



## Literary Isagogics

### Literature and Jewish Theology from the Categorical Standpoint

#### Literature and its Influence on Jewish Theology

Literature according to name or category; 1) The Talmud, 2) The Targum, 3) The Mishnah, 4) The Midrash, 5) The Halakhah, 6) The Haggadah, 7) The Septuagint, 8) Aquila's Greek Version, 9) Apocrypha, 10) Pseudepigraphal Writings, 11) Philo's Canons, and 12) Torah.

#### The Torah

This was the name given to the first section of the Hebrew canon of the Scriptures which were divided into three parts. The Torah first began as the five books of Moses or the Pentateuch. Later the Pharisees and Rabbis recognized an Oral Torah, which was made up of applications of general principles of the written Torah.

#### The Targums

These were explanations of the Hebrew, translations and paraphrases of the Hebrew in Chaldaic for the Jews who no longer understood or used the Hebrew. The actual word means "to explain" or "to interpret."

Many Jews during the Babylonian captivity had adopted Southwestern Aramaic as their origin both in the captivity area and in Palestine. The worship during this time had also shifted from the temple centered worship to several things: Study of the Law in common. Chanting of Psalms and united prayers. Therefore, the language used by Ezra and others in explaining the Law was that which the people understood, Aramaic.

The three basic Targums of the Old Testament: The Targum on the Pentateuch Targum of Onkelos, about 70 AD. The Targum on the Prophets Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, a student of the school of Hillel, first half of the first century. The Targum on the Writings, or Hagiographist: This includes Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Chronicles, Esther.

The language of the Targums was basically Western Aramaic, colored with Hebrew. The time concept of the Targums they date back to 444 BC orally with the written ones coming on from the first century up to the tenth century or so.

The communication of the Targums to the people. Nehemiah 8.8 has a three-fold process. They read "distinctly" means the reading of the Law in the Hebrew. "Giving the sense" means the translating of the Hebrew into Aramaic. "Cause to understand the reading" means to interpret in Aramaic the meaning of the translation.

The Talmud gives extensive and explicit rules for interpretation of the Hebrew text. There is a question, of course, on how closely they followed the rules.

A sample of the rules of interpretation of the Targums follows: The Law was read by the reader verse by verse and each verse was followed by the interpretation, (actually, the translation and interpretation) in Aramaic. In prophetic books, they read three verses before the translation and explanation. In reading, the one reading the Hebrew text had to keep his eyes on the text without looking up. The one giving the translation and interpretation had to look up and give the translation and interpretation without looking



at the text. This was done to make very clear the difference between the actual words of the text, and the interpretation given in the Aramaic.

The Targums were first forbidden to be written, but the Law interpretations became so expressed as if it had been written. This was usually true also of the Psalms and the prophets. Other portions were written down and read in private from the beginnings.

### The Talmud

This is a Jewish work which contains the civil and religious laws not found in the Pentateuch, with commentaries upon and illustrations of these laws. The word means teaching or doctrine. It represents the learning, teaching, opinions, and decisions of Jewish teachers over a period of approximately 800 years, from 300 BC to 500 AD. It is in two parts; the Mishna, the oral law; and the Gemara, the commentaries and illustrations.

### The Mishna

This was begun by Hillel before the birth of Christ, and was called the Second Law. Its chain of transmission was supposed to be from Moses to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, the elders to the prophets, the prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue, and by them to their successors to the 2nd century AD. It is divided into six sections, each dealing with the following general subjects. Seeds, Feasts, Women, Damages, Sacred Things, and Purifications. It is written in Hebrew.

### The Gemara

This is the part of the Talmud which contains the notes, commentaries and explanations and illustrations of the Mishna, and lots of other information. It was written in Aramaic and completed about 500 AD. It had 2 forms. The Jerusalem Gemara, completed about 200 AD. The Babylonian Gemara contains about 6,000 pages.

### The Midrash

It is basically a less formal explanation and exposition of the Old Testament from a doctrinal and homiletical viewpoint. It is written in Hebrew and Aramaic. It means investigation and interpretation. It differs from the Targums in that it is not a translation, but a commentary. It differs from the Talmud in that it does not deal with the oral law but with the written law. It is divided into two parts: the Halakhah, and the Haggadah.

### The Halakhah

This is confined to the Pentateuch and gives explanation and additions to the law and ritual. It covers cases which the law does not cover. It gives decisions of Rabbis on controversial subjects.

### The Haggadah

This covers the entire Old Testament and includes the historical prophetic, and poetical sections. It is popular, and covers history, tradition, stories, legends, parables, allegories, beliefs, customs; much fanciful, much good. The most significant and flourishing use of this was from 100 BC to 300 AD.

### The Septuagint

This is a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language for the Greek speaking Jews of Alexandria, Egypt and other locations. Its composition dates from 280 to 180 BC. Its importance could be summed up in the following major points.



It is probably the oldest attempt to reproduce any book into another language. It is probably the oldest translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into another language. It was the earliest attempt to establish union between Hebrew speaking peoples and Greek speaking peoples. It gave the truths of the isolated Hebrew language to the whole world through the Greek language.

It prepared the way for the people of the world to have the entire Bible in one great universal language, Greek. When Philo quoted from the Old Testament, he always used the Septuagint. Philo was a Jewish philosopher and writer from Alexandria. It was commonly used in New Testament times. Christ and other writers of the New Testament quoted from it freely.

It was accepted gladly by the Jews except those in the schools and synagogues who held to the Hebrew language. It was accepted also and used by the early church. It is still the text held by the Greek Catholic Church.

It was the basis for other translations including Old Latin, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Gothic, and Slavonic. Its oldest manuscripts, Aleph, B, A, C, are 500 years older than the oldest Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament. Therefore, it is the earliest witness of the original text of the Old Testament.

