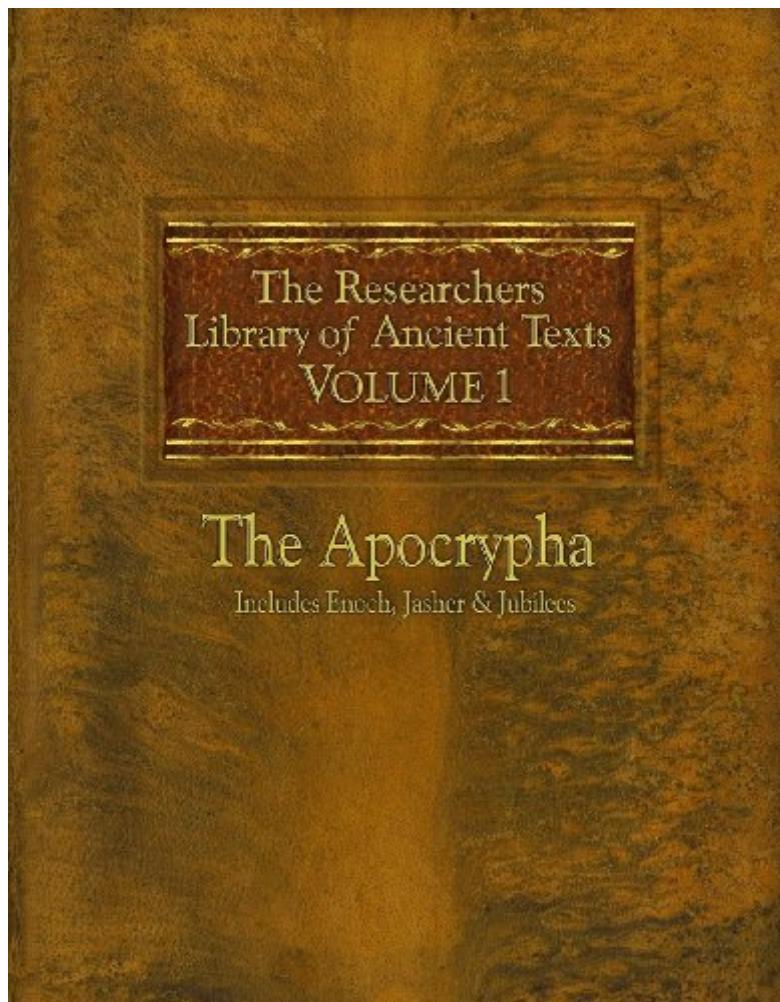


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The Researchers Library Of Ancient Texts: Volume One The Apocrypha Includes The Books Of Enoch, Jasher, And Jubilees



Synopsis

The Bible, as we hold it today, is esteemed by many religious institutions and especially Conservative Christians to be the inspired, inerrant Word of God. This doctrinal position affirms that the Bible is unlike all other books or collections of works in that it is free of error due to having been given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works • (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). While no other text can claim this same unique authority, Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal literature such as contained in this volume of The Researchers Library of Ancient Texts (Volume Oneâ "The Apocrypha: Includes the Books of Enoch, Jasher, and Jubilees), provides literature that often precedes or follows the chronology of biblical texts, which frequently are used or assigned as supplemental works within academic settings to help students and scholars discover or better understand cultural and historical context within the Word of God. Whether or not the information contained in the apocryphal literature is entirely preciseâ "as is the canon of Scriptureâ "these ancient texts provide commentatorsâ ™ valuable insight into what many ancient Jews and early Christians believed when, â œGod, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophetsâ • (Heb. 1:1). The Researchers Library of Ancient Texts is therefore intended to be a supplemental resource for assisting serious researchers and students in the study of the Bible and Bible times. Contained in this volume: The Book of Enoch, The Book of Jasher, The Book of Jubilees, 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, Susanna, Prayer of Azariah, Prayer of Manasseh, Bel and the Dragon, and Laodiceans.

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I tell my students every chance I get to read and become familiar with the Old Testament Apocrypha as the most important literature outside of the Protestant canon that they could encounter. Since these Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books are part of the Bible for the majority of the world's Christians (i.e., Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians), however, they are also readily available in many modern translations. These translations are considerably better (being done by groups of scholars on the basis of the best textual evidence and modern research on the original languages) and more readable than the older public domain translations. So I would advise readers to check out the editions of the Apocrypha in the NRSV, ESV, or CEB (all of which also include 3 and 4 Maccabees, two essential writings from Hellenistic Judaism left out here) and purchase one of these in an inexpensive edition. As for 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and the Book of Jasher, the same translations included here (R. H. Charles did his translation of 1 Enoch before World War I) are freely available on many sites across the web, and 1 Enoch (also a very important book for understanding early Judaism and Christianity) is now available in an excellent modern translation by James VanderKam and George Nickelsburg. The combined cost of a modern Bible with the Apocrypha and this new translation of 1 Enoch is less than the list price of this collection. Calling this the "Researcher's Library" of these texts is, I just have to say, shamelessly misleading. As a researcher, I would turn to the editions in R. H. Charles's 2-volume Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphy of the Old Testament for the sake of the copious annotations it contains and the editions of 1 Enoch and Jubilees in the collections by James Charlesworth and H. F. D.

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