lord" - v.23
5. Susanna is falsely accused and condemned to die - vv.28-43
6. Daniel speaks against the execution - v.46
7. The men are caught in a lie and put to death - vv.60-62

III. Application - *Matthew 5:10-12*

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1. Christians must stand firm against persecution - work, home, society
2. Early Christians were accused of:
 - a. Cannibalism - partaking in the body and blood of Christ
 - b. Orgies - attending worship and agape (love) feasts
 - c. Revolutionaries - speaking about the end of time
 - d. Home wreckers - splitting up families are called to share in the sufferings of Christ
3. Christians are blessed when they suffer - share in the sufferings of Christ
4. Christians witness the abounding grace of God when persecuted
5. Christians give God the glory in everything they do

The Song of the Three Jews Azariah vv.29-41

- 9 “Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our ancestors, and to be praised and highly exalted forever;
0 And blessed is your glorious, holy name, and to be highly praised and highly exalted forever.
1 Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory, and to be extolled and highly glorified forever.
2 Blessed are you who look into the depths from your throne on the cherubim, and to be praised and highly
exalted forever.
3 Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom, and to be extolled and highly exalted forever.
4 Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven and to be sung and glorified forever.
5 “Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
6 Bless the Lord, you heavens; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
7 Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
8 Bless the Lord, all you waters above the heavens; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
9 Bless the Lord; all you powers of the Lord; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
0 Bless the Lord, sun and moon; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
1 Bless the Lord, stars of heaven; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

The Elders Attempt to Seduce Susanna Susanna vv. 19-23

When the maids had gone out the two elders got up and ran to her. ²⁰ They said, “Look, the garden doors are shut, and no one can see us. We are burning with desire for you; so give your consent, and lie with us. ²¹ If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away.” ²² Susanna groaned and said, “I am completely trapped. For if I do this, it will mean death for me; if I do not, I cannot escape your hands. ²³ I choose not to do it; I will fall into your hands, rather than sin in the sight of the Lord.”

Deliverance Susanna vv.42-46

Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said, “O eternal God, you know what is secret and are aware of all things before they come to be; ⁴³ you know that these men have given false evidence against me. And now I am to die, though I have done none of the wicked things that they have charged against me!” ⁴⁴ The Lord heard her cry. ⁴⁵ Just as she was being led off to execution, God stirred up the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel, ⁴⁶ and he shouted with a loud voice, “I want no part in shedding this woman’s blood!”

APOCRYPHA: THE HIDDEN WRITINGS

Men's Ministries International

The Books of Maccabees

I. The Book of First Maccabees

A. History

1. Contains a history of the Jews from 175BC to 135BC
2. Describes the reign of Alexander the Great and the Greek kingdoms after his death
3. Written in Greek and Hebrew around 100BC
4. Centers around the Maccabees family who defended the Temple of the Lord

B. Content

1. Alexander dies and his kingdom is divided - *I Maccabees 1:1-10*
2. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrates the temple - *I Maccabees 1:20-50*
3. Mattathias (Hasmonian/Maccabees) revolts and pledges to restore the Temple - *I Maccabees 2:24-26*
4. Judas Maccabees rededicates the Temple - **Hanukkah** - *I Maccabees 15:15-21*
5. Further Maccabees attacks against the Greeks - Rome supports the Jews - *I Maccabees 15:15-21*

II. The Book of Second Maccabees

A. History

1. Contains a history of the Maccabean wars from 176BC to 161BC
2. Written in Greek by a Jew before 63BC emphasizing God's care for His people
3. Very popular with the early church during times of persecution and suffering

B. Content

1. Direction about the celebrations of Booths and Hanukkah - *II Maccabees 1:1-2:18*
2. Summarizes the war up to the Temple dedication - *II Maccabees 2:19-10:9*
3. Follows Judas Maccabees' life and military victories - *II Maccabees 10:10-15:39*
4. Includes stories of Jewish martyrs who died for Temple and Torah

III. The Book of Third Maccabees

A. History

1. Misnamed book - deals with the Egyptian Jews who suffered under Ptolemy V
2. Written around 85AD by an Alexandrian Jew in Greek
3. Held in high esteem in the early church especially by Coptyc Christians (Egypt)

B. Content

1. Ptolemy threatens to desecrate the Temple - *III Maccabees 1:1-29*
2. Simon prays and God intervenes - *III Maccabees 2:1-26*
3. Ptolemy treats the Jewish people harshly - *III Maccabees 2:25-5:51*
4. Eleazar prays and God changes Ptolemy's heart - *III Maccabees 6:1-7:23*

