



## Fall 2013 Sermon Series: Bible on Trial

### The Charge:

- A. The Bible is merely a human book, not the message from any God.
- B. The Bible is not true, it contains errors, it is not historically reliable and it is not accurate.
- C. The Bible's teachings are often unscientific, unethical, socially regressive and immoral.

### The Plea: Not Guilty

#### Introduction

We at FTC claim that the Bible is the written word of God. We claim that it is true, without error and that it is authoritative. Everything we teach here has as the Bible as its basis and authority. We claim that it is not merely a truth but that its message is **exclusively the** truth. We claim that the Bible (all 66 books) is not merely a word from God, but that it is **the** word from God. All our theological beliefs are founded on the Bible. Since the Bible is God's word, it is a worthy foundation for our beliefs and practices. If the Bible were not the word of God, it would be instructive, containing much history and wisdom, but it would not be authoritative. If the Bible were not the word of God, it would be like all other books, merely the word of men.

The purpose of this series, Bible on Trial, is to learn why we believe that the Bible is the word of God. Our study will cover eight crucial topics:

**Revelation** addresses the issue of *what God revealed*. 9-8-13

**Inspiration** addresses the issue of *how what God revealed (the Bible) was written and by whom*. 9-15-13

**Canonicity** addresses the issue of *which books are in the Bible*. 9-22-13

**Inerrancy** addresses the issue of the original inspired books *being without error*. 2-29-13

**Reliability** addresses the issue of *how accurate* our modern day Bibles are *to the original books*. 10-6-13

**Translation** addresses the issue of what it says *in another language*. "What does it say?"

**Interpretation** addresses the issue of meaning, and answers the question, "What does it mean?" "How should we interpret the Bible?" Literal, metaphorical, allegorical, etc? This topic is called **hermeneutics**.

**Application** addresses the issue of life response. "What am I going to do about it?"

*"How can we know that the Bibles we have today accurately reflect originals written 2000 years ago for the New Testament and up to 3400 years ago for the Old Testament? Communication is never perfect; people make mistakes. Copying errors are compounded with each successive generation, just like the message in the telephone game. Over 2000 years have passed; so it's anyone's guess what the original said. Plus, there are so many different translations and interpretations. Who knows what the Bible originally said!?"*

**The Bible makes claims about itself. The Bible requests to take the witness stand. It speaks and wants to be heard, questioned, cross-examined. So let's put the Bible on the trial.**

#### Procedure for This Study

We will appeal to the Bible in our defense of its authority. This may appear to be circular reasoning, but think of this study as a trial. In a trial the accused is permitted to speak in his own defense. The defendant is permitted to testify in his own defense. While the defendant's testimony does not settle the matter, it is admissible as evidence and useful for evaluating the defendant's credibility. It is also fair game for the prosecution to call the defendant back to the stand for cross-examination. In our case, the defendant will not plead the 5<sup>th</sup>.

First, we need to clearly understand the claims. Then we need to weigh the evidence and come to some conclusions. In a court of law, you don't have to prove your point *beyond all shadow of doubt*. You do have to prove your point, or make your case, *beyond reasonable doubt*.

## **Canonicity: How do we know that the Bible contains all and only the inspired books?**

**Who decided which books are in the Bible?** Sept. 22, 2013 Fardale Trinity Church, Pastor Joe Talone

*General* revelation is what we have in nature. It's what we can understand about God from what we observe in the universe, (creation and conscience) without Him speaking directly to us.

*Special* revelation is God's particular direct communication to people. God wanted some of His particular communication preserved and passed on so other people could have it too. *The process whereby the revelation has been written down is called inspiration.* The product of inspiration is God's written word, the Bible.

*So the Bible is what God has revealed to people. The Bible is God's word written for our information and instruction.*

**Inspiration** is the process by which God moved human authors, using their own individual personalities, to compose and record, without error, His revelation to man in the words of the original books of the Bible. We call this process *verbal, plenary inspiration* in order to state that it extends to the actual words (verbal) and to all of the actual words (plenary, which means "full, entire, complete, absolute").

