

The Second Canonical Books

Objective

To learn about the second canonical books and why they are not included in the Protestant versions of the Bible and to demonstrate their spiritual value

References

The Second Canonical Books- El Mahaba Library

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macabees>

http://st-takla.org/pub_Deuterocanon/Deuterocanon-Apocrypha_El-Asfar_El-Kanoneya_El-Tanya_0-index.html

<http://members.aol.com/twarren13/apoc.html>

Scriptural Verse

“You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” John 5:39

Lesson Guidelines

Introduction

The second canonical books are books of the Holy Bible which are included in the Orthodox and Catholic Bibles but not in the widely used Protestant versions of the Bible. The Protestant translations of the Bible included only books collected by Ezra the priest. Ezra collected these Old Testament books before the second canonical books were written. These books were written during the time of exile of the Jews in different places. They were written in the Greek language while the books collected by Ezra were written in Hebrew.

The second canonical books and their order in the Orthodox Bible are as follows:

- **Tobit:** 14 Chapters - comes after Nehemiah
 - Story of a righteous family that was rewarded for their adherence to God’s commandments.
- **Judith:** 18 chapters- comes after the book of Tobit
 - Story of a Jewish heroine who saved her people from the enemy through the help of God and her courage.
- The remainder of **the book of Esther:** chapters 10:4-16
 - Contains another trial of destroying the Jews that Esther and Mordecai were also able to stop through their belief in God’s protection
- **Wisdom of Solomon:** 19 chapters- comes after Song of Songs
 - Spiritual advice and guidance similar to Proverbs
- **Son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus):** 51 chapters- comes after the Wisdom of Solomon
 - Spiritual advice and wisdom similar to Proverbs and Wisdom of Solomon

- **Baruch:** 6 chapters- comes after Lamentations
 - o A prophecy written by Baruch, a companion of Jeremiah the prophet, regarding the return of the Jews to Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon following their repentance and return to God.

- The remainder of **the book of Daniel:** the rest of chapter 3 and chapters 13-14
 - o The rest of chapter 3 is the praise of the three young men
 - o Chapter 13: the story of Susanna
 - o Chapter 14: The story of Bel and the snake.

- **The First Macabees:** 16 chapters- comes after Malachi
 - o A story of liberation of the Jews from their enemies and foreign rulers under the leadership of the Macabees family. This was initially started by Mattathias, a descendant of the Levites.

- **The Second Macabees:** 15 chapters-comes after first Macabees
 - o Continuation of the story of the rule of the Macabees family during which time the Israelites enjoyed freedom again.

Many of the readings of the Orthodox Church during the Holy Pascha Week are from the second canonical books. The above mentioned books are the only ones accepted by the Orthodox Church. Other books such as the Gospel of Judas are considered apocryphal by the Orthodox Church even though others may claim that they are part of the second canonical books.

Conclusion

The second canonical books are filled with enriching spiritual virtues and symbolism. They are in line with the spirit of the other books in the Bible and also correlate with many verses in the New Testament.

Discussion Points/Activities

1. What are the differences between the second canonical books and books not included in all translations of the Bible, e.g. Barnabas?
2. Discuss the meaning of the word “Apocrypha” and how it relates to the second canonical books.
3. Why are the Orthodox translations of the Bible not widely available?
4. What other denominations believe in the second Canonical Books?
5. Distribute cards with the names of the second canonical books and ask the group to place them in the correct order in the Bible (New King James Version).