IV. The Book of Fourth Maccabees

A. History

1. A Greek philosophical treatise on devout reason illustrated from the Maccabees
2. Written in Greek and Syriac around 50BC by an Alexandrian Jew
3. Deeply influenced the preaching and piety of the Eastern church

B. Content

1. Philosophical introduction - reason, self-control, justice and courage - *IV Maccabees 1:1-3:18*

2. Illustrations of suffering, persecution and disobedience - *IV Maccabees 3:19-12:19*
3. Discussion on martyrdom and holiness - *IV Maccabees 13:1-14:10*
4. A mother's response to martyrdom - *IV Maccabees 14:11-18:24*

V. Application - *Hebrews 12:1-3*

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

1. We have a great cloud of witnesses - typological hope
2. We throw off everything that hinders us - simplified life
3. We rid ourselves of sin - humble confession
4. We run the race marked for us - steadfast endurance
5. We fix our eyes on Jesus Christ - faithful obedience
6. We consider the life of Jesus Christ - holy imitation
7. We do not grow faint or lose heart - righteous courage

Nicanor Threatens the Temple *1 Maccabees 7:35-38*

35 and in anger he swore this oath, "Unless Judas and his army are delivered into my hands this time, then if I return safely I will burn up this house." And he went out in great anger. 36 At this the priest went in and stood before the altar and the temple; they wept and said, 37 "You choose this house to be called by your name, and to be for your people a house of prayer and supplication. 38 Take vengeance on this man and on his army, and let them fall by the sword; remember their blasphemies and let them live no longer.

The Martyrdom of Seven Brothers *2 Maccabees 7:3-6*

3 The king fell into a rage and gave orders to have pans and caldrons heated. 4 These were heated immediately, and he commanded that the tongue of their spokesman be cut out and that they scalp him and cut his hands and feet, while the rest of the brothers and the mother looked on. 5 When he was utterly helpless, the king ordered them to take him to the fire, still breathing, and to fry him in a pan. The smoke from the pan spread widely, but the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly, saying, 6 "The Lord God is watching over us and in truth has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song that bore witness against the people to their faces, when he said, 'And he will have compassion on his servants.'

The Prayer of Eleazar *3 Maccabees 6:10-12*

10 "Even if our lives have become entangled in impieties in our exile, rescue us from the hand of the enemy, and destroy us, Lord, by whatever fate you choose. 11 Let not the vain-minded praise their vanities at the destruction of your beloved people, saying, 'Not even their god has rescued them.' 12 But you, O Eternal One, who have all might and all power, watch over us now and have mercy on us who by the senseless insolence of the lawless are being deprived of the life in the manner of traitors.

An Encomium on the Mother of the Seven *4 Maccabees 15:22-23*

22 How great and how many torment the mother then suffered as her sons were tortured on the wheel and with the hot irons! 23 But devout reason, giving her heart a man's courage in the very midst of her emotions, strengthened her to disregard, for the time, her parental love.

APOCRYPHA: THE HIDDEN WRITINGS

Men's Ministries International

1 and 2 Esdras

I. The Book of 1 Esdras

A. History

1. 1 Esdras is also known as Esdras A (in the LXX) and 3 Esdras (in the Latin Vulgate)
2. Sometimes called *The Greek Ezra*
3. Intimately connected with the Old Testament
 - a. Reproduces *II Chronicles 35:1-36:23*
 - b. Contains the whole of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah 7:38-8:12*
4. Stresses the importance of Josiah, Zerubbabel and Ezra in temple worship
5. Written around 100BC and used by Josephus around 93AD
6. Placed as an appendix in the Vulgate by the Catholic Church
7. Recognized as Scripture by the Eastern Orthodox Churches

B. Content

1. The debate of King Darius's body guards over strength - *1 Esdras 3:1-17*
2. The speech about wine - *1 Esdras 3:18-24*
3. The speech about the King - *1 Esdras 4:1-12*
4. The speech about women - *1 Esdras 4:13-32*
5. The speech about truth - *1 Esdras 4:33-31*

II. The Book of II Esdras

A. History

1. II Esdras is also called IV Esdras (in the Vulgate) or *The Ezra-Apocalypse*
2. Classified as apocalyptic literature: the angel Uriel brings seven revelations
3. Written by a Palestinian Jew in Hebrew or Aramaic around 100BC and translated into Greek
4. Edited by an unknown Christian around 60AD who wrote an introduction
5. Another unknown Christian added an ending around 150AD
6. Early translations include Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian and Georgian
7. Used by Clement of Alexandria but not considered part of the canon

