BIBLIOLOGY (62)

God's people have God's Spirit and it is only logical to assume that God's Spirit would lead God's people to accept books that were in fact from God. There are many illustrations from Scripture which do substantiate this point:

(Illustration #1) - God's people immediately recognized that the words written by <u>Moses</u> were words from God and they took his books and placed them in the ark (Deut. 31:24-26).

(Illustration #2) - God's people clearly viewed the words written by <u>Joshua</u> as words coming from God (Josh. 24:26-27).

(Illustration #3) - God's people clearly accepted the words written by <u>Samuel</u> as belonging in God's word (I Sam. 10:25).

(Illustration #4) - Daniel accepted the words written by <u>Jeremiah</u> and <u>Moses</u> as being the words of God (Dan. 9:2, 10-11).

(Illustration #5) - Peter fully accepted <u>Paul's</u> writings as inspired Scripture (II Pet. 3:l5-16).

(Illustration #6) - The Thessalonians fully accepted <u>Paul's</u> writings as being the Word of God (I Thess. 2:13). In fact, they were charged to read it to "all the brethren" (I Thess. 5:27).

Clearly from these illustrations it may be established that the issue of the writing being received and accepted by God's people was an important matter of canonicity. Dr. Chafer wrote: "In the case of the Old Testament, the congregation of Israel under the leadership of their elders, rulers, prophets, and priests, gave sanction to those writings which formed the first canon. In the case of the New Testament, the early church, including her officers and ministers, gave sanction to the second canon. Without consciousness on their part in either case that they were being used of God to accomplish a momentous objective, they did, nevertheless, under presidency of the Holy Spirit, determine what could not have been postponed to later generations nor surrendered to other peoples, namely, to decide the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the Bible canon." (p.95)

These five canonical rules were those used to determine the canon of Scripture. God saw to it that 66 books were discovered which measured up to the rules of canonization. These 66 books are the **only** books which have measured up to the rules of canonicity and inspiration.

There were a group of books written between the Old Testament period and the New Testament period, approximately 200 B.C.- A.D. 100, that were called Apocrypha, which means <u>hidden</u>. These books **were not** found in the Hebrew Old Testament, but were found in some manuscripts of the LXX, the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament made by seventy (LXX) translators in the third and second centuries B.C. in Alexandria.

Although these Apocryhpal books contain many valuable historical truths, they were not recognized as being inspired books of God for the following reasons:

(Reason #1) - They were **not** found with the <u>Hebrew</u> Old Testament.

In March 1947, an Arab shepherd boy (Muhammad adh-Dhib) was looking for a lost goat 7 1/2 miles south of Jericho and a mile west of the Dead Sea. There he discovered a cave. Upon his entrance, he found some jars which contained several leather scrolls. The caves were called the Qumran caves and the scrolls were named the Dead Sea Scrolls. In explorations which took place over the next 9 years, eleven Qumran caves were discovered containing literally thousands manuscript fragments.

Every book in the Hebrew O.T., with the exception of Esther was discovered in these caves, including a complete copy of the book of Isaiah. At this discovery, in one of the caves were also some Apocryphal books. They were not in the Hebrew O.T. and there were no commentaries discovered which expounded these books like they did the Bible. Futhermore, the Apocrypha books were not wtitten on the same type of special parchment paper, nor were they written in the same Hebrew script. This clearly establishes that the Qumran community **did not** accept the Apocryphas books as belonging in the inspired Hebrew O.T..

(Reason #2) - They were **never** considered canonical until <u>AD 1545</u>.

Prior to A.D. 1546, these books were not even considered as being inspired books of God. It was a Roman Catholic council who determined this, and it was voted upon and approved by a slim margin at the Council of Trent, in A.D. 1546. Furthermore, there have been in history Catholics, who themselves opposed the Apocryphal writings as being part of the inspired Word of God. For example, Cardinal Xirnenes, a man who opposed Martin Luther at Augsburg in 1518, published a book in A.D. 1532 called, "Commentary on all the Authentic Historical Books of the Old Testament." His list did not include the Apocrypha. Martin Luther, a man who at one time was studying to be a Catholic priest, spoke **against** the Apocrypha as belonging in the Bible. In fact, Geisler & Nix say: "Many Roman Catholic scholars through the Reformation period rejected the Apocrypha."(p.273) The fact that for over 1500 years the Apociypha was not accepted as canonical or ever considered, plus the fact that even many of the Catholic scholars rejected it is weighty evidence that it does not belong in the Bible.

(Reason #3) - They were **never** <u>quoted</u> by New Testament writers, indicating they were not accepted.

(Reason #4)- There is **no** evidence that the first <u>Greek</u> O.T. (Septuagint, LXX) even contained a copy of the Apocrypha. Christ sometimes cited a verse from the Septuagint, but neither He nor His disciples ever cited an Apocryphal book.

(Reason #5)- They contain many doctrinal, historical and geographical <u>errors</u> which do not meet the standard of a true book of God.

For example, in the Apocryphal books there are such things as "prayer for the dead" (II Macc. 12:42-45) and "salvation by works" (Tobit 12:9). Both of these doctrinal concepts are unbiblical and heretical and actually present information contrary to the true books of God.

In Luke 16:25-28, one who had died and was in hell clearly understood that there was no chance for him changing locations. In fact, this was the basis of him appealing to Abraham in order that someone might go back and warn his family. Also, N.T. doctrine makes it clear that salvation is not by works (Rom.4:5; Eph.2:8-9; Gal.3:11). Apocryphal books do not measure up to the rest of the teachings of the Word of God.

When it comes to the matter of geography and history, Apocryphal books are filled with many errors. William Green writes: "The books of Tobit and Judith abound in geographical, chronological, and historical mistakes, so as not only to vitiate (lessen the quality) the truth of the narratives which they contain, but to make it doubtfiil whether they even rest upon a basis of fact." (<u>Ibid</u>., p.271)

(Reason #6) - These books contain stories which are ludicrous and <u>bizzarre</u>.

Much of the information in the Apocrypha exists on the boundaries of absurdity. For example, in the story of Bel and the Dragon, pagan priests of Bel attempt to deceive Daniel by having him go through a trap door in order that he would eat the food offered to Bel, in order to prove that Bel is a living "god" who eats and drinks food everyday. This story is absolutely senseless and does not present any redeeming truth whatsoever about the true God of the Bible.

(Reason #7) - These books **did not** meet the <u>measurement</u> rules of canonicity.

This point, in and of itself, negates any Apocryphal book from being a legitimate book of the Bible.

The Apocryphal books are:

1. The Wisdom of Solomon	6. II Esdras	11. Additions to Esther
2. Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)	7. I Maccabees	12. Prayer of Azariah (Song
3. Tobit	8. II Maccabees	of the Three Young Men)
4. Judith	9. Baruch	13. Susanna
5. I Esdras	10. Letter of Jeremiah	14. Bel and the Dragon
		15. Prayer of Manasseh

None of these books measure up to the canonization rules which all of the sixty-six books of the Bible clearly do. Although we may be able to profit from deciphering some of the true historical and background data, we do not accept the Apocrypha as belonging in the Word of God.