### **Pseudepigraphical Writings**

These are writings which claim biblical authorship or time, but have never been accepted as Canonical. These fall into categories - Old Testament Pseudepigraphical Writings and New Testament Pseudepigraphical Writings.

The Old Testament Pseudepigraphical Writings fall into four categories - Apocalyptic books, Legendary books, Poetical books, and Didactic books.

#### The Apocalyptic books visionary, dreams, etc. (12 in number)

*Books of Enoch (2)*

*Secrets of Enoch*

*The Apocalypse of Baruch*

*The Rest of the Words of Baruch*

*The Assumption of Moses*

*A Revelation of Moses*

*Prophecy of Isaiah*

*Apocalypse of Elijah*

*Apocalypse of Zephaniah*

*Apocalypse of Esdras*

*Sibylline Oracles*

#### The Legendary Books (10 in number)

*The Testament of Adam*

*The Book of the Jubilees*

*Testaments of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*



*Apocalypse of Abraham*

*Testament of the 12 Patriarchs*

*Life of Asenath, Joseph's wife*

*Testament of Job*

*Testament of Solomon*

*The Book of Noah*

*Penitence of Jannes and Jambres*

**The Poetical Books (3 in number)**

*Psalms of Solomon*

*18 Psalms in Greek*

*Addition to the Psalter*

**The Didactic Books**

*Magical Books of Moses*

*Story of Achiacharus*

**The New Testament Books fall into 4 categories.**

The Gospels, The Acts, The Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans, and The Apocalypse.

**The Gospels of the New Testament Pseudepigraphical Writings.**

*Gospel of Andrew*

*Gospel of Bartholomew*

*Gospel of Barnabas*

*Gospel of Matthias*

*Gospel of Thomas*

*Gospel of Peter*

*Gospel of Philip*

**The Acts of the New Testament Pseudepigraphical Writings.**

*The Acts of John*

*The Acts of Paul*

*The Acts of Peter*

*The Acts of Andrew*

*The Acts of Thomas*

*The Acts of Matthias*



*The Acts of Philip*

*The Acts of Thaddaeus*

*The Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans falls into the third class all by itself.*

The Apocalypse Books of the New Testament Pseudepigraphical Writings.

*Apocalypse of Peter*

*Apocalypse of Paul*

*Apocalypse of Thomas*

*Apocalypse of John, the Theologian*

**Appendix to Apocalyptic Books**

The Book of Enoch

It occurs in 2 books, I & II Enoch. It originated in Palestine and comes from a Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures. I Enoch was written 163-63 BC. II Enoch was written AD1-50. It is divided into 3 sections; introduction, the book, the epilogue. The introduction has 5 chapters, the book 5 parts, and then the epilogue.

Of great importance in I Enoch are the sections on: The Fall of the Angels, Enoch's journey into heaven and earth, what he saw and heard, The Kingdom of Heaven, and The Second Advent. It gives probably the best account of the development of Jewish doctrine in the last two centuries before Christ. The first book is regarded as the Book of the Angels, then the second being the Similitude.

Some other subjects in the books of Enoch: The glory of the Messiah, the subjugation of the kings of the earth to the Messiah, a long account of Leviathan and Behemoth, the history of the world up to the Maccabean Struggle, and the history of the world is set forth in ten successive week periods.

The Book of Similitudes, with revelations concerning heaven and hell is probably the best part of the books of Enoch. The complete books of Enoch exist in Ethiopic. The date most comfortably held on the books of Enoch would be 205 BC.

The Secrets of Enoch

This is a rabbinic book, ascribed to Rabbi Ishmael, a figure in the rebellion of Bar Kokba. Enoch is seen here as the Metatron.

The Apocalypse of Baruch

This is divided into 7 sections. The basic nature of this book is a revelation to Baruch, along with his answers, questions, and observations about his prayers, fasting, and person. Some of the topics covered in the book: The consequences of sin of our first parents. Information about what body and what form the dead rise in.

The figurative language employed lends great assistance to understanding the figurative language of the New Testament. The consequence of sin is set forth as physical death. This was written after the fall of Jerusalem, 70 AD.

The Rest of the Words of Baruch.



The main spokesman in the book, Jeremiah. This was written by a Christian Jew in Palestine.

#### The Assumption of Moses.

7-8 AD. Deals with the presentation of Moses activity with Joshua preceding his death, then as account of the chronological sketch up to Herod of history is referred to in Jude about the disputing for the body of Moses.

#### The Revelation of Moses.

Deals with the life of Adam and Eve after the death of Abel up to the time of their deaths. Supposed to be a revelation of God to Moses. There is no evidence of this being Christian in origin but rather Jewish.

#### The Ascension of Isaiah (about 68 AD).

This is called by the early Christian fathers and especially Origen, The Apocryphon of Isaiah. Some of the basic concepts in the book: Refers to demon possession of Manasseh who then would have Isaiah sawn asunder. Discusses Isaiah's retirement as in Bethlehem. There is some confusion between the first and second coming of Christ.

Deals with the incarnation of Belial (god) into Nero, and the persecution of the Apostles, with reference to one being a martyr. It sets forth the time of the reign of the Anti-Christ as 1,335 days as computed by Roman time, or 3 years, 7 months, and 27 days. There is reference made to the Beloved descending into Sheol. There is an account of the martyrdom of Isaiah by being sawn in two with a wooden sword.

Then the heart of the book on the Ascension of Isaiah is given how he traveled all through the 7 heavens seeing different things in each of them. In the atmosphere he saw the angels of the devil envying one another. In the next, the throne with angels to the right and to the left, this continuing through the 2, 3, 4, 5th, each getting more glorious. In the 6th, no throne and no distinction in the angels. All were equal. In the 7th, he sees God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The work of the Son is set forth as descending to earth, taking on human form, being crucified through the influence of the Prince of the World, then descending into Sheol, spoiling it, then ascending on high. There is also reference to a miraculous birth.