B. Content

1. Introduction (Christian) - turn from sin and believe in the Son of God - *II Esdras 1-2*
2. Apocalyptic Revelations (Jewish) - a series of seven revelations from Uriel - *II Esdras 3-14*
3. Conclusion (Christian) - a series of warnings against sin - *II Esdras 15-16*

III. Application - *II Thessalonians 2:8-12*

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

1. There is a powerful evil in this universe doing harm
2. There is a truth that sets us free from the lie
3. There is a holy God standing ready to judge the quick and the dead

The Speech about Truth *I Esdras 4:33-41*

33 Then the king and the nobles looked at one another; and he began to speak about truth:

34 ‘Gentlemen, are not women strong? The earth is vast, and heaven is high, and the sun is swift in its course, for it makes the circuit of heavens and returns to its place in one day. 35 Is not the one who does these things great? But truth is great, and stronger than all things. 36 The whole earth calls upon truth, and heaven blesses it. All God’s works quake and tremble, and with him there is nothing unrighteous. 37 Wine is unrighteous, the king is unrighteous, women are unrighteous, all human beings are unrighteous, all their works are unrighteous, and all such things. There is no truth in them and in their unrighteousness they will perish. 38 But truth endures and is strong forever, and lies and prevails forever and ever. 39 With it there is no partiality or preference, but it does what is righteous instead of anything that is unrighteous or wicked. Everyone approves its deeds, 40 and there is nothing unrighteous in its judgment. To it belongs the strength and the kingship and the power and the majesty of all the ages. Blessed be the God of truth!’ 41 When he stopped speaking, all the people shouted and said, ‘Great is truth, and strongest of all!’

The Interpretation of the Vision *II Esdras 13:25-38*

25 ‘This is the interpretation of the vision: As for your seeing a man come up from the heart of the sea, 26 this is he whom the Most High has been keeping for many ages, who will himself deliver his creation; and he will direct those who are left. 27 And as for your seeing wind and fire and a storm coming out of his mouth, 28 and as for his not holding a spear or weapon of war, yet destroying the onrushing multitude that came to conquer him, this is the interpretation: 29 The days are coming when the Most High will deliver those who are on the earth. 30 And bewilderment of mind shall come over those who inhabit the earth. 31 They shall plan to make war against one another, city against city, place against place, people against people, and kingdom against kingdom. 32 When these things take place and the signs occur that I showed you before, then my Son will be revealed, whom you saw as a man coming up from the sea. 33 ‘Then, when all the nations hear his voice, all the nations shall leave their own lands and the warfare that they have -against one another; 34 and an innumerable multitude shall be gathered together, as you saw, wishing to come and conquer him. 35 But he shall stand on the top of Mount Zion. 36 And Zion shall come and be made manifest to all people, prepared and built, as you saw the mountain carved out without hands. 37 Then he, my Son, will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness (this was symbolized by the storm), 38 and will reproach them to their face with their evil thoughts and the torments with which they are to be tortured (which were symbolized by the flames), and will destroy them without effort by means of the law (which was symbolized by the fire).

APOCRYPHA: THE HIDDEN WRITINGS

Men's Ministries International

Bel and the Dragon and Additions to Esther

I. Bel and the Dragon

A. History

1. Attached to the Book of Daniel in the Greek Septuagent - *Daniel 13:65-14:42*
2. Included in the Latin Vulgate as a single book
3. Based on an ancient Semitic Myth around the Babylonian god named Bel
4. Written around 200BC in Greek and Aramaic ridiculing the Babylonians
5. Used by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen and others as Scripture
6. Questioned by Julius Africanus in the 2nd Century for its validity

B. Content

1. The stories revolves around eating (or not eating)
 - a. Priests eating the food set out for Bel, the god of creation
 - b. The dragon eating his last meal prepared by Daniel
 - c. Daniel needing to eat and is miraculously fed by Habakkuk
 - d. The lions not eating Daniel in the den
2. Daniel uncovers the false worship of Bel - *vv.1-22*
3. Daniel kills the dragon named, Tiamat by poison - *vv.23-30*
4. Daniel is thrown into the lions den - *vv.31-32* and *Daniel 6:1-28*
5. Habakkuk feeds Daniel a stew made in Judea by miraculous transportation - *vv.33-42*

