
FAQ

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Apocrypha

J.K. McKee revised 12 August, 2019

What is your position concerning the Apocrypha?

Protestants do not consider the books of the Apocrypha to be canonical because Jews do not consider them to be canonical. Jews do not consider these books to be canonical because the principal copies we have of them are written in Greek, and not Hebrew, and were an adjunct part of the Septuagint. The Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions do consider these books to be canonical, with the Anglican tradition often regarding them as deuterocanonical. The principal books of the Apocrypha include:

3 Esdras
4 Esdras
Tobit
Judith
The Additions to Esther
Wisdom
Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Baruch
The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Youths, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon
The Prayer of Manasseh
1 Maccabees
2 Maccabees

The Eastern Orthodox Church adds 3&4 Maccabees to its Apocryphal canon.

We would not consider the books of the Apocrypha to be “inspired Scripture,” per se, but do believe that they should be consulted as a valuable historical and cultural reference. They do play a significant role in historical Christian theology, and certainly cannot be ignored. The traditions and points of view that the Apocrypha often records do make their way into many parts of the Apostolic Scriptures, so the Apocrypha should have some secondary place after Scripture in determining one’s theology. You will see Apocryphal books quoted from time to time with this purpose in mind. Generally speaking, we quote from the Revised Standard Version translation of the Apocrypha, as it is literal and in modern English.