

## ARE THE APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA INSPIRED BY GOD?

### Introduction

There are a number of problems related to the canon of the Scriptures. How do we know what is in the canon of the Scripture? When was the canon of the New Testament established? In addition, do the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha belong in the canon of the Scriptures?

#### What is the Canon of the Scriptures?

In order to answer the question of “what is the canon” lexical definitions for the Greek word κανων (pronounced *canon*) will be given. Merriam-Webster defines the word canon as: “ruler, rule, model, standard ... an authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture.” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition). Thayer defines the Greek word κανων (pronounced *canon*) as: “prop. a rod or straight piece of rounded wood to which any thing is fastened to keep it straight; used for various purposes ... a measuring rod, rule; a carpenter’s line or measuring tape.” (Thayer, page 324).

Another way to define words is to consider how the word is employed in the Scriptures. The Greek word κανων is used in II Corinthians 10:13, 15, and 16 (translated province<sup>1</sup> in the ASV). This word is also found in Galatians 6:16 and Philippians 3:16 (translated “rule”).

#### Errors Concerning the Canon

There are several errors concerning the canon in the religious world. The first error is that the canon was established slowly over a period of time (taking perhaps several hundred years for the canon to be established). This is probably the most common error on this subject.

The second error was that the canon was determined by a group of men who lived long after the age of miracles. This is the doctrine taught by the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> This is one of the basic arguments made by the Roman Catholic Church to prove that the R. C. Church speaks authoritatively. (*If the R. C. Church established the canon, then the R. C. Church speaks authoritatively*).

#### How Was the Canon Established?

God granted miraculous gifts to enable the church to detect false prophets and false doctrine. One of the gifts was “discerning of spirits” (I Corinthians 12:10, 14:29, I John 4:1, etc.). In addition, prophets were commanded to use their gift to determine if a written document was Scripture (I Corinthians 14:37). The church obeyed I Corinthians 14:37 and accepted the I Corinthian epistle (II

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<sup>1</sup> Footnote ASV = limit Gr. measuring-rod

<sup>2</sup> One difference is that the Roman Catholic Church claims that miracles continue today.

Corinthians 1:12-14). The church at Thessalonica accepted Paul's writings as the Word of God (I Thessalonians 2:13).

The following argument establishes this author's contention that the canon of the Scripture was established in the first century:

If a prophet was commanded to determine if a document was Scripture, then it was their duty to do this.

If it was their duty, then all the prophets established the canonicity of the Scriptures.

The apostles quoted Scripture and stated that it was Scripture. Paul quoted Deuteronomy 25:4, Matthew 10:9-10, and Luke 10:7 in I Timothy 5:18. Peter stated that the writings of Paul were Scripture (II Peter 3:15-16). Since God does not do anything that is unnecessary, it is evident that it was necessary to tell the church that these passages and books are Scripture. Establishing that a book is Scripture is tantamount to establishing that it is part of the canon.

It is a sin to reject the canonicity of any part of the Scriptures (III John 1:9). It is a sin to accept any false doctrine as Scripture (Galatians 1:6-9). A just God would naturally give sufficient evidence for people to know what was part of the canon in order to keep from sinning. The following hypothetical syllogism clarifies this argument:

If God is just and it is a sin to either reject the canonicity of part of the Scriptures or it is a sin to claim canonicity for a non-inspired book, then God provided the early church with evidence for the canonicity of the New Testament books.

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God provided the early church with evidence for the canonicity of the New Testament books.

The canon of the New Testament was established by the miraculous gifts of the first century. The apostles, New Testament prophets, and those with the gift of discerning of spirits established the canon of the New Testament.