Does the testimony, does the witness, does the story that God has communicated with mankind and told them to write down what He said make sense logically and rationally? And does it fit the world and reality as we experience it. I say "Yes, very much so." There is a God who is there, Who created us like Himself in our capacity for rule (exercise dominion) and relationship with each other and with Himself. He is a powerful, creative, intelligent designer. We are the effect of which He is the Cause. It seems perfectly sensible to me that since He is an intelligent, moral communicator and He has made us in His own image according to His likeness that we too would be intelligent, with moral capacity, and capable of communication. And since we are made with the capacity for communication, does it seem odd that He would communicate with us? Not at all. It would seem odd *if He did not* communicate with us. And does it seem odd that He would communicate with us through spokesmen and tell them to write it down so that others would have His communication? Not at all odd. In fact, I'd say it makes sense. It fits reality as we observe it.

## **Canonicity: How do we know that the Bible contains all and only the inspired books?**

**Who decided which books are in the Bible?** Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>

How do we know that the 66 books in our Bibles are **the** 66 inspired books? Who made the decision as to which books belong in the Bible and which books do not belong in the Bible? How and when were the books collected and by whom? What about the Apocrypha? Why do some Bibles have it and others do not?

The term "canon" literally means "reed" and this reed was used for measuring. The measuring reed was a standard of measure or a rule or rod. A book was identified as "canonical" if it conformed to a standard or rule. When we speak of "Canonicity" we are speaking of the process whereby men **recognized** the inspiration of a book of the Bible. The term was not used until the compiling of the NT books, but the concept of "canon" and the idea that some writings are the inspired Word of God, while other writings are not, is ancient.

### **A. The Canonicity of the Old Testament**

The gradual growth of the OT can be seen in the OT writings themselves.

1. Moses wrote the first [five](#) books, known as the Torah or Law (Deut. 31:24).

<sup>24</sup> It came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, <sup>25</sup> that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, <sup>26</sup> "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you.

2. Joshua [added](#) on to what Moses had written.

See last 8 verses of Deut. (page 168 in pew Bible, 314 in Spanish Bible) and Joshua 24:26.)

[And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; \(Joshua 24:26\)](#)

3. Samuel added to *"the book and placed it before the Lord"* (1 Sam. 10:25)

<sup>25</sup> Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and *wrote them in the book* and placed it before the LORD.

*"The book"* was placed *beside* before the Lord the ark in the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle and later the temple. The tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were written were placed *in* the ark.

(See Exodus 25:16, 21 and Ex. 31:18 and Ex. 40:20; Deut. 10:2 and Deut. 31:26;)

[You shall put into the ark the testimony \(the two stone tablets\) which I shall give you. <sup>21</sup> You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you. \(Exodus 25:16 and 21\)](#)

[When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God. \(Exodus 31:18\)](#)

Then he took *the testimony* (the two stone tablets) and put *it* into the ark, and attached the poles to the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. (Exodus 40:20)

I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered, and you shall put them in the ark.' (Deut. 10:2)

<sup>26</sup> "Take this book of the law and place it *beside the ark* of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you. (Deut. 31:26)

4. The Talmud ascribes the books of Judges, Ruth and 1 & 2 Samuel to the Prophets Samuel, Nathan and Gad. Early writings say Jeremiah the Prophet wrote the books of I & II Kings. Ezra wrote the books of I & II Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. Psalms was written by David and others. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes were written by Solomon. The authors of Job and Esther are unknown, although many believe that Job wrote his own story. And early writings claim that Mordeci wrote Esther. The 16 books of the Prophets were written by the prophets whose name their bear, sometimes with a helper or secretary.
5. References within several later books indicate that a definite body of sacred writings was in existence and recognized as having divine authority. (Daniel 9:2, Zechariah 7:12, Ezra 7: 6-14, and Nehemiah 8:1-8)

<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in *the books* the number of the years which was *revealed* as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. (Daniel 9:2)

They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear *the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets*; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 7:12)

(Ezra 7: 6-14)

<sup>6</sup> This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in ***the law of Moses***, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the LORD his God was upon him. <sup>7</sup> Some of the sons of Israel and some of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers and the temple servants went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.

