



# History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha (Classic Reprint)

*Robert H. Pfeiffer*

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Excerpt from History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha

"If you steal from one author, it's plagiarism;  
If you steal from many, it's research."

Wilson Mizner

After eight years, later than anticipated, I present here the sequel and completion of my Introduction to the Old Testament. The unexpectedly warm reception and generous appraisal of that book had encouraged me to write an Introduction to the Apocrypha in the same style and for the same public; but after completing it, I could not resist the temptation to preface it with a history of the period in which the Apocrypha were written.

The incredibly favorable reviews and astonishing wide circulation of the first volume produced in me a sense of duty - a most distressing feeling - urging the completion of the work. In addition to what seemed to me a royal command to undertake this considerable labor, I may adduce two other reasons as my excuse for inflicting on long-suffering readers another bulky tome.

First of all, like other writers of manuals, I was convinced (O blissful illusion!) that my book was needed, for no other book in existence presented the same information quite as well! Otherwise no university instructor who does not expect academic promotion or other advantages from his book, would ever submit to the labor and mental agony involved in its preparation - unless he was utterly insane. When I began to teach a course on "The Intertestamental Period" at the Boston University School of Theology twenty-five years ago, I could find no textbook for my students except the five-volume antiquated English translation of Emil Schürer's great *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, out of print in English and German; I had luckily purchased a copy of the last German edition, and thus prepared a lecture course!

The second reason is merely the momentum derived from the fun of teaching that course through the years. If the students had not shown interest in the subject and given me every encouragement, I might merely have written an introduction to the Apocrypha. Here instead are two books in one: a summary of the history, religion, and literature of Judaism from 200 b.c. to a.d. 200 (much briefer than Schürer's); and an introduction to the Apocrypha (much more detailed than Schürer's or any other known to me).

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