

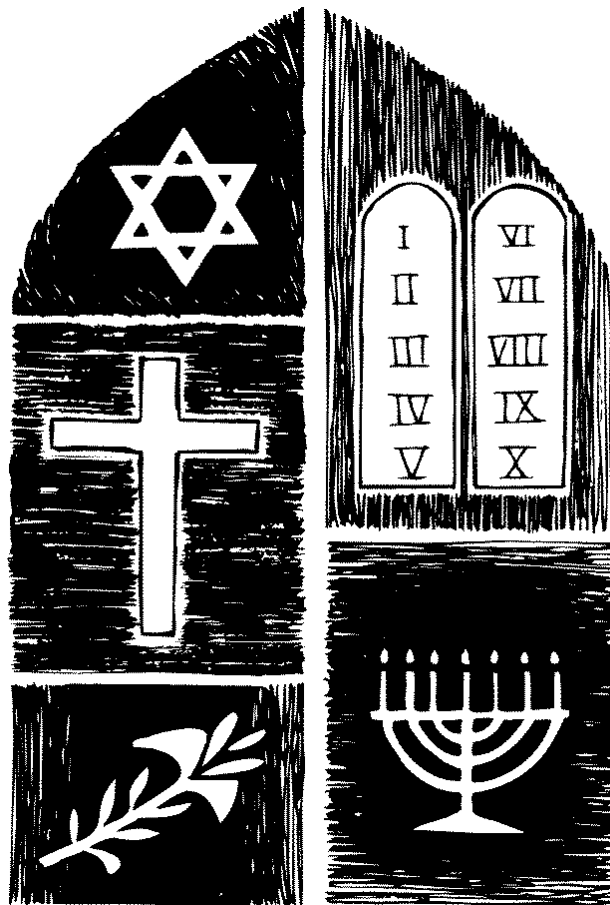
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## The Apocrypha



## and Christianity

Written by Robert Jones  
Acworth, Georgia

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## Christian Theology and History Adult Sunday School Courses

Robert Jones

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I've always been a strong believer in adult Sunday School classes and Bible studies in our churches. And many churches have quality, Biblically-based adult-focused programs. Unfortunately, just as many churches tend to downplay adult education, focusing on children's education (not a bad thing in itself), or focusing on the needs of the "unchurched", where topics such as church history and theology are often purposely ignored.

Yet there is a strong need for adult education focused on both the Bible and the basic tenets and history of the Faith. Among the reasons:

- Not all adults come from a strong childhood background in the church – adult Sunday School classes/Bible studies may be their first serious introduction to what Christianity is all about
- Christianity (and especially Evangelical Christianity) is under constant attack from the media and popular culture (movies, music, etc.). We need to give fellow Christians the tools to defend the Faith against attack (or to provide a "ready defense" as Peter says in 1 Peter 3:15)
- Even adult Christians that have a strong Biblical background often know little about the origins and history of their Faith

To better meet the needs of adult Christians (both those mature in their Faith, and those just starting out in the "School of Christ"), I've written a series of courses that focus on the history of the Christian Church (including the Jewish roots), as well as the development of doctrine in the Church. The topics represented in these courses are intended to both further the participant's walk in the Faith, as well as serve as a starting point for Christian apologetics.

While the primary purpose of these courses is for use in churches, they also may be useful for High School and College projects, especially the courses focused primarily on historical aspects.

One note: these courses are primarily written from an Evangelical Protestant viewpoint (I come from a Reformed Church background), but I hope I've given ample time to other points of view throughout the various courses.

# The Apocrypha and Christianity

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## Introduction

I've taught the Methodist "Disciples" Bible study three times (and have started on #4). One of the things that has been evident in all of my Disciples sessions is the somewhat jarring note presented by the sudden end of the Old Testament (around 430 B.C.), and the beginning of the New Testament (around 4 B.C.) After spending many months studying the history and theology of the Jews before Christ, suddenly the students are expected to make a 400-year jump, with no context. Some examples of the perplexity that this can cause might include:

- There is nothing about the Maccabean Revolt in the Old or New Testament. As such, it would be difficult (for example) for Jews to explain the meaning of Hanukkah to their Christian brethren
- There is nothing about Alexander the Great (356 - 323 B.C.) and his impact on Palestine in the Old or New Testaments
- The Old Testament mentions very little about Satan, demons, or hell. Yet, those topics are common in the New Testament – what changed in those 400 years?
- The Old Testament doesn't really discuss the concept of the resurrection of the dead, yet the Pharisees believe in this doctrine in the New Testament. Where did this doctrine come from?

However, there is a set of Jewish documents that add to our understanding of the historical and theological background of the Inter-Testamental period – the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha is, in general terms, the set of books that appear in the Greek Septuagint, but not in the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament. Most of these books were written in the aforementioned Inter-Testamental period (although some claim to have been written earlier.) While many of these books appear in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Bibles (referred to by the Roman Catholics as "deuterocanonical"), many Protestants (especially those from a Reformed Church background) are not even aware that these books exist, and may be a bit shocked when they attend a Catholic service, and hear readings from the Book of Sirach, or Tobit!

There have been arguments for 2,000 years as to whether the Apocryphal books should be considered "authoritative" – i.e. of the same authority as the Old and New Testament. Some have argued for their equal authority (Saint Augustine), some have argued for their inclusion in the Bible, but in an appendix (Martin Luther), and some have argued vehemently against their inclusion in the Bible in any form (the views of 17<sup>th</sup> century English Calvinists that still impact most Protestant Bibles today.) However, whether one accepts these books as authoritative or not, the Apocrypha (along with the Dead Sea Scrolls) provides valuable historical and theological background to our understanding of the First Century A.D. Christian movement.

This primary focus of this booklet will be to examine the Apocrypha from the point of view of its help in illuminating the Jewish roots of Christianity. Three areas of special interest will be considered:

1. The valuable *historical* background provided in the Apocrypha for the Inter-Testamental period, especially the Maccabean Revolt
2. The development of certain *theological* viewpoints in the Inter-Testamental period that would later flourish under Christianity, such as resurrection of the dead, belief in the devil, demons, and hell, a focus on the end times, belief in a divine Messiah, and a highly developed "angel-ology"
3. The great debate over the years in Christian circles as to whether the Apocrypha should be considered *authoritative*

## ***Nomenclature***

The term “apocrypha” comes from a Greek word meaning “hidden”, or “things hidden away”. In modern parlance, the word is often used to describe things that are spurious, or of questionable authority. The term “Apocrypha” (capital “A”) refers to a collection of books written in the Inter-Testamental period (and into the 1<sup>st</sup> century). In general, these books (2 Esdras and Prayer of Manasseh are exceptions) appeared in the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, but not in Hebrew versions of the Old Testament. For the sake of this study, I’ll be using the list of books included in the NRSV Apocrypha, which include:

- Tobit
- Judith
- Esther (Greek version)
- Wisdom of Solomon
- Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus)
- Baruch
- Letter of Jeremiah
- Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews
- Susanna (Chapter 13 of the Greek Daniel)
- Bel & the Dragon (Chapter 14 of the Greek Daniel)
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees
- 1 Esdras
- Prayer of Manasseh
- Psalm 151
- 3 Maccabees
- 2 Esdras
- 4 Maccabees

I am also including (perhaps somewhat arbitrarily) one other book in this study – 1 Enoch. I’m including this book because 1) it is the only Apocryphal book quoted in the New Testament (Jude 14/15) and 2) some 20 copies of 1 Enoch have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, perhaps arguing for the idea that at least one Jewish sect (Essenes) viewed the work as authoritative.

There are other apocryphal Jewish writings from the same period, often referred to collectively as the **Pseudepigrapha**, meaning that these works were often written under assumed names (the word means “with false subscriptions”). Some of the works (which will not be studied in this course) in this category include:

- Assumption of Moses (see Jude 9)
- Life of Adam and Eve
- Book of Jubilees
- Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
- and many others...

Of course, some books in the Apocrypha are also written with “false subscriptions” – Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, 2 Esdras, Wisdom of Solomon, etc., adding to some of the confusion surrounding what books are considered to be part of the Apocrypha, and what books are part of the Pseudepigrapha.