II. The Additions to Esther

A. History

1. Six different additions added to the Book of Esther over a period of two hundreds years
2. Additions A, C, D and F written in Hebrew or Aramaic around 100BC and then translated
3. Additions B and E written in Greek between 50BC and 93AD by an Alexandrian Jew
4. Additions A and F from an author living in or around Jerusalem
5. The additions deemphasize the establishment of Purim and are anti-Gentile in nature
6. The Greek additions stress the providence of God and use His name more than 50 times
7. The additions give an interpretation of the events in Esther
8. The book of Esther does not mention God at all

B. Content

1. Addition A: Mordecai's dream and discovery of the plot - *Esther 11:2-12:6*
2. Addition B: The Royal Edict by Haman against the Jews - *Esther 13:1-7*
3. Addition C: The prayers of Mordecai and Esther - *Esther 14:1-9*
4. Addition D: Esther's appearing before the King - *Esther 15:4-9*
5. Addition E: The Royal Edict by Mordecai - *Esther 16:1-24*
6. Addition F: Interpretation of Mordecai's dream - *Esther 10:4-13;11:1*

II. Application - *Esther 4:12-14*

When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?'

1. Extreme devotion is choosing death over denial
2. Extreme devotion is choosing love over fear

3. Extreme devotion is choosing hope over despair
4. Extreme devotion is choosing faith over feeling
5. Extreme devotion is choosing witness over walking away
6. Extreme devotion is choosing to follow Jesus Christ over the world
7. Extreme devotion is rare - *Hebrews 11:38*

Daniel and the Lions' Den

Bel and The Dragon 14:31-42

31 They threw Daniel into the lions' den, and he was there for six days. 32 There were seven lions in the den, and every day they had been given two human bodies and two sheep; but now they were given nothing, so that they would devour Daniel. 33 Now the prophet Habakkuk was in Judea; he had made a stew and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going into the field to take it to the reapers. 34 But the angel of the Lord said to Habakkuk, 'Take the food that you have to Babylon, to Daniel, in the lions' den.' 35 Habakkuk said, 'Sir, I have never seen Babylon, and I know nothing about the den.' 36 Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown of his head and carried him by his hair; with the speed of the wind he set him down in the Babylon, right over the den. 37 Then Habakkuk shouted, 'Daniel, Daniel! Take the food that God has sent you.' 38 Daniel said, 'You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you.' 39 So Daniel got up and ate. And the angel of God immediately returned Habakkuk to his own place. 40 On the seventh day the king came to mourn for Daniel. When he came to the den he looked in, and there sat Daniel! 41 The king shouted with a loud voice, 'You are great, O Lord, the God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!' 42 Then he pulled Daniel out, and threw into the den those who had attempted his destruction, and they were instantly eaten before his eyes.

Esther's Prayer

Esther 14:3-19

3 She prayed to the Lord God of Israel, and said: 'O my Lord, you only are our king; help me, who am alone and have no helper but you, 4 for my danger is in my hand. 5 Ever since I was born I have heard in the tribe of my family that you, O Lord, took Israel out of all the nations, and our ancestors from among all their forebears, for an everlasting inheritance, and that you did for them all that you promised. 6 And now we have sinned before you, and you have handed us over to our enemies 7 because we glorified their gods. You are righteous, O Lord! 8 And now they are not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have covenanted with their idols 9 to abolish what your mouth has ordained, and to destroy your inheritance, to stop the mouths of those who praise you and to quench your altar and the glory of your house, 10 to open the mouths of the nations for the praise of vain idols, and to magnify forever a mortal king. 11 'O Lord, do not surrender your scepter to what has no being; and do not let them laugh at our downfall; but turn their plan against them, and make an example of him who began this against us. 12 Remember, O Lord; make yourself known in this time of our affliction, and give me courage, O King of the gods and Master of all dominion! 13 Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the man who is fighting against us, so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. 14 But save us by your hand, and help me, who am alone and have no helper but you, O Lord. 15 You have knowledge of all things, and you know that I hate the splendor of the wicked and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. 16 You know my necessity—that I abhor the sign of my proud position, which is upon my head on days when I appear in public. I abhor it like a filthy rag and do I not wear it on the days when I am at leisure. 17 And your servant has not eaten at Haman's table, and I have not honored the kings' feast or drunk the wine of libations. 18 Your servant has had no joy since the day that I was brought here until now, except in you, O Lord God of Abraham. 19 O God, whose might is over all, hear the voice of the despairing, and save us from the hands of evildoers. And save me from my fear!'