### How Do We Establish the Canon Today?

The Old Testament Scriptures serve as a pattern for us today (I Corinthians 10:11, 13, Romans 15:4, etc.). The Old Testament saints were given instructions on how to determine what was from God and what was not from God. Moses instructed the Children of Israel that (1) they must reject any prophet who taught anything contrary to what was in the Scriptures they already accepted (Deuteronomy 13:1-18) and (2) there must be miraculous evidence that a prophet was a true prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-22). These rules would apply equally to what a person spoke or wrote which they claimed to be from God (inspired of God). Once a book was confirmed there is no evidence that another prophet ever reconfirmed a message from an earlier prophet. If a man's covenant needs

only one confirmation, then God's covenant (a greater covenant) needs only one confirmation (Galatians 3:15).

From Deuteronomy 13:1-18 and Deuteronomy 18:15-22 two principles are derived for modern mankind: (1) no book is to be accepted as canonical that contradicts anything in other books that are canonical and (2) there must be internal evidence (of a miraculous nature) to establish that the book is from God. This would include such things as scientific foreknowledge, prophecy (foretelling the future), a true prophet stating that it is Scripture, etc.

### The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Souter states: "In Greek the public reading is expressed by the words δημοσιευεσθαι (δημευεσθαι) εν εκκλησιας. The original sense of the word αποκρυφος is in contrast to that of ενδιαθηκος, etc. A work is αποκρυφος (απορρητος), not because any stigma is attached to it, but simply because it is read not in public service, but only in private, in secret. Αποκρυφοι, απορρητοι, *apocryphi, secreti*, are, in fact, also the opposite of ῥητοι, manifesti, vulgati, publici." (page 145) It seems that the books of the Apocrypha were not read publicly by the early church but were read by some of the members in private. This is the same basic thing we will do when we read books written by men (not by the inspiration of God) in our homes but would not think of reading these books from the pulpit of the Lord's church.

The word "Pseudepigrapha" is derived from two Greek word ψευδο (a Greek prefix meaning "false") and γραφη (writing). Even the Roman Catholic Church rejects the Pseudepigrapha. When the Roman Catholic Church refers to the Apocrypha they are referring to the Pseudepigrapha.

The Roman Catholic Church claims to have the authority to determine what books should be in the canon of the Scriptures. Several books that are commonly considered to be a part of the Apocrypha by non-Roman Catholics are considered to be part of the Scriptures by the Roman Catholic Church. These books were first officially considered to be part of the Scriptures at the Council of Trent on April 8, 1546. Do these books have the proper evidence to support their contention that they should be part of the Scriptures?

### Claims of Inspiration

Several of these books actually deny that they are inspired. In the prologue of the book entitled "Ecclesiasticus" the author disclaims inspiration.

Ecclesiasticus (prologue) Wherefore let us intreat you to read it with favour and attention, and to pardon us, wherein we may seem to come short of some words, which we have laboured to interpret.

The writer of I Maccabees 4:46 and 9:27 confesses there was no prophet in Israel at the time the book was being written.

I Maccabees 4:46 And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place,

until there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them.

I Maccabees 9:27 So was there a great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time that a prophet was not seen among them.

The writer of II Maccabees 2:23 implicitly disclaims inspiration.

II Maccabees 2:23 All these things, I say, being declared by Jason of Cyrene in five books, we will assay to abridge in one volume.

### Acceptance of These Books

None of the books of either the Apocrypha or the Pseudepigrapha were accepted, at any time, by either the Jews, Jesus, the Apostles, or by any other New Testament writers. The acceptance of the books of the Old Testament by the Jews goes back to the days of Ezra and entailed prophetic evidence. The absence of miraculous evidence, in both Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha, is a strong argument against these books being part of the canon. This linked with the presence of negative internal evidence demands that these books be rejected.

### Internal Evidence

Neither the Apocrypha nor the Pseudepigrapha has internal evidences of inspiration. These books contradict the Bible. The book entitled "Wisdom of Solomon" contradicts Genesis 1:1, etc. in Wisdom of Solomon 11:17.

Wisdom of Solomon 11:17 For thy Almighty hand, that made the world of matter without form, wanted not means to send among them a multitude of bears, or fierce lions.

Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20 contradicts Psalm 139:13-16 and Zechariah 12:1, by teaching reincarnation (transmigration of the soul).

Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20 For I was a witty child, and had a good spirit. 20 Yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled.

The book entitled "Baruch" contradicts Jeremiah 52:12-13 and 43:6-7 in Baruch 1:2.

Baruch 1:2 In the fifth year, and in the seventh day of the month, what time as the Chaldeans took Jerusalem, and burnt it with fire.

The book entitled "Judith" condones the murder of the men of Shechem in Judith 9:2-9 but Genesis 34 condemns it.

The book entitled "II Maccabees" contradicts Matthew 25:1-ff in II Maccabees 12:45.

II Maccabees 12:45 And also in that he perceived there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.

### The Apocrypha has Internal Contradictions.

The book entitled "Tobit" has internal contradictions in Tobit 3:9 and Tobit 6:1-17. In addition it has contradictions between Tobit 5:12 and Tobit 12:15.

The book entitled "II Maccabees" has internal contradictions between II Maccabees 1:13-16 and II Maccabees 9:19-29. In addition II Maccabees 1:13 contradicts II Maccabees 9:28.

### The Apocrypha has Factual Errors.

Factual errors entail errors contradicting any known fact of history, geography, or other fact. Presence of this type of error is conclusive evidence that these books are not part of the canon of the Scriptures.

First, the book entitled "Judith" have at least two factual errors in Judith 1:1 and 2:4.

Judith 1:1 In the twelfth year of the reign of Nabuchodonosor, who reigned in Nineve, the great city; in the days of Arphaxad, which reigned over the Medes in Ecbatane.

Judith 2:4 And when he had ended his counsel, Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians called Holofernes the chief captain of his army, which was next unto him, and said unto him. Holofernes was a Persian general, not a Babylonian. In addition, Nebuchadnezzar ruled over the Babylonians in Babylon, not Ninevah (Assyria).

Second, the book entitled "I Maccabees" contradicts historical accounts of the death of Alexander the Great in I Maccabees 1:6-7. This same book contradicts historical accounts of the nature of the rule of Roman emperors (I Maccabees 8:16).

### Concluding points on the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Even if these books were part of the Scriptures they would be part of the Old Testament which was taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14). Since the Old Testament was taken out of the way it is not a binding law for Christians.

If it is proven these books are not inspired, then the Roman Catholic Church is shown to be fallible. The following argument is offered as proof of their fallibility:

If the 66 books of the Bible are inspired of God and the Apocrypha contradicts these 66 books; then the Apocrypha must not be inspired of God.

If the Apocrypha is not inspired; then the Roman Catholic Church is fallible.

Since we have proven the Apocrypha is not inspired we have proven the Roman Catholic Church is fallible.

If we demonstrate that miracles, including prophesying, ceased in the fourth century BC and did not begin again until the coming of Jesus, then we cannot have new books added to the Old Testament Scriptures. Since all of the books of the Apocrypha were written after the close of the Old

Testament and before the time of the coming of Christ, they cannot be accepted into the canon. In addition, if we demonstrate that miracles, including prophesying, ceased near the end of the first century AD, then we cannot have new books, which were written after that date (the Pseudepigrapha), added to the New Testament canon.

### Summary

The New Testament canon was established by the miraculous gifts of the first century. The modern canon is established by considering the internal evidence in the books. Internal evidence is of three types. The first type of evidence is internal consistency with other canonical books. The second type of evidence is supernatural evidence (foreknowledge etc.). The third type of evidence is a statement by a prophet that a certain book was Scripture.

None of the books in either the Apocrypha or the Pseudepigrapha contain the necessary evidence to be included in the canon of the Scriptures. The 66 books of our Bible contain the complete will of God and we should not worry about additional revelation from God. Any doctrine derived exclusively from either the Apocrypha or the Pseudepigrapha must be a false doctrine.

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