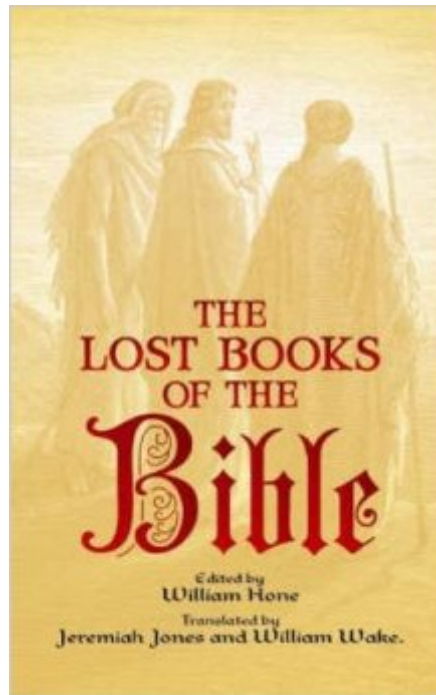


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The Lost Books Of The Bible (Dover Value Editions)



Synopsis

Rediscovered in modern times, these "non-canonical" gospels, epistles, and other pieces were excised from the standard Bible by various church councils in the first four centuries of the Christian era. Here, among other texts, are writings describing the girlhood and betrothal of Mary and her life before Christ's birth; the childhood of Jesus, as described by Peter and Nicodemus; and the appearance of Christ before the gates of Hell, from whence he leads Adam and the saints to Paradise. Translated from the original languages, with 32 illustrations from ancient paintings and missals, *The Lost Books of the Bible*, helps give depth to the historical characters of Jesus, Mary, the apostles, and other figures of the New Testament. Presented without argument or commentary, these apocryphal texts are fascinating, often provocative, reading. An essential resource for the study of biblical history and theology, this authentic presentation of the "lost" Scriptures can be enjoyed for its beauty and directness, while also adding to one's understanding of life in Judea during the first century A.D.

Book Information

Series: Dover Value Editions

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486443906

ISBN-13: 978-0486443904

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (104 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #284,883 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #63 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Additional Texts > Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha](#) #4312 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Bible Study](#) #26598 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs](#)

Customer Reviews

This is a reprinting (no updates) of a text published in 1928. It contains Christian (New Testament) "apocrypha and pseudepigrapha" (hereafter NTAP) -- books which some considered to be scripture in the past, but which were not included in the canonical Bible as used by mainstream Christians today. This book (available in several different printings, sometimes bound with "The Lost Books of

Eden") is the most economical way to get acquainted with this material. It includes some simple critical notes describing the origins of these texts. If you have a larger budget, the current standard edition (available through .COM) is Schneemelcher's "New Testament Apocrypha." The original publication dates are important here, because biblical archaeology and textual studies have progressed substantially in the past seventy years. For example, this book predates the discovery of the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, and accordingly does not include it. The NTAP is the source of many Christian traditions. For instance, many believe that Mary's mother was Saint Anne. The only written source for this information is the "Protovangelion", in the NTAP. On the other hand, The "Infancy Gospel", included in this book, claims to tell stories of the early days of Jesus's life. I think any committed Christian reading the "Infancy Gospel" would understand why the Church Fathers believed it was not inspired and therefore did not include it in the canonical Bible. It presents Jesus as divine, yet also having the personality of a five-year-old boy. For example: "When the Lord Jesus was coming home in the evening with Joseph, he met a boy who ran so hard against him, that he threw him down; To whom the Lord Jesus said `As thou hast thrown me down, so shalt thou fall, nor ever rise.' And that moment the boy fell down and died." (I infancy, Ch. XIX, vv. 22-24)

A good variety and collection of books which, for whatever reason, were excluded by the early Church councils from what became the Old Testament and New Testament. Initially published as a group in 1926, each one of the "Lost Books" includes a brief introduction giving background and history. Like the editors of this two-part volume, I do not feel it is necessary to share my opinion of the historicity of these works, each reader can decide for him or herself what is shadow and what is worthy in his own esteem, and consider the debate which at one time engulfed some of these books. This volume is divided into two sections. The first is called "Lost Books of the Bible", and includes works which deal with Jesus & Company, and may at one time have been considered part of the New Testament Gospel in various bishoprics (prior to successive Councils and later the establishment of Roman and other Orthodox sects). Includes are the following 26 "lost" books: Mary, Protevangelion, I. Infancy, II. Infancy, Christ and Abgarus, Nicodemus, The Apostles' Creed, Laodiceans, Paul and Seneca, Paul and Thecla, I. Clement, II. Clement, Barnabus, Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnaeans, Polycarp, Philippians, I. Hermas-Visions, II. Herman-Commands, III. Hermas-Similitudes, Letters of Herod and Pilate, The Last Gospel of Peter. There is even room in the margin for little notes to yourself as you read. I found it helpful to devote a specific portion of time to each chapter and consider its implications, weigh the quality of the writing, etc. This is an interesting window into the formation of Christianity during its

first several hundred years. Also, don't miss the book "The Lost Books of Eden", which covers *JEWISH WORKS* :) which were not included in the Canon due to their more recent origin (ONLY about 2,200-2,000 years old).

Originally published in 1926, the 1979 edition of this work purports to illustrate religious works "not included" by the compilers of the New Testament. It is an interesting read, with each book prefaced by scholarly opinions of how legitimate the material is. Some books directly echo the accepted New Testament, such as the book `Infancy' and `Mary'; others have the same title, such as `Ephesians', with some of the same ideas as found in the New Testament. Others, such as the books dealing with Pontius Pilate, seem to contain historical inaccuracies (such as who exactly the Roman emperor was at the time), which lead to doubt about authenticity (although it is interesting to read). I would recommend this book, although it is dense, and the print is NOT reader-friendly, as a companion piece to other `apocryphal' literature, but a newer edition might be more instructive.

A collection of ancient Christian documents, some of which were considered and rejected when the New Testament was being compiled. I found it very interesting, particularly regarding Jesus's and Mary's childhoods.

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