

**Thesis:** Catholic Bibles have 46 Old Testament books versus our 39 books. The extra books (and chapters and verses) are called the Apocrypha. These additions may be safely rejected from God's Word for a variety of reasons: the Apocrypha is not included in the Hebrew OT, is not quoted in the NT, does not claim to be inspired, and is riddled with errors and false teachings. The Apocrypha is not inspired and ought to be rejected from canon. Our Bibles are complete.

## 1. Greeting

- a. Good morning!
- b.

## 2. Introduction

- a. Please turn to **2 Maccabees 12:38-45:**

[38] Then Judas assembled his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was coming on, they purified themselves according to the custom, and they kept the sabbath there.

[39] On the next day, as by that time it had become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kinsmen in the sepulchres of their fathers.

[40] Then under the tunic of every one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was why these men had fallen.

[41] So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous Judge, who reveals the things that are hidden;

[42] and they turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out. And the noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen.

[43] He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection.

[44] For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead.

[45] But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.

- i. You have probably noticed by now, that 2 Maccabees is not in our Bibles.
  1. However, this book and many others are included in the Bibles Catholics use.
  2. Their Bibles have 46 books in the Old Testament, whereas our Bibles have only 39 books.
  3. The extra seven books and additions to the books of Jeremiah, Esther, and Daniel comprise what is called the Apocrypha.
    - a. Apocrypha is a transliteration of the Greek word *apokruphos*, which literally means hidden.



- b. This morning, I will use the word Apocrypha to refer to the additions made to the Catholic Old Testament.
    - ii. By the way, I chose to read these verses from **2 Maccabees**, because this is where Catholics go in support of their teachings:
      - 1. Purgatory.
      - 2. Indulgences.
      - 3. Sacrifices and offerings for the dead.
      - 4. Prayers for the dead.
  - b. Therefore, the study of the Apocrypha is actually quite important.
    - i. We need to be absolutely certain whether or not these books ought to be included in our canon of scripture.
      - 1. We do not want to reject God's Word if, in fact, they should be included.
      - 2. On the other hand, we do not want to accept them as God's Word, if they should be excluded.
      - 3. We need to be certain our Bibles include everything that God wants us to have, read, study, and obey.
3. **Please consider this morning's study of the Apocrypha a faith-building exercise.**
- a. **Through its study we can be certain the Apocrypha is not God-breathed, and, therefore, safely rejected from the canon of scripture.**
  - b. **I could offer a myriad of reasons why these writings should be rejected, but in the interest of time, I submit to you four reasons why the Apocrypha should not be included in the Old Testament.**
4. **Reason #1: The Apocrypha is not included in the Hebrew canon (OT).**
- a. The Jews did not include the Apocrypha in their scriptures for a reason. The reason is found in **Malachi 4:4-6**:
    - i. <sup>4</sup> "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup> "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."
      - 1. These words were written at about 430 B.C.
        - a. To urge Israel to keep the law of Moses (**4:4**).
        - b. To be on the lookout for Elijah the prophet, the forerunner of the Lord (**4:5; 3:1**).
          - i. An implication of this is that there would be no more prophecy until the coming of Elijah.
            - 1. The Jews are still waiting for Elijah.
            - 2. The NT teaches this prophecy was fulfilled in John the Baptist.
              - a. According to Jesus, "[H]e is the Elijah who is to come" (**Matthew 11:14**).
    - 2. Here's the upshot: Jews understood that prophetic activity would cease from the time of Malachi until the coming of Elijah the prophet.
      - a. Obviously, if there are no prophets, then there are no inspired writings.



- b. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote, “We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine” (Against Apion 1:8).
    - i. These 22 books correspond to our 39 OT books.
  - c. He went on to write, “From Artaxerxes [his reign ended in 424 B.C.] to our own time the complete history has been written but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with earlier records because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets” (Against Apion 1:41).
    - i. Josephus considered everything written after Artaxerxes (424 B.C. ) to be of man, since prophetic activity had ceased.
  - d. The Talmud, the body of oral Jewish law, states, “The rabbis taught: Since the death of the last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Spirit has left Israel...”
3. Even the writers of the Apocrypha (which were written after 200 B.C) correctly understood that prophetic activities had ceased.
- a. **I Maccabees 9:27**, “Thus there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.”
  - b. A few chapters later we read, “[A]nd that the Jews and the priests were pleased that Simon would be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise” (**I Maccabees 14:41**).
- ii. Prophecy ceased after Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, exactly as foretold by the prophet Malachi.
- 1. Therefore, anything written after 425 B.C. until the time of John the Baptist cannot possibly be from God, because there were no prophets during this time.
    - a. The books of the Apocrypha were written during these silent years.
      - i. Consequently, they are merely works of men.
  - b. The Jews understood this and never admitted the Apocrypha into their canon.
5. **Reason #2: The Apocrypha is not quoted in the New Testament.**
- a. Although these books were never admitted into Hebrew canon, they did eventually make their way into the Septuagint, the first Greek translation of the Hebrew OT.
    - i. For whatever reason, later copies of the Septuagint included the books of the Apocrypha.
      - 1. Moreover, when quoting the OT, Jesus and the writers of the NT most often quote the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew OT.
      - 2. This is seemingly strong evidence in favor of including the Apocrypha in canon.



