

## General Topics :: Ancient Books (Which ones are worth the read?)

### Ancient Books (Which ones are worth the read?) - posted by mguldner (), on: 2017/9/13 9:52

A while back I asked if anyone would be interested in discussing The First Book of Adam and Eve and no one seemed interested. As I thought about it and as I read more posts on the forum it lead me to the question. Of the Ancient books, which ones are worth the read?

I have several of the early church writings that didn't make it into the bible. I know of the extra books in the Catholic bible. I am asking which ones are worth the time to read. Please keep in mind that I'm not looking to find new and interesting doctrines I read for mere interest.

From the First Book of Adam and Eve (I haven't finished it yet) I have seen a side story that reveals God in an even more merciful light. Instead of God kicking Adam and Eve out and being done with them He continues to love, show mercy, and even pursue a relationship with them.

Anyways! Was just curious if there were other books that would be edifying to the reader that could be early church to ancient books that didn't make cannon. Any help is appreciated!

### Re: Ancient Books (Which ones are worth the read?) - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/9/13 10:28

Brother,

This is a good question as early believers had access and read these books and the Apocrypha was in the KJV Bible until only 100-150 years ago.

I recommend:

Apocrypha

Book of Enoch

Didache

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com>  
has some good writings such as:

50-120 Didache

80-140 1 Clement

100-160 Shepherd of Hermas (which almost made it into the canon)

105-115 Ignatius of Antioch

110-140 Polycarp to the Philippians

130-160 2 Clement

130-200 Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus

150-160 Martyrdom of Polycarp

**Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2017/9/13 12:41**

I didn't realize the Apocrypha was removed only 100 to 150 year ago. I'll have to research it some more and give it a shot!

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/9/13 14:11**

After the Lutheran and Catholic canons were defined by Luther (c. 1534) and Trent (8 April 1546) respectively, early Protestant editions of the Bible (notably the Luther Bible in German and 1611 King James Version in English) did not omit these books, but placed them in a separate Apocrypha section apart from the Old ...

#### Modern editions

All King James Bibles published before 1666 included the Apocrypha, though separately to denote them as not equal to Scripture proper, as noted by Jerome in the Vulgate, to which he gave the name, "The Apocrypha." In 1826, the National Bible Society of Scotland petitioned the British and Foreign Bible Society not to print the Apocrypha, resulting in a decision that no BFBS funds were to pay for printing any Apocryphal books anywhere. Since that time most modern editions of the Bible and reprintings of the King James Bible omit the Apocrypha section. Modern non-Catholic reprintings of the Clementine Vulgate commonly omit the Apocrypha section. Many reprintings of older versions of the Bible now omit the apocrypha and many newer translations and revisions have never included them at all.

There are some exceptions to this trend, however. Some editions of the Revised Standard Version and the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible include not only the Apocrypha listed above, but also the third and fourth books of Maccabees, and Psalm 151.

The American Bible Society lifted restrictions on the publication of Bibles with the Apocrypha in 1964. The British and Foreign Bible Society followed in 1966. The Stuttgart edition of the Vulgate (the printed edition, not most of the on-line editions), which is published by the UBS, contains the Clementine Apocrypha as well as the Epistle to the Laodiceans and Psalm 151.

Brenton's edition of the Septuagint includes all of the Apocrypha found in the King James Bible with the exception of 2 Esdras, which was not in the Septuagint and is no longer extant in Greek. He places them in a separate section at the end of his Old Testament, following English tradition.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical\\_apocrypha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_apocrypha)

So it appears in 1826 that the Apocrypha was started to be removed from protestant bibles.

and this site states 1881 as a major date of its being removed;

<http://rockingodshouse.com/why-were-14-books-apocrypha-removed-from-the-bible-in-1881/>

**Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/9/13 19:20**

Some of you might not know this but there is a website called Christian classics ethereal library. It has mountains of Church fathers through the reformers and puritans down to Edwards, Spurgeon etc.

One of my faves is Athanasius and another is Athanagorus. I love Basil too.

From those old teachings you get to see where the early Fathers were a little off, and others ahead of their time. Others were instrumental in bringing forth revelation to the Church that forever changed its conception of God and Christ.

Lastly you can see that God used heresies, attacks on the Church to bring forward a solidified understanding of biblical texts. These took the form of creeds and statement of faith. You also get to see the in-depth wisdom of God displayed from which exegesis of scripture goes way beyond what you will hear on a Sunday morning.

