

## INTERTESTAMENTAL WRITINGS: SOME VOCABULARY.

APOCALYPTIC. ( Gk: apo, from; kalypto, cover: to take from hiding; uncover, disclose, reveal): A highly imaginative style of narrative writing which comprises, or has elements comprising of i) a revelation given by God ii) through a mediator (angel) iii) to a seer iv) interpreting events v) for the consolation (con-solid-ation) of a faith-community vi) in crisis.

An 'apocalypse' refers to a book of this style. 'The Apocalypse' refers to the Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament. The style flourished in Jewish and Christian religious writing for (broadly) about two centuries before and after Christ and is the style of writing characterising the apocryphal books of that period.

APOCRYPHA. ( apo, from; krypto, hide): The books and portions of books not finally accepted by Judaism or the early Church as canonical scripture.

CANON. ( kanon: rod, rule, measure, norm): The collection of writings which give witness to the experiences, and the reflection and interpretation of the experiences, of the originating community, received as the norm regulating the faith and practice of the continuing community.

DEUTERO-CANONICAL. ( deutero: second; kanon: norm): The books or parts of books not accepted as canonical in the Hebrew bible but accepted by the Septuagint (LXX) and early church fathers and councils as canonical.

ESCHATOLOGY (Gk, eschaton, last): The sense of finality and purposefulness increasingly permeating the revelation of God recorded in Scripture, and the tradition of Israel.

MIDRASH. (Heb, mi, from √ drs, search, enquire): Commentary on Scripture gained from 'searching' the Scripture. It is either HALAKHIC: (Heb, √ hlk, walk, behave (morally)): moral commentary, legal commentary, or HAGGADIC (Heb, √ ngd, tell (a story)): narrative commentary, homiletical or exegetical commentary.

MISHNA(H) (Heb, mi, from; √ sna, repeat): the authoritative collection of rabbinic halakhic (legal) material arranged by Judah ha Nasi (3 cent C.E.) which provides the foundation and structure of the Talmud.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHA (-ic). ( Gk, psuedo: false; epigrapho: write upon): 'written upon a false [name]': Jewish or Jewish-Hellenistic writings in apocalyptic style which use the name of biblical figures, prophets or patriarchs pseudepigraphally.

TALMUD (Heb. √ lmd, learn, teach): Comprehensive term for the Mishna and its commentary, the Gamara, developed in Tiberias (PALESTINIAN TALMUD - much lost) and Babylon (BABYLONIAN TALMUD): 5894 pages, and based on the Mishna, it is divided into 6 orders having 63 tractates.

TARGUM(IM): (Aramaic: translation(s); interpretation(s)):  
The Aramaic translation(s)/interpretation(s) of the Hebrew or LXX arising from the synagogal practice of commenting on the scriptures for the benefit of Aramaic speaking Jews, and hence becoming more paraphrase and interpretation rather than just translation.

TORAH (Heb, √ yrh, point, show (the way)): strictly, the first five canonical books of the Hebrew Scriptures; more broadly, the whole tradition of Jewish law and practice.

cf Richard N. Soulen. Handbook of Biblical Criticism. 2nd Edn. John Knox. 1981.  
Anchor Bible Dictionary. Vols I-VI. Ed. D.N. Freedman. Doubleday. 1992.