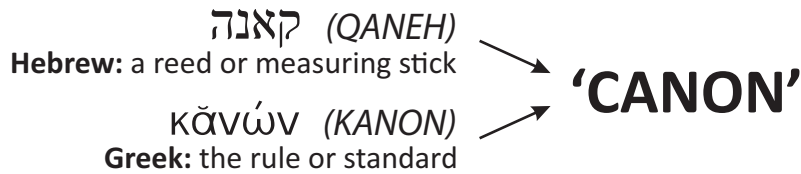


The History of the Bible

CANONIZATION - OLD TESTAMENT

Canonization: The process by which God guided His people (first the Jews and later Christians) to recognize which books and letters were inspired. If a book is “canonized,” it has been assigned a sacred status as inspired by God and authoritative.



“Canonization is determined by God and recognized by God’s people.”

The Work of Nehemiah: We have record of purposeful discussion about canonization as far back as 400 BC.
2 Maccabees 2:13–15

The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Nehemiah, and also that he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and prophets, and the writings of David, and letters of kings about votive offerings. In the same way Judas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war that had come upon us, and they are in our possession. So if you have need of them, send people to get them for you.

The 'Great Synagogue': The “Great Synagogue” or “Great Assembly” dates back to the time of Ezra and consisted of 120 scribes, scholars and prophets. The first assembly reportedly included the post-exilic prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. This assembly discussed the canon of Scripture.

The Jewish Encyclopedia Online writes, “They included the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, and the Twelve Minor Prophets in the Biblical canon ... The first three books, which were composed outside Palestine, had to be accepted by the men of the Great Synagogue before they could be regarded as worthy of inclusion, while the division of the Minor Prophets was completed by the works of the three post-exilic prophets, who were themselves members of that council.”

Three-Fold Division of the Old Testament: This Great Synagogue not only recognized the canonization of Old Testament writing, but also the classification of these books. The collection of sacred writing was broken down into the categories. They divided Old Testament Scripture into three sections called:

<u>TORAH</u> (Law)	<u>NAVIIM</u> (Prophets)	<u>KETHUVIM</u> (Writings)
Genesis	Joshua/Judges	Psalms
Exodus	Samuel (1&2)/Kings (1&2)	Proverbs
Leviticus	Isaiah	Job
Numbers	Jeremiah	Song of Solomon
Deuteronomy	Ezekiel	Ruth
	The Twelve (Minor Prophets)	Lamentations
		Ecclesiastes
		Esther
		Daniel
		Ezra/Nehemiah
		Chronicles (1&2)

The Septuagint or LXX: After Alexander the Great's conquests (circa 325 BC), the influence of Greek culture and Greek language was massive. A great library was established in Alexandria, Egypt. Jewish tradition holds that sometime around 250 BC, King Ptolemy II gathered 70 Jewish scholars to translate religious writings into Greek. This collection included several additions to the Old Testament: 1-2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, 1-4 Maccabees, the Prayer of Manasseh, Psalms of Solomon and Psalm 151. Also additions to Esther and Daniel including: The Prayer of Azarias, Song of the Three Children, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon.

Council of Jamnia: Among the Jewish community, just before 100 AD, there seems to have been an assembly held called the Council of Jamnia. One of the issues addressed was the recognition of the Jewish canon or, what we would call, the Old Testament. They concluded books must exist in Hebrew to be considered inspired. This council agreed the Old Testament consists of the customary 39 books (though they counted them differently).



Why Do Catholics Accept The Apocrypha?

The Septuagint (with its “extra” books) was frequently copied and recopied because it was in a language accessible to early Christians when the Hebrew Old Testament was not.

In about 400 AD, a language shift occurred which sidelined Greek and popularized Latin. A priest named Jerome of Stridon translated all Scripture into Latin. He determined to use only the 39 books of the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, but Pope Damasus insisted on including the Apocryphal books. This translation, known as the Vulgate, became the accepted Bible of Roman Catholicism.

Why Don't We Use The Apocryphal Books?

1) *The Apocryphal books themselves testify that they aren't inspired Scripture:*

1 Maccabees 4:46 (*They removed the altar of burnt offerings ...*) and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them.

