

Two Important Questions Regarding Scripture

How did we get our 66 books of the Bible?

This is the Canon of Scripture – a series or list of what books were considered Scripture and which books were not considered Scripture.

Consider the following factors:

- Precedent for the formation of a list of authoritative NT books was set by the model of the “closed” OT canon.
 - Luke 22:44
 - Matt 23:35
 - Josephus, a Jewish Historian writing in 90 AD considered the OT canon closed.
- Quotation patterns of the OT in the NT indicate a closed canon.
 - Quotes from Pentateuch, Prophets, and Writings.
- The apostles knew they were writing Scripture and that they spoke with authority.
- The church does not establish the canon, but recognize which books were canonical.
- God established the canon and the church was witness to this, organizing and documenting what God was doing.
- Which books should we read in services? Which books are worth dying for?
- Criteria:
 - Apostolicity. Apostles are close companions of the apostles.
 - Orthodoxy. Must line up with the apostolic tradition or “rule of faith.”
 - Catholicity. Wide circulation and broad support among the churches.
 - Self-authentication – The Bible impresses upon humans that it is God’s Word. The books themselves attest to the authorship of God. God’s word is recognized.

Is the Apocrypha inspired Scripture?

- History is not decisive.
- The NT never directly quotes the Apocrypha as it does OT Scripture.
- Philo quotes from the OT prolifically, but never quotes the Apocrypha as inspired.
- The alleged NT allusions to the Apocrypha may simply have been the use of words or concepts at the time which the Apocryphal writers drew from.
- The three early Greek manuscripts which contain books of the Apocrypha vary in which Apocryphal books they include. Only four books occur in all three and none of these manuscripts include the books listed and accepted by the Council of Trent.

- Although some of the Apocrypha was found at Qumran, many other noncanonical works were found as well.
- No commentaries were found on the Apocrypha, only on the OT.
- Some teachings of the Apocrypha are patently unbiblical (praying for the dead).
- There are demonstrable chronological, geographical, and historical errors which exist in the Apocrypha.
- The Apocrypha was written in the intertestamental period, and it was commonly understood among the Jews that such writings were not prophetically inspired and were therefore not on par with OT books.
- Consider Jesus' statement in Matt 23:35 and Luke 11:50-51 where he extends the canon from the time of Genesis to 2 Chronicles.