<sup>8</sup> He came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. <sup>9</sup> For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him. <sup>10</sup> For Ezra had set his heart to study ***the law of the LORD and to practice it***, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.

<sup>11</sup> Now this is the copy of the decree which King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, learned in the words of the commandments of the LORD and His statutes to Israel: <sup>12</sup> "Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, ***the scribe of the law of the God of heaven***, perfect peace. And now <sup>13</sup> I have issued a decree that any of the people of Israel and their priests and the Levites in my kingdom who are willing to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. <sup>14</sup> Forasmuch as you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to ***the law of your God which is in your hand***, (Ezra 7: 6-14)

(Nehemiah 8:1-8)

And all the people gathered as one man at the square, which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring ***the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel***. <sup>2</sup> Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who *could* listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup> **He read from it** before the square, which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to ***the book of the law***. <sup>4</sup> Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium, which they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand; and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam on his left hand. <sup>5</sup> **Ezra opened the book** in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. <sup>6</sup> Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people *remained* in their place. <sup>8</sup> **They read from the book, from the law of God**, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.

**Summary of 1-5.** Immediately when written, *the books* received immediate acceptance and recognition by the Jews. The books were added to the collection at that time. They were kept beside the ark in the tabernacle and later the

temple. The scribes carefully copied the Law and the Prophets (the two-fold designation for all the writings) onto other scrolls for study, reading, and usage.

6. Other books of historical, ecclesiastical, and religious value were written during the OT period (and the inter-testamental period) but the Jews did not recognize them as inspired and did not place them beside the Ark of the Covenant. One dominant criterion for recognition as a sacred writing for the OT Jews was Prophetic authorship. The writer did not have to be a prophet in the sense of having visions of the future (though many did), but in the sense of being a mediator between God and the nation of Israel. If the writer functioned in the capacity of God's spokesman to the nation, he was considered a prophet. For example, Ecclesiasticus (written by Ben Sira, a known non-prophet) was never included in the collection of sacred writing by the ancient Jews, even though they respected it, studied it and taught it to their kids.
7. The OT canon closed according to the Jews with the last prophet Malachi, until John the Baptist. The Jews have never had any other books in their "Bible" other than the ones we have in our Old Testament. We arrange them a little differently and divide some books into two, which they have as one, but the content is the same. None of the apocryphal books were ever considered to be the inspired Word of God by the orthodox Jews. The books were respected and studied, but not considered Scripture.
8. Jesus viewed the OT canon as closed. The Jews place II Chronicles last in their "Bible". Jesus says the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on the earth from Able (the first righteous martyr, recorded in Genesis 4) to Zechariah (the last righteous martyr in the OT, recorded in II Chron. 24:21) will fall on the scribes and Pharisees. ("... so that upon you may fall *the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.*" Matt. 23:35) Jesus viewed II Chronicles as the last book of the OT even though the Apocryphal works were well known and well respected by the orthodox Jews of the first century.

## B. The Canonicity of the New Testament

1. The period of A.D. 33-45 is characterized by Apostolic preaching. Not much was written because the early Christians expected Christ to come back to the earth at any moment. The Apostles' preaching included OT quotations, and things Jesus said. There were probably collections of Jesus' sayings such as may be alluded to in John 21:25 and in Luke's prologue.

<sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they \*were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself \*would not contain the books that \*would be written. (John 21:25)

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, <sup>2</sup> just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, <sup>3</sup> it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

The Gospels do not contain all that Jesus said and did. Acts 20:35 records words spoken by Jesus, but not recorded in any of the Gospels.