## Apocrypha Quiz

1. There are no references to Jewish apocryphal works in the New Testament T/F
2. The reason for the Maccabean Revolt in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. was to kick the Romans out of Palestine T/F
3. The reason it was called the Maccabean Revolt is because a family named Maccabeus led the fighting T/F
4. There was no concept of the resurrection of the dead in pre-Christian Jewish theology T/F
5. Martin Luther felt that the books of the Jewish apocrypha were heretical, and should not be read under any circumstances T/F
6. Out of the major Christian denominations in the world, only the Roman Catholic Church includes books from the Apocrypha in their Bibles T/F
7. One of the reasons that some people feel that the Apocryph is not authoritative is because there are geographical and historical errors in some of its books T/F
8. Most of the books of the Apocrypha were included in the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint T/F
9. Saint Augustine believed that the Septuagint translation was inspired by God, and is therefore of equal authority with the original Hebrew T/F
10. Possible Hebrew sources for the Septuagint have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls T/F

## Historical Background

### Timeline

Date	Event
c. 430 B.C.	Malachi is written (the end of the Old Testament)
334-323 B.C.	Alexander the Great conquers the East
323 B.C.	Alexander the Great dies of a fever, probably after a drinking binge
320 B.C.	Ptolemy 1 of Egypt conquers Jerusalem
c. 250 B.C.	First of the Dead Sea Scrolls are written
200 B.C.	Antiochus III (223-187 B.C.) of Syria defeats Ptolemy V of Egypt and annexes Palestine
c. 188 B.C.	Antiochus III defeated in battle by the Romans, and forced to pay huge war reparations (Peace of Apamea)
175 – 164 B.C.	Rule of Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes IV, who may have been the prototype for the “abomination that causes desolation” in Daniel
173 B.C.	Jewish High Priest Onias III deposed by Antiochus Epiphanes IV and replaced by his brother Jason (priesthood to the highest bidder)
171 B.C.	Jason ousted by Menelaus as High Priest (priesthood to the highest bidder)
c. 169 B.C.	Antiochus Epiphanes IV loots the Jerusalem Temple treasury
c. 167	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antiochus Epiphanes IV:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desecrates the Temple in Jerusalem</li> <li>• Establishes a military garrison in Jerusalem</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Date	Event
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maccabean revolt under Judas Maccabeus begins</li> </ul>
165 B.C.	Judas defeats Syrian commander Seron at Beth-horon
Dec. 164 B.C.	Judas occupies Temple area, and rededicates it (commemorated by the festival of Hanukkah)
163 A.D.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judas fights in Idumea (Edomites), Galilee, Transjordan (Ammonites), Philistia</li> <li>Antiochus Epiphanes IV dies during a campaign in Persia; Regent Lysias has prince declared king as Antiochus V Eupator</li> </ul>
162 B.C.	Syrian throne seized by Demetrius I; Syrian commander Bacchides occupies Jerusalem, and installs Alcimus as high priest and governor
162-161 B.C.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syrian King Demetrius sends a new general, Nicanor, against Judas; Judas wins a great victory</li> <li>Judas negotiates treaty with Romans</li> </ul>
c. 160 B.C.	Death of Judas in a battle against Bacchides; Brother Jonathan (youngest son of Mattathias) takes command of the revolutionary forces
152 B.C.	Jonathan becomes High Priest after cutting a deal with Syrian King Alexander Balas
146 B.C.	Jonathan kidnapped, and then murdered by Syrian General Trypho; brother Simon takes command
146-134 B.C.	<p>Rule of Simon as governor and High Priest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through diplomatic and military successes, Judea is freed from foreign influences (142-141 B.C.)</li> <li>The sons of Simon, John and Judas, defeat Syrian General Cendebeus</li> <li>Simon (and his sons Judas and Mattathias) murdered by his son-in-law Ptolemy</li> </ul>
141 – 37 B.C.	Rule of the Hasmonean dynasty in Palestine
134-104 B.C.	Rule of John Hyrcanus, eldest son of Simon, as High Priest and ethnarch
103-76 B.C.	Rule of Alexander Jannaeus – breakout of Civil War between pro-Sadducean and Pharisee forces
63 B.C.	Pompey annexes Palestine
63-40 B.C.	Rule of Hyrcanus II
37-4 B.C.	Herod the Great rules as puppet king of Palestine (end of the Hasmonean Dynasty)
68 A.D.	Last of the Dead Sea Scrolls are written

## Alexander the Great

One of the most significant historical events in the period between the Old and New Testaments is the rule of Alexander the Great (b. 356 B.C.; d. 323 B.C.) Alexander, a Macedonian by birth, was the first “world conqueror”. He conquered most of what would today be Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and even parts of Northern India. Alexander brought Greek culture to the lands that he conquered, beginning a period of “Hellenization” in the conquered regions that would last for hundreds of years. (Photo: Alexander the Great, Library of Congress LC-USZ62-40088)

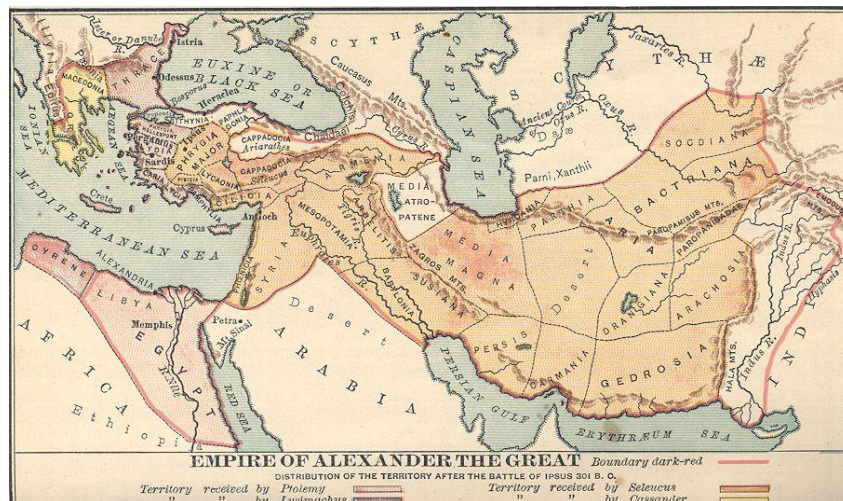




So how did all of this impact Palestine and the Jews? After the premature death of Alexander in June of 323 B.C., his kin and generals squabbled over who should control his vast empire. In time, three kingdoms would dominate the Mediterranean until the advent of the Roman Empire: Macedon, ruled by the Antigonids, Egypt, ruled by the Ptolemies, and Syria, ruled by the Seleucids. It is the last two that impact our story here, as Palestine was in the middle of these two great empires. While Palestine would change hands on more than one occasion between the competing kingdoms, it was ruled primarily by the Seleucids. The heavy handedness of one of their kings, Antiochus IV (ruled 175-163 B.C.) led to the Maccabean revolt, which eventually led to a period of independence for the Jews in Palestine.

1<sup>st</sup> Maccabees, one of the great histories of the ancient world, describes the rule of Alexander the Great and the impact of the breakup of his empire on the Jews in its first chapter:

<sup>1</sup>After Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came from the land of Kittim, had defeated King Darius of the Persians and the Medes, he succeeded him as king. (He had previously become king of Greece.)  
<sup>2</sup>He fought many battles, conquered strongholds, and put to death the kings of the earth. <sup>3</sup>He advanced to the ends of the earth, and plundered many nations. When the earth became quiet before him, he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up. <sup>4</sup>He gathered a very strong army and ruled over countries, nations, and princes, and they became tributary to him.  
<sup>5</sup>After this he fell sick and perceived that he was dying. <sup>6</sup>So he summoned his most honored officers, who had been brought up with him from youth, and divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive.  
<sup>7</sup>And after Alexander had reigned twelve years, he died.  
<sup>8</sup>Then his officers began to rule, each in his own place. <sup>9</sup>They all put on crowns after his death, and so did their descendants after them for many years; and they caused many evils on the earth.” (1 Maccabees 1:1-9, NRSV)



Map from Barnes Brief History Series, c. 1903

## The Septuagint

The Septuagint is a term applied to a Greek translation of the Old Testament, started in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. The translation was necessary because, as a result of the Diaspora which occurred in the centuries preceding, Jews lived all through the Mediterranean, and had to adopt Greek (“Hellenized”) customs and language to survive as “strangers in a strange land”.

Legend has it that the translation of the Old Testament (or, at least, the Pentateuch) was done at the order of King Ptolemy II of Egypt (285-246 B.C.) The legend records that 72 Jewish scholars (or 70 in some accounts) produced 72 translations in 72 days – without a word of variation! (The word *septuagint* derives from “seventy”, and is sometimes represented as LXX). Early Church Father Justyn Martyr (c. 150 A.D.) recounts the legend, and makes it clear that he believes it is true:

“[Ptolemy, king of Egypt] when he had built the library in Alexandria, and by gathering books from every quarter had filled it, then learnt that very ancient histories written in Hebrew happened to be carefully preserved; and wishing to know their contents, he sent for seventy wise men from Jerusalem, who were acquainted with both the Greek and Hebrew language, and appointed them to translate the books; and that in freedom from all disturbance they might the more speedily complete the translation, he ordered that there should be constructed, not in the city itself, but seven stadia off (where the Pharos was built), as many little cots as there were translators, so that each by himself might complete his own translation; and enjoined upon those officers who were appointed to this duty, to afford them all attendance, but to prevent communication with one another, in order that the accuracy of the translation might be discernible even by their agreement. And when he ascertained that the seventy men had not only given the same meaning, but had employed the same words, and had failed in agreement with one another not even to the extent of one word; but had written the same things, and concerning the same things, he was struck with amazement, and believed that the translation had been written by divine power, and perceived that the men were worthy of all honor, as beloved of God; and with many gifts ordered them to return to their own country. And having, as was natural, marveled at the books, and concluded them to be divine, he consecrated them in that library. **These things, ye men of Greece, are no fable, nor do we narrate fictions; but we ourselves having been in Alexandria, saw the remains of the little cots at the Pharos still preserved...**” (Justin Martyr, *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, Chapter 13; emphasis added)

