



Septuagint and Reliability

Septuagint - What is It?

Septuagint (sometimes abbreviated LXX) is the name given to the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures. The Septuagint has its origin in Alexandria, Egypt and was translated between 300-200 BC. Widely used among Hellenistic Jews, this Greek translation was produced because many Jews spread throughout the empire were beginning to lose their Hebrew language. The process of translating the Hebrew to Greek also gave many non-Jews a glimpse into Judaism. According to an ancient document called the *Letter of Aristeas*, it is believed that 70 to 72 Jewish scholars were commissioned during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus to carry out the task of translation. The term "Septuagint" means seventy in Latin, and the text is so named to the credit of these 70 scholars.

Septuagint - Influence on Christianity

The Septuagint was also a source of the Old Testament for early Christians during the first few centuries AD. Many early Christians spoke and read Greek, thus they relied on the Septuagint translation for most of their understanding of the Old Testament. The New Testament writers also relied heavily on the Septuagint, as a majority of Old Testament quotes cited in the New Testament are quoted directly from the Septuagint (others are quoted from the Hebrew texts). Greek church fathers are also known to have quoted from the Septuagint. Even today, the Eastern Orthodox Church relies on the Septuagint for its Old Testament teachings. Some modern Bible translations also use the Septuagint along side Hebrew manuscripts as their source text.

Septuagint - What Does It Contain?

The Septuagint contains the standard 39 books of the Old Testament canon, as well as certain apocryphal books. The term "Apocrypha" was coined by the fifth-century biblical scholar, Jerome, and generally refers to the set of ancient Jewish writings written during the period between the last book in the Jewish scriptures, Malachi, and the arrival of Jesus Christ. The apocryphal books include Judith, Tobit, Baruch, Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus), the Wisdom of Solomon, First and Second Maccabees, the two Books of Esdras, additions to the Book of Esther, additions to the Book of Daniel, and the Prayer of Manasseh.

The Apocryphal books were included in the Septuagint for historical and religious purposes, but are not recognized by Protestant Christians or Orthodox Jews as canonical (inspired by God). Most reformed teachers will point out that the New Testament writers never quoted from the Apocryphal books, and that the Apocrypha was never considered part of the canonical Jewish scripture. However, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches include the Apocrypha in their Bible (except for the books of Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh).

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