The book reflects a knowledge of Roman affairs, at the time of Nero's fall, beyond what the normal individual in Palestine would know; that Rome is usually held as the place of composition.

It is made up of two parts but the Christian element comes out in both. The Christian influence of early church type is shown in the early expectancy of Christ's return, the struggles between the Judaizers and the Pauline Christians, the emphasis on the 12 apostles, the omission of all reference to Paul. It does not give any account of the powers and principalities of Satan's kingdom.

#### Sibylline Oracles: written in Greek hexameters (180BC to 350 AD)

It consists of 12 books, the first 2 completed by the end of the second century by a Jewish (probably) Christian. Basic concepts found in the books:

Heathen myths concerning the first ages of man welded with Old Testament views. The third book contains information dated to different times: some to 160 BC and some to 31 BC. The rest to later periods of time.

The third book falls into 3 parts. The ancient scheme cast into Jewish mold. Uranus becomes Noah. Saturn, Titan, and Japetus become Shem, Ham, and Japeth. The Rebellion of the Titans becomes the



Tower of Babel. Then the history of the world is told with the Kingdom of Israel and David occupying a focal point. This has to do with heathen oracles interwoven in Jewish scheme. This is anti-heathen, polemical, and apocalyptic.

Books #4, 5, 9, and 12 were written by Egyptian Jews from 80 AD to the third century AD. Book #6 is of Christian origin. It dates to second half of the second century. Books #3, 10, and 11 have Jewish portions but Christian authorship.

The term Sibyl itself was a name given by the Greeks and Romans to a prophetess inspired by Apollo or by some other deity. There were several Sibyls famous in history. Herophile, the Sibyl who prophesied the Trojan War. The Sibyl of Cumae responsible for a series of books taken by Tarquin the Proud, written in Greek, known as the Sibylline Books. This Sibyl was also in Virgil's Aeneid where she prophesied Aeneas' future and guided him to the underworld. She is said to have offered the books at a price to King Tarquin who refused to pay (9 of them). She burned 3 of them then and offered 6 at the same price, again he refused. She then offered the last 3 which he bought.

#### The Fourth Book of Esdras known as II Esdras in the Apocrypha.

It was written in Greek originally and translated into 5 languages. It was composed at the end of the first century. The basic thrust is the mystery of Israel's fall and restoration. The book is a series of visions depicting various things about Israel.

Vision #1 Uriel is sent by God to reveal to Ezra His plan for Israel. Vision #2: Purpose was to bring out the limited understanding of man through a series of questions. Vision #3 The account of creation in more detail than in Genesis and a full description of Leviathan and Behemoth. Ezra is shown the heavenly Zion. Also the place of punishment is shown as well as Paradise.

Vision #4. This is a vision of a woman weeping, interpreted as Zion. Vision #5. Eagle appears with 3 heads and 12 wings, picturing the Roman Empire. A lion appears and destroys the eagle. Vision #6 This begins with the account of the coming of Christ. Vision #7: This one begins with a rewriting of these books by dictation given by Ezra. Then 70 selected sacred books are retained. This was apparently written after the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, probably 81-96 AD.

### **Reference Sheet on Literature Affecting and Relating To the Isagogics of the Word of God**

#### Jewish Literature

The Torah

The Targums

The Talmud

The Mishna

The Gemara

The Midrash

The Halakhah

The Haggadah

The Septuagint





## Old Testament Pseudepigraphal Writings

### *Apocalyptic Books:*

Books of Enoch  
Secrets of Enoch  
The Apocalypse of Baruch  
The Rest of the Words of Baruch  
The Assumption of Moses  
A Revelation of Moses  
Ascension of Isaiah  
Apocalypse of Elijah  
Apocalypse of Zephaniah  
Fourth Esdras  
Sibylline Oracles

### *Legendary Books:*

The Testament of Adam  
The Book of the Jubilees  
Testimonies of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob  
Apocalypse of Abraham  
Testament of the 12 Patriarchs  
Life of Asenath, Joseph's Wife  
Testament of Job  
Testament of Solomon  
The Book of Noah  
Pentintence of Jannes and Jambres

### *Poetical Books:*

Psalms of Solomon  
18 Psalms in Greek  
Addition to the Psalter

### *Didactic Books:*

Magical Books of Moses  
Story of Achiacharus

## New Testament Pseudepigraphical Writings:





*The Gospels:*

Gospel of Andrew  
Gospel of Bartholomew  
Gospel of Barnabas  
Gospel of Matthias  
Gospel of Thomas  
Gospel of Peter  
Gospel of Philip

*The Acts:*

Acts of John  
Acts of Paul  
Acts of Peter  
Acts of Andrew  
Acts of Thomas  
Acts of Matthias  
Acts of Philip  
Acts of Thaddaeus

*The Apocalypse Books:*

Apocalypse of Peter  
Apocalypse of Paul  
Apocalypse of Thomas  
Apocalypse of John the Theologian

*The Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans*

**The Apocrypha**

Old Testament Apocrypha

The Classifications:

Historical - I & II Esdras, I & II Maccabees, Additions to Daniel, Additions to Esther, The Epistle of Jeremy, The Prayer of Manasseh.  
Legendary - Book of Baruch, Tobit, Judith  
Apocalyptic - Fourth Esdras as II Esdras  
Didactic - The Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)

Order of Apocrypha in English



*I Esdras*

*II Esdras (Fourth Esdras)*

*Tobit*

*Judith*

*The Rest of Esther*

*The Wisdom of Solomon*

*Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)*

*Baruch, with Apostle of Jeremy*

*The Song of the Three Holy Children*

*The History of Susanna*

*Bel and the Dragon*

*The Prayer of Manasseh*

*I Maccabees*

*II Maccabees*

#### The place of the Apocrypha in relation to Bibles and versions.

During early Christian centuries most Greek and Latin church fathers such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and Cyprian, none of whom knew Hebrew, quoted passages from the Apocrypha as “Scripture,” “Divine Scripture,” and “inspired.”