The Septuagint held a place of special importance among the early Christians – the vast majority of quotations in the New Testament from the Old are taken from the Septuagint – and not the Masoretic Text (MT) which forms our modern day Old Testament. As there are significant differences between the LXX and MT, the natural inclination is to believe the “original” Hebrew text (MT), instead of the Greek translation. However, Biblical manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that the differences between the LXX and the MT are not necessarily because the LXX is a translation, but because the LXX is based on a different Hebrew source than the MT. If this is true, it may elevate the authoritative of the LXX in the eyes of Biblical scholars (the early Christians may have been right all along in using the LXX!!). Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archeology Review*, comments:

“One result [of the Dead Sea Scrolls] has been to give somewhat more authority to the Greek Septuagint, even though it is a translation. Based on the Hebrew Biblical fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls, it appears that the differences between LXX and MT are often attributable not to the fact that the LXX is a translation, but rather to the fact that the LXX translators were working from a somewhat different Hebrew base text.” (Shanks, p. 150)

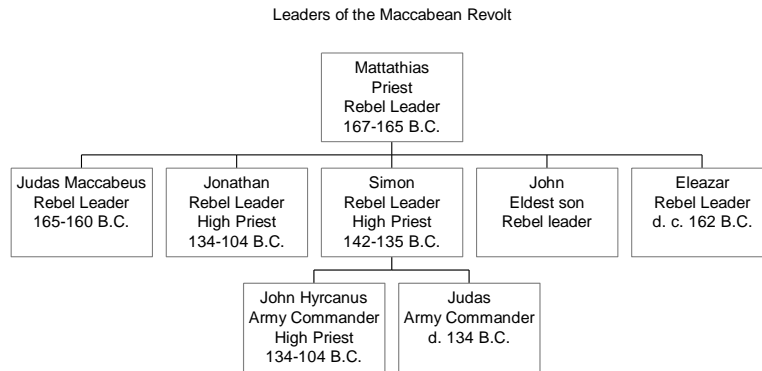
Saint Augustine was a strong proponent of the Septuagint, according divine inspiration to the original translators. Clearly, Augustine considered the Septuagint to be of equal authority with Hebrew versions of the Old Testament:

“For the Septuagint translators are justly believed to have received the Spirit of prophecy; so that, if they made any alterations under His authority, and did not adhere to a strict translation, we could not doubt that this was divinely dictated.” (St. Augustine, *City of God*, p. 652)

“And therefore we find that the apostles justly sanction the Septuagint, by quoting it as well as the Hebrew when they adduce proofs from the Scriptures.” (*City of God*, p. 632)

So why do we care about the relative authority of the Septuagint compared to early Hebrew versions of the Old Testament? Because the Greek Septuagint contains a number of books not in the Hebrew Masoretic Text. Those books (with a couple of additions) make up the Apocrypha.

## ***The Maccabean Revolt***



The Maccabean Revolt, started in 167 B.C. by a Jewish Priest named Mattathias, was one of the defining moments of Jewish history. One of the high points of the Revolt, the rededication of the Temple, is still commemorated today by the Jewish Festival of Hanukkah.

At the time of the revolt, Palestine was under the control of the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Antiochus (possibly the “abomination that causes desolation” in Daniel) was 1) hard up for money and 2) determined to Hellenize the territories controlled by him. These two factors would put him on a collision course with the Jews in Palestine.

In order to get more money for his depleted treasury, Antiochus IV on at least one occasion looted the Jerusalem Temple treasury (c. 169 B.C.). This act followed in the footsteps of his predecessor Seleucus IV (187-175 B.C.) who had done the same thing. Antiochus also put the Jerusalem High Priest position up to the highest bidder – High Priests Jason and Menelaus both achieved their positions through bribes to the Seleucid King.

In c. 167 B.C., Antiochus intensified his attempts at Hellenization by desecrating the Temple in Jerusalem. The act is vividly described in 1 Maccabees 1:54-61:

“<sup>54</sup>Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-fifth year, they erected a desolating sacrilege on the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding towns of Judah, <sup>55</sup>and offered incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets. <sup>56</sup>The books of the law that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. <sup>57</sup>Anyone found possessing the book of the covenant, or anyone who adhered to the law, was condemned to death by decree of the king. <sup>58</sup>They kept using violence against Israel, against those who were found month after month in the towns. <sup>59</sup>On the twenty-fifth day of the month they offered sacrifice on the altar that was on top of the altar of burnt offering. <sup>60</sup>According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised, <sup>61</sup>and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers’ necks.” (NRSV)

These outrages would lead to a revolt that would eventually kick the Seleucids out of Palestine. The revolt was named after the nickname of one of its greatest leaders – Judas Maccabeus, or Judas “the hammer”.

The revolt started when a Priest from Modein named Mattathias refused to commit an apostasy ordered by the King’s men in Modein. Mattathias ended up killing both an officer of the king, and a Jew that agreed to commit the apostasy. 1 Maccabees 2:23-28 describes the scene:

“<sup>23</sup>When he had finished speaking these words, a Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the altar in Modein, according to the king’s command. <sup>24</sup>When Mattathias saw it, he burned with zeal and his heart was stirred. He gave vent to righteous anger; he ran and killed him on the altar. <sup>25</sup>At the same time he killed the king’s officer who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar...

<sup>27</sup>Then Mattathias cried out in the town with a loud voice, saying: ‘Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!’ <sup>28</sup>Then he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the town.” (NRSV)

Mattathias may have fled to the hills, but a great revolt would grow out his actions. Mattathias would only live for another year, but the revolt would succeed under the leadership of his five sons – John, Simon, Judas, Eleazer, and Jonathan. Three of them would lead the rebel forces in succession (Judas, Jonathan, and Simon), and two would rise to the position of High Priest and Ruler of Judea (Jonathan and Simon).

When Mattathias was on his deathbed, he turned the reins of the revolt over to his son Judas. The scene is described by 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus:

“I exhort you, especially, to agree one with another; and in what excellency any one of you exceeds another, to yield to him so far, and by that means to reap the advantage of every one’s own virtues. Do you then esteem Simon as your father, because he is a man of extraordinary prudence, and be governed by him in what counsels he gives you. Take Maccabeus for the general of your army, because of his courage and strength, for he will avenge your nation, and will bring vengeance on your enemies. Admit among you the righteous and religious, and augment their power.” (*Jewish Antiquities*, Book 12, Chapter 6)

Judas won a number of battles against the Seleucids, and in December of 164 B.C., Judas occupied the Temple area in Jerusalem, and cleansed and re-dedicated the Temple. After the rededication, the Jewish Festival of Hanukkah was established, and it is still celebrated today. The establishment of the festival is described in 1 Maccabees 4:59:

“<sup>59</sup>Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev.” (NRSV)

In c. 160 B.C, Judas fell in battle against Seleucid commander Bacchides. 1 Maccabees commemorated the event by using language that had heretofore only been used to describe the great Kings of Israel’s past – “How is the valiant man fallen, that delivered Israel!”

The revolt didn’t end with the death of Judas Maccabeus, though. His brother Jonathan, and later his brother Simon took over the leadership of the revolt. By skillful manipulation of a state of disorder in the Seleucid line of succession, Jonathan was eventually named High Priest. After his death, his brother Simon took over as ruler, and in c. 142 B.C. the last vestiges of Seleucid control of Israel ended:

“<sup>41</sup>In the one hundred seventieth year the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel, <sup>42</sup>and the people began to write in their documents and contracts, ‘In the first year of Simon the great high priest and commander and leader of the Jews.’” (1 Maccabees 13:41-42, NRSV)

Descendents of Mattathias would rule as High Priests and ethnarchs until the time of Herod the Great (37 A.D.) This long period of family rule is known as the Hasmonean Dynasty.

Three books of the Apocrypha record events of the Maccabean Revolt (1, 2, 4 Maccabees).

## The Great Debate – authoritative or not?

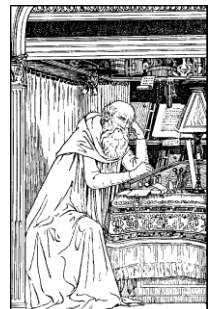
### Timeline

Date	Event
c. 90 A.D.	Jewish rabbis fix the Old testament canon at the Council of Jamnia in Palestine, leaving out the books that only appeared in the Septuagint (Note: Some scholars dispute whether this Council ever actually took place)
c. 382 A.D.	St. Jerome begins his translation of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate). Jerome views that only Hebrew texts are authoritative, but grumpily includes the Apocrypha anyway
1534	Martin Luther places the Apocrypha in a separate section between the Old and New Testaments
c. 1536	Menno Simon, leader of the Anabaptist movement, accepts the Apocrypha as canonical
1546	Roman Catholic Council of Trent approves the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the canon
1629	The Apocrypha is omitted from the King James Version
1646	Westminster Confession places the Apocrypha on the same level as “other human writings”
1827	British and American Bible Societies decide to omit the Apocrypha from their Bible editions

The great debate – whether the Apocrypha should be viewed as authoritative or not by Christians, has raged for 2,000 years. In the early years of the Church, it was natural for Christians to use the Greek Septuagint translation of the Bible, as this was the language most familiar to them. As such, many of the Early Church fathers quoted from the Apocrypha in the same way that they quoted from the New and Old Testaments. However, there was some discord, even as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

In 382 A.D., St. Jerome was asked by Pope Damasus to translate the Bible into Latin (the “Vulgate”). Jerome felt that only Hebrew texts were authoritative. He therefore rejected the Greek additions to the Septuagint, but, under pressure, still included them in the Vulgate, calling them “apocryphal”.

