

Intertestament History

“Jewish Literature”

1. The Old Testament in Greek

A. The Septuagint (LXX)

1. Derivation: Latin word for “seventy”
2. Designed to put in library at Alexandria
3. The need: Hellenization of the world
4. One of the most important literary events of its day

B. Other Greek works:

1. Alexandrian canon
2. Fragments

2. The Apocrypha

A. Defining the term is difficult.

B. Etymologically, it is from a word meaning “hidden away.”

C. Apocryphal books:

- a. 1 Esdras (Greek Ezra) – based on material in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah – has one major addition not found in Ezra and Nehemiah
- b. 2 Esdras – also known as 4 Ezra as the Latin Vulgate counted Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 Esdras and 2 Esdras 3-14 as 1,2,3,4 Ezra
- c. Tobit – one of the most widely read books of fiction among the ancient Jews
- d. Judith – patriotic book intended to encourage and strengthen the faith of the Jews under intense circumstances
- e. Additions to Esther – reading it apart from Esther, it makes little or no sense – consists of several prayers indicating a deep devotion to God
- f. Wisdom of Solomon – calls for justice and praises wisdom – provides insight into the pre-existent Christ
- g. Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) – author identified as a Sadducee sympathizer
- h. Baruch – supposedly written by Jeremiah’s secretary during Babylonian captivity
- i. Letter of Jeremiah – often attached to Baruch – supposedly a letter sent by Jeremiah to Jews in Babylonian captivity
- j. Additions to Daniel
 - 1) “Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Young Men”
 - 2) “Susanna”
 - 3) “Bel and the Dragon”

k. Prayer of Manasseh – claimed to provide detail not included in 1 Chr. 33:10-13)

l. 1 Maccabees – used heavily by Josephus and other historians

m. 2 Maccabees – not as good historically as the first

3. Pseudepigrapha

A. Definition – a “catch all” for all Jewish literature that did not fall into some other category

B. The Pseudepigraphal books:

1. 3 Maccabees – pseudo-history
2. 4 Maccabees – author drew heavily on Stoic philosophers
3. Epistle of Aristeas
4. Jubilees – a rewriting of history from creation to the giving of the Law
5. 1 Enoch – popular at Qumran
6. 2 Enoch – an elaboration of Gen. 5:21-32
7. Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs – claims to the last words of the twelve sons of Jacob
8. Testament of Job – praises the virtue of patience as superior to all
9. Assumption of Moses – rewriting of Deut. 31-34
10. Ascension of Isaiah – contains three separate works
11. 2 Baruch – letter to the 9½ in dispersion
12. The Psalms of Solomon

4. The Dead Sea Scrolls

A. Major impact in many areas

B. Discovery

C. Library of Qumran

D. Writings associated with Qumran community

1. Rule of the Community (or Manual of Discipline)
2. Rule of the Congregation (or Messianic Rule)
3. Book of Blessings
4. Damascus Document
5. War Scroll
6. Thanksgiving Hymns
7. Habakkuk Commentary
8. Genesis Apocryphon
9. Copper Scroll
10. Temple Scroll
11. Halakhic Letter

5. Philo

- A. The man
- B. Nature of his work

6. Josephus

- A. The man
- B. Four works survive:
 - 1. “The Jewish War”
 - 2. “Jewish Antiquities”
 - 3. “The Life”
 - 4. “Against Apion”

7. Rabbinic Literature

- A. Background
- B. Mishnah – interpretations of legal laws of the Pentateuch
- C. Tosefta – collection of interpretations contemporary with the Mishnah, but missing from it
- D. Talmud – “Mishnah” plus commentary = Talmud
- E. Midrashim – commentary
- F. Targumim – preserve the way passages were commonly interpreted...paraphrase