1 Maccabees 9:27 So there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.

1 Maccabees 14:41 The Jews and their priests have resolved that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise.

2) *Jewish tradition testifies the Apocryphal books aren't Scripture.*

2 Baruch 85:3 speaks of the 400 years of silence and says, “the prophets are sleeping.”

Seder Olam Rabbah 30:3 quotes Daniel 8 and identifies it as fulfilled when Alexander defeated the Persian Empire. And then says, “Until that time there were prophets prophesying by the Holy Spirit.”

Jewish Historian Josephus, writing in about 90 AD, asserts the Jews accepted the 3-fold division of Scripture into 22 books (the same as our 39) and wrote that since the time of Malachi (425 BC) there was no addition to the canon of Scripture.

3) **Jesus Recognized Our Old Testament Canon**

- Jesus accepted the 3-fold division of the Great Assembly: **Luke 24:44–45**
- Jesus left no room for additional prophetic messages: **Luke 11:50–51**
(Abel – Zechariah is bracketing the Old Testament by listing the first murder in Genesis (Abel) and the final murdered prophet in Chronicles (Zechariah).

the basics of the APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

1st Esdras gives an account of events recorded in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, but it has additional information called "the Debate of the Three Youths." This section is known to be an adaptation of a traditional Persian tale. In it, Zerubbabel wins a debate and earns the opportunity to remind Darius the Great about his obligation to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

2 Esdras consists of seven strange visions seeking explanation to the suffering of the people and hope for Jerusalem's future. The final vision pictures Ezra's restoration of the sacred books of Scripture.

Tobit is a story of a pious Hebrew of the northern captivity, Tobit, and his son Tobias. Tobit suffers persecution because of his kindness to fellow Israelites. He is accidentally blinded, ashamed of relying on his wife for support and prays that he may die. At the same time, a young woman named Sarah is troubled by a demon who has murdered seven different men who want to marry her. An angel is sent to bless them both. The angel leads Tobit's son, Tobias, to marry Sarah. The angel has Tobias burn fish entrails to drive the demon away and anoint his father's eyes with fish oil to heal his vision.

Judith tells the story of a brave young Hebrew widow who pretends to be a spy on behalf of an Assyrian officer. Instead, once she gets him alone, she beheads him and causes chaos among the Assyrian army.

Prayer of Azariah purports to be what one of Daniel's three friends prays while in the fiery furnace.

Song of the Three Holy Children is an addition to Daniel 3 and records a song the three young men sang while being marched to the fiery furnace.

Susanna is the account of a beautiful and righteous wife of a rich Jewish man during the Babylonian Captivity. Two Jewish elders lust after her and attempt to blackmail her into adultery. When she refuses, Susanna is condemned. At this point a young Daniel decries this injustice and conducts a second trial, uncovering the lies of the evil men.

Bel and the Dragon are two stories written to mock idol worship. In the first, Daniel shows that the priests of Bel are eating the food offerings that they say the idol is eating. He does this by secretly spreading ashes on the floor of their sanctuary and tracing their footprints to a secret passage the priests use to enter at night and eat the offerings. In the second story, Daniel promises to destroy, with no weapon, a fierce dragon worshipped in Babylon. He accomplishes this by baking bread made from tar, fat and hair which causes the dragon to burst open.

The Epistle of Jeremiah is supposed to be written by the prophet. It is an attack on Hebrew practices of idolatry.

The Book of Baruch is allegedly the work of Jeremiah's scribe (see Jeremiah 36:26). He encourages the exiles of Babylon to repent and see Jerusalem restored.

Ecclesiasticus is quite long (51 chapters) and is written as advice for living a righteous life.

Maccabees. 1-2 Maccabees records the history of the revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. 3 Maccabees is an account of persecution endured under Ptolemy IV. 4 Maccabees is a denunciation of emotion over logic and shows influences of Stoic philosophy.

Wisdom of Solomon purports to be written by Solomon, but dates to the 1st or 2nd Century BC, many centuries after Solomon's death. It not only elevates wisdom to the level of God Himself, but also suggests in Wisdom 9:18 that man's wisdom is the source of salvation.