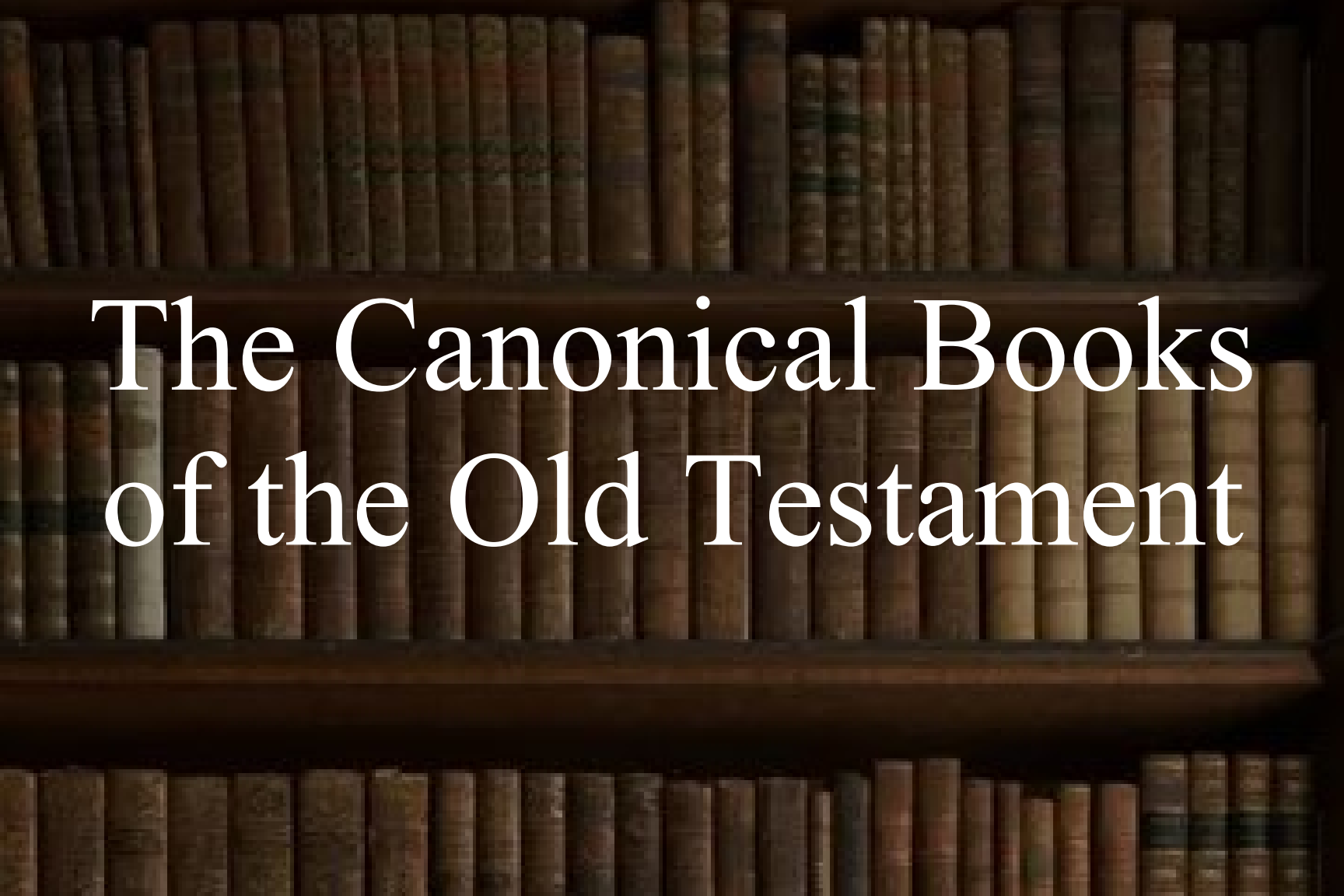


OLD TESTAMENT

APOCRYPHA

Apocrypha are biblical or related writings not forming part of the accepted canon of scripture, some of which might be of doubtful authorship or authenticity. In Christianity, the word apocryphal (ἀπόκρυφος) was first applied to writings that were to be read privately rather than in the public context of church services. Apocrypha were edifying Christian works that were not always initially included as canonical scripture.
(source wikipedia)



The Canonical Books of the Old Testament

“unto them (the Jews) were
committed the oracles of God.”
(KJV)

“the Jews were entrusted with the
whole revelation of God.” (NLT)

The Shrine, in Israel



An aerial photograph of a rugged, arid desert landscape. The terrain is characterized by deep, winding canyons and steep, eroded cliffs. The rock formations are light-colored, possibly sandstone or limestone, and show signs of weathering and erosion. The overall scene is one of a vast, desolate, and historically significant archaeological site.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Caves

No other book other than the 39
we know has any right to be
numbered among the inspired
books of the Old Testament

Early Jewish sources treated as canonical only the Tanakh

The Dead Sea Scrolls (250 BC – 68 AD) confirm the special treatment of the Jewish canonical books in respect to the non-canonical ones, which were not copied in a “biblical” format.

The witness of Josephus (37-100 AD)

Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived in the early first century, wrote:

“For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have], but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, [...] the prophets who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not

been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation, is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly die for them.” Flavius Josephus, Against Apion, 8.38-42, in The Works of Josephus, Complete and Unabridged, translated by William Whiston, A.M., Hendrickson Publishers, first printing – January, 1991, page 776”

What we learn from this authoritative source is that, confirming the witness of the Dead Sea Scrolls:

The Jews believed in the unique inspiration of the Old Testament books

That they were twenty-two in number.

(Today they count them as 24, but they are the same books. We count the same books as 39)

That they were divided into three portions: The five books of Moses, the Prophets and the “hymns.”

THE WORDS OF JESUS AND THE TANAKH

The Jews call the Old Testament **TANAKH**, an acronym built from the first letters of its three main sections:

T = Torah (תּוֹרָה) – The Law of Moses.

N = Nevi'im (נְבִיאִים) – Prophets

K = Ketuvim (כְּתוּבִים) – Writings

“Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, **from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.**” (Matthew 23:34-35).

The Lord made another direct reference to the Tanakh, mentioned in the book of Luke.

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”
(Luke 24:44)

New Testament authors quote only the Tanakh as Scripture.

In doing this the New Testament was consistent with the use of the Qumran community.

We must distinguish between Ecclesiastical use from attributing authority as Scripture to a book.

APOCRYPHA

Or

DEUTEROCANONICAL ?

The Roman Catholic Church has added to its editions of the Old Testament:

7 books: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees.

Portions of books: Additions to Esther and to Daniel: a longer ending in chapter 3, and two more chapters, 13 and 14.

With right we call them **APOCRYPHA** because they do not meet the essential requirements to be part of the Jewish Canon.

The Catholic Church calls them **Deuterocanonical** (inserted later in the canon) and receives them as Scripture because:

- a. They were part of the Septuagint (LXX).
- b. They were quoted or used by the early Church Fathers.
- c. The early Church councils affirmed them.

The Council of Trent in 1546 AD formally ratified the Apocrypha as part of the Roman canon of Old Testament Scriptures.

Jerome's position

In the early fifth century Jerome was the first to actually translate the Old Testament from the Hebrew originals. He confirmed that only the 39 books we accept were part of the Jewish canon, though he included the other books found in the *Septuagint* in his translation at the Catholic Church's request.

The King James Version

The original KJV included the Apocrypha, but between the two testaments, after Malachi and before Matthew. The Church of England considered them useful for “example of life and instruction of manners,” but not for establishing doctrine (per Article VI of the Thirty-Nine Articles).

The Apocrypha remained in most KJV editions until the late 19th century.

The Orthodox Church

The Orthodox churches add more books to the O.T. than the Catholic Church—because of their dependence on the Septuagint.

To the above 7 already mentioned they add:

1 Esdras (Greek Esdras), the Prayer of Manasseh,
Psalm 151 and 3 Maccabees

In some traditions (especially Greek) 4 Maccabees

The Ethiopian Bible and the Book of Enoch

The Ethiopian Bible has even more books, 81.

It preserves the complete **Book of Enoch** in Ethiopian. It is true that it has been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in Hebrew – fragments 4Q201 and 4Q204. But this states only that, though the Jews knew it, they never considered it canonical.



Enoch is mentioned in Genesis 5:18-24. This is what we know, the rest are fables.

Some say the books of Enoch was quoted by Jude:

“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...” (Jude v. 14, 15).

This does not automatically mean that the Book of Enoch was inspired too – if Jude was actually quoting from it at all!

In 1 Corinthians 15:33, Paul quotes a comedy written by a famous Greek author, Menander. Is this play to be considered inspired?

In 1 Corinthians 15:29 Paul writes something that sounds pretty strange to us. He used even a wrong interpretation of baptism of some to get his point across.

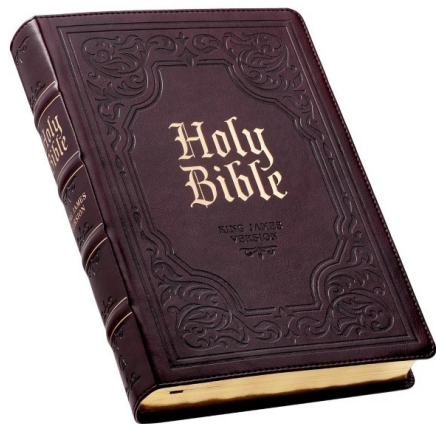
Paul said to the Greeks he came proclaiming the unknown God they had erected an altar to (Acts 17:22-23).

According to tradition, Isaiah was sawn in two by order of King Manasseh. The epistle to the Hebrew 11:37 is not saying that Jewish tradition was inspired, but evidently in this case it preserved a true historical fact.

The New Testament is full of expressions, doctrines, teachings that we find nowhere else. They are authoritative and inspired because they are there, sanctioned by the apostles.

There is a sentence spoken by Jesus that we know of only because Paul mentions it and Luke records it in the book of Acts:

“...to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive.**” (Acts 20:35 - KJV)



For all the reasons stated above, since **the Jews were the only ones to whom God entrusted His Word**, any claim that books outside the Jewish **Tanakh** are inspired and should be considered Scripture has no actual biblical foundation and must be dismissed.

There are good books outside the Bible. They may have historical or even spiritual value and are worth reading or even studying. Yet, **unless they are part of the Tanakh approved by the Jews, Jesus, and the apostles, we cannot consider them Scripture.**

I want to leave you with a challenge:

“...the Jews were entrusted
with the whole revelation of God.”

What if this statement can be applied to
the New Testament as well?

But that is another Bible study entirely.