Only an occasional father made any effort at all to learn the limits of the Hebrew Old Testament (canon). The Apocrypha by meaning is “hidden” and “secret.” This produced different interpretations of this meaning. It was thought as “hidden” in the sense of known only by the initiated and therefore of an esoteric nature. It was held by others as “hidden” in the sense of the great value of it, that is the great import being hidden within its contents.

The designation “Apocrypha” went through various usages. It went from the one mentioned, to include any book that was of non-canonical status. Then it moved back to a more specific usage referring to the 14-15 books normally appearing in the version of the Catholic Bible. There was also in the mind of men a distinction made between Hebrew canonical books and other works, including the Apocrypha which were just deemed Scripture.

In the fourth century many Greek fathers came to Apocrypha recognize the difference between the books in the Hebrew canon and the rest of the books still held as Scripture, (Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Amphilochius, Epiphanius).

At the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672 the books of Wisdom, Tobit, Tobit, Bel and the Dragon, Susanna, Maccabees, and Ecclesiasticus were designated as canonical. In the Latin church, the council of Hippo, 393 AD and the council of Carthage, 397 and 419 AD authorized their use as Scripture.

When Jerome wrote the Latin Vulgate, he separated them from the Hebrew canon Scriptures, but later his prefatory notes were deleted. In the 14th century, John Wycliffe, produced the first English version of the Bible. This included all the Apocrypha except II Esdras. However, he noted they were without



authority. II Maccabees was an issue in the reformation because it deals with the controversial subjects of Purgatory, efficacy of prayers and Masses for the dead.

The first real treatise on the Apocrypha from a Protestant point of view was by Andreas Bodenstein, commonly known as Carlstadt, in 1520 in the Latin treatise, “De Canonicis Scripturis Libellus,” (published at Wittenberg). He distinguishes them from the Hebrew canon of Scripture but refers to them as “holy writings...and not to be despised”. This he relates to the first of 2 groups into which he divides the Apocrypha. The second group, I and II Esdras, Baruch, Prayer of Manasseh, Additions to Daniel, he says are worthy of a censor ban.

The first edition of the Swiss-German Bible of the church in Zurich, 1527-29, is written in 6 volumes, the fifth containing or being, the Apocrypha. They are stated as being “books which are not reckoned as Biblical by the ancients nor found among the Hebrews.” The Swiss Reformer, Johannes Oecolampadius, declared in a formal statement issued in 1530 AD that “...we do not allow them divine authority with the others.”

The Council of Trent on April 8, 1546 gave in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church the first infallible approval to the Apocrypha. It also pronounced a decree of anathema on any who refused them as the canon of Scripture. The Prayer of Manasseh and the books of I and II Esdras, however were not included in this official recognition.

In England, the Protestants were unified in that they all rejected the Apocrypha as canonical but they did differ as to how the Apocrypha could be used. Some looked at it as one would look at the value of a sermon, while others used it as a lectionary. The Puritans had an aversion to any human book that didn't have a place in the Hebrew and Greek canons of Scripture. This led to the publishing of Bible which did not contain the Apocrypha.

The earliest copies of the English Bible which excluded the Apocrypha are certain Geneva Bible printed in 1599 in the Low Countries. George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury and one of the translators of the King James Version of the Bible in 1615, gave public notice that no copy of the Bible was to be bound or sold which did not contain the Apocrypha. However, Bibles began showing up without it in 1616, 1618, 1620, 1622, 1627, 1629, 1630, 1633. There was a growing demand for these.

#### Reasons for rejection of the Apocrypha into the canon of Scripture

It is universally admitted that they never had a place in the Hebrew canon. Every card indexing catalog of the Canon of Scripture excludes them. They were never quoted in the New Testament either by Christ or His apostles although they were in existence at that time.

Josephus expressly excludes them limiting the number of divinely inspired books to 22 which he enumerates. Philo, the great Jewish philosopher of Alexandria wrote largely and quoted frequently from the Old Testament but never from the Apocrypha. He didn't even mention them. They are not found in any catalog of canonical books made during the first 4 centuries AD.

Jerome declared for the strict Hebrew canon and rejected the authority of the entire Apocrypha in the most emphatic manner. Divine inspiration and authority is claimed by none of the writers and is disclaimed by some. The books contain many historical, chronological and geographical errors and distortions of the Old Testament narratives, contradicting themselves, the Bible, and secular history.

No prophets were connected with the Apocrypha, neither do they contain a true prophetic element. The “succession of prophets” had ceased. They teach doctrines and uphold practices which are directly opposed to the canon of Scripture. They have a definite weakness of style, stiffness, lack of originality



and an artificial expression when compared with canonical books.

Much of the literature is legendary and contains absurdities. Tobit 11:9, II Mac 2:3-5. The so-called miracles, deeds, and descriptions of persons are grotesque and silly, Tobit 5:13-17; 1-9. The spiritual and moral level is far below that of the Old Testament. They are worlds apart.

The books were written much later than the Old Testament and after the Hebrew Old Testament was closed. The canon was closed in about 425 BC. They were permitted to be read for instruction but never considered canonical by any organization, group of men, or prominent man until the Roman Catholic Council of Trent 1546 and then by a small majority.

The Christian Church received from the Jewish Church only the Old Testament Scriptures and not any of the Apocrypha. The use of the term “Scripture” by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament makes it very clear that the “limits” of the Old Testament Hebrew canon had already been long fixed by the time of their lives and ministries.

