

How the Books of the Bible became Scripture: A Brief Explanation

1. The Old Testament isn't much in question because Judaism confirmed it, Christ confirmed it, and the early Church confirmed it. Much is said in Jewish history and literature regarding the completeness and finality of its completeness. Jesus quoted every major section of the Old Testament, and never quoted other sources. He never quoted anything in the Apocrypha (included in the Roman Catholic Bible). The early church never qualified the books of the Apocrypha as Scripture.

Why not the Apocrypha?

1546 Council of Trent officially declared the Apocrypha to part of the Catholic Scriptures. They did this in response to Martin Luther's teachings and the spread of Protestant Reformation. The Apocrypha supports the Catholic view of prayers for the dead and justification by faith plus works, not by faith alone.

...The writings of the Apocrypha should not be regarded as part of Scripture: (1) they do not claim for themselves the same kind of authority as the Old Testament writings; (2) they were not regarded as God's words by the Jewish people from whom they originated; (3) they were not considered to be Scripture by Jesus or the New Testament authors; and (4) they contain teachings inconsistent with the rest of the Bible.

We must conclude that they are merely human words, not God-breathed words like the words of Scripture. They do have value for historical and linguistic research, and they do have stories about the courage and faith of many Jews during the period after the Old Testament ends, but they have never been part of the Old Testament canon, and they should not be thought as part of the Bible.

2. The Apostles or someone closely tied to an Apostle wrote the New Testament books. All of which lived in the first century. A collection of the books was made very early on. The early Church spent much time quoting the apostles writings. The early church fathers made many lists of what they believed to be Scripture. Eventually some of the early Church fathers began to counter the heretic, Marcion the Gnostic, who rejected parts of the New Testament. Eventually the Church began to list the books that were part of the Canon (Scripture) as a response to those heretics that began to bring opposition.

5 Criteria for the New Testament—John Hanna-Dallas Theological Seminary

1. Apostolic origin
 2. Early Church use
 3. Early Church attitude towards it
 4. Intrinsic content—did it contradict the Old Testament or other apostolic teaching?
 5. The effects spiritually and morally it had on its readers
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3. Evangelical Christians believe the canon is closed meaning no other books should be added. Some of the other religions, Mormon, Islam, etc. All claim to have additional religious materials, which in their minds trump the New Testament. Most cults add or subtract information to and from Scripture.

“The books did not become authoritative by Church decision or as a result of veneration attaching to things of antiquity. They were authoritative when written because given by inspiration of God. They were recognized as authoritative, inspired, and canonical by the generations to which they were addressed because of the position of the authors as acknowledged spokesmen of God. In the ancient times, the succession of writing prophets following Moses, the great prototype, gave us our Old Testament. In the times of the founding of the Christian Church the apostles were God’s chosen instruments appointed expressly by Christ for the purpose and endued by Him with the Holy Spirit for the revelational activity. They were conscious of such a holy gift, and as they write to us the Word of God, they attach to it a suitable blessing for all who receive it in faith and practice it: Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand”--- R. Laird Harris

The following statements were made in response to the idea that the early church as a hoax concocted the writings of Scripture, especially those that deal with Jesus’ divinity.

“The Council of Nicaea did not "invent" the divinity of Jesus. This was already the declaration of the Church, claimed by Jesus himself and proclaimed by the apostles. The council boldly claimed this as the faith of the Church and named Arianism as a heresy and Arians as heretics. A close vote? Only two out of more than 300 bishops failed to sign the creed. Not exactly a cliffhanger.

The Nag Hammadi texts as the real gospels? Not on your life. The texts are easily identifiable as Gnostic literature peripheral to the Church. The early Church did not establish the canon (official set of New Testament writings) at Nicaea, though a general consensus was already evident at that gathering. The New Testament writings were recognized and set apart because of their authorship by one of the apostles and by their clearly orthodox content--in harmony with the other New Testament writings as recognized by the churches spread throughout the Greco-Roman world.

Much more could be considered, but the main issue is this: How plausible is such a conspiracy? The threshold of credibility for this conspiracy requires us to believe that the entire structure of Christian theology is a sinister plot to fool the masses. Further, we must believe that the leaders of this conspiracy knew that Jesus was not the Son of God, but were willing to die for this cause by the millions. As C. S. Lewis once argued, people might be willing to be martyrs for a lie if they are innocently deceived, but very few will die for what they know to be a lie.”—Albert Mohler

Resources from which much was drawn:

[Albertmohler.com/commentary](http://albertmohler.com/commentary)

Systematic Theology—Wayne Grudem

Who Made God? And Answers To Over 100 Other Tough Questions of Faith—Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler.