



Apocrypha

Books Excluded from the Protestant Bible

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Some Protestant reasons for exclusion of Apocrypha from their Bible

In 1546, the Council of Trent claimed that books of the Apocrypha were to be included in their Bible by the Roman Catholic Church. They decided that these specific books were sacred writings which are the norm for faith among believers, and declared them "inspired" and thus a part of the canon of the Old Testament of the Holy Bible.

The canon that contains the Apocrypha is sometimes called the "Alexandrian Canon," as opposed to the "Palestinian Canon" which excludes the Apocrypha. Protestants disputed this inclusion for many reasons...

1. Jesus Christ did not quote from these books as authoritative Scripture.
2. The Jews, who were entrusted to the oracles of God within the Old Testament (Rom. 3:2), did not view these books inspired.
3. It was only in the fifth century that these books were declared "inspired" by the Roman Catholic Church
4. St. Augustine's teachings led to the acceptance of the books, which was refuted by St. Jerome
5. St. Jerome, the most biblical scholar, emphatically rejected these books of the Apocrypha.
6. These books were added by the Catholic Bible to support false doctrines of Purgatory (II Macc 12:45) and salvation by "works" (Tob. 12:9; Eccus. 3:30).
7. The Apocrypha does not claim to come from inspiration of God, and there were probably no prophets of God at the time the books were written.
8. There is no new knowledge about Christ the Messiah added, which is in direct contrast to Scripture that states "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophesy" (Rev. 19:10)
9. Some of the stories within the Apocrypha books of Bel and the Dragon, Additions to Esther, Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Tobit, and Judith are extrabiblical and fanciful.
10. Prayers for the Dead (2 Macc. 12:45-46) and Salvation by Works (Tobit 12:9) directly conflict with Scripture concerning praying for the dead (Heb 9:27; Luke 16:25-26; 2 Sam 12:19) and doing works for salvation (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:5; Gal 3:11).
11. Unlike the inerrant Word of God contained within the "Palestinian Canon," the Apocrypha contained within the "Alexandrian Canon" has both historical and chronological errors. Tobit falsely claims that Tobit was alive when the Assyrians conquered Israel (722 B.C.) and when Jeroboam revolted against Judah (931 B.C.), yet his total life-span was recorded as 158 years in Tobit 14:11; cf. 1:3-5). Also, Judith speaks of Nebuchadnezzar as reigning in Nineveh instead of Babylon (Judith 1).

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Some Reasons that Roman Catholics accept the Apocrypha

1. The New Testament refers to events contained within the Apocrypha (Hebrews 11:25 with 2 Macc. 7, 12).
2. The New Testament reflects the ideas of the Apocrypha; neither offer conflicting thoughts.
3. Clement, Irenaeus, and Tertullian accepted all of the books of the Apocrypha as canonical, and many of the early church fathers used the Apocrypha as Scripture in their worship service.
4. Christian catacombs have scenes depicting accounts from the Apocrypha showing a high regard for the Apocrypha.
5. The Apocrypha is interposed among great Greek manuscripts translating Old Testament books, showing the relationship of the Jewish-Greek translation of the Old Testament.
6. The Council of Rome (A.D. 382), the Council of Hippo (393), and the Council of Carthage (397) accepted the Apocrypha.
7. The Eastern Orthodox Church also accepts the Apocrypha, which removes its designation as simply a Catholic dogma.
8. Some books from the Apocrypha have been discovered among the Old Testament books in the Dead Sea community at Qumran. This suggests that they were originally associated closely with the Hebrew Canon.

The books of the Roman Catholic Apocrypha included in their Bible

1. Tobit - Religious Romance (c. 200 B.C.)
2. Judith - Religious Romance (c. 150 B.C.)
3. Additions to Esther - Legendary (140-130 B.C.)
4. The Wisdom of Solomon - Didactic (c. 30 B.C.)
5. Ecclesiasticus - Didactic (132 B.C.)
6. Baruch - Prophetic (c. 150-50 B.C.)
7. The Letter of Jeremiah - Legendary (c. 300-100 B.C.)
8. Payer of Azariah - Legendary (Second or First Century B.C.) (Song of Three Young Men)
9. Susanna - Legendary (Second or First Century B.C.)
10. Bel and the Dragon - Legendary (c. 100 B.C.)
11. 1 Maccabees - Historic (c. 110 B.C.)
12. II Maccabees - Historic (c. 110-70 B.C.)

It should be noted that there are additional books included in some Orthodox Bibles that are also considered Apocrypha, which include the historic book 1 Esdras (c. 150-100 B.C.), and the legendary books, 2 Esdras (c. A.D. 100) and the Prayer of Manasseh (second or first century B.C.)

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