On the other end of the spectrum, Jerome’s contemporary, St. Augustine, strongly believed in the canonicity of the Greek additions to the Septuagint, as he considered the Septuagint *translation* to be divinely inspired. St. Athanasius (c. 296-373 A.D.), whose list of books of the New Testament would become the standard of the Chris-



tian world, took a middle view, stating in his 367 A.D. Paschal letter:

"...that there are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. **The Wisdom of Solomon**, and the **Wisdom of Sirach**, and **Esther**, and **Judith**, and **Tobit**, and that which is called the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Shepherd..." (Athanasius, *Festal Letter 39*, emphasis added)

Augustine's view would prevail, though, and the Roman Catholic Church would include the Apocryphal books in the Catholic Bible, assigning them the official status of "deuterocanonical", or being of a second tier of the canon. This view was made official at the Council of Trent in 1546, which condemned:

"[Anyone that] does not accept these entire books, with all their parts, as they have customarily been read in the Catholic Church and are found in the ancient editions of the Latin Vulgate, as sacred and canonical."

The Orthodox Church, which generally uses the Septuagint as its primary translation, also accepts the Apocrypha as canonical, and adds other books not included in the Vulgate (such as 1 Esdras, 3 & 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151).

The most heated debates regarding the authoritative-ness of the Apocrypha began in the Reformation. In 1534, Martin Luther placed the books of the Apocrypha in a separate section between the Old and New testaments, and commented:

"Apocrypha, that is, books which are not held equal to the sacred scriptures, and nevertheless are useful and good to read."

This position, of course, is only mildly different than the Roman Catholic "deuterocanonical" view. The real difference of opinion occurred with 17<sup>th</sup> century Calvinists (Puritans) who successfully lobbied to have the following section added to the 1646 Westminster Confession:

1-3. "The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings."

The Calvinist argument against the canonicity of the Apocrypha traditionally includes these points:

- The books of the Apocrypha are not part of the Jewish canon
- While 90% of the New Testament references to the Old Testament are from the Septuagint, there are no New Testament references to the Apocrypha
- Jerome rejected the Apocryphal books
- There are geographical and historical errors in some of the Apocryphal books (Judith, for example)
- None of the authors of the Apocrypha claimed divine inspiration
- Lying and assassination are accepted as tools for good in one book (Judith)

To balance out the argument slightly (without taking a stand one way or another), it should be noted:

- As mentioned previously, the Dead Sea Scrolls have given new status to the authoritative-ness of the Septuagint, which may have come from a different Hebrew Source than the one later approved by the Jewish Rabbis (the Masoretic Text)

- The book of Jude in the New Testament actually *does* refer to two apocryphal works – the Assumption of Moses, and 1 Enoch (although these two books are not included in the Vulgate)
- One of the reasons that Jerome rejected the Apocryphal books was because they were written in Greek, not Hebrew. Yet later evidence (including the Dead Sea Scrolls) indicate that many of the books of the Apocrypha were originally written in Hebrew (or Aramaic).
- One of the reasons that the apocryphal books were rejected by the Jewish rabbis is because they believed that the age of revelation ended with Ezra. Christians, of course, believe that the age of revelation ended with the death of John the Apostle, theoretically extending the time of revelation to include the period in which the Apocrypha was written.

The argument continues today. The Church of England includes the Apocrypha in their Bible editions, but stipulates that they can't be used to prove any point of doctrine (Article 3 of the Thirty-Nine Articles). The Lutheran Church typically views them as useful for study, but not on the same level as the books of the Old or New Testament canon.

## Books of the Apocrypha

Book	Date	Original language	Accepted by:
DSS – Dead Sea Scrolls; RC – Roman Catholic Church; OC – Orthodox Church; EC – Ethiopic Church; * - not in the Septuagint			
Tobit	c. 225-175 B.C.	Hebrew or Aramaic (DSS)	RC, OC
Judith	2 <sup>nd</sup> century B.C.	Hebrew?	RC, OC
Greek Esther	2 <sup>nd</sup> century B.C.	Greek	RC, OC
Wisdom of Solomon	1 <sup>st</sup> century B.C.	Greek	RC, OC
Sirach	c. 200 B.C.	Hebrew (DSS)	RC, OC
Baruch	2 <sup>nd</sup> century B.C.	unknown	RC, OC
Letter of Jeremiah	3 <sup>rd</sup> century B.C. – 1 <sup>st</sup> century A.D.	unknown	RC, OC
Prayer of Azariah & The Song of the Three Jews	2 <sup>nd</sup> century B.C.	unknown	RC, OC
Susanna (Daniel Chapter 13)	2 <sup>nd</sup> century B.C.	unknown	RC, OC
Bel & the Dragon (Daniel Chapter 14)	2 <sup>nd</sup> century B.C.	unknown	RC, OC
1 Maccabees	2 <sup>nd</sup> century B.C. (after 135 B.C.)	Hebrew	RC, OC
2 Maccabees	1 <sup>st</sup> century B.C.	Greek	RC, OC
1 Esdras	100 B.C.	unknown	OC, appendix

Book	Date	Original language	Accepted by:
			in the Vulgate
Prayer of Manasseh *	2 <sup>nd</sup> century B.C.	unknown	OC, appendix in the Vulgate
Psalms 151	By David?	Hebrew (DSS)	OC
3 Maccabees	1 <sup>st</sup> century B.C.	Greek	OC
2 Esdras*	1 <sup>st</sup> century A.D.	Hebrew/Greek	Slavonic Bible (3 Esdras); appendix in the Vulgate (4 Esdras)
4 Maccabees	63 B.C – 70 A.D.	Greek	Appendix to Greek Bible
1 Enoch *	2 <sup>nd</sup> -1 <sup>st</sup> centuries B.C.	Aramaic (DSS)	EC, (20 copies found in DSS)

## **Tobit**

Tobit is a story of a pious Jew living in Ninevah during the Assyrian occupation of Northern Israel in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The author and namesake of the story, Tobit, goes blind as the result of committing a pious act – burying a Jew who had been strangled in the marketplace.

Tobit is not the only person with problems in the piece. A woman named Sarah is possessed by a demon named Asmodeus with dire consequences:

“<sup>8</sup>For she had been married to seven husbands, and the wicked demon Asmodeus had killed each of them before they had been with her as is customary for wives.” (Tobit 3:8, NRSV)

As the result of prayers of supplication from Sarah and Tobit, the angel Raphael is sent to heal both of them. Through a series of events, the son of Tobit teams up with Raphael (not knowing that he’s with an angel), and:

- Marries Sarah
- Casts out the demon Asmodeus, using a foul-smelling concoction made up of a fish liver and heart recommended by the Angel Raphael
- Heals his father of his blindness using the same concoction

The pious Tobit lives to the ripe old age of 112, and his son lives to 117.

In addition to the moral lesson that the pious are eventually rewarded in this life (similar to the message in Job), Tobit is characterized by flashes of humor. Two examples:

- It is the *smell* of the fish concoction which drives the demon “to the remotest parts of Egypt”
- There is a wonderful scene that has Sarah’s father Raguel telling his servants to dig a grave for young Tobias on the night of his wedding, because of the possibility that he may be killed by the demon before the morning. When a maid discovers that Tobias is quite alive, Raguel has the grave filled in before the sun rises.



## Relevance to Christianity

Tobit is of interest in a Christian context because it helps illuminate the intense Jewish interest in angels and demons during the Inter-Testamental period (see 2 Esdras and 1 Enoch for more on theme). In the New Testament, Jesus drives out many demons, but the concept is pretty much absent in the Old Testament.

As far as the angel Raphael is concerned, we may view that he is an archangel, because of a statement in Tobit 12:15:

<sup>15</sup>I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ready and enter before the glory of the Lord.” (NRSV)

The beautiful words spoken by Tobias during his wedding ceremony are said to be used by the Amish in modern-day weddings:

<sup>5</sup>So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, ‘Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever.

<sup>6</sup>You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.’

<sup>7</sup>I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.’

<sup>8</sup>And they both said, ‘Amen, Amen.’” (Tobit 8:5-8, NRSV)

## Judith

Judith is the story of a beautiful young widow who saves a Jewish town from the massed troops of King Nebuchadnezzar. The town is named Bethulia, and is unknown outside of this work. It appears to be located in Samaria.

The town is besieged by almost 200,000 troops under army commander Holofernes. Holofernes gives orders to cut off the water supply of Bethulia, and in a short time, the city is completely without water. In despair, the citizens consider surrendering, but Judith gives a passionate speech to the elders of the town, and convinces them to let her try to save them. She doesn’t specify how she will go about it, though.

Judith leaves Bethulia after making herself as alluring as possible.

<sup>4</sup>She put sandals on her feet, and put on her anklets, bracelets, rings, earrings, and all her other jewelry. Thus she made herself very beautiful, to entice the eyes of all the men who might see her.” (Judith 10:4, NRSV)

She is quickly captured by one of the patrols of Holofernes, and taken to the commander. Judith offers to help Holofernes capture Bethulia. The commander is smitten with her, and gives her free rein to move around the camp.

