

LXX and the Apocrypha

Regarding the apocrypha in which some Encyclopedic definitions like those of Easton which is Dispensational in its orientation; or Fausset who uses the term "heretic" in reference to the apocryphal books of the Septuagint, LXX which is the Greek translation of the ancient Hebrew Scripture do so in defense of using the Masoretic texts rather than the LXX for translating Old Covenant Scripture into English.

Judaism sanctioned the creation of all the books translated into the LXX because at the time it was written in 285 BC the ancient Hebrew was becoming a "lost" language which ultimately "died" around 200 BC. The reason for this has much to do with the 70 years Babylonian captivity (605-536 BC) when they destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. The created two categories of Jews known as the **diaspora** or dispersion which are those who fled to Gentile nations to escape Babylonian captivity; and the **remnant** which are those who returned to Judea and Jerusalem upon the fall of Babylon by King Cyrus who released them from captivity. The remnant rebuilt the temple and the city of Jerusalem and continued until what is called the Hellenization period which began during the time of Alexander the Great in 331 BC and Greek rule and occupation of the holy land until Pompey conquered Greece to establish Roman rule in 63 BC until Roman Emperor Constantine began the Byzantine period in AD 324 - 638 which is known as the Greco-Roman rule where all living in their conquered and occupied territories spoke and wrote Koine Greek as their common language in addition to whatever native tongue was spoken prior to the Greco-Roman occupations. The diaspora and remnant Jews who settled in the occupied territories of the Grecian Empire assimilated the culture and languages of their occupiers. During this Grecian period that began in 331 BC under Alexander the Great is when the ancient Hebrew language of Scripture began to decline because fewer and fewer Hebrews were able to speak, read, or understand their ancient language until around 200 BC when the language became dead and was lost.

It was during this decline of the ancient Hebrew that Judaism saw and recognized the need to record the "Sacred Scrolls" into the common language of the Empire (Koine Greek) to preserve the Scriptures, their heritage and the ways and words of God so they too would not become lost. Around 285 BC the Pentateuch, the first five books of Scripture "Torah" which means Law was translated into Greek and this marked the first time in recorded human history that Scripture became available in a language other than Hebrew. In short order, the remaining Sacred Scrolls of Scripture "Tanakh" were translated as well as the Rabbinical Writings, also called the Oral Law was written into Koine Greek. These Rabbinical Writings are inclusive of but not exclusive to what we refer to today as the "Apocrypha" (secret or concealed) though that has always been a misnomer for these were never secret or concealed writing but always taught as Rabbinical Law which was NEVER acknowledged as "Scripture" though it taught as equally binding as Scripture by the Rabbis. There was no such concept of a "canon" as we understand it today up through the first advent of Messiah Jesus because there was never any need for such because the Jews had full control over what they deemed God-Breathed Scripture and Rabbinical and Oral law.

The Greek "Hebrew Bible" is called the Septuagint (LXX) which means 70 because 72 Scribes, six from each of the 12 tribes came together to translate Torah and the Rabbinical writings into Greek at Alexandria, Egypt which was the capital and center of knowledge and commerce in its day. The LXX had the full blessing, authority and approval of the Sanhedrin living in Judea to undertake this translation. This was never a 'renegade' work of the diaspora because the LXX was the Hebrew Bible for

the next 400 years since its introduction around 285 BC under the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus up through 100 AD. The LXX replaced all the Hebrew Scrolls in the synagogues for the next 400 hundred years because the ancient Hebrew language became lost and was no longer the spoken language of the Jews. However, the acknowledgement of the LXX as the Hebrew Bible changed after the first advent of Messiah Jesus when the Disciples and Apostles of Christ (the Greek translation for Messiah) began using the Hebrew Scriptures, the LXX to argue and prove Jesus is the prophesied Messiah who was crucified, raised from the dead and ascended to heaven. Not only did that create great animosity between the "Messianic Jews" (Christians) who were using the LXX contrary to rabbinical interpretation but when the Messianic Jews began adding the New Covenant writings: Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation to the LXX around 100 AD that was more than the nonbelieving Jews could bear. From that time on the LXX had to be discredited for multiple thousands of Jews were coming to believe Jesus is their prophesied Messiah. Therefore new versions of LXX began to emerge with the purpose to discredit and replace the first LXX under the guise it was a renegade product with faulty and corrupt translation of the ancient Hebrew. These newer versions of LXX made substantive changes to words, phrases and full passages of Scripture the Messianic believers were using to proclaim Yeshua HaMashiah, Jesus the Christ as their awaited Messiah and therefore needed to be "scrubbed" and justified for reasons other than those mentioned, the true motives for doing such. By around the second century we see evidences of the ancient Hebrew texts being resurrected and scrubbed by making substantive variations and adjustments designed to negate Messianic fulfillment in Yeshua.

The Jewish attack upon the LXX was successful with many simply ignoring the fact that the LXX was always seen as the Hebrew Bible, the Greek translation of the Sacred Scrolls and the Oral Law for 400 years with not so much as a peep by those who taught from the LXX. It must be reiterated that the LXX replaced Hebrew Scrolls in all their synagogues and in the Temple at Jerusalem until replacement texts were written immediately after the first Century. The true corruption is rabbinical apostasy and departure from the precepts of God and not so much from the Greek translation of the Sacred Scrolls. Many rabbinical apostasies were exposed by the teachings of Jesus and one such apostasy was holding Rabbinical-Oral laws, what we now call the apocrypha and oral teachings associated with Tanakh, as equally binding as Scripture (Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-16). When Jesus read from Scripture in the Synagogues as recorded in Luke 4:16-30 He was reading from the Septuagint, the LXX Koine Greek translation for the ancient Hebrew language became a dead language around 300 years before the birth of Christ in 4 BC. When New Testament writers used the Septuagint to reference Old Covenant quotations, this was the only Scripture in use at the time for there was no access to the Hebrew Scrolls. God removed His perfect language from His people due to their apostasy around 200 BC, and then removed His Temple as their place of worship in 70 AD when He had the Romans destroy the Jerusalem Temple. The Temple was never rebuilt.