While there were Targums for the canonical books of the Old Testament, no such Targums existed except a possible manuscript on the book of Tobit. The difference between the Apocrypha and the Old Testament Scriptures can be felt rather than defined by their contents they are self-condemned.

#### Doctrinal errors and contrary principles to the canon of the Word of God

Prayers and offerings for the dead II. Mac 12:41-46.

Suicide justified. II Mac. 14:41-46.

Atonement and salvation by almsgiving. Ecc 3:31,33 and Tobit 4:11.

Cruelty to slaves justified. Ecc. 33:25-29

The Doctrine of Emanations. Wisdom of Solomon 7:25. (This is the demiurge concept).

The preexistence of souls (Traducianism). Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20.

Lying is sanctioned. Tobit 12:15.

Magical incantations are sanctioned. Tobit 6:7-17.

#### New Testament Apocryphal Writings

Categories of the New Testament Apocrypha (Apocryphal here meaning non-canonical).

Apocryphal gospels non-canonical but not necessarily spurious.

Apocryphal epistles non-canonical and doubtless pseudepigraphical.

Apocryphal apocalypses non-canonical and also pseudepigraphical.

#### Apocryphal Books Breakdown - General Listing (15)

*The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles*

*The Epistle of Barnabas*

*The First Epistle of Clement*

*The Second Epistle of Clement*

*The Shepherd of Hermas*



*The Apocalypse of Peter*

*The Acts of Paul, including Paul and Thecla*

*The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*

*The Seven Epistles of Ignatius*

*The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*

*The Protoevangelium of James*

*The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary*

*The Gospel of Nicodemus*

*The Gospel of the Savior's Infancy*

*The History of Joseph the Carpenter*

#### Reasons for the origin of the New Testament Apocrypha.

A desire for more details and definite knowledge of Christ than communicated by the evangelists and preachers obtained from oral instruction.

A popular desire for fuller information than that occurring in the 4 Gospels This was usually in relation to Christ's birth, childhood, life of Mary, etc.

Doctrinal issues such as the humanity or deity of Christ prompted writers to emerge with their heretical views and support of their views in writing. This was designed to add credibility to their views.

The Apocryphal Acts arose probably during the time when the Canonical Acts was not yet recognized as being alone authoritatively.

The New Testament Apocrypha originated to glorify the true Christianity by the unlawful means of pious fraud.

They also originated to fill up supposed lacks and chasms in the canonical writings.

#### Apocryphal Epistles

Our Lord: An answer by the Lord supposedly to Abgarus, King of Osroene, saying that He could not leave Palestine but that after the ascension, He would send a messenger back to heal him.

The Clementine Homilies. Work of fiction attributed to Clement of Rome. This is dated at approximately the end of the second century or the beginning of the third century.

The Epistle from Laodicea. A reference to a letter of such nature in Col. 4:16 apparently was the source of someone writing an epistle and forging it. It is written in Latin consisting of 20 verses. It is mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment (170 AD). By the end of the fourth century it had wide circulation. By now it is almost universally rejected as being spurious.

The Lost Epistle to the Corinthians. A reference to an epistle which apparently was lost. In 1 Cor. 5:9 is the biblical basis held to for the Lost Epistle of the Corinthians. In the fifth century after 1 Corinthians in the text, this short manuscript was included besides one from the Corinthians to Paul. These are found in Armenian and Syrian versions and they date from about 200 AD occurring in the versions in the fifth and fourth centuries respectively.



The Epistle to the Alexandrines. This is mentioned only in the Muratorian Fragment. This epistle has not come down to us today.

Letters of Paul to Seneca. This is written in Latin. They contain 6 letters attributed to Paul and 8 letters attributed to Seneca. Scholars believe that this correspondence was probably forged in the fourth century. This correspondence had a wide circulation in the Middle Ages apparently its purpose being to recommend Seneca to Christian readers or Christianity to the students of Seneca.

### **Jewish Doctrine of Angels - A Masterpiece of Distortion**

If the true doctrine of the Angelic Conflict is vital to understanding the plan of God of earth, surely the distortion of the doctrine would lead one to the depths of blindness. This will be seen as the case for the nation of Israel, the Jews. Some of the greatest distortions of doctrines by Rabbinical authorities falls within the scope of the doctrine of Angels and Demons. The following will set forth categorically the Jewish view basically of these doctrines during the New Testament times.

The first category of Angels are the Unnumbered Hosts. These are not the Angel-Princes (as will be defined later).

The creation of these "Hosts."

They were either created on Day Two or Day Five of creation. Every day new angels of this type are created, whose purpose is to praise God, then they pass away in a fiery stream. They go to Lamentations 3:23 to seek to support this. Also each Word spoken by God is an angel.

They have a very intricate system (specific) of numbering these Hosts, especially relating to the Nation Israel. There are 12 Mazzaloth (signs of the Zodiac). Each of these have 30 chiefs of armies. Each chief has 30 legions. Each legion has 30 leaders. Each leader has 30 captains. Each captain with 30 under him. Each of these have 365,000 stars (angels) under him.

The passage, Isaiah 14:12ff. is referred to by Jewish belief as relating to Nebuchadnezzar.

They have a system of 7 heavens (each 500 years thick, etc.)

Vilon - in which is the Sun.

Requia - in which the sun shines and the moon, stars, and planets are set.

Shechaquim - in which is the millstone which made the manna for the pious.

Zebhul - in this realm is the Upper Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Altar: in this sphere Michael, the Chief Angel Prince, offers sacrifices.

Maon - this is the Realm of the Angels of Ministry or Host. They sing by night. They are silent by day, this is to honor Israel.

Machons - this is where all the snow, hail, noxious dews, receptacles for water, the wind chamber, mist and fire chamber, mist and fire chamber are.