APOCRYPHA: THE HIDDEN WRITINGS

Men's Ministries International

The Prayer of Manasseh and Psalm 151

I. The Prayer of Manasseh

A. History

1. A prayer of repentance written around 100BC in Aramaic and Greek
2. Attributed to King Manasseh's repentance in *II Chronicles 33:10-19*
3. Considered deuterocanonical by Eastern Orthodox churches only
4. Recited during Lent before going to bed as a prayer of turning to God

B. Content

1. King Manasseh is a terrible king and causes the downfall of Judah - *II Kings 21:1-18*
2. King Manasseh repents and reforms the Temple worship - *II Chronicles 33:10-17*
3. The prayer is a classic devotional of seeking mercy from a just God
4. There is an **invocation** praising God - vv. 1-8
5. There is a personal **confession** of sin - vv. 9-10
6. there is a **supplication** for pardon - vv. 11-15
7. There is a **doxology** for the glory of God - v. 15b

II. Psalm 151

A. History

1. Written in Hebrew and Aramaic around 300BC
2. Included in the Septuagint as *Psalm 151* - an appendix to the Psalter
3. Included in the Greek Psalter as Scripture
4. Discovered with the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1956 in Hebrew (along with other Psalms)
5. The Greek version is a condensed recension of two separate Hebrew Psalms
6. Used in the Ethiopian coronation ritual

B. Content

1. A Psalm about David and Goliath and the victory of God
2. God sends for David and anoints him
3. David goes out to meet the giant and kills Goliath
4. David takes away the disgrace from the people of Israel

III. Application - *Ephesians 6:18*

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

1. Pray in the Spirit - connect with the Holy Spirit
 - a. Confession of sin - letting go of the past
 - b. Confession of faith - holding on to the future
2. All occasions - learn to pray without ceasing
3. All kinds of prayers and requests - dialogue with God
 - a. Adoration
 - b. Meditative
 - c. Petition
 - d. Thanksgiving
 - e. Intercession
 - f. Surrender
 - g. Examination
 - h. Healing
 - i. Salvation
 - j. Deliverance

4. All the saints - encourage the body of Christ

Supplication for Pardon

The Prayer of Manasseh 11-15

11 an now I bend the knee of my heart, imploring you for your kindness. 12 I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions. 13 I earnestly implore you, forgive me, O Lord forgive me! Do not destroy me with my transgressions! Do not be angry with me forever or store up evil for me; do not condemn me to the depths of the earth. For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent, 14 and in me you will manifest your goodness; for, unworthy as I am, you will save me according to your great mercy, 15 and I will praise you continually all the days of my life. For all the host of heaven sings your praise, and yours is the glory forever. Amen.

Hebrew Psalm 151

1 Smaller was I than my brothers and the youngest of the sons of my father, Yet he made me shepherd of his flock and ruler over his kids. 2 My hands have made an instrument and my fingers a lyre; and [so] have I rendered glory to the Lord, thought I, within my soul. 3 the mountains do not witness to him, nor do the hills proclaim; The trees have cherished my words and the flock my works. 4 For who can proclaim and who can bespeak and who can recount the deeds of the Lord? Everything has god seen, everything has he heard and he has heeded. 5 He sent his prophet to anoint me, Samuel to make me great; My brothers went out to meet him handsome of figure and appearance. 6 Though they were tall of stature and handsome by their hair, The Lord God chose them not. 7 But he sent and took me from behind the flock and anointed me with holy oil, And he made me leader of his people and ruler over the people of his covenant.

In the line following the Hebrew text of this psalm another psalm (with its heading) begins, of which only two poorly preserved lines remain. Apparently they celebrate David's' victory over Goliath; Sander's translation is as follows:

At the beginning David's power after the prophet of God had anointed him. 1 Then I [saw] a Philistine uttering defiances from the r[anks of the Philistines].

Greek Psalm 151

1 I was small among my brothers, and the youngest in my father's house; I tended the sheep. 2 My hands made a harp; my fingers fashioned a lyre. 3 And who will tell my Lord? The Lord himself; it is he who hears. 4 It was he who sent his messenger wand took me from my father's sheep, and anointing me with his anointing oil. 5 My brothers were handsome and tall, but the Lord was not pleased with them. 6 I went out to meet the Philistine, and he cursed me by his idols. 7 But I drew his own sword; I beheaded him, and took away disgrace from the people of Israel.