In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ***'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'***" (Acts 20:35)

So whether written or oral, apparently some of Jesus' sayings were passed on or "handed down". Remember that *this is in the lifetime of and during the ministry of the Apostles who were eyewitnesses.* (This is **NOT** three centuries of "oral tradition handed down" until someone in the fourth century recorded the history mixed with myths that crept into the facts.)

2. The period of AD 45-100 is when all the NT books were written. Many scholars believe that all but 4 or 5 books were written before AD 70 when the temple was destroyed. The histories (Gospels and Acts) were written to teach people about Christ's life and ministry. The Epistles were written to teach converts, to give instruction, to correct, to address new issues and to answer questions.
3. Gradual Growth of NT Canon During the 1<sup>st</sup> Century
  - a. The Gospels were written by and with the assistance of eyewitnesses. (Luke 1:1-2)
  - b. Paul quotes Luke's Gospel (Luke 10:7) as Scripture within 3-4 years of its writing, which shows the immediate recognition and acceptance which inspired writings enjoyed. (1 Tim 5:18)

Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. (Luke 10:7)



For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," (in Deut. 25:4) and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (in Luke 10:7) (1 Timothy 5:18)

- c. Peter accepted Paul's letters as [Scripture](#). (2 Peter 3:15-16)

and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

This indicates that Paul's letters were put on the [same level](#) as the OT Scriptures. It also implies that Paul's letters were widely circulated and known, which shows the immediate recognition and acceptance inspired writings enjoyed.

- d. The Gospels and Epistles were read by the early church and circulated [immediately](#) when written. The letters themselves instruct the recipients to read and heed. (Col. 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:27; 1 Tim. 4:13; Rev. 1:3)

When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea. (Col. 4:16)

I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren. (1 Thes. 5:27)

Until I come, give attention to the *public reading of Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching. (1 Tim. 4:13)

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. (Rev. 1:3)

#### 4. Why don't we have a list of the 27 NT books from the 1<sup>st</sup> century?

- a. Poor communications (no phones, no postal service, no email, no TV) meant limited circulation of books. Not every church had every book.

Clement of Rome mentioned at least eight New Testament books (A.D. 95). Ignatius of Antioch acknowledged about seven books (A.D. 115). Polycarp, a disciple of John the apostle, acknowledged 15 books (A.D. 108)

- b. The Apostles had not all visited each church.
- c. Churches were springing up rapidly and many churches did not have copies of many of the books. There were no printing presses.
- d. Not until the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries did anyone doubt the Divine authority (Canonicity) of any book in our NT. The rise of heresy, fakes and frauds along with Pseudepigrapha in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century forced the discussion about canon, and led to the development of lists of sacred books.
- e. There was no particular widespread heresy in the 1<sup>st</sup> century to necessitate being able to distinguish between genuine writings and pretenders (spurious). During the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries over 100 apocryphal books were written. They were never recognized as authentic by the Christian church or its leaders.

#### 5. Criteria for Recognition as Canonical

Apostleship- It had to be written by or with an [Apostle](#)

Content – It had to be of sufficient [spiritual content](#). (consistency of doctrine and orthodox teaching)

Universality – It had to be [widely accepted](#)

Character – It had to give [internal](#) evidence of inspiration.

(Evidence of high moral and spiritual values that would reflect a work of the Holy Spirit)

#### 6. The Recognition of the NT Canon

- a. By AD 170 every NT book is spoken of or universally recognized as in the canon except for Hebrews, James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Revelation. These seven books were *accepted* by some *disputed* by others but *rejected as spurious* by none.

Irenaeus AD 170 considered the book of *Revelation* authentic.

The Muratorian Canon AD 170 lists 2 & 3 *John*, *Jude* and *Revelation* as authentic books.

*Hebrews* was questioned because the author could not be identified with certainty, although Paul was thought to be the writer.

*Revelation* was not well understood and so was doubted.

*James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John* were short letters, not widely circulated.

