

## PREFACE TO THE APOCRYPHAL/DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS OF THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

When the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible was published in 1611, it contained, between the Old and the New Testaments, the books of the Apocrypha. These are books and portions of books that appear in the Latin Vulgate, either as part of the Old Testament or as an appendix, but are not in the Hebrew Bible. With the exception of 2 Esdras, these books appear also in the Greek version of the Old Testament that is known as the Septuagint.

In the course of time printers began to issue editions of the King James Bible without the books of the Apocrypha, and when the American Standard Version of the Bible was published in 1901, it did not include the Apocrypha. After the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was issued in 1952, a request came from the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church that the Standard Bible Committee undertake also the revision of the English translation of the Apocrypha. This work was accomplished in 1957. It was on the basis of this version that the text of a 'Common Bible,' approved by both Roman Catholics and Protestants, was issued in 1973. Subsequently, in order to include all the texts accepted as Deuterocanonical by Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Standard Bible Committee prepared a version of 3 and 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151. These were issued in 1977, and the expanded edition of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books was endorsed by representatives of Orthodox communions. Since the contents of the collection known as Deuterocanonical Books vary among the churches that recognize them as authoritative, in the interest of clear identification they have been arranged in the New Revised Standard Version in four sections (see the Table of Contents).

For the translation of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books the Committee made use of a number of texts. In the case of most of the books the basic text was the standard edition of the Greek Septuagint prepared by Alfred Rahlfs and published by the Württemberg Bible Society (Stuttgart, 1935). For several of the books the more recently published individual volumes of Göttingen Septuagint project were utilized. For the book of Tobit it was decided to follow the form of the Greek text found in codex Sinaiticus (supported as it is by evidence from Qumran); where this text is defective, it was supplemented and corrected by other Greek manuscripts. For the three Additions to Daniel (namely, Susanna, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews, and Bel and the Dragon) the Committee continued to use the Greek version attributed to Theodotion (the so-called "Theodotion-Daniel"). In translating Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), while constant reference was made to the Hebrew fragments of a large portion of this book (those discovered at Qumran and Masada as well as those recovered from the Cairo Geniza), the Committee generally followed the Greek text (including verse numbers) published by Joseph Ziegler in the Göttingen Septuagint (1965). But in many places the Committee has translated the Hebrew text when this provides a reading that is clearly superior to the Greek; the Syriac and Latin versions were also consulted throughout and occasionally adopted. The basic text adopted in rendering 2 Esdras is the Latin version given in the *Biblia Sacra*, edited by Robert Weber (Stuttgart, 1971). This was supplemented by consulting the Latin text as edited by R.L. Bensly (1895) and by Bruno Violet (1910), as well as the several Oriental versions of 2 Esdras, namely, the Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic (two forms, referred to as Arabic 1 and Arabic 2), Armenian, and Georgian versions. Finally, since the Additions to the Book of Esther are disjointed and unintelligible as they stand in most editions of the Apocrypha, we have provided them with their original context by translating the whole of the Greek version of Esther from Robert Hanhart's Göttingen edition (1983).

For the Committee,  
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