

How We Got the Bible

The Old Testament Canon – Part 1

How can we be sure that the 39 books of our OT are the

Canon: the standard or rule for our faith and practice. The canon refers to the 66 books that are our rule and standard of faith and practice.

Man did not decide the canon. We believe the Holy Spirit decided and determined to bring the books together the way we have them. It is important to understand that believers *discovered* rather than *determined* what books would be brought together. Our view is that the Holy Spirit determined which books would be brought together. For many people the canonicity of the Bible is the weak link in the chain of God's revelation coming together in one volume for us today. However the same Holy Spirit who inspired the writings is the Holy Spirit that brought the books together.

The books that make up our O.T. are not the only books the ancient Hebrews wrote. The Bible makes reference to other books we don't have. (Jasher, Joshua 10:13; the book of the wars of the LORD, Numbers 21:14; books of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, 1Ch. 29:29; Iddo 2Ch. 12:15). Even ancient writings which are preserved are not a part of our Bible. Even though some of them were authored by Bible authors. These writings include the Apocrypha (hidden books) and Pseudepigrapha (false inscriptions). Why are these books not included in our Bibles?

We do not have 39 books in our Old Testament because they are the only books the ancient Hebrews wrote. The books of our Bible are a sub-set of a larger collection of books. Also, not every book written by a Bible author is included in the O.T. There is something different about the 39 books

1. Neither one of these collections of books have ever been accepted or even considered by the Jews as inspired. Even the Catholic church does not recognize the pseudepigrapha. Roman Catholic Cardinal Thomas Cajetan (1469-1534) said, "Here we close our commentaries on the historical books of the Old Testament. For the rest (that is, Judith, Tobit, and the books of Maccabees) are counted by St. Jerome out of the canonical books, and are placed amongst the apocrypha, along with Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, as is plain from the Protogus Galeatus. Nor be thou disturbed, like a raw scholar, if thou shouldst find anywhere, either in the sacred councils or the sacred doctors, these books reckoned as canonical. For the words as well of councils as of doctors are to be reduced to the correction of Jerome. Now, according to his judgment, in the epistle to the bishops Chromatius and Heliodorus, these books (and any other like books in the canon of the Bible) are not canonical, that is, not in the nature of a rule for confirming matters of faith." (Cardinal Cajetan, "Commentary on all the Authentic Historical Books of the Old Testament," cited by William Whitaker in "A Disputation on Holy Scripture," Cambridge: Parker Society (1849), p. 424)

The Catholic church defined the canon to include the Apocrypha in 1546. The Catholic Encyclopedia states: "The most explicit definition of the Catholic Canon is that given by the Council of Trent, Session IV, 1546. For the Old Testaments catalogue reads as follows: The five

books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), Josue, Judges, Ruth, the four books of Kings, two of Paralipomenon, the first and second of Esdras (which latter is called Nehemias), Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, the Davidic Psalter (in number one hundred and fifty Psalms), Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaias, Jeremias, with Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, the twelve minor prophets (Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Zophonieas, Aggeus, Zacarias, Malachias), two books of Machabees, the first and second.”

Jewish encyclopedia states, “There were controversies concerning the admission into the canon of the Book of Ezekiel, Solomon’s three books (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon), and Esther. But no controversy arose concerning the Apocrypha: all were agreed that they were non-canonical.”

Early church fathers: Origin (185-254), Melito of Sardis (died c. 180) both stated there were 22 books (while counting 24)

The well-known Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 95) writes in his *Against Apion* that there “are but twenty-two” books “which are justly accredited.”

Jerome, who translated the Latin Vulgate, put the Jewish biblical canon at twenty-four books. (The Biblical Canon pp. 205)

2. None of the 14 books of the Apocrypha is quoted in the N.T. The Catholic Encyclopedia makes the following claim: “ St. Paul seems to quote the Greek text of Judith 8:14, in 1 Corinthians 2:10 (cf. also 1 Corinthians 10:10, with Judith 8:25).”
3. The Apocryphal books contain doctrines that contradict our Bible books.
 - A. Prayers and alms for the dead: 2 Maccabees 12:43-45
 - B. Giving alms to obtain salvation. Sirach) 3:30; Tobit 12:8-9
 - C. The existence of Purgatory: 2 Maccabees 12:43-45
 - D. Magic: Tobit 6:5-8
 - E. Error: Sirach 12:4-7; 2Esdras 6:42
4. The Apocrypha was never received by orthodox believers in the Christian church. John Bunyan in *Grace Abounding* stated that the texts of the Apocrypha were not holy and canonical.

The Geneva Bible prints a disclaimer on the Apocrypha. It says in part, “The books that...are called Apocrypha, that is books, which were not received by a common consent to be read and expounded publicly in the Church, neither yet served to prove any point of Christian religion, save in as much as they had the content of the other Scriptures called Canonical.”

Jewish order of the books v. Luke 11:51

“The End of the Prophets” – statement printed in some Bibles after the book of Malachi. 1
Maccabees 4:46; 9:27; 14:41

Apocryphal Books

1 Esdras (c. 150 B.C.)

2 Esdras (A.D. 70-135)

Tobit (250-175 B.C.)

Judith (175 – 110 B.C.)

Additions to Esther (180 – 145 B.C.) Esther 400-300 BC

Wisdom of Solomon (150 B.C. – A.D. 40)

Ecclesiasticus/Sirach (190 B.C.)

Baruch (200 B.C. – A.D. 70)

Song of the Three Children (167 – 153 B.C.?) Addition to Daniel 3 (Daniel 620-538 BC)

Susanna (c. 100 B.C.) Daniel 13

Bel and the Dragon (150 – 100 B.C.?) Daniel 14

Prayer of Manasseh (150 – 50 B.C.?)

1 Maccabees (103 – 63 B.C.?)

2 Maccabees (c. 100 B.C.)

(Source: Archaeological Study Bible, Zondervan, Grand Rapids Michigan, 2010, pp. 1740)

Ancient poets quoted by Paul:

Aratus [Greek poet] 310 – 240 B.C. – Acts 17:28 (Maybe Epimenides)

Menander [Greek dramatist] 342 – 291 B.C. – 1Co. 15:33

Epimenides [Cretan Seer] 538 B.C. – Titus 1:12

Jannes & Jambres [the Apocrypha of Jannes & Jambres ?? (per Origin, b. ca. 185) 2Ti 3:8

Book of Enoch (pseudepigrapha) possibly quoted by Jude

Enoch 1:9 And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones To execute judgement upon all, And to destroy all the ungodly: And to convict all flesh Of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

Jude 14,15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

HEBREW (Proper chronological order) [Josephus numbering]

(Source: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=1025&letter=B#2928#ixzz1LaXNumCR>)

LAW

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

PROPHETS

6. Joshua
Judges
7. 1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
8. Jeremiah
9. Ezekiel
10. Isaiah
11. Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah

- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggi
- Zechariah
- Malachi

HAGIOGRAPHA (Sacred Writings)

12. Ruth
13. Psalm
14. Job
15. Proverbs
16. Ecclesiastes
17. SofS
18. Lamentations
19. Daniel
20. Esther
21. Ezra
Nehemiah
22. 1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles