

a. Why you should read other books

i. Introductory issues

1. Establishing the Need: Some say, "I only read the Bible, nothing else," with the attitude that a Christian should only read the Bible. But is this really biblical?
2. Clarification: Christians should read books beyond the Bible, but that does not mean Christians should read every kind of non-Christian books at all times. There needs to be discernment.

Reasons:

ii. Reading non-canonical books is not wrong: those who write the Bible also read non-Canonical books

1. Old Testament authors read non-Canonical books

a. Moses read the Book of the War of the Lords  
(Numbers 21:14-15)

- i. The Book of the War of the Lords is not in the Bible.
- ii. Moses describes Israel's journey in Numbers 21:10-13.
- iii. Moses then quotes from the Book of the War of the Lords in Numbers 21:14-15.
- iv. Implication: If God is interested in history books enough to reference it, what does that mean to us as people of the Book?

b. Joshua read the Book of Jashar (Joshua 10:12-13)

- i. The Book of Jashar is not in the Bible.
- ii. In the context of this passage, five king are waging war against Gibeonites (Joshua 10:5) and Joshua leads Israel against the kings while the Lord cause son to stand still (v.12).
- iii. There is then a reference that this event was documented in the book of Jashar ( v.13).

c. Author of 1 Samuel read the Book of Jashar (1 Samuel 1:18)

- i. Again, the Book of Jashar is not in the Bible.
- ii. In the context of this passage, King David laments the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan by chanting a lament (v.17).
- iii. There is then a reference that this song can be found in the book of Jashar ( v.18).

d. Author of 1 Kings read the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41)

- i. The Acts of Solomon is not in the Bible.
- ii. In the context of this passage, the account of God bringing up adversaries against Solomon (v.14-40).

- iii. Since too many historical events have occurred reference to more historical account is given, pointing to the Acts of Solomon ( v.41).
  - e. Ezra know of, read and quotes secular letters and decrees (Ezra 4-5)
    - i. Letters of oppositions
      - 1. In the context of this passage, there were non-Jews who were actively plotting against the Jews rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 4:1-5).
      - 2. Part of their plan is to write a letter to King Artaxerxes ( v.6-10).
      - 3. This letter is originally not the Word of God.
      - 4. The letter is quoted from vv.11-16.
      - 5. Consequence: End of temple work ( v.17-24).
      - 6. Implication: If God felt it was important enough to record a secular letter to a king, what does that means to us as people of the Book when it comes to being knowledgeable of those who write and plot against the cause of Christ?
    - ii. Decree of King Cyrus
      - 1. In the context of this passage, the Jews continued to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 5).
      - 2. When challenged, the Jews knew about the decree of King Cyrus from the first year of his reign (v.13)
      - 3. They even know the content of what was written in it (v.14-17)
      - 4. This decree was important enough that Ezra 1:1-4 recorded it.
      - 5. Implication: If God felt it was important enough to record a secular political decree made by a king, what does that means to us as people of the Book when it comes to understanding political documents Biblically?
  - f. Other possible non-canonical sources the Bible reference: 1 Chronicles 27:24, 29:29, 2 Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22.