

Why the Apocrypha is Not in the Bible

The Canon of scripture is a list of all the books that belong in the Bible. The word canon is of Greek origin and means “measuring rod.” We use the phrase Canon of Scripture to describe the compilation of books in the Bible as the standard by which all truth is measured.¹

The Canon of scripture is accepted as truth, as legitimate, as undeniable. But at certain points, some people decided that parts of the Bible were not the canon. Something caused doubt or evidence seemed contradictory. When something was taken from the canon, it became apocrypha.

What does Apocrypha mean? a story or statement of [doubtful](#) authenticity, although widely [circulated](#) as being true.² So, the word apocrypha in its original meaning is: book(s) of unknown authorship and obscure or hard to understand (collectively all these books are called the Apocrypha). So, instead of a book being authentic and included in the canon, it was considered inauthentic because of some doubt or contradictory evidence and therefore is called apocrypha. By definition a book in the apocrypha is not considered true, or the book is inauthentic.

But, the Apocrypha and Canon are tied. How? There was a process that scripture went through in order for the books to be authentic.

To start, look at the general criterion used for a book to be considered Old Testament scripture. About the writers:

- **Writer indicates God was speaking through them** (see Ex 20:1, Josh 1:1, Is 2:1). Writers believed they were divinely inspired by God and wrote believing they were.
- **Writers identify themselves as a genuine prophet of God** (see Jer 2:1-2, Ez 1:1, Hos 1:1, etc.) “It has been argued that while not every book was actually written by a prophet, each book may have had some sort of prophetic endorsement behind it. Although this may be true, it cannot be proven in the case of some of the Old Testament books. These include: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.”³
- **Writings do not contradict with the rest of scripture.**
Since God cannot contradict Himself, if the book under consideration was found to be contradictory with the previous accepted writings, then it would automatically be

¹ <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/the-canon-of-scripture-why-it-is-trustworthy-and-true/#:~:text=The%20canon%20of%20Scripture%20is,which%20all%20truth%20is%20measured.>

² From <https://www.etymonline.com/word/apocrypha> (the origin or beginning of a word...it's original meaning).

³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart_don/faq/right-books-in-old-testament/question9-criteria-recognize-old-testament.cfm

rejected. However, the reverse is not necessarily true. Merely because a book is orthodox, and agrees with previous doctrine, does not make it Holy Scripture.⁴

- **Writings were authoritatively accepted.**

The people who read these writings during that day believed the book to be authoritative and of divine inspiration. In other words, God's authority backed the book. After all, the Bible is God's words to us.⁵

- **Writings survived over time.**

Scribes meticulously copied scripture by hand. The materials used were perishable and to preserve them, they had to be copied over and over.⁶

Why are the Apocryphal books of the Bible considered not true or inauthentic? There are several reasons. The following reasons are from www.crossexamined.org.

1. **The Apocrypha indicates that it is not scripture.**

- The authors of the Apocrypha acknowledge that they aren't prophets and don't speak with divine authority like the Old Testament authors. (See 1 Maccabees 9:27: Prophets only existed in their ancient memories.)

From the criterion above, writers indicated God was speaking through them, they were an actual prophet. Events of the Apocrypha do not indicate that a prophet was speaking the words God gave to them.

- Additionally, these books contain theological and historical errors. For example, the Book of Wisdom indicates that God created the world out of preexisting matter (11:17) which contradicts the rest of Scripture's teaching that God created the world out of nothing. Moreover, the book of Judith incorrectly states Nebuchadnezzar was king of Assyria, when in fact, he was the king of Babylon (1:5).

It's hard to imagine how the Spirit could inspire documents containing both theological and historical error. When you couple the errors with the authors' acknowledgment that no prophets existed during this time, we have good reasons to reject the Apocrypha as sacred Scripture.⁷

2. **The Jews did not accept the Apocrypha as scripture.** (see www.crossexamined.org for more information.)

3. **The New Testament does not refer to the Apocrypha as scripture.**

- Scripture referencing within itself is called intertextuality. Scripture does not quote the Apocrypha within itself.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <https://crossexamined.org/why-the-apocrypha-isnt-in-the-bible/>

Scripture contains 295 direct citations; however, “it can be asserted that more than 10 percent of the New Testament is made up of citations or direct allusions to the Old Testament.”⁸

4. The Catholic Church didn’t proclaim the Apocrypha as scripture until the Reformation (see www.crossexamined.org for greater explanation).

⁸ <https://www.bible-researcher.com/nicole.html>