



# Protestant Omitted Canonical Books of the Old Testament

## Introduction

**For the Mighty Arrows reader, this issue Vol. 7 No. 1** will provide a place where the reader can go to read a narrative on the Protestant omitted canonical Holy Books. In 1611, when the King James Version of the Holy Bible was published it contained the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and New Testament Books ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King\\_James\\_Version\\_of\\_the\\_Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Version_of_the_Bible)). These Books have historically appeared without omission in the Greek Version of the Old Testament, “Septuagint” which as Coptic Orthodox we have always adhered to.

**Over time, re-printing of the King James version** of the Holy Bible began to exclude the Apocrypha (a commonly used non-Orthodox term denoting the omitted canonical Books used to paraphrase references within this introduction only), and when the American Standard version of the Holy Bible emerged in 1901 it also did not contain the Apocrypha. In 1952, a Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible was also printed that did not contain the Apocrypha. In 1973 a common Holy Bible which included the Apocrypha was printed at the request of Roman Catholics and Protestants.

**The reprinting of the Apocrypha used the basic** text, the Greek Septuagint, which the Coptic Orthodox Church has utilized consistently throughout church history. Therefore the Coptic Orthodox Church has not been found lacking or omitting these canonical books and so terms these books, “Protestant omitted canonical Holy Books,” or “omitted canonical Holy Books” correctly designating the Holy Books not Apocrypha or Deuterocanonical (because they are not second in importance).

**According to Dr. Emile Maher Ishak** (currently recognized as Rev. Fr. Shenouda Maher Ishak serving in Rochester, NY), past professor of Old Testament and

Theology in the Coptic Orthodox Theological College at Cairo (1997) and the author of, *The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, states “History alone allows us to establish the fact that Jews and Christians have always believed in the inspiration of the Holy Books of the Bible. These Holy Books are held sacred and canonical, not because having been put together merely by human labor and afterwards approved by the Church’s authority, but because having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and as such, they have been handed down to the Church itself as an unerring guide to her.”

**The omitted Canonical Books are held sacred by the** Coptic Orthodox Church and include the Holy Books of Tobit, Judith, Additions to the Holy Book of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach, Baruch, The Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to the Holy Book of Daniel (The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon), I and II Esdras, Psalm 151 following Psalm 150, and I, II, and III and IV Maccabees.

The following abbreviations are used in listing the “Protestant omitted canonical Holy Books”:	
Tob.....	Tobit
Jdt .....	Judith
Add Esth.....	Additions to Esther
Wis.....	Wisdom
Sir .....	Sirach
Bar .....	Baruch
I Esd .....	I Esdras
II Esd.....	II Esdras
Let Jer .....	Letter of Jeremiah
Song of Thr	Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Jews
Sus .....	Susanna
Bel.....	Bel and the Dragon
I Macc.....	I Maccabees
II Macc .....	II Maccabees
III Macc .....	III Maccabees
IV Macc.....	IV Maccabees

**Again, it should be commonly noted that the preferred** Coptic Orthodox terminology denoting these Holy Books is “**Protestant omitted canonical Holy Books**” rather than Apocryphal or Deuterocanonical Books.

## References:

Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America (1989), *The Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament New Revised Standard Version*. Cambridge



University Press, New York, NY.

Ishak, Emile M. (1997). The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Al-anba Ruweis Press, Cairo, Egypt.

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## The Holy Book of Tobit

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*“Tobias and the Angel,” represents God being nearer to us than we think. God is ready to assist us if we remain faithful to Him.*

Written in Aramaic, the original Holy Book of Tobit was lost for centuries. The Greek translation, existing in three different recensions, is our primary source. In 1955, fragments of the Holy Book in Aramaic and in Hebrew were recovered from Cave IV at Qumran. These texts are in substantial agreement with the Greek recension that has served as the basis for the present translation. This Holy

Book tells the story of Tobit, son of Tobiel of the descendants of Asiel, of the tribe of Naphtali.

Tobit was a righteous man who walked in the ways of truth all of his life. He performed many acts of charity for the people around him. He gave food to the hungry, and clothing to the naked. Tobit buried the bodies of the dead of his people who were thrown out behind the wall of Nineveh. One time someone told King Sennacherib that Tobit was doing these things, and the king ordered that he be put to death. Tobit ran away and hid from the king, and all his property was taken away. After a while the sons of Sennacherib killed their father, and appointed Ahikar, which is the son of Tobit’s brother Hanael, the cupbearer. Ahikar interceded for Tobit, and he returned to his family in Nineveh.

The Holy Book of Tobit is like one of the Lord Jesus Christ parables; there may be some historical basis for it but we do not know what it is. The Book of Tobit is a Wisdom Book because it offers instruction on how to live in relation to God and to one’s fellow men. Theological points to look for in the Holy Book are that God is nearer to us than we think and He is ready to assist us if we remain faithful to Him. Love for God must be shown in virtuous deeds and not just in words. We should think highly of burying the dead properly, remaining chaste before marriage, being faithful to one’s wife or husband, prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

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## The Holy Book of Judith

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Judith was a Protestant omitted canonical Holy Book that