Araboth - this is where Justice, Judgment and Righteousness are; also here are the treasures of Life, Peace, Blessing. Here also are the souls of the righteous, the spirits and souls who are to be born in the future, and the dew stored for raising the dead. Also here abides the Ophanim, Seraphim, living creatures, ministering angels, Throne of Glory, and over them is enthroned the Great King.



## The Second Classification of Angels are the Angel-Princes.

They cannot seem to determine the exact number of Angel-Princes.

The following general factors are held:

There are 70 nations composing the world, each with an Angel-Prince.

Each of these Angel-Princes plead their cause with God.

Therefore, all but one of the Angel-Princes are basically hostile to the Nation Israel and therefore not quite good angels.

Each of these angels will be cast down when their respective nation is destroyed.

There are 4 chief Angel-Princes which surround the Throne of God; Michael, Gabriel, Rephael, and Uriel.

There is a fifth special type of Chief called the Metatron. This one is under the throne and before it.

In the Targum –Pseudo-Jonathon there is a list of six principle Angels--Michael, Gabrial, Metatron, Yophiel, Uriel and Yophyophyah.

The Book of Enoch lists 6 principle angels but mentions 7.

The five special types of chief angels looked at from the Jewish viewpoint.

### Metatron

Corresponds to the Logos or Angel of the Face. He is the Representative of God. He is not to be adored, neither does he have power to forgive sins, neither is he to be seen as a Mediator. A Rabbi was supposed to have seen Metatron sitting in heaven and immediately inferred this to mean there were two supreme powers. Immediately to disprove this to the Rabbi, Metatron received 60 fiery lashes to prove his inferiority, from another angel.

The Metatron is called the Great Scribe, the Prince of this World. He is called “the Youth,” the “Little God,” and had 7 names like the Almighty and shared His Majesty. He was designated as the “Prince of the Face,” sat in the innermost chamber, other angels on the outside.

Metatron is recorded as having done many things. Showed the unknown to Moses. Instructed infants who died without knowledge. He was supposed to have shown Moses the whole land of Palestine. He was the one who went before Israel in the wilderness.

### Michael, the Great Prince

He stands at the Right Hand of God. He is the Prince of Wisdom. He is the Prince of Jerusalem, the representative of Israel. He offers sacrifices upon the Heavenly altars; sometimes souls of the pious, sometimes lambs of fire. He is not to be invoked by Israel, even though he is their angel. He attempted to intervene before the destruction of Jerusalem but failed. The origin of his name came from the Song of Moses at the Red Sea.

He had many great feats. He delivered Abraham from fiery oven of Nimrod. He delivered the three Hebrew children from fiery furnace. He was one of 3 angels who announced the birth of Isaac to Abram. The other two were Gabriel and Rephael. He also saved Lot. Michael and Gabriel wrote down Jacob as one through whom would come the Seed. God confirmed it. Michael and Gabriel were “friends of the bridegroom” at the wedding of Adam and Eve. He prepared the coffin for Moses: Gabriel covered his





(Moses') face with a cloth. In the world of the future, Michael would bless the fruit of Eden, hand them to Gabriel who would pass them on to David, etc.

Gabriel - "the Hero of God"

Represents judgment. In executing judgment, he did many things. He destroyed Sodom. He struck the servants of the Egyptian princess who took Moses from the water. They didn't want her to do it. He killed the men standing by the fiery furnace. He smote the army of Sennacherib (185,000). He instructed Moses on how to make the Golden Candlestick. In the coming world, Gabriel will hunt and slay Leviathan.

Uriel

Means "God is my light" and stands to the left side of the Throne

Rephael

Means "God heals" and stands behind the Throne.

### The Ministering Angels and Their Ministry

They are divided into two classes, those praising God - 594,000 myriads and those carrying out His commands.

#### *The Activity of the Ministering Angels*

Angel performed the service at the first sacrifice of Adam. They cut the hands and feet off the serpent (which was a camel-like animal), so they said. They appeared to Abraham as a baker, a sailor, and an Arab. 120,000 of them danced for Jacob when he left Laban. 4,000 myriad were ready to fight Esau if he attacked Jacob. 22,000 came to Mount Sinai and stood by Israel when they were afraid of the Voice of God and retreated 12 miles.

They were told to shut the doors of heaven when Moses was about ready to pray a prayer he learned from Sagsagel which would have prevented his death. They are designed to punish apostate Israel. A good and evil angel always accompanied man.

These angels formed in Rabbinical circles sort of a consultative Sanhedrin. God always consulted the angels before he did something. This was true regarding creation of man. The angels interceded for Adam and requested that Moses and Aaron who were sinless also be punished with Adam, as the just and unjust must have one fate. They interceded for Isaac and dropped three tears on the blade of Abraham which blunted its edge.

#### *The Limitation of the Power of the Angels*

They are pure spirit beings without sense, hatred, envy, jealousy without sin. They know much about the future. They have part in Divine Light. They live on beams of Glory. They are not limited as to movement. They are inferior to Israel.

They were unable to name the animals in Eden. The angel that wrestled with Jacob lost. Their nature, not their power, is what separated them from man. No angel could do two messages at the same time.

They are creatures blindly doing God's work. They are liable to punishments. God had informed the angels that the creation of man was Superior to theirs and it made them envious. Adam was really nearer to God than the angels, and... Of course, Israel was too.

#### *The Good and Evil Character of the Angels*



Angels are not absolutely good. (The view of the Rabbis). When God consulted the angels about the Creation of man, the angels opposed it. Therefore, God kept secret that man would sin. The angels conspired for the fall of man.

The angels had an Accusation ministry. They accused Abraham for not offering a sacrifice to God at the Weaning of Isaac. They badmouthed Ishmael that he might die from thirst. They opposed Moses' ascension into Heaven. They opposed Moses' writing down the Law. They became the friends of Moses when he showed them the Law was only for those with sinful desires, therefore excluding them. When Manasseh tried to repent, the angels closed the gates so his prayers couldn't get to God.