Eventually, Judith cuts off the head of Holofernes, after he becomes drunk. The event is described in some detail:

<sup>6</sup>“She went up to the bedpost near Holofernes’ head, and took down his sword that hung there. <sup>7</sup>She came close to his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and said, ‘Give me strength today, O Lord God of Israel!’ <sup>8</sup>Then she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head. <sup>9</sup>Next she rolled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the posts. Soon afterward she went out and gave Holofernes’ head to her maid, <sup>10</sup>who placed it in her food bag. Then the two of them went out together, as they were accustomed to do for prayer. They passed through the camp, circled around the valley, and went up the mountain to Bethulia, and came to its gates.” (Judith 13:6-10, NRSV)

Judith returns to Bethulia in triumph, and the besieging army eventually withdraws in disarray. The Elder Uzziah says of Judith:

<sup>18</sup>“Then Uzziah said to her, ‘O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all other women on earth; and blessed be the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who has guided you to cut off the head of the leader of our enemies. <sup>19</sup>Your praise will never depart from the hearts of those who remember the power of God. <sup>20</sup>May God grant this to be a perpetual honor to you, and may he reward you with blessings, because you risked your own life when our nation was brought low, and you averted our ruin, walking in the straight path before our God.’ And all the people said, ‘Amen. Amen.’” (Judith 13:18-20, NRSV)

The story of Judith of Bethulia was made into a silent film by D.W. Griffith in 1913/14.



Still from *Judith of Bethulia*, D.W. Griffith, 1914

Judith is one of the strongest female characters in all of Jewish tradition.

### Relevance to Christianity

Out of all of the books of the Apocrypha, this is perhaps the work that causes the most ire among some Protestant groups. Among the objections:

- The book contains historical and geographical errors. The first one is in the first verse of the first chapter, which tells us that King Nebuchadnezzar ruled over the Assyrians in Nineveh. Nebuchadnezzar, of course, was the ruler of the Babylonians, not the Assyrians.
- The book seems to accept lying, deceit, and assassination, as tools for good

Martin Luther had a milder point of view regarding Judith:

“The book of Judith is not a history. It accords not with geography. I believe it is a poem, like the legends of the saints, composed by some good man; to the end he might show how Judith, a personification of the Jews, as God-fearing people, by whom God is known and confessed, overcame and vanquished Holofernes — that is, all the kingdoms of the world...It is a tragedy, setting forth what the end of tyrants is.” (Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, Chapter 24)

## ***Esther (Greek version)***

The “Greek Esther” contains six lengthy additions to the original “Hebrew Esther” found in the Old Testament, including two letters (proclamations) by King Artaxerxes, prayers by Esther and Mordecai, and a dream (and interpretation of the dream) by the latter. The most striking difference in the Greek Esther, though, is the fact that the word “God” or “Lord” is mentioned over 50 times, whereas God isn’t mentioned once in the Hebrew Esther!

In the Hebrew Esther, most of the positive action happens as the result of the personal bravery or resourcefulness of the two heroes, Esther and Mordecai. In the Greek Esther, most of the action is as a result of God’s will. An example is the famous scene where an uninvited Esther invades the inner court of the King – an act punishable by death, unless looked upon favorably by the King. In the Hebrew version, Esther is spared because the King seems glad to see her. In the Greek version, Esther is spared because of the direct intervention of God:

“<sup>7</sup>Lifting his face, flushed with splendor, he looked at her in fierce anger. The queen faltered, and turned pale and faint, and collapsed on the head of the maid who went in front of her. <sup>8</sup>Then God changed the spirit of the king to gentleness, and in alarm he sprang from his throne and took her in his arms until she came to herself. He comforted her with soothing words...” (Greek Esther 15:7-8, NRSV)

## ***Wisdom of Solomon***

The Wisdom of Solomon is a book of Hebrew “wisdom” literature, similar in style to such Old Testament books such as Job and Proverbs. As in Proverbs, Wisdom is characterized as being female. While the work is entitled “The Wisdom of Solomon”, it is more likely the work of a 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. Jew.

## **Relevance to Christianity**

Unlike the aforementioned Job, which posits that the righteous are rewarded in this life, and that evil is punished in this life, the Wisdom of Solomon makes extensive references to an afterlife for the righteous, and a final punishment for the evil. These are, of course, themes that would flower in Christianity a century later. Some examples:

“<sup>15</sup>But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them.”  
(Wisdom of Solomon, 5:15-16, NRSV)

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

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>When the unrighteous see them, they will be shaken with dreadful fear, and they will be amazed at the unexpected salvation of the righteous.

<sup>3</sup>They will speak to one another in repentance, and in anguish of spirit they will groan, and say,

<sup>4</sup>“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.” (Wisdom, 4:20-5:4, NRSV)

The Wisdom of Solomon was so widely read in the early Christian Church, that it actually appears in one prototypical list of *New Testament* books (Muratori Canon (c. 200)).

## ***Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus)***

Unlike many books in the Bible, we know exactly who wrote Sirach, and who translated it into Greek. The massive work was written by Jesus ben Sirach, a Jewish scribe, probably around 200 B.C.:

“<sup>27</sup>Instruction in understanding and knowledge I have written in this book, Jesus son of Eleazar son of Sirach of Jerusalem, whose mind poured forth wisdom.” (Sirach 50:27, NRSV)

The Greek translation was done by his grandson in 132 B.C.:

“...[my] grandfather Jesus, who had devoted himself especially to the reading of the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors, and had acquired considerable proficiency in them, was himself also led to write something pertaining to instruction and wisdom...”

“You are invited therefore to read it with goodwill and attention, and to be indulgent in cases where, despite our diligent labor in translating, we may seem to have rendered some phrases imperfectly. For what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have exactly the same sense when translated into another language. Not only this book, but even the Law itself, the Prophecies, and the rest of the books differ not a little when read in the original.” (Prologue, Sirach, NRSV)

Sirach is another example of Jewish “wisdom” literature, similar especially to Proverbs. It is full of helpful advice on many diverse topics, from friendship, women and the sin of pride, to inappropriate speech. Also, perhaps the most famous phrase in all of the Apocrypha is contained in Sirach. In the introduction to a lengthy section describing the fine attributes of various heroes of Jewish history (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc.), Sirach states, “Let us now sing the praises of famous men”.

Also of interest in Sirach is a description of the activities of the scribes. Many scholars believe that the scribes were the beginning of the Phariseic movement. Sirach comments:

<sup>1</sup>He seeks out the wisdom of all the ancients, and is concerned with prophecies;  
<sup>2</sup>he preserves the sayings of the famous and penetrates the subtleties of parables;  
<sup>3</sup>he seeks out the hidden meanings of proverbs and is at home with the obscurities of parables.  
<sup>4</sup>He serves among the great and appears before rulers; he travels in foreign lands and learns what is good and evil in the human lot.  
<sup>5</sup>He sets his heart to rise early to seek the Lord who made him, and to petition the Most High; he opens his mouth in prayer and asks pardon for his sins.” (Sirach 39:1-5, NRSV)

## ***Baruch***

Baruch is purportedly written by the scribe of the prophet Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 32:12, 36:4). It is more likely written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. by an unknown Jewish author.

Baruch is written in three parts.

The first part is a prayer of confession and petition read to the deposed King of Judah, Jeconiah, and later sent to Jerusalem. It contains a harrowing description of the destruction of the Jews in the time of Nebuchadnezzar:

“<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>Some of us ate the flesh of their sons and others the flesh of their daughters. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>They were brought down and not raised up, because our nation sinned against the Lord our God, in not heeding his voice.” (Baruch 2:1-5, NRSV)

The second part is in the Jewish Wisdom tradition (“In praise of wisdom...”), similar to the early chapters of Proverbs.

The final section contains encouragement for Israel, assuring the faithful that eventually God will return Israel to the Chosen People:

“<sup>7</sup>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.” (Baruch 5:7, NRSV)

### **Relevance to Christianity**

Some early translations (the Vulgate, among others) of Baruch stated in Baruch 3:37 that *God* appeared on earth and lived with human kind. The following is an example:

“[This is our God] Afterward did he shew himself upon earth, and conversed with men.” (Baruch 3:37, Ages Software, 1997)

It appears that the proper translation, though, (as in NRSV) is that *wisdom* appeared on earth, and lived with mankind.

### **Letter of Jeremiah**

The Letter of Jeremiah purports to be:

“<sup>1</sup>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.” (Letter of Jeremiah 6:1, NRSV)

It was more likely written at a later date by a Hellenized Jew.

The primary theme of the Letter of Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 29:1-23 for a description of a similar letter) is to disparage the worship of idols. The real point seems to be to discourage Hellenized Jews from following foreign ways - and foreign religions:

“<sup>5</sup>So beware of becoming at all like the foreigners or of letting fear for these gods possess you <sup>6</sup>when you see the multitude before and behind them worshipping them. But say in your heart, ‘It is you, O Lord, whom we must worship.’ <sup>7</sup>For my angel is with you, and he is watching over your lives.” (Letter of Jeremiah 6:5-7, NRSV)

Note that in some Bibles, the Letter of Jeremiah appears as Chapter 6 of Baruch.