## b. Recognition by Church Councils in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century

1. During the persecution under Diocletian in AD 303 the Roman government attempted to destroy the Church's Scriptures. You protect with your life only that which you believe to be the authentic writings, and the church protected the 27 books that we have in our NT today.
2. In 313, Constantine and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan, which legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire.
3. Local Council of Laodicea 363 lists all 27 NT books except Revelation.
4. Letter of Athanasius 367 lists all 27 NT books as in the canon.
5. Third Council of Carthage 397 (in the Western part of the empire) lists all 27 NT books as canonical.
6. The council of Hippo 419 confirmed the Council of Carthage for both the East and West churches.

### Message

The Bible contains all of and only the inspired books.

### Action Points:

- ✓ If you'd like to know more about the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, or the Gnostic writings, I have a lot of info and knowledge on these and would love to discuss it with you.  
[jtalone@fardaletrinitychurch.org](mailto:jtalone@fardaletrinitychurch.org) or 201-825-1823
- ✓ Join a fold here at FTC so you can read, study and discuss God's Word with your spiritual family.
- ✓ Read a book of the Bible this week. Pick a book, any book!
- ✓ **Inerrancy** addresses the issue of the original inspired books *being without error*, and that's what we will look at next Sunday.

## What about the Apocrypha?

**The Apocrypha** meaning "hidden" or "secret" in the sense of not for public reading or liturgical reading because they were not Holy Spirit inspired books, i.e. not Scripture. These books date from 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC through 1st century AD.

When we use the term "Apocrypha" we are speaking of those books not included in the Hebrew canon or most modern Protestant translations of the Bible. Roman Catholic Bibles contain 7 of these books as freestanding, with 6 additions to other books. The Greek Orthodox Bible contains all of these and a few more. See the list of these writings in the Roman Catholic Bible below.

Tobit  
Judith  
Wisdom of Solomon  
Ecclesiasticus (also known as Sirach)  
Baruch  
1 Maccabees  
2 Maccabees

Esther – additions to (*Esther 10:4-16:24* in the Latin Vulgate)  
The Epistle of Jeremy (Jeremiah) (is chpt 6 of *Baruch* in the Latin Vulgate)  
The Prayer of Azarias (included in Book of *Daniel* in the Latin Vulgate )  
Song of the Three Children (*Daniel 3:24-90* in the Latin Vulgate)  
Story of Susanna (*Daniel 13* in the Latin Vulgate)  
The Idol Bel and the Dragon (*Daniel 14* in the Latin Vulgate)

## 1. How did the apocryphal books come to be included in the Bible?

In about 250 BC the Jews living in Greek-speaking North Africa (Alexandria, Egypt) translated the Pentateuch (Law) into Greek, supposedly for the library of the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy II. Over the next *two centuries* the Prophets and the Writings were also translated along with some other writings.

For the Jews living in Palestine, the OT collection of sacred writings was long since fixed. They clearly distinguished between the books which “*defile the hands*” (show the hands to be unclean by virtue of their intrinsic holiness as sacred writings) and other writings of religious or ecclesiastical value.

The Greek speaking Jews living in Alexandria translated some of these writings which they respected, but did not differentiate the books which “*defile the hands*” from the non-sacred (but still respected) books. This collection of books translated from Hebrew into Greek came to be called the Septuagint. The Septuagint became the OT Bible for the Greek-speaking Jews who had lost the knowledge of how to read (and in some cases speak) Hebrew. And it contained these books we call the Apocrypha.

The Palestinian Jews, including Jesus and the Apostles, probably knew of and may have read the Septuagint. While they never cited an apocryphal book, they may have quoted from the canonical books in the Septuagint. This is to be expected because they were orthodox Jews who knew the Scriptures to be the Hebrew collection of 24 (or 22) scrolls or books, which equal the 39 in our OT. The Hebrew collection has come to be known as the “Palestinian Canon”. The Septuagint (LXX) is referred to as the “Alexandrine Canon” contained these apocryphal books.

