

Here again we have **Sirach**, an apocryphal book, which Protestant Bibles list separately. I explained the whole thing in October. Here is a short version:

The Book of **Sirach** is part of the Wisdom Literature of the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate Bible. While originally written in Hebrew, the Book was known only through its Greek translation, known as Σιράχ [in Greek]. It was translated at Alexandria in Egypt, into Greek by the author's grandson for the Jews living in there in Egypt who no longer spoke Hebrew. [important because the Rabbis at Jamnia thought it was **originally** written in Greek, in Egypt, so they rejected it.]

**Sirach** was not included in the Hebrew Masoretic Text as part of the Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament because they thought it was: A) written first in Greek and B) not in Palestine. How did that happen? Following a revolt by Jewish Zealots, the Romans conquered Jerusalem in 70 AD. They leveled the Temple of Herod [except for the Wall which remains today]. They scattered the Jewish leaders throughout the empire [which actually helped the spread of Xtianity!]

Problem is, as I mentioned before, there was no ONE book “marked” Old Testament. There were in fact many holy writings read, known, and respected. Which ‘scriptures’ were really authentic and inspired? So in 90 AD Palestinian Rabbis gathered at Jamnia in Israel and came up with some rules. One rule was it had to have been written in HEBREW, and 2nd written IN ISRAEL.

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What about the Apocrypha? [usually now included separately in Protestant Bibles.]

The OT Apocrypha books, the ones not accepted by Luther and other Protestants, are ALL found in the OLDEST manuscripts: **\*\*Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Beza** and are included in the Catholic, most Eastern Christian, Assyrian and Coptic Bibles. They were in the Gutenberg Bible, as they were in Jerome’s Vulgate, and in the first King James Version! They are:

- Tobit
- Judith
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees
- **Wisdom** [of Solomon]
- [Wisdom of] **Sirach** (Ecclesiasticus)
- Baruch including the Letter of Jeremiah
  - parts of Esther
  - additions to Daniel

And Surprise!! These today have all been found in Hebrew versions; MOST of them were also quoted in other OT books—and by the Evangelists in the NT books. So they were well known.

What books were to be considered **INSPIRED**, and so fit for formal use in ceremonies, took time to establish. Who decided that? Ans: The **CHURCH**. Eventually the **CHURCH** decided to use those books which were more or less universally accepted. With the NT there is no difference of inspired books **TODAY**. Everyone accepts the same books. But that was **NOT** established or clear right at the beginning. The NT took about 250 years to finalize what to include.

The OT is a different story from the NT. So the Question is Why? Why do some books of the OT count but others don’t? At least as inspired by Protestants and for Jews? The Jews at Jamnia set some criteria. **BUT** some that they thought fit the criteria, we now know don’t; and some, like **Sirach**, we now know **do fit** the criteria.

Having said all that, why doesn’t everyone think they are ‘inspired’?

First reason: When Luther came along, he thought: “Well here is the Byzantine Codex. Byzantium is Constantinople; They speak Greek, so it must be the best source.” These books were not in the Byzantine Codex, so Luther thought they didn’t belong. **He was wrong**. He didn’t know about **Sinaiticus**, the OLDEST codex, which includes them, for example.

Today's readings: SIRACH—and the Psalm—basically say the same thing: *God will bless those who honor their fathers and mothers*. Especially when the parents get Alzheimers. Remember how you put your parents through Hell when you were a teen! A chance to make some repayment.

Paul's Epistle (letter) to the COLOSSIANS, the people of Colossus, in modern Turkey, lists obligations for Fathers, Mothers, and kids. But TWO for the dads! My aunt Middie would always say, "I will love Frank, but I will NOT obey him." I add Middie's words for those who object to the last part, but ignore the "husbands love your wives" part. That at times may be harder?

The GOSPEL is from Matthew. Remember he is writing for JEWS. He is most concerned with showing that JESUS the Messiah-Christ FULFILLS all the OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES.

Matt emphasizes JOSEPH; Luke, MARY. Tradition has it that LUKE got his 'story' from Mary.

Remember how Matt started his Gospel with "14 generations from . . . and 14 . . . and 14.  
*v. 17 Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations.*

Why 14? Because like most ancient languages the Letters of the alphabet were also NUMBERS. The number 14 in Hebrew is DVD = DaViD. = דַּבְּדָהּ + 6 + 4

It is a shorthand way for Matt to say that JESUS is the Son of DAVID. ד = dalesh ו = va

In this Gospel today Matthew does both: first, he shows that Jesus does fulfill the OT prophesies and 2<sup>nd</sup> Matthew emphasizes that JOSEPH acted on his FAITH and TRUST in God's message. [More churches are named for Joseph in Germany than any other person.]

So Jesus, the new Moses, will lead his people! He is saved, like Moses, from being killed and 'comes out of Egypt', like Moses. Yahweh told Moses to tell the Pharaoh that Israel is God's "first-born son" and "let my son go that he may serve me." So here Matthew is identifying Jesus, the "first-born son", with the nation of Israel and the story of the Exodus.

Like the Pharaoh, Herod does NOT thwart God's plan—because of Joseph's TRUST and FAITH.

Hosea 11:1 says, the same: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." Matthew shows Jesus the Child coming out of Egypt.

. . . what had been spoken through the prophets. . . He shall be called a Nazorean.

What does Nazorean mean? Some questions?

Which prophet? Probably means prophets in general not one particular one. Remember Matt wants to show that Jesus IS the XT, who fulfills all that the prophets preached.

And -- He shall be called a Nazorean?

1 possibly means only that he comes from Nazareth, a most INSIGNIFICANT small village. In Galilee! Think a small hamlet in WV. How insignificant. God picks the least likely!

2 possibly from Isaiah 11:1: But a **shoot** shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a **bud [netzer]** shall blossom. Shows that Jesus IS that **shoot** of Jesse, Father of DAVID and XT.

3 That he is, like a Nazorite, **totally dedicated** to God. A Nazorite was consecrated and bound by a vow to God, to not cut his hair, eat meat, or drink alcohol. Xt is **totally dedicated** on the Cross.

4 Maybe all Three! God chose David, the youngest and LEAST likely; Jesus is a BLOOMING FLOWER from Jesse's branch LIKE King David; and Jesus is totally bound to God.