### **Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews**

The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews is the first of three additions to the book of Daniel found in the Septuagint. It is inserted between Daniel 3:23 and 3:24. It contains “The Prayer of Azariah in the Furnace” and “The Song of the Three Jews”, purportedly written by the three youths that are

thrown into a furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar when they refused to commit apostasy. Verse 1:66 states that the three have been “rescued from Hades” by the Lord:

“<sup>66</sup>Bless the Lord, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever. For he has rescued us from Hades and saved us from the power of death, and delivered us from the midst of the burning fiery furnace; from the midst of the fire he has delivered us.” (1:66, NRSV)

The three youths are perhaps better known by their Babylonian names – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

### ***Susanna (Chapter 13 of the Greek Daniel)***

Susanna is Chapter 13 of the Book of Daniel in the Septuagint. It concerns a beautiful woman named Susanna, who is married to a rich man named Joakim.

The plot develops when two lecherous elders attempt to seduce Susanna in a private garden. They tell her that if she doesn't have sex with them, they will claim that she was committing debauchery with a young man when they came upon her. The virtuous Susanna refuses their advances, and is later condemned to death on the false testimony of the elders.



The plot thickens, though, when God “stirred up the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel”, who says to the people “Return to court, for these men have given false evidence against her” (Susanna 49).

In a performance worthy of Perry Mason or Colombo, Daniel separately asks the two elders “under what tree did you see them being intimate with each other?” (Susanna 54) When the two give different answers, Susanna is found innocent, and the two elders are put to death for bearing false witness. “And from that day onward Daniel had a great reputation among the people.” (Susanna 64)

### ***Bel & the Dragon (Chapter 14 of the Greek Daniel)***

Bel and the Dragon is the third of three Septuagint additions to the book of Daniel. It often appears as Chapter 14.

The chapter contains two different stories. The first concerns “Daniel and the Priests of Bel”. In this story, the Babylonians are worshipping an idol named Bel (probably the Babylonian God Marduk). Through a clever ploy involving spreading ashes on the floor in a supposedly inaccessible room (sounds a bit like a Sherlock Holmes mystery!), Daniel proves to the King that Bel does not actually eat the daily offering of food made to it. It turns out that the priests and their families had been sneaking into the room at night through a hidden entrance, and eating the food. “Therefore the king put them to death, and gave Bel over to Daniel, who destroyed it and its temple.” (Bel and the Dragon 22, NRSV)



The second story concerns Daniel killing a “great dragon which the Babylonians revered.” Daniel kills the dragon by feeding it a foul concoction containing “pitch, fat, and hair”. The Babylonians become

outraged at this, and throw Daniel into a lion's den. Daniel survives for six days in the lion's den, receiving sustenance by the miraculous intervention of the prophet Habakkuk:

<sup>36</sup>“Then the angel of the Lord took him [Habakkuk] by the crown of his head and carried him by his hair; with the speed of the wind he set him down in Babylon, right over the den.” (Bel and the Dragon 36, NRSV)

On the seventh day, the King comes to mourn Daniel, and discovers that he is still alive. Daniel is rescued, and his tormenters are thrown into the den and killed.

## **1 Maccabees**

1 Maccabees is one of the great histories of the ancient world, and is the most important work in the Apocrypha in terms of describing the key Jewish Inter-Testamental historical event – the Maccabean Revolt.

1 Maccabees starts with a brief description of the reign of Alexander the Great (334-323 B.C.). However, the bulk of the work concentrates on the period from about 167 B.C. to 134 B.C., starting with a description of the rebellious actions of the priest Mattathias, and ending with a description of the murder of his son Simon (and installation of his grandson, John Hyrcanus, as High Priest).



The hero of the story is, of course, Judas Maccabeus, for whom the whole revolt (and four Apocryphal books) are named, with his brothers Simon and Jonathan coming in a close second. The villain of the piece is Seleucid King Antiochus IV, perhaps the “abomination that causes desolation” in Daniel.

As I have already described the Maccabean Revolt in some detail in an earlier section, I won't recount it here. 1 Maccabees recounts the story of the revolt reasonably crisply and soberly, although it does show a strong bias in favor of the family of Mattathias and his descendents (the Hasmonean Dynasty), that would rule Israel for 100 years.

## **2 Maccabees**

2 Maccabees, like 1 Maccabees, tells the story of the Maccabean Revolt. However, it ends after the defeat and death of Nicanor, while Judas is still alive (c. 161 B.C). Thus, there is no discussion of the line of succession of the Hasmonean family that appears in some detail in 1 Maccabees (Judas, Jonathan, Simon, John Hyrcanus).

2 Maccabees says that it is a condensed version (an early Reader's Digest?) of a five volume work of a Jason of Cyrene (a work which is now lost). It tells us in the preface that it will discuss:

<sup>19</sup>The story of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, and the purification of the great temple, and the dedication of the altar, <sup>20</sup>and further the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator, <sup>21</sup>and the appearances that came from heaven to those who fought bravely for Judaism, so that though few in number they seized the whole land and pursued the barbarian hordes, <sup>22</sup>and regained possession of the temple famous throughout the world, and liberated the city, and re-established the laws that were about to be abolished, while the Lord with great kindness became gracious to them—<sup>23</sup>all this, which has been set forth by Jason of Cyrene in five volumes, we shall attempt to condense into a single book.” (2 Maccabees 2:19-23, NRSV)

It differs from 1 Maccabees in ways other than the aforementioned time frame that it covers:

- It describes the political infighting among the various high priests Onias, Jason, and Menelaus in great detail, the last two “buying” the priesthood from Antiochus Epiphanes IV for money
- 2 Maccabees ascribes some of the success of the Jews in the Revolt to direct Divine intervention, such as this description of one of the battles of Judas Maccabeus:

“<sup>29</sup>When the battle became fierce, there appeared to the enemy from heaven five resplendent men on horses with golden bridles, and they were leading the Jews. <sup>30</sup>Two of them took Maccabeus between them, and shielding him with their own armor and weapons, they kept him from being wounded. They showered arrows and thunderbolts on the enemy, so that, confused and blinded, they were thrown into disorder and cut to pieces. <sup>31</sup>Twenty thousand five hundred were slaughtered, besides six hundred cavalry.” (2 Maccabees 10:29-31, NRSV)

- There are some differences in the timeline. In 2 Maccabees, for example, the death of Antiochus Epiphanes IV precedes the rededication of the Temple. (In 1 Maccabees, he dies after the rededication of the Temple).
- 2 Maccabees is perhaps even more passionate than 1 Maccabees in describing the horrors of Hellenization, and the indignities forced on the Jews by Antiochus. In one passage, for example, 2 Maccabees records that 80,000 Jews were slain:

“<sup>12</sup>He commanded his soldiers to cut down relentlessly everyone they met and to kill those who went into their houses. <sup>13</sup>Then there was massacre of young and old, destruction of boys, women, and children, and slaughter of young girls and infants. <sup>14</sup>Within the total of three days eighty thousand were destroyed, forty thousand in hand-to-hand fighting, and as many were sold into slavery as were killed.” (2 Maccabees 5:12-14, NRSV)

## Relevance to Christianity

2 Maccabees has several passages that indicate a Jewish belief in the resurrection of the dead, and a final judgement day – themes that would later flourish in Christianity. One section discusses the martyrdom of seven brothers, who died rather than agree to eat pork. The brothers are defiant partially because they believe in resurrection of the dead:

“<sup>9</sup>And when he was at his last breath, he said, ‘You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.’” (2 Maccabees 7:9, NRSV)

“<sup>14</sup>When he was near death, he said, ‘One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!’” (2 Maccabees 7:14, NRSV)

“<sup>23</sup>Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of humankind and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws.” (2 Maccabees 7:23, NRSV)

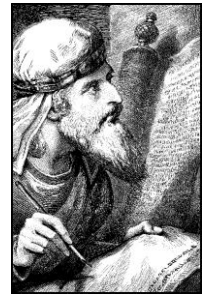
In another scene, Judas discovers that some of his troops have been wearing pagan amulets. In atonement:



<sup>43</sup>He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. <sup>44</sup>For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. <sup>45</sup>But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin.” (2 Maccabees 12:43-45, NRSV)

## **1 Esdras (Greek for Ezra)**

1 Esdras (which is listed as 3 Esdras in an appendix to the Vulgate) is one of the more curious apocryphal books. It contains most of the Hebrew version of Ezra (translated into Greek), but also contains portions of 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah. There is one addition to 1 Esdras which doesn't appear anywhere in the Hebrew Bible, which will be discussed presently. Curiously, the Septuagint not only included 1 Esdras, but also a Greek translation of the Old Testament Ezra. Scholars have argued about which came first, but generally the view is that the Old Testament Ezra as we know it today is the source document (although 1 Esdras may have been taken from a different Hebrew source document).



The one addition to 1 Esdras appears in 1 Esdras 3:1-4:63. It describes the story of three bodyguards of King Darius who have an argument regarding “what one thing is strongest”. They decide to present their arguments to the King, in hopes of reward. One says that wine is the strongest because “it leads astray the minds of all who drink it”. The second says that the King is strongest, because “whatever he says to them they must obey”.

The third bodyguard, interestingly identified as Zerubbabel, starts out with an argument that women are the strongest, because they “gave birth to the king and to every people that rules over sea and land.” He then changes his vote to say that “Great is truth, and strongest of all!” His argument:

<sup>37</sup>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. <sup>38</sup>But truth endures and is strong forever, and lives and prevails forever and ever.” (1 Esdras 4:37-38, NRSV)

Passages regarding the greatness of truth were often quoted in the Early Church.