As Christianity spread to the Gentiles, the Septuagint became the OT Bible. The Gentiles could not read Hebrew, so the OT in the Greek language was their Bible. The leaders of the church of the late first century were Gentiles who cited their Septuagint “Bible” with out differentiating the canonical books from the non-canonical books. As the late first century and second century church debated orthodox Jews concerning Jesus, they became aware of the fact that the Jews did not regard the apocryphal books as Scripture. Some church fathers who were familiar with the Hebrew language recognized the problem but it was only a problem when debating Jews. The Septuagint was the only OT “Bible” they had.

## 2. The Latin Vulgate

By the middle of the third century Latin had become the language of the Western Roman Empire so much so that translations of the Septuagint into Latin began to appear. Many were poor translations and the rise of heresy necessitated a standard, recognized translation. Jerome was commissioned in AD 382 by the Bishop of Rome to translate the Greek Septuagint into Latin. Rome was the most influential city in the West, so a translation authorized by the church there would be respected. Jerome did as requested, but in 390 began to translate the OT from Hebrew. Jerome recognized that the apocryphal books did not belong in the canon. He noted at the beginning of each book whether it was canonical or not. He argued for their exclusion from the collection of Scripture.

Augustine of Hippo lived in North Africa where the Septuagint had been **the Bible** for over 400 years. He knew Greek and Latin, but not Hebrew. He disagreed with Jerome and viewed the Apocrypha as equally inspired Scripture as the rest of the OT. Augustine stands as one of the most brilliant and influential theologians the church has known and his influence was decisive. At the synods of Hippo in 393 and Carthage in 397, Augustine his influence prevailed. When the Latin Vulgate was completed, the Apocrypha was included against Jerome’s better judgment. The Latin Vulgate became the Bible of Europe for almost a thousand years.

## 3. The Reformers

The Reformers were very careful students of Scripture, because they looked to the Scriptures alone for authority, not to the Roman Church or to Church councils or to Church tradition. The renewed interest in the original languages of the Bible led to fresh studies of the Hebrew text, which brought the issue to debate once again. Several books in the Apocrypha teach about prayers for the dead and were used by the Roman Catholic Church to defend the doctrine of Purgatory.

The reformers translated the Bible into the languages of their country, and they included the Apocryphal books *with notes that the books were not canonical*. (Jerome had done the same thing when he translated the Hebrew books into Latin in his translation of the Bible, known as the Latin Vulgate.) In many of the reformers’ translations the apocrypha is sectioned off by itself between the Old and New Testaments or after the NT. The Wycliffe Bible (1382), Luther’s Bible, Coverdale Bible (1535), Mathew’s Bible (1537), Zurich Bible, Douay-Rheims Bible, and even the King James Bible (1611) were all originally printed with the Apocrypha. English translations of the Bible began to be published without the Apocrypha in the early 1800’s by the Protestants.

## 4. The Council of Trent 1546

The Council of Trent was the Roman Catholic Church’s answer to the Roman Catholic Priests’ Protest Reform Movement (Protestant Reformation). The council, among other things, listed the apocryphal books as being fully Scripture with the exception of 1 and 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh, which they regard as apocryphal. In 1566 Sixtus of Sienna introduced the distinction protocanonical and deuterocanonical, meaning “later added to the canon.” Many Roman Catholic scholars use this terminology today.

**Pseudepigrapha** “false writings” were recognized as false immediately. Old Testament pseudepigrapha date from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to the first century AD. They were viewed as non-authentic and non-inspired by the Jewish and Christian communities. These writings were never viewed or regarded or accepted as inspired books by anyone. They have never been considered as Bible books by anyone. Some people refer to the Gnostic writings of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries as NT pseudepigrapha.

Pagans who sought to blend paganism with Christian teachings wrote books in an attempt to popularize their syncretism of religious views. Among these texts are the Gnostic writings.