Not every Church Father spoke about Christ as eloquently or as biblically as a Charles Spurgeon, but they were men for their time and spoke to the people of God then. From this you can recognize the grace of God toward the Church that had vastly different ideas of society, poverty, riches, community, rights, freedoms, and methods of worship. From this you begin to see the largeness of God's heart to include and approve of so many differences to our present culture you come away with an appreciation for what we have and what God is doing in our day and time.

From them you learn boldness...as some here consider themselves bold, they have not yet resisted unto blood but these men have and did. You learn compassion, giving and faithfulness was all centered on honoring and loving Jesus Christ and loving one another.

You won't find much on infralapsarianism vs supralapsarianism in the early fathers simply because it was not a theological abstract necessary for them to contend with. What I mean is many of these fathers wrote in defense of the Christian faith over against the pagans who warred constantly with each other. The one worshipping some animal and the other eating that animal in defiance to that god. Some of it is actually hilarious.

**Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2017/9/13 20:04**

Please, saints, avoid things like the Book of Enoch and The Book of Adam and Eve. They are not in your Bible for good reason. I don't care what early church fathers endorsed them, or if they were sandwiched in between the King James version for centuries. They contain heresy and ridiculous lies.

For instance, the Book of Enoch says fallen angels' offspring grew 450 feet tall and that an angel is set over repentance.

"The Book of Adam and Eve is believed to be the work of an unknown Egyptian writer, who first wrote the story in Arabic; eventually, the book found its way farther south and was translated into Ethiopic. Pinning down the date of the original writing is difficult, but many believe the Book of Adam and Eve was written a few hundred years before the birth of Christ. The first English translation of the book appeared in the 19th century. In summary, the two-part Book of Adam and Eve is a fictional account of Adam and Eve after the fall. It is filled with fantastical stories, such as how the earth trembled when the blood of Abel touched it; and how Cain was unable to bury Abel because the grave kept spitting out the body (Book I, chapter LXXIX); and how Adam and Eve kept the body of Abel in their cave for seven years (Book II, chapter I). The Book of Adam and Eve also contains blatant contradictions of the Bible, claiming that both Cain and Abel brought sacrifices of blood and grain (Book I, chapters LXXVII and LXXVIII). Genesis 4:3-4 states that Cain brought a bloodless offering of 'some of the fruits of the soil' and Abel brought 'fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.' From gotquestions.org

I say all of this not to judge any of you; I still consider you all my family in Christ. But please be careful.

**Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/9/13 22:19**

Drifter: I've been acquainted with Enoch but Adam and Eve is a new one for me. Thanks for the heads up. In the 1st and 2nd centuries forward there have always been books written that are heretical/spurious/mystical. Today we have the same thing under the 'Christian umbrella' worldly/heretical/spurious.

I don't count it a judgment against me to warn me of pseudographia.  
Great little synopsis by the way.

**Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/9/13 22:31**

I would highly recommend reading the Book of Sirach and the Book of Wisdom. The understanding these authors had of the coming Christ is incredible!

**Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/9/13 22:38**

Matthew I think from Drifter's synopsis of Adam and Eve, Enoch etc there would not be a very productive discussion. Those books which are called Pseudographia (false writings) usually have an apostle's name attached to them but contradict the canon of scripture, therefore they are relegated by most Christians to bird-cage liners and window cleaning rags.

There is some limited value in reading and discussing them because academically they point to the heresies current in those times and cultures. It helps us to recognize look-a-like cults adopting Satan's ancient devices by renaming the devilish doctrines so as not to red-flag knowledgeable Christians. To me they serve as counter-cult literature whereby you can

n detect ancient heresies in these writings and with some study discern modern ones.

Case in point...ancient sebellianism/patipassianism/modal monarchianism all find their way into our modern day United Pentacostal Church U.P.C. Also known as Oneness apostolic Churches.

I am not here attempting to shift topics, only to point out those old ancient heresies can be seen and recognized in the 3-4th centuries and how the orthodox leaders dealt with it and why it was anathematized.

**Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2017/9/13 22:49**

I definitely don't plan on shaping any theology or doctrine off of The book of Adam and Eve or the book of Enoch. I am merely interesting by the story. My dad always told me when it comes to reading or listening to sermons. Eat the meat, throw away the bones. What I thought was interesting about the Book of Adam and Eve is it how God in the story is portrayed. He shows mercy after mercy to Adam and Eve. Anytime Adam and Eve are in distress God sends a character named "The Word" to revive and encourage them.

Again I find the stories interesting but I take what I read with a grain of salt.

**Great resource for look up - posted by dohzman (), on: 2017/9/14 11:37**

Here is a link with a ton of old writings if you want to download and read, as to your question which old writings are worth the time? prayerfully read them all with the bible next to you

<http://www.ccel.org/index/format/pdf>