

QUESTION: What is the Apocrypha?

ANSWER: The Apocrypha is the name given to a collection of books that were rejected by both the Jews and the early church as NOT being inspired Scripture and NOT being the word of God. The Roman Catholic religion has inserted these books in their Bibles between the Old and New Testaments, and they consider them as Scripture, and as having as much validity as the Old and New Testaments. However, the Roman Catholics also consider many other doctrines and teachings of their religion as being on the same level as Scripture, and consider proclamations from the Pope as being equal to what the Bible says. It is very dangerous to consider the Apocrypha or anything else as equal to the Bible, and several false doctrines, such as the false doctrine of Purgatory, come out of the Apocrypha.

The names of the books in the Apocrypha **sound** very much like names of books of the Bible, and are as follows: The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Esdras, I Maccabees, II Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Baruch & the Epistle of Jeremiah, II Esdras, Prayer of Manasses, The Rest of Esther, Song of the Three Hebrew Children, History of Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon. A few of these books have historical value, such as I Maccabees, which tells us of some events during the 400-year time period between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, but that only makes them history books, not God's word. Many of the others are pure fiction, although of a religious nature, similar to our going to the Christian bookstore today and buying a novel based on the life of a Bible character, or that takes place in Bible times. Many of them contain historical and geographical errors and inaccuracies. At the worst, some are complete forgeries, and are satanically inspired to lead people into false doctrines. For more in-depth information about each one of these books, and which ones are the worst ones for false doctrine, read Unger's Bible Dictionary under the listing "Apocrypha" (pages 70 and 71 in our edition).

The dictionary defines "apochrypha" as writings or statements of dubious authenticity" or "spurious, fictitious". The Greek word actually means "obscure, hidden". Satan and his false religions always like to make people think that they have discovered something hidden or secret, that others do not know. It is the knowledge of these so-called "hidden and secret" things that leads to extreme PRIDE and judgmentalism among cult members who hold to these beliefs. Satan works on the pride and conceit of a person by saying, "You have further revelation from God that these others are missing!" An example is the Mormons with their Book of Mormon, which was supposedly (according to their teachings) found as golden tablets hidden under a rock! These golden tablets have since conveniently disappeared, and we only have the word of Joseph Smith that he ever found them. The Book of Mormon also contains historical and geographical errors and inaccuracies, and has never been proved to be other than the work of men.

At the beginning of the New Testament times with the early church, there were other books written by men that some tried to claim as Scripture, and we find this happening today as you will hear in the news media that certain so-called "missing books of the Bible" have been discovered. Don't believe it! God has given us the complete canon of Scripture, and that is what we have in our Bibles today. The original apostles and the early church REJECTED the following books as being false: "Acts of Paul", Shepherd of Hermias", Apocalypse of Peter", Epistle of Barnabas", Didache", Gospel of Peter", Gospel of Thomas", "Gospel of Matthias", "Acts of Andrew", and "Acts of John". Beware of these old forgeries, as well as newer New Age writings supposedly coming from Jesus by way of spirit channeling. God has already revealed His will to us by the Holy Bible, and He does not use New Age channelers or anyone else to give us "new messages" of any kind!

Read also "Why Should I Believe the Bible?"