

God's Word is Complete

Scripture:

- Jesus empowered the apostles through the Holy Spirit to recall, write, and interpret the life, words, and deeds of Jesus – John 14:26; 16:13
- The Apostle John verifies himself as an eyewitness to the events he wrote – John 21:24
- As the NT letters began to be gathered and read throughout the church, we find evidence that they were already being included and described as “Scripture” – 2 Peter 3:15, 16
 Peter places Paul’s epistles in the same category as the ‘rest of Scripture’
- God officially warns against the tampering with Scripture – Revelation 22:18, 19

It is important to understand that church leader’s centuries ago did not create the Bible; they simply recognized it for what it was – the Word of God

1. Canonization of Scripture:

Canon: A term used to refer to the complete list of the sixty-six books recognized as the genuine, inspired, authoritative Word of God

A. Authorship

- Who wrote the book or epistle?
- Was it written by an apostle or an associate of an apostle?

B. Local Church Acceptance

- Had it been read in various churches?
- What was their opinion?

C. Church Fathers Recognition

- Had the pupils of the disciples quoted from the book?

D. The Books Subject Matter (content)

- What did the book teach?
- Did it contradict other recognized books?

E. Personal Edification

- Did the book have the ability to inspire, bring convict, and edify local congregations and individual believers?

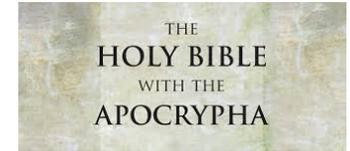


2. The Apocrypha

After the OT canon was recognized by the Jews as closed, and prior to the NT period, there arose 14 books called the Apocrypha

Apocrypha:

This word literally means *“that which is hidden”*



Reasons for Rejecting the Apocrypha:

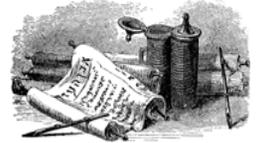
- A. The Apocrypha was never included in the OT canon by such recognized authorities as the Pharisees, Ezra the Prophet, etc.
- B. It was never quoted by the Jews, by Jesus, or any NT writers
- C. The Jewish historian Josephus excluded it
- D. The well-known Jew Philo did not recognize it
- E. The early church fathers excluded it
- F. The Bible translator Jerome did not accept the books as inspired
 - He was forced by the Pope to include them in the Latin Vulgate Bible
- G. None of the fourteen books claim inspiration; in fact some actually disclaim it
- H. Some of the books contain historical and geographical errors
- I. Some of the books teach false doctrine, such as praying for the dead
- J. No Apocryphal book can be found in any catalogue list of canonical books composed during the first centuries A.D.
 - It was not until 1596 at the Council of Trent that the Roman Catholic Church officially recognized these books
 - This was done basically to strengthen their position, which had been grievously weakened by the great reformer Martin Luther

3. The Gnostic Gospels:

- The Gospel of Thomas
- The Gospel of Truth
- The Gospel of the Egyptians
- The Gospel of Judas
- The Gospel of Mary Magdalene
- The Gospel of Philip

When were they written?

- Mid A.D. 100s
- Mid A.D. 100s
- Late A.D. 100s
- Around A.D. 180?
- Around A.D. 200
- Between A.D. 200 and 350



As compared to the Gospels –

- Between A.D. 40 and 100
- Between A.D. 64 and 70
- Between A.D. 70 and 90
- Between A.D. 68 and 100
- Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were recognized from the very beginning as authoritative accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus
- It is said that Emperor Constantine eliminated books from the NT that did not suit his political agenda
- However, The NT books were considered inspired Scripture before Constantine was born