### *The Names of Angels*

Sar ha-Olam - "Prince of the World"

Rahab - "Prince of the Sea"

Dumah - "Angel of the realm of the Dead"

Yorgemi - "Prince of Hail"

Ridya - "Angel of Rain"

Ruach Pisqonith - "Spirit of Decision"

Naqid - "Angel of Food"

Nabhel - "Angel of Poverty"

Two angels of Healing

Lailah - "Angel of Dreams"

"Angel of Lust"

### Rabbinic Doctrine of Satan and the fall of the Angels

General Principles of Rabbinic Doctrine of Satan. This section of Rabbinic Theology is even more pronounced than that of angels. In Rabbinic writings none of the New Testament names given to Satan occur except the word, Satan. There is no mention of a Kingdom of Satan. Satan is the enemy of man, not the enemy of God and good. They hold a threefold expression of Satan. Satan or Sammael - Person as the Accuser. Yetser ha-Ra evil impulse personified – Seducer. Angel of Death (Accuser, Tempter, and Punisher).

### The Fall of Satan and his Angels

This took place not before but after the creation of man. The reason for the fall of Satan and the angels was jealousy and envy by the angels. The fall of man is not traced to the agency of Satan directly.

There was a dispute in heaven among the angels and God over the creation of man. While the dispute continued God quietly created man, then addressed the angels with, "Man is made, why do you dispute?"

Therefore, they plotted the fall of Adam because of his supremacy. Sammael was the most distinguished above the Seraphim and living creatures. The angels who fell with Satan were only those who were under his command and authority. They came to earth and disguised as a serpent, an animal like a camel with hands and feet and speech.



Several explanations are given as reasons for the temptation of the servant. One is that the Devil had nothing to do with it: the serpent wanted to trick Eve and Adam, so Adam would die being responsible and he could then marry Eve.

Satan, or Sammael, as the Accuser of man is related as accusing Abraham to God, therefore God tests Abraham to prove him. Satan, or Sammael, as the Seducer -- this is a rationalistic advance, making the person into an evil inclination.

The Talmud directly expresses that God created the Yetser Ha-Ra in man as he was before the fall. This is supposed to come from Gen. 2:7. This evil inclination of man's nature was absolutely necessary to continue in the world and was a neutralizer of fear when in trouble.

As the Seducer many things were attributed to Satan or this Evil inclination. Satan appeared before David on the house top as a bird, when he rose up and shot at it, Bath-Sheba looked up, David saw her beauty and went on from there to sin. He made the coffin of Moses appear before the children of Israel in a Cloud.

### Satan, as the Enemy of Man

As the enemy of man, Satan seeks to hurt and destroy him. Satan is the Angel of Death. However, he does not have absolute power. When Israel took on the Law at Sinai this broke his sway over them, but the golden calf incident nullified this blessing. There were six people over whom the angel of Death, Satan, had no power Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Miriam and some include Benjamin.

He temporarily disrupts God's plan by breaking concentration. Satan climbed up a tree and shook it, David went out and climbed up a ladder to check it out. When he did, he broke a rung in the ladder and this broke his chain of holy thoughts.

### The Doctrine of Evil Spirits according to Jewish, Rabbinical Theology.

The General Characteristics of the Evil Spirits; They are cunning and malicious. They are not absolutely evil. Contact with them is dangerous. They often turn out to be kind and helpful. They can be rendered inoperative at times.

#### Their Creation and Origin

They were created on the eve of the Sabbath (views differ however). They are continually multiplying. Some are the offspring of Eve and male spirits, others of Adam and female spirits, or with the Queen of female spirits called Lilith. This is one of the reasons for Adam having no children for 130 years until the birth of Seth, he was under a ban.

They propagate themselves. They also propagate by passing through a four-fold transformation from: Viper to vampire to thorns and thistles to Shedim. After finally reaching the Shedim they can occur in many forms including that of the form of men. This process of transformation takes about 28 years. Some of them have defects such as blindness, like the one who fell over a bush when chasing a Rabbi, and perished.

They have special places where they like to stay, particularly in dirty places. They could be conquered by the "Ineffable Name." They could be banished by certain forms and words written or worn such as in the amulets, which they wore. The Queen of the Female Spirits has a following of 180,000. These evil spirits are everywhere, in bread crumbs, in the oil in lamps, in water you drink, in diseases, in the air, in the room, day and night.



## Their Classifications and Designations

They are arranged into two basic classes, male and female. The King of the male class of evil spirits is Ashmedai. The Queen of the female class of evil spirits is Lilith.

The other evil spirits are divided as follows:

The Morning spirits: Tsaphrire

The Midday spirits: Tihare

The Evening Spirits: Telane

The Night spirits: Lilin

### A Specific look at the Leadership of the Evil Spirits.

The Ashmedia the king of the demons or evil spirits. He is pictured as strong, immense in size, cunning and malignant. He sometimes does good. He may be rendered serviceable or at your disposal by the use of the "Ineffable Name." Ashmedia was always said to flee at the sight of the signet ring of Solomon.

Lilith - the queen of the Female Spirits. She is the queen of Zemargad, the land of Zemargad being Sheba. She is usually presented as a fair woman, but usually one with wild flowing hair.

### The Habits of the Shedim

Many are only personifications of evil. Therefore, many spirits are diseases such as croup, asthma, rabies, stomach disorders. They were often localized such as at Samaria and Tiberias. They were also used in magic cures of illness. This would be the demon removing the illness he had incurred in the person. In other words, demon induced illness removed by the demon.

Sometimes they used Biblical verses to expel the Shedim, sometimes other things. Demons could imitate and do anything that the great men and prophets would do. This is one of the reasons why the Jews ascribed the works of Christ to the prince of demons, Beelzebub. Legions of demons lie around waiting for an error of man. There are certain demons called familiar spirits who taught the Rabbis. There was Shed Joseph. There was Shed Jonathan.

### Rabbinical Views about Demon Possession and Those Possessed

#### From the Writings of Josephus

Josephus states that the disorder of Saul was due to demonic influence. Josephus states that the much wisdom, learning, and achievements of Solomon with his expelling of demons was due to the use of incantations, and that the very formulas used by Solomon were still known in Josephus' time. A certain Eleazar was supposed to cast a demon out of a man in the presence of Vespasian and his army by following one of the prescribed formulas of Solomon.

#### Rabbinic Views

One view is that demons are the souls of the wicked, with specific mechanics being that the backbone or spine of a person who didn't bow to God became a Shed or demon. Rabbis viewed demons under several names: evil spirits, unclean spirits. A demoniac is called a Gebher Shediya. The demons are said to propagate themselves, eat and drink.

There are two basic views that hold most of the Rabbinical thinking on this subject. Demons enter into and take possession of men. This is the cause for many diseases. Leaving the hands unwashed is just a



great big invitation to legions of demons. (Apparently this implies that they enter the body this way.)

### Magic and Magicians

Egypt was designated as the home of magic. The power of witchcraft and magic was supposed to have no control or power over the nation of Israel as they adhered to the Law. The nation of Israel was forbidden to have any connection specifically with witchcraft, magic, soothsaying, etc. God had particularly banned this.

The Talmud ascribes the miracles of Jesus to Magic. Jesus had learned this magic in Egypt during his stay there. (Talmud) The way Jesus brought this magic back to Palestine was by putting it under his skin. He did this because everyone was searched when leaving so they wouldn't take any of their magic out of the land.

### The Rabbinic View of Many Christians

The Jews did not deny the Spiritual Gifts and miracles in the early church; they just relegated them to magic. It was distorted by Jewish Christians who apparently played around with demonism and therefore cast a suspicious shadow on all of Christendom. Jewish Christians were consigned to eternal punishment in Gehinnom and even their circumcision was taken away.

### Classes of Magicians according to the Talmud

Baal Obh: conjuror of the dead. Spoke from under the armpit of the dead body. The dead might be called up through a process that would bring the apparent person up feet first. The dead might be called up through magical means using a skull be made to answer.

Yideoni: uttered oracles by putting a certain bone into the mouth. This was the second class of magician.

Chabar: this was the serpent (snake) charmer.

Meonen: this was the magician who could tell what days were lucky and unlucky.

Searcher after the Dead: this was the magician who spent his time on graves attempting to make contact with the dead.

Black Art: this was practiced either through demons or magic. This was done by incantations, using a knife with a black handle, using a cup of incantation, magic by the thumb.

### Demonism and Disease

There were four things that were dangerous because of demons. Walking between two palm trees, if the space was wider than 4 cubits. To borrow drinking water. To walk over water that has been poured out, unless it has been spat in, covered up, or you are barefooted. The shadow of the moon, of certain trees, and of other objects because demons like to stay there.

Many actual diseases were caused by direct Demoniac possession. Leprosy, Rabies, Heart disease, Madness, Asthma, and Croup. Magical cures.

Wearing of amulets; these were pieces of parchment on which certain magical words were written, or small bundles of plants or herbs. This had to be accompanied by the stating of the demon's name that you wanted removed or the disease.

Remedies against danger from drinking water were saying verses of Scripture in which the word "voice" (Qol) occurred seven times. You could also say: "Be cured of the." To cast out demons certain formulas



were given. Sometimes the demon was invoked, sometimes the demon was threatened.

Observation will be made at this point from a correct doctrinal basis that the entire stage was set by Satan in blinding the eyes of the Jews in the Doctrine of Angels so there was an almost exact counterfeit of each thing that Christ would come to the world to do. All the antithetical positions were firmly drawn, therefore when Christ came, did His miracles and finished His work, There was some former distortion of the plan of God, by the Greatest deceiver of the Universe, Satan.

In the true doctrine of the Angelic Conflict as given in the Scripture we realize that a large part is given over to the Doom of Satan, and that of man when he lines up volitionally and finally with Satan. This factor brings us to this important area of Eternal Punishment. According to Job one of the major points of contention between God and Satan has to do with the eternal confirmed destiny of Satan and those who fell with him. We shall now look at this section of Rabbinical teaching on Eternal Punishment.

#### Eternal Punishment as Viewed in Rabbinical Teaching

The First Rabbinical thought came from the schools of thought; the Schools of Shammai and Hillel.

The Shammai school thinking: Divide mankind into three classes. Perfectly righteous - sealed for eternal life. Perfectly wicked - sealed for eternal life. Intermediate class - those who go down to Gehinnom, moan, and come back again. (Has the Purgatory connotations). They quote Daniel 12:2 referring to the judgment after Resurrection. This position is held basically by the school of Hillel.

The Hillel school thinking: Sinners of Israel as well as Gentiles are sent to Gehenna for suffering for 12 months, then their bodies and souls are consumed and their ashes scattered out under the feet of the righteous. However, some are confined there throughout the ages. This school of thought sort of emphasizes the Mercy of God in that not all are sent there forever.

#### The Synagogue teaching on Eternal Punishment

The doctrine of Eternal Punishment was basically held throughout the synagogues throughout the first century. In the second century Rabbinic teaching and position changed. The concept that arose here was the teaching of the terminating of punishment in Gehenna, either by release or by the heat of the sun consuming the wicked. In the third century, one Rabbi maintained that the fires of Gehenna did not hurt the sinners among the Jews. The concept o also that God will eventually destroy all evil.