The LXX versus the Masoretic text or Masorah are both straw men debates for both have apostasy of the Hebrews integrated within them. For example, in addition to rabbinical law being added to their bible, the refusal to reveal the personal name of God (YHWH, Yahweh) that He gave to His people to call Him by is forever buried in the LXX for nowhere is the tetragrammaton YHWH revealed or indicated with special wording for it is simply translated as Lord (kurios) in the Koine Greek. The Masorah came to be around 1,000 to 1,300 years after the first publication of the LXX when the Masorites took upon themselves the task to restore the Hebrew language that was lost by adding vowels to the language (pointings) and eventually established a new and dramatically different language from the ancient Hebrew. The language continued to develop and pronunciation characters were also added to this new Hebrew language. The Masorites used texts from after the first Century as the basis for writing Hebrew Torah and Tanakh but specifically omitted original LXX from any of their source documents. These new Masoretic texts became known as Biblia Hebraica (Biblical Hebrew) or Masorah. They made certain that the so-called "mistakes" of the first LXX that proved Jesus is Messiah were "corrected" by making significant changes including removals of passages and extensive use of marginal

notes and writings with new interpretations of the texts which are considered oral law. The changes are clearly evident from the Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient finds. The Masorah uses these altered first and second Century texts that resulted from the attacks upon LXX that are integrated into Masorah.

In the absence of the ancient Hebrew texts, both the LXX and the Masorah are to be consulted for translation and not seen as one versus the other for both have their own strengths and weaknesses. Regarding the sacred name of YHWH, Yahwey the LXX all but reduced that to oblivion for the tradition to never speak the personal name of God was retained and the LXX translates it into the Koine Greek as Lord "Kurios" without fanfare or special notation. When the Masorites added the vowel points to the Tetragrammaton YHWH they used the Hebrew vowel points for adonai (Lord) to do so essentially forming a new word, spelling and pronunciation that in no way reflects the personal name of God but its substitute YeHoWaHo and where we get the word Jehovah. Neither Lord nor Jehovah reflects the true name of God because both are created to obscure His true name. LORD as it appears in the English translations is a title based upon the Hebrew obscurities inherent in both LXX and Masorah. They also made changes to the ancient Hebraic texts that the disciples of Messiah used to establish Jesus is the prophesied Messiah which is now quite evident when comparing the LXX that was written long before the first advent of Messiah with the Masorah. In that regard it makes the LXX a truer translation of the ancient Hebrew for there was no agenda at work to discredit anything like there was with the Masorah. Fortunately both texts are preserved and both expose apostasy in obscuring Yeshua HaMachiah in the Masorah and YHWH Yahwey, the personal name of God in the LXX.

The apocryphal books though not God-Breathed Scripture are very useful books for revealing historical facts and also to help us understand the practices and beliefs of the first Century believers who were all reared under the LXX. There are many instances where some of these practices are revealed in the New Covenant Scripture. For example, when Paul speaks of the early practice of some being baptized for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29) we know this is not a New Covenant teaching or practice. Here we see an example of an early Jewish converts taking it upon themselves to comingle the New Covenant practice of water baptism with a practice established under Oral or Rabbinical law that encouraged praying for their dead loved ones to rise in the resurrection because 2 Maccabees 12:44 states it was good to pray for the dead to be raised. Rabbinical/Oral law is not Old Covenant Scripture nor is it New Covenant Scripture but a practice engrained into Judaism's rabbinical law contained in LXX. There is no teaching from Paul that this is or was an acceptable practice under the New Covenant for some who were being baptized for the dead were doing so their dead ancestors may participate in the resurrection. This is an argument for why only Scripture should be included in a bible and that should especially be applied to modern day bibles where man's commentary is intertwined with God's words. While Oral Law in Maccabees says it was good to pray for the dead, God is not saying so for nowhere in Old or New Covenant Scripture is this practice indicated. However, the practice of including the apocryphal books like the 1611 King James Bible did is acceptable because they clearly delineated these books from the rest of Scripture.

Portions of New Covenant Scripture reveal many early Hebrew believers wrestling with the doctrinal positions of the New Covenant and those of LXX rabbinical law and Scripture. In fact, the New Covenant Scripture reveals in Luke 1:1-3 that many attempts at writing books and letters were being presented to producing a detailed and accurate account of the teachings of Jesus but not successfully so. It is highly likely that many of the apostasies of rabbinical Judaism and oral law was also being transmitted and rightfully worthy of such rejection as God-Breathed inspiration. The godly transition from Old Covenant Scripture to New Covenant Scripture was difficult enough for the 1st Century Jew apart for the inherent departure from rabbinical law on top of that especially when Oral Law was taught as equally binding with Scripture. We should not fall prey to the distorted criticisms of the LXX and the apocryphal books without knowing the more complete and unfiltered history of the LXX and Masoretic texts. The books of the apocrypha are not God-Breathed Scripture but an aspect of Rabbinical/Oral laws

of Judaism. Demonizing the apocryphal books as heresy and repeating the lies of Judaism to discredit LXX does grave injustice to its role and purpose in in biblical history.