## **Prayer of Manasseh**

According to 2 Kings 21:1-18, and 2 Chronicles 33, Manasseh was one of the worst Kings in the history of Judah, ruling for 55 years, and bringing idolatry and other sacrileges to Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 33:10-13 describes an incident where Manasseh is captured by the Assyrians and taken to Babylon. Verse 13 states that “He [Manasseh] prayed to him [God], and God received his entreaty, heard his plea, and restored him again to Jerusalem and to his kingdom.”

The Prayer of Manasseh purports to be that prayer, although it is more likely that it was written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.

## **Psalm 151**

Most versions of the Septuagint have 151 Psalms, with this one being listed last. The translator records “This psalm is ascribed to David as his own composition (though it is outside the number), after he had fought in single combat with Goliath (NRSV).” “Outside the number” can be taken to mean that it is outside the traditionally accepted number of 150 Psalms. However, Hebrew versions of the Psalm have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, perhaps giving more authority to Psalm 151.

## **3 Maccabees**

The first thing to note about 3 Maccabees is that it has nothing to do with the Maccabean Revolt or Judas Maccabeus. It is set fifty years earlier in the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-204 B.C.). The story concerns a lapsed Jew named Dositheus who prevents an assassination plot against Ptolemy. A grateful Ptolemy visits Jerusalem laden with gifts, and all is well until the King desires to enter the inner sanctuary of the Temple. When told that that is forbidden, he tries to enter anyway, and is stricken down with a paralysis sent by God.

The enraged Ptolemy swears revenge against the Jews, and orders various measures against them, including deportation, ordering them to commit apostasy, and removing their citizenship. Finally, Ptolemy orders all Jews to be rounded up and executed in a particularly gruesome fashion – to be trampled to death by 500 drunk elephants in a hippodrome! The Jews are saved twice by divine intervention, when the King 1) falls asleep, and 2) becomes forgetful.

Eventually, though, the King orders the massacre, and the elephants are released. Apparently in answer to a prayer by a priest named Eleazar, God once again intervenes to save the Jews:

“<sup>18</sup>Then the most glorious, almighty, and true God revealed his holy face and opened the heavenly gates, from which two glorious angels of fearful aspect descended, visible to all but the Jews. <sup>19</sup>They opposed the forces of the enemy and filled them with confusion and terror, binding them with immovable shackles. <sup>20</sup>Even the king began to shudder bodily, and he forgot his sullen insolence. <sup>21</sup>The animals turned back upon the armed forces following them and began trampling and destroying them.” (3 Maccabees 6:18-21, NRSV)

The Jews are spared, and are returned to the good graces of the King.

## **2 Esdras**

While 2 Esdras does not appear in the Septuagint, it appears in the Slavonic Bible as 3 Esdras, and in an appendix in the Vulgate as 4 Esdras. The work is very apocalyptic in tone, presenting a series of visions of the end times.

The visions are presented through the device of a dialogue between the prophet Ezra and the archangel Uriel (once seemingly referred to as Jeremiel). As such, it is similar in tone, content, and style to the Book of Revelation in the New Testament, and also may have served as a model for the (probably) 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian work “The Shepherd of Hermas”, with the angel asking tough questions that are probably unanswerable by a mere mortal. (“He [Uriel] said to me, ‘You cannot understand the things with which you



have grown up; how then can your mind comprehend the way of the Most High?" (2 Esdras 4:10-11, NRSV))

Some people date 2 Esdras as late as the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., interpreting the following phrase in 2 Esdras 3:1 to be referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.:

"In the thirtieth year after the destruction of the city, I was in Babylon – I, Salathiel, who am also called Ezra." (2 Esdras 3:1, NRSV)

Note that some scholars believe that 2 Esdras 3:1 is the original Jewish beginning to the work.

2 Esdras also contains an interesting claim that Ezra and five companions wrote ninety-four books in forty days, under the inspiration of the Most High:

"So during the forty days, ninety-four books were written. <sup>45</sup>And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, 'Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; <sup>46</sup>but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. <sup>47</sup>For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge.' <sup>48</sup>And I did so...." (2 Esdras 14:44-48, NRSV)

The claim that some knowledge should remain hidden would later be echoed by the early Gnostics, who believed that salvation could only be achieved through secret knowledge.

## **Relevance to Christianity**

2 Esdras is, perhaps, the Jewish apocryphal book with the most "Christian" tone and language. (In fact, some scholars believe that the first and last two chapters may have been later Christian additions). At a minimum, 2 Esdras shows that, at the time of Christ, there were Jewish sects that believed in many of the same precepts as Christianity, such as original sin, a divine Messiah, and a final judgement day for sinners. While it is in no place stated, 2 Esdras seems especially Essene in style and theology (assuming the Dead Sea Scrolls can be used as a guide for Essene thought).

Some examples of themes in 2 Esdras that would later take root in Christianity follow.

### ***Original Sin***

"<sup>21</sup>For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. <sup>22</sup>Thus the disease became permanent; the law was in the hearts of the people along with the evil root; but what was good departed, and the evil remained." (2 Esdras 3:21-22, NRSV)

### ***Divine Messiah***

"<sup>28</sup>For my son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years. <sup>29</sup>After those years my son the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath." (2 Esdras 7:28-29, NRSV) [Note: This passage probably indicates that 2 Esdras was not written by a Christian.]

"<sup>31</sup>And as for the lion whom you saw rousing up out of the forest and roaring and speaking to the eagle and reproving him for his unrighteousness, and as for all his words that you have heard, <sup>32</sup>this is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the offspring of David, and

will come and speak with them. He will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will display before them their contemptuous dealings. <sup>33</sup>For first he will bring them alive before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, then he will destroy them. <sup>34</sup>But in mercy he will set free the remnant of my people, those who have been saved throughout my borders, and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment, of which I spoke to you at the beginning.” (2 Esdras 12:31-34, NRSV)

“<sup>32</sup>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.” (2 Esdras 13:32, NRSV)

“<sup>37</sup>Then he, my Son, will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness...” (2 Esdras 13:37, NRSV)

### ***Judgment Day***

“<sup>33</sup>The Most High shall be revealed on the seat of judgment, and compassion shall pass away, and patience shall be withdrawn. <sup>34</sup>Only judgment shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong.” (2 Esdras 7:33-34, NRSV)

“<sup>70</sup>He answered me and said, ‘When the Most High made the world and Adam and all who have come from him, he first prepared the judgment and the things that pertain to the judgment.’” (2 Esdras 7:70, NRSV)

“<sup>35</sup>For after death the judgment will come, when we shall live again; and then the names of the righteous shall become manifest, and the deeds of the ungodly shall be disclosed.” (2 Esdras 14:35, NRSV)

### ***Resurrection of the dead***

“<sup>16</sup>And I will raise up the dead from their places, and bring them out from their tombs, because I recognize my name in them.” (2 Esdras 2:16, NRSV)

“<sup>31</sup>Remember your children that sleep, because I will bring them out of the hiding places of the earth, and will show mercy to them; for I am merciful, says the Lord Almighty.” (2 Esdras 2:31, NRSV)

“<sup>31</sup>After seven days the world that is not yet awake shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish. <sup>32</sup>The earth shall give up those who are asleep in it, and the dust those who rest there in silence; and the chambers shall give up the souls that have been committed to them.” (2 Esdras 7:31-32, NRSV)

### ***Hell as a place of damnation for the wicked***

“<sup>36</sup>The pit of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of hell shall be disclosed, and opposite it the paradise of delight. <sup>37</sup>Then the Most High will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead, ‘Look now, and understand whom you have denied, whom you have not served, whose commandments you have despised. <sup>38</sup>Look on this side and on that; here are delight and rest, and there are fire and torments.’ Thus he will speak to them on the day of judgment...” (2 Esdras 7:36-38, NRSV)

### ***No one is worthy of salvation***

“<sup>35</sup>For in truth there is no one among those who have been born who has not acted wickedly; among those who have existed there is no one who has not done wrong.” (2 Esdras 8:35, NRSV)

## **4 Maccabees**

4 Maccabees, which appears in an appendix in the Septuagint, is written in the form of a sermon, seemingly to demonstrate that the Greek philosophy of rational judgment being the highest virtue is fully reconcilable with Jewish religious belief, and belief in the Law.

The bulk of the work is another telling (see also 2 Maccabees) of the martyrdom of Eleazer and the seven brothers under the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. 4 Maccabees, like 2 Maccabees, also gives additional details of the evil perpetrated by the High Priest Jason, who had purchased his priesthood from the Seleucid king:

“<sup>19</sup>Jason changed the nation’s way of life and altered its form of government in complete violation of the law, <sup>20</sup>so that not only was a gymnasium constructed at the very citadel of our native land, but also the temple service was abolished.” (4 Maccabees 4:19-20, NRSV)

4 Maccabees assures the faithful that Antiochus Epiphanes IV would be punished for his sins:

“<sup>5</sup>The tyrant Antiochus was both punished on earth and is being chastised after his death...” (4 Maccabees 18:5, NRSV)

## **Relevance to Christianity**

4 Maccabees is a stirring tribute to the ability of religious faith to overcome even the direst forms of torture. In seeming anticipation of the later Christian martyrs, one of the brothers is quoted as saying “How sweet is any kind of death for the religion of our ancestors” (4 Maccabees 9:29). Several of the Church Fathers, including Augustine and Origen (and, possibly, the author of Hebrews) referred to 4 Maccabees as the epitome of pious martyrdom.