## Gnostic Writings

### An Overview of the Nag Hammadi Texts (Copied from <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl.html>)

The Nag Hammadi library (popularly known as The Gnostic Gospels) is a collection of early Christian Gnostic texts discovered near the Upper Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi in 1945. That year, twelve leather-bound papyrus codices buried in a sealed jar were found by a local peasant... The writings in these codices comprised fifty-two mostly Gnostic tractates (treatises), but they also include three works belonging to the Corpus Hermeticum and a partial translation / alteration of Plato's Republic. In his "Introduction" to The Nag Hammadi Library in English, James Robinson suggests that these codices may have belonged to a nearby Pachomian monastery, and were buried after Bishop Athanasius condemned the uncritical use of non-canonical books in his Festal Letter of AD 367.... The once buried manuscripts themselves date from the 3rd and 4th centuries.

When analyzed according to subject matter, there are **six separate major categories of writings** collected in the Nag Hammadi codices:

- 1. Writings of creative and redemptive mythology, including Gnostic alternative versions of creation and salvation:** The Apocryphon of John; The Hypostasis of the Archons; On the Origin of the World; The Apocalypse of Adam; The Paraphrase of Shem. (For an in-depth discussion of these, see the Archive commentary on Genesis and Gnosis.)
- 2. Observations and commentaries on diverse Gnostic themes, such as the nature of reality, the nature of the soul, the relationship of the soul to the world:** The Gospel of Truth; The Treatise on the Resurrection; The Tripartite Tractate; Eugnostos the Blessed; The Second Treatise of the Great Seth; The Teachings of Silvanus; The Testimony of Truth.
- 3. Liturgical and initiatory texts:** The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth; The Prayer of Thanksgiving; A Valentinian Exposition; The Three Steles of Seth; The Prayer of the Apostle Paul. (The Gospel of Philip listed under the sixth category below, has great relevance here also, for it is in effect a treatise on Gnostic sacramental theology).
- 4. Writings dealing primarily with the feminine deific and spiritual principle, particularly with the Divine Sophia:** The Thunder, Perfect Mind; The Thought of Norea; The Sophia of Jesus Christ; The Exegesis on the Soul.
- 5. Writings pertaining to the lives and experiences of some of the apostles:** The Apocalypse of Peter; The Letter of Peter to Philip; The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles; The (First) Apocalypse of James; The (Second) Apocalypse of James, The Apocalypse of Paul.
- 6. Scriptures which contain sayings of Jesus as well as descriptions of incidents in His life:** The Dialogue of the Saviour; The Book of Thomas the Contender; The Apocryphon of James; The Gospel of Philip; The Gospel of Thomas.



## The texts discovered at Nag Hammadi in alphabetical order

The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles	The Apocalypse of Paul
Allogenes	The Apocalypse of Peter
The Apocalypse of Adam	The Apocryphon of James:
The (First) Apocalypse of James	
The (Second) Apocalypse of James	
The Apocryphon of John	On the Baptism B
Asclepius 21-29	On the Eucharist A
Authoritative Teaching	On the Eucharist B
The Book of Thomas the Contender	On the Origin of the World
The Concept of Our Great Power	The Paraphrase of Shem
The Dialogue of the Savior	Plato, Republic 588A-589B
The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth	The Prayer of the Apostle Paul
Eugnostos the Blessed	The Prayer of Thanksgiving
The Exegesis on the Soul	The Second Treatise of the Great Seth
The Gospel of the Egyptians	The Sentences of Sextus
The Gospel of Philip	The Sophia of Jesus Christ
The Gospel of Thomas:	The Teachings of Silvanus
The Gospel of Truth	The Testimony of Truth
The Hypostasis of the Archons	The Thought of Norea
Hypsiphron	The Three Steles of Seth
The Interpretation of Knowledge	The Thunder, Perfect Mind
The Letter of Peter to Philip	The Treatise on the Resurrection
Marsanes	Trimorphic Protennoia
Melchizedek	The Tripartite Tractate
On the Anointing	A Valentinian Exposition
On the Baptism A	Zostrianos