- a. The reasoning goes, “If it’s good enough for Jesus, if it’s good enough for Paul, if it’s good enough for Peter, then it is good enough for me.
      - b. They used a book that included the Apocrypha, and we should as well.”
    - ii. On the surface, this seems correct, until one realizes the Apocrypha is never quoted by Jesus or the penmen of the NT, despite their preference for the Septuagint.
      - I. Brother Wayne Jackson notes:
        - a. In fact, some one thousand quotations or allusions from thirty-five of the thirty-nine Old Testament books are found in the New Testament record. And yet, significantly, not once is any of these apocryphal books quoted or even explicitly referred to by the Lord, or by any New Testament writer. Noted scholar Emile Schurer argued that this is really remarkable since most of the New Testament habitually quoted from the LXX (1894, 99).
          - i. Despite the fact that the New Testament writers quote largely from the Septuagint rather than from the Hebrew Old Testament, there is not a single clear-cut case of a citation from any of the fourteen apocryphal books....The most that can be said is that the New Testament writers show acquaintance with these fourteen books and perhaps allude to them indirectly, but in no case do they quote them as inspired Scripture or cite them as authority (Unger 1951, 101).
    - iii. It is conceded that later copies of the Septuagint did include the Apocrypha. They did.
      - 1. However, Jesus and the writers of the New Testament never once quoted from or directly alluded to the Apocrypha, despite quoting largely from the Septuagint, which included these books by the of Jesus and the apostles.
      - 2. I see no problem having the Apocrypha bound together with the Holy Bible.
        - a. In fact, I have such a book here in my hands.
        - b. That being said, like Jesus and the NT penmen, we should not quote it or directly alluded to it as scripture.
    - b. The Apocrypha is not quoted in the New Testament.
6. **Reason #3: The Apocrypha does not claim to be inspired.**
- a. We find this claim for inspiration throughout the pages of the Bible.
    - i. The Old Testament makes this claim.
      - 1. David says in **2 Samuel 23:2**, “<sup>2</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me; his word is on my tongue.”
      - 2. **Jeremiah 1:9** reads, “<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, ‘Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.’”



3. The Old Testament claims to be the Word of God more than 3800 times; in fact, this claim is made about 175 times just in Psalm 119.
  - ii. The New Testament also claims to be the Word of God.
    1. Peter says in **2 Peter 1:21**, “<sup>21</sup> For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
    2. Paul writes in **2 Timothy 3:16**, “<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God...”
    3. He told the church in Corinth, “<sup>37</sup> If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord” (**1 Corinthians 14:37**).
    4. Like the OT, time and time again, the New Testament claims to be the Word of God.
  - b. The Apocrypha nowhere makes the claim for inspiration. In fact, some books claim the opposite; they claim to not be inspired.
    - i. In the prologue of Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Sirach) we read, “You are urged therefore to read with good will and attention and to be indulgent in cases where, despite our diligent labor in translating, we may seem to have rendered some expressions ineffectively.”
      1. It doesn’t sound like this man “was carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
    - ii. Or listen to how the writer of **2 Maccabees** ends his book. He writes, “So I too will here end my story. If it is well told and to the point, that is what I myself desired; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that was the best I could do” (**2 Maccabees 15:37b-38**).
      1. This writer sounds more like a high school student turning in paper.
        - a. “Teacher, it was the best I could do.”
        - b. It falls a little short of “thus says the Lord.”
  - c. The Old Testament makes the claim for inspiration.
  - d. The New Testament makes the claim for inspiration.
  - e. The Apocrypha, however, never makes this claim.
    - i. Rather, in places it confesses non-inspiration.
- 7. Reason #4: The Apocrypha does not bear the mark of inspiration; it is riddled with error, contradictions with Scripture, and false teachings.**
- a. The Apocrypha, being a product of man, contains errors.
    - i. The book of Tobit says Tobit lived to be 158 years old (**Tobit 14:11**).
      1. Elsewhere it says Tobit was alive when Jeroboam revolted against Jerusalem (931 B.C.) and when the Assyrians invaded Israel (722 B.C.) (**Tobit 1:3-5**).
        - a. That’s 209 years; 209 > 158. Obviously, there is an error somewhere.
    - ii. The book of **2 Maccabees** gives at least two conflicting accounts of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes.
      1. In one account, he was “cut to pieces in the temple of Nanea by a deception employed by the priests of Nanea” (**2 Maccabees 1:13**).



