

## Why is the Apocrypha not used today?

Christians of different denominations as I have said previously disagree as to which and how many books there are in the Apocrypha. That aside here are however, a number of reasons why the Apocrypha should not be part of the Canon or standard writings of Scripture at all and should therefore not be used. These are the arguments I have found:

### Rejection by Jesus and the Apostles

1. There are no clear, definite New Testament quotations from the Apocrypha by Jesus or the apostles. While there may be various allusions by the New Testament to the Apocrypha, there are no authoritative statements like "thus says the Lord," "as it is written," or "the Scriptures say." There are references in the New Testament to the Apocrypha (Jude 14-15 talks about Enoch) and even citations from pagan sources (Acts 17:22-34), but none of these are cited as Scripture and are rejected even by Roman Catholics. In contrast, the New Testament writers cite the Old Testament numerous times (Mt. 5; Lk. 24:27; Jn. 10:35) and use phrases such as "thus says the Lord," "as it is written," or "the Scriptures say," indicating their approval of these books as inspired by God.

2. Jesus implicitly rejected the Apocrypha as Scripture by referring to the entire accepted Jewish Canon of Scripture, "From the blood of Abel [Gen. 4:8] to the blood of Zechariah [2 Chron. 24:20], who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation (Lk. 11:51; cf. Mt. 23:35)."

Abel was the first martyr in the Old Testament from the book of Genesis while Zechariah was the last martyr in the book of Chronicles. In the Hebrew Canon, the first book was Genesis and the last book was Chronicles. They contained all of the same books as the standard 39 books accepted by Protestants today, but they were just arranged differently. For example, all of the 12 minor prophets (Hosea through Malachi) were contained in one book. This is why there are only 24 books in the Hebrew Bible today. By Jesus' referring to Abel and Zachariah, He was canvassing the entire Canon of the Hebrew Scriptures which included the same 39 books as Protestants accept today. Therefore it could be argued and it is that Jesus implicitly rejected the Apocrypha as Scripture.

### Rejection by the Jewish Community

3. The "oracles of God" were given to the Jews (Rom. 3:2) and they rejected the Old Testament Apocrypha as part of this inspired revelation. Interestingly, Jesus had many disputes with the Jews, but He never disputed with them regarding the extent of the inspired revelation of God.

4. While the Dead Sea scrolls contain copies of several books of the Apocrypha, they contain far more copies of pseudepigraphal (false writings) books like 1 Enoch that even the Roman Catholic church admits are clearly not inspired. What is important to note here, however, is that owning copies of a book does not imply belief in that book's inspiration. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain a variety of community rules, historical documents, festival calendars, and other uninspired documents that the community found useful. The scrolls do not contain commentaries on the Apocrypha as they do for the Jewish Old Testament books, and they do not cite the Apocrypha authoritatively as scripture. This probably indicates that even the Essene community did not regard the Apocrypha as highly as the Jewish Old Testament books.

5. Many ancient Jews rejected the Apocrypha as Scripture. Philo never quoted the Apocrypha as Scripture. Josephus explicitly rejected the Apocrypha and listed the Hebrew Canon to be 22 books (remember the content was the same as today but arranged differently as I have already said about the 12 minor prophets, confusing I know). In fact, the Jewish Community acknowledged that the prophetic gifts had ceased in Israel before the Apocrypha was written.

### Rejection by many in the Catholic Church

6. The Catholic Church has not always accepted the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha was not officially accepted by the Catholic Church at a universal council until 1546 at the Council of Trent. This is over a millennium and a half after the books were written, and was a counter reaction to the Protestant Reformation.

7. Many church Fathers rejected the Apocrypha as Scripture, and many just used them for devotional purposes. For example, Jerome, the great Biblical scholar and translator of the Latin Vulgate, rejected the Apocrypha as Scripture though, supposedly under pressure, he did make a hurried translation of it. In fact, most of the church fathers in the first

four centuries of the Church rejected the Apocrypha as Scripture. Along with Jerome, names include Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Athanasius.

8. The Apocryphal books were placed in Bibles before the Council of Trent and after but were placed in a separate section because they were not of equal authority. The Apocrypha rightfully has some devotional purposes, but it is not inspired.

### False Teachings

9. The Apocrypha contains a number of false teachings

The command to use magic (Tobit 6:5-7)

Forgiveness of sins by almsgiving (Tobit 4:11; 12:9).

Offering of money for the sins of the dead (2 Maccabees 12:43-45).  
Think about the implications here of buying prayers for the dead - indulgences, which was one of the causes of the Reformation.

### Not Prophetic

10. The Apocryphal books do not share many of the characteristics of the Canonical books: they are not prophetic, there is no supernatural confirmation of any of the apocryphal writers works, there is no predictive prophecy, there is no new Messianic truth revealed, they are not cited as authoritative by any prophetic book written after them, and they even acknowledge that there were no prophets in Israel at their time (cf. 1 Macc. 9:27; 14:41).

I'm sure there are other reasons around that I have not found but I think that is enough to answer the question. The Apocrypha contains some interesting historical stories but that is all they are, stories. They are not the inspired word of God as are the 66 books of our bible. They contain nothing that point us to the way of Jesus or helps and guides us through this life to our final destination - eternity with God.