The author of 4 Maccabees goes into great detail to describe the tortures suffered by Eleazer and the seven brothers (and, finally, the mother of the brothers). The descriptions are eerily reminiscent of the torture methods that would be perfected by the Inquisition a thousand years later.

“<sup>12</sup>When he had said these things, he ordered the instruments of torture to be brought forward so as to persuade them out of fear to eat the defiling food. <sup>13</sup>When the guards had placed before them wheels and joint-dislocators, rack and hooks and catapults and caldrons, braziers and thumbscrews and iron claws and wedges and bellows, the tyrant resumed speaking: <sup>14</sup>“Be afraid, young fellows; whatever justice you revere will be merciful to you when you transgress under compulsion.”” (4 Maccabees 8:12-14, NRSV)

## **1 Enoch**

Until recently, 1 Enoch existed only in an ancient Ethiopic translation, which was only “discovered” and brought to the West in 1768. Since then, however, at least 20 fragmentary copies of 1 Enoch in Aramaic have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, showing 1) that 1 Enoch existed at least as early as 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. and 2) 1 Enoch was considered important by at least one Jewish sect at the time of Christ. 1 Enoch does *not* appear in the Septuagint, and is not generally considered to be part of the collection of books known as the Apocrypha.

However, it does hold a unique position among Inter-Testamental Jewish works, which is why it is included in this study – it is the only Inter-Testamental Jewish writing quoted in the New Testament (see next section).

1 Enoch purports to be written by Enoch:

“Concerning these things will I speak, and these things will I explain to you, my children: I who am Enoch. In consequence of that which has been shewn to me, from my heavenly vision and from the voice of the holy angels have I acquired knowledge; and from the tablet of heaven have I acquired understanding.” (1 Enoch 92:2-3, translation by Richard Laurence, LL.D., 1821)

Most scholars today believe that several authors wrote it, perhaps over a period of some years.

1 Enoch has a number of somewhat discrete sections/themes, which lends itself to the theory of multiple authorship. Some of these include:

- The Fallen Angels
- Three parables
- Visions of the Son of Man/Elect One
- “The book of the revolution of the luminaries of heaven”
- A dissertation on Noah’s Ark

Spread throughout 1 Enoch are graphic and detailed descriptions of heaven, hell, God on the Throne, and even the Garden of Eden. Parallels to both Revelation and Daniel are readily apparent.

In one passage, hell is described in terms especially familiar to later Christians:

“And they shall confine those angels who disclosed impiety...And when all this was effected, from the fluid mass of fire, and the perturbation which troubled them in that place, there arose a strong smell of sulphur, which became mixed with the waters; and the valley of the angels, who had been guilty of seduction, burned underneath its soil.” (1 Enoch 66:4,6, Laurence)

## **Angel-ology**

1 Enoch contains an elaborate hierarchy of angels and demons, including (as referenced above) a lengthy description of the story of the Fall of the Angels. More angels and demons are named in 1 Enoch than in the New Testament, Old Testament, and Apocrypha combined.

### ***Fall of the Angels***

The story of the Fall of the Angels is told in some detail, amplifying on Genesis 6:1-4. As in Revelation 12, the Fall is often discussed in terms of stars falling from the heavens. Interestingly, the term “satan” is sometimes applied corporately, as opposed to an individual (“expelling the satans”). The angel that led the others astray is named Azazyel:

“All the earth has been corrupted by the teaching of the work of Azazyel. To him therefore ascribe the whole crime.” (1 Enoch 10:12, Laurence)

### ***The archangels***

Many descriptions of the archangels are given in 1 Enoch. In one section, six are listed, along with their roles (the number is slightly at odds with the verse from Tobit 12:15):

“These are the names of the angels who watch:

- Uriel, one of the holy angels, he it is who is over clamor and terror
- Rapahel, one of the holy angels, who is over the spirits of men
- Raguel, one of the holy angels, who inflicts punishment on the world and the luminaries
- Michael, one of the holy angels, who presiding over human virtue, commands the nations
- Sarakiel, one of the holy angels, who presides over the spirits of the children of men that transgress
- Gabriel, one of the holy angels, who is over Iskiasat, over paradise, and over the Cherubim” (1 Enoch 20:1-7, Laurence)

In another section, four are listed above all others:

“The first is the merciful, the patient, the holy Michael. The second is he who presides over every suffering and every wound of the sons of men, the holy Raphael. The third who presides over all that is powerful, is Gabriel. And the fourth, who presides over repentance, and the hope of those who will inherit eternal life, is Phanuel. These are the four angels of the most high God, and their four voices which at that time I heard.” (1 Enoch 40:8-9, Laurence)

## **Relevance to Christianity**

1 Enoch is the only Jewish Inter-Testamental work quoted in the New Testament. Compare Jude 14-15 with 1 Enoch Chapter 2:

“Behold he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgement upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all of flesh for every thing which the sinful and ungodly have done, and committed against him.” (1 Enoch, 2 Chapter, Laurence)

“It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘See, the Lord is coming with ten thousand of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’” (Jude 14-15, NRSV)

(Note: The Revised Standard Version so credits Jude 14-15 to 1 Enoch. The NRSV and the NIV do not).

## ***Son of man/Elect One***

1 Enoch describes a figure that it refers to as either the “Son of man” or the “Elect One”, amplifying on the description in Daniel 7:13-14. The “Son of man” prophesied in 1 Enoch sounds remarkably like Jesus Christ – down to the detail that he existed before all creation (see John 1:1-18). Some excerpts follow.

“[The Ancient of Days] answered and said to me: This is the Son of man, to whom righteousness belongs; with whom righteousness has dwelt; and who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed; for the Lord of spirits has chosen him...” (1 Enoch 46:1, Laurence)

“Before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed, his [this Son of Man] name was invoked in the presence of the Lord of spirits. A support shall he be for the righteous and the holy to lean upon, without falling; and he shall be the light of nations...All who dwell on earth, shall fall down and worship before him...” (1 Enoch 48:3-4, Laurence)

“...and his [the Elect one] glory is forever and ever; and His power from generation to generation.” (1 Enoch 48, Pt II:2, Laurence)

## Judgment Day

One of the key roles for the “Son of man”/“Elect One” will be to preside over what, in Christian terms, is referred to as Judgment Day. Some excerpts regarding the day of judgment (and the role of the “Son of man”) follow:

“O ye kings, O ye mighty, who inhabit the world, you shall behold my Elect one, sitting upon the throne of my glory. And he shall judge Azazeel, all his associates, and all his hosts, in the name of the Lord of spirits.” (1 Enoch 54:5, Laurence)

“But then the time shall come, then shall the power, the punishment, and the judgment take place, which the Lord of spirits has prepared for those who prostrate themselves to the judgment of righteousness, for those who abjure that judgment, and for those who take his name in vain.” (1 Enoch 59:5, Laurence)

“Who [the Elect one] shall judge all the works of the holy, in heaven above, and in a balance shall he weigh their actions. And then He shall lift up his countenance to judge their secret ways in the word of the name of the Lord of spirits, and their progress in the path of the righteous judgment of the God most high.” (1 Enoch 60:11, Laurence)

“He sat upon the throne of his glory; and the principal part of the judgment was assigned to him, the Son of man.” (1 Enoch 68:39, Laurence)

## Summary

The Apocrypha is an invaluable aid in understanding the Jewish roots of Christianity, and filling in the theological and historical gaps left by the fact that the Old Testament ends 400 years before the New.

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## Notes

### About the Author

Robert C. Jones grew up in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. He made his living as a hotel lounge band leader/musician from 1974-1981. In 1981, he moved to the Atlanta, Georgia area, where he received a B.S. in Computer Science at DeVry Institute of Technology. From 1984-2009, Robert worked for Hewlett-Packard as a computer consultant.



Robert is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church. He has written and taught numerous adult Sunday School courses (see front inside cover). He has also been active in choir ministries over the years, and has taught the *Disciples* Bible Study five times.

Robert is also President of the Kennesaw Historical Society, for whom he has written several books, including "The Law Heard 'Round the World - An Examination of the Kennesaw Gun Law and Its Effects on the Community", "Retracing the Route of the General - Following in the Footsteps of the Andrews Raid", and "Kennesaw (Big Shanty) in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century". A new book, "Images of America: Kennesaw", was published by Arcadia in 2006.

Robert has also written several books on ghost towns in the Southwest, including in Death Valley, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and Mojave National Preserve.

In 2005, Robert co-authored a business-oriented book entitled "Working Virtually: The Challenges of Virtual Teams". His co-authors were Lise Pace and Rob Oyung.

His interests include the Civil War, Medieval Monasteries, American railroads, ghost towns, hiking in Death Valley and the Mojave, and Biblical Archaeology.

Robert is available as a guest speaker on Christian history and theology topics in the Atlanta Metro area, and North Georgia. See <http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/speaker.htm> for more information.

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