

Revivals And Church History :: The Septuagint LXX

The Septuagint LXX - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/9/16 14:21

What are your basic views on the validity of the Septuagint as a whole, though more specifically the apocrypha? I'm familiar with the history and how they supposedly came to be and so forth.

I'm taking a rather blasphemous Intro to the Old Testament class at the secular college I attend, and we recently spent some time discussing why the professor asked us to buy a Bible that included apocrypha (I use my own Bible by the way... didn't purchase the one he asked us to.)

The whole thing sounds rather Satan-composed to me, to be frank, so I want to ask for all your feedback or any other intelligent tidbits you might have to offer about the Septuagint, especially apocrypha.

If the apocrypha is not truly the Word of God and was fabricated by the translators, could not the rest of the Greek translation be tainted at all? Is it to be trusted at all? :-?

Re: The Septuagint LXX - posted by Jason, on: 2003/9/16 22:00

The LXX is a pretty good translation of the Hebrew Bible, actually. In fact, some of the Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts (which are much older than those we have from the Masoretes that underlie our current translations) actually agree with the LXX over the Masoretic Text.

In addition, the LXX is used in over half of the OT quotes in the NT. For the other quotes, the NT authors translate the Hebrew themselves or even combine the Septuagint with their own translation. This speaks very highly of the LXX, and also confirms the fact that the LXX was more commonly used than the Hebrew text outside Palestine in the first century.

As for the apocrypha, most of it actually does have some value -- particularly historical value. In the same way a commentary or history book may be useful to our understanding of Scripture, the apocrypha can be more or less helpful to our understanding of the "intertestamental period."

Essentially, the LXX is a useful and necessary tool for understanding the New Testament -- if Paul used it often, it probably is quite valuable. The apocrypha can be helpful, but it understandably falls short of the qualifications for Scripture.

Re: - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/9/17 1:24

That's helped -- I haven't read any of the apocrypha because of their origin. They're all historical documents?

Re: - posted by Jason, on: 2003/9/17 7:52

The books of Maccabees are history books (although scholars think a little embellished); 1 Esdras is also a history book.

Tobit, Judith, and Baruch are stories that are clearly not historical, but were written during the intertestamental period as moral fictions.

2 Esdras is an apocalypse that tries to show why Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD by pseudonymously speaking through the historical character of Ezra.

Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon are both proverbs-like texts. Wisdom of Solomon was in a few early Christian codices and was thought of fairly highly in some places if I recall correctly.

The others (Bel, Susanna, Letter of Jeremiah, etc.) are all additions to the books we already have in the canon. They are mostly legendary folktales, but some think the Letter of Jeremiah and/or the Prayer of Manassah may be authentic.

For more information, go to <http://wesley.nnu.edu/noncanon/apocrypha.htm>, where they have a little writeup on most of the books.

Re: The Septuagint LXX - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/9/17 16:52

One aspect of the LXX which can be very illuminating is the use of Greek words which later appear in the New Testament. Bible words don't have definitions but they do have histories and several NT Greek words have OT LXX histories. e. g. ekklesia

The LXX was the AV (KJV) of the first century and a number of concepts in the NT have their roots in the OT LXX.

If you have the tools to do it (and they are available free with the OnlineBible) that can be a very profitable line of enquiry for a Bible student.