2. Another account, within the same book, says he “suffered an annoying illness” (**9:21**) and “came to the end of his life by a most pitiful fate, among the mountains in a strange land” (**9:28**).
  - iii. According to Princeton Professor William H. Green, “The books of Tobit and Judith abound in geographical, chronological, and historical mistakes, so as not only to vitiate the truth of the narratives they contain, but to make it doubtful they even rest upon the basis of fact.”
  - iv. Given the number of simple errors in these books, we know they cannot be a product of God.
- b. The Apocrypha contradicts Scripture.
- i. **Judith 1:1** says Nebuchadnezzar ruled “in the great city of Ninevah.”
    1. The Bible and history say he was king of Babylon.
  - ii. The Bible teaches God created the heavens and the earth from nothing; he spoke them into existence (**Genesis 1:1; Psalm 33:6-9**).
    1. The Apocrypha in the **Wisdom of Solomon** says God “created the world out of formless matter” (**Wisdom of Solomon 11:17**).
  - iii. Jeremiah says Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem (**Jeremiah 52:12-13**). After this, Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch were taken to Egypt (**Jeremiah 43:6-7**).
    1. According to the Apocryphal book of Baruch, Baruch was in Babylon at the time of the burning of Jerusalem (**Baruch 1:1-2**).
  - iv. The Apocrypha contradicts Scripture; therefore, it cannot be from God.
- c. The Apocrypha abounds in false teachings.
- i. Listen to some of these gems.
    1. Suicide is described in **2 Maccabees 14:41-43** as “noble” and “manful,” rather than sinful.
    2. **Tobit 6:1-17** describes the use of magical potions to drive away demons.
    3. The **Wisdom of Solomon** teaches pre-existence of the soul. It reads, “As a child I was naturally gifted and a good soul fell to my lot; or rather, being good, I entered an undefiled body” (**Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20**).
    4. **Tobit 12:8b-9a** says, “It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold. For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin.”
      - a. This teaches almsgiving, rather than only Christ, atones for sin.
  - ii. The books of the Apocrypha teach numerous false doctrines.
- d. The Apocrypha does not bear the mark of inspiration; it is littered with error, contradictions, and assorted false teachings.

## 8. Conclusion

- a. My objective this morning was not to trash the Catholic church, and please forgive me, if I have given you that impression.
- b. I, like every other Christian, am after truth, the truth of God and his Word.
- c. The Catholic church teaches some unusual doctrines, things contrary to truth.
  - i. Things like purgatory, indulgences, sacrifices and offerings for the dead, and prayers for the dead.



1. They turn to the Apocryphal book of **2 Maccabees** for support.
- d. In our quest for truth this morning, we briefly examined the Apocrypha.
- i. We learned that these books are not divine, and they should not be considered the Word of God.
    1. They are not included in the Hebrew canon (OT), since they were written during a time of no prophetic activity (no prophets implies no inspired books).
    2. They are not quoted or directly alluded to in the NT, despite being part of the Septuagint, which is the translation most often quoted by Jesus and the NT writers.
    3. Apocrypha does not claim to be inspired, and in places, it claims non-inspiration.
    4. These books do not bear the mark of inspiration; they are filled with error, contradictions, and various false teachings.
  - e. Let me emphasize: the books of the Apocrypha are an interesting read, but they are not sacred Scripture.
    - i. Therefore, we must reject them from our canon.
    - ii. Moreover, we must reject any doctrine taught within them that is not substantiated by Scripture.
    - iii. Purgatory, indulgences, sacrifices and offerings for the dead, and prayers for the dead must be rejected since these concepts are foreign to the Scriptures.

## 9. Invitation

- a. **Hebrews 9:27-28**, “<sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”
  - i. The Hebrew writer says your fate is sealed upon your physical death.
    1. You are going to die, and after that you will be judged by Christ.
    2. There is nothing that you or anyone on earth can do to change your spiritual condition at the time of your death.
      - a. If you are in Christ at the time of your death, the Bible says you will inherit eternal life.
      - b. If you are not in Christ upon your death, God says you are destined for damnation.
      - c. These are your two options; the Bible makes no mention of purgatory or any of its associated false doctrines.
- b. You need to be in Christ.
  - i. Paul writes in **Galatians 3:26-27**, “<sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
    1. Believer’s baptism puts one into Christ.
    2. If you have faith in God and his Christ, and are willing to repent, confess Jesus as Lord, and be baptized into him, you will in Christ and your destiny is assured.
    3. Obey the gospel this morning.



- c. If you are ready to obey the gospel this morning or you have a care you'd like to bring before the church, won't you please come forward as we stand and sing.
- d. Let us stand and sing.