

Apocrypha, Versions of

I know that the Apocrypha is not considered canonical Scripture by Jews or Protestants, but I am interested in finding a suitable modern English translation to use for reference. Which one(s) can you recommend?

There are five main versions of the Apocrypha included with some major Bible versions that our ministry employs in our research. These include the following in the order of their publication, along with a brief description of the Bible they are included with. This same order happens to be the order in which we generally use them for study:

1. **Revised Standard Version (1952):** This is considered today to be a centrist-liberal Bible version, even though about 95% of it is reproduced word-for-word in the more conservative New American Standard. Its Apocrypha translation is somewhat literal, and true to the Septuagint Greek text behind it. It represents an ecumenical Protestant perspective, with some Anglican and Catholic influences.
2. **New English Bible (1970):** This was the first modern Bible translation produced for Christians in the United Kingdom, and represents an ecumenical perspective including the Church of England, British Protestant denominations, and British Catholicism. Its Apocrypha translation represents a more “dynamic equivalency” translation, than the RSV Apocrypha. Overall, the translation is left of center.
3. **New Revised Standard Version (1989):** This is the revised edition of the RSV, which primarily updates the RSV to include new scholarship unavailable when the RSV was produced. The NRSV represents a liberal ecumenical perspective, and employs the concept known as inclusive language, whereby terms relating to “man” or “mankind” are replaced with the more neutral “human” or “humanity.” The NRSV Apocrypha, while not being as literal as the RSV Apocrypha, notably includes the Eastern Orthodox Apocrypha, and texts that neither Roman Catholicism nor the Anglican Church consider canonical.
4. **Revised English Bible (1989):** This is the revised edition of the NEB, produced primarily for Christians in the U.K. It employs inclusive language, and represents a liberal ecumenical perspective.
5. **New Jerusalem Bible (2000):** This is a Catholic Bible translation that is Catholic-conservative in its approach, but employs a total dynamic equivalence. Its Apocryphal books are not organized between the Old and New Testaments, but instead are sorted in with the Old Testament books.