

Are There Books Missing From The Bible?

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Perry Cotham was born to Christian parents January 5, 1912 in Murray, Kentucky. He was baptized at an early age began preaching soon after in 1929 at the age of 17. He entered Freed-Hardeman College (then a junior college) in September, 1929 and graduated in June, 1931. He then entered college at his hometown of Murray, Kentucky and graduated from Murray State University in June of 1934. While attending college he preached for several of the area churches and conducted meetings. After several years of local work in Kentucky, Oklahoma and Texas he began full time meeting work in 1972. Since that time he has preached in all 50 of the United States and in all inhabited continents of the world, including over 70 nations. He has written 16 tracts which have been distributed throughout the world. He has published 3 debate books with those of the Pentecostal persuasion. Perry lives in Grand Prarie, Texas (in the Dallas - Ft. Worth metroplex).

To begin our study let us note two statements of Scripture given by David, the sweet singer of Israel, concerning the Word of God:

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations (Psalm 100:5 [emp. mine, PBC]).

Thy word is true from the beginning: (or, The sum of thy word is truth, ASV) and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever (Psalm 119:160 [emp. mine, PBC]).

It has long been the belief and teaching of the church that God's Truth endureth to all generations; that He, in His providence, has preserved His Word from one generation to another, and will continue to do this forever. The Word of God will remain, and will remain the same to all generations. The sixty-six books of the original writings of the Scriptures are the products of men who wrote as they were guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Thus, we have today God's scheme of redemption for man's salvation given, confirmed, and recorded in the Bible. God's providence has delivered this sacred Record into our possession today.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

When Jesus was on earth, He confirmed that all of the writings of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament had the approval of God and were, therefore, authoritative. On one occasion He said, "...and the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), confirming the fact that all the books recognized as Scripture by the Jews were from God.

Later in his public ministry, after His resurrection and prior to his ascension back to the Father, He made this statement regarding the books of the Old Testament as Scripture:

These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me (Luke 24:44).

Here He mentioned the three divisions into which the Hebrews divided the entire Old Testament: “the law of Moses,” “the prophets,” and “the psalms.”

Some think the Jews made the following division of the books of the Old Testament:

1. *The Law of Moses*: These five books were Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Some scholars think that the Jews also included in this list: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.
2. *The prophets*: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.
3. *The psalms*: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon and Lamentations.

We usually make this fourfold division of the books of the Old Testament:

1. *Law of Moses*: Genesis to Deuteronomy
2. *history*: Joshua to Esther
3. *poetry*, or books of devotion: Job to The Song of Solomon; and
4. *prophecy*, both major and minor books: Isaiah to Malachi.

There are no books of the Old Testament, given by the inspiration of God, that are missing.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The books of the New Testament have, also, their fourfold division:

1. *Biography of Christ*, or books of testimony to produce faith in Christ: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (John 20:30-31).
2. *Book of conversions*: The Acts of the Apostles. This book gives examples of how to become a Christian, and the beginning and growth of the church for about thirty years.
3. *Epistles to Christians*: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John and Jude. These books are given to teach Christians how to live the life of a faithful child of God (cf. 2 Peter 1:4-11) in order to go to heaven.
4. *Prophecy*. Revelation. This book was given to point Christians to the eternal home of the soul, heaven, and to urge them to remain faithful to the end of life’s journey in spite of all trials and difficulties (cf. Revelation 2:10; 12:11; 17:14; 22:14).

We should learn to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

ALL TRUTH GIVEN

Peter wrote that God “hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3 [emphasis added]). Paul stated: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God,” (literally “breathed out by God”), and is able to furnish one completely “unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17 [emp. mine, PBC]). There is not any teaching that is omitted that is necessary for Christians today.

So, in the Holy Bible, God has given to us all the Truth, and He has preserved this book, in spite of all opposition to it, to this day. He will continue to do this. The New Testament was given by inspiration of God as well as the Old Testament, but people today are not living under the law of the Old Testament; they are living under the law of the New Testament, the Will of Christ (cf. Galatians 6:2; Colossians 2:14; Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 1:1-2; 7:12; 8:6-9; 9:15; 10:9). The Bible is the only inspired book in the world.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

The question is sometimes asked, “Do we have all the books in our Bible today that have been written by inspired men?” or “Have any of the books of God’s divine Word been lost?” This is a key issue in this and every age of the church. David declared: “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89). God answers the question for us.

GOD’S WORD DIVINE

God determined what would be Scripture. If a writing is inspired, it is Scripture. Peter referred to the writings of “our beloved brother Paul” and called them “scriptures” (2 Peter 3:15-16). If it is Scripture, then it belongs with the other Scriptures. Paul once affirmed “that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37).

Man cannot make that which is not inspired an inspired writing. God called all writing given by inspired men “Scripture,” and the early Christians recognized it as such. It was man’s duty to recognize that which the Lord had already made divine and authoritative. So, in a sense, the books became canonized the minute they were written. It was not necessary for some “Church Council” centuries later to declare them inspired and authoritative. In fact, the Bible is in a class all by itself. The Bible alone is the sole authority in the real of religion, and this Book is complete.

GOD’S WORD ETERNAL

About the year A. D. 64, the apostle Peter wrote to Christians concerning their new birth and said these important things of God’s Word:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (1 Peter 1:23-25 [emp. mine, PBC]).

Thus, the Word of God is ever living as is God Himself. It will endure forever. No one has ever been able to completely destroy the Word of God from the face of this earth—or shall any person ever. God’s Word—all of it—will endure forever. Men have tried to destroy the Bible in years past, but they have always failed.

For example, the Roman Emperor Diocletian, in A. D. 303, issued an edict to destroy the Bible. He thought he had accomplished his goal! But twenty-five years later Constantine, the new

emperor, commissioned fifty copies of the Bible to be prepared at government expense. Voltaire, the French infidel, in 1776, predicted that in one hundred years the Bible would be lost. But about twenty-five years after his death, in 1778, the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded, and this one Society alone has given to the world millions of copies of the entire Bible in several hundred different languages. One hundred years later, Voltaire's own printing press, on which his infidelic literature had been printed, was used to print Bibles. The very house in which he had lived was used as a storage room for the Word of God. The American Bible Society in New York City has, for many years, been printing and distributing millions of copies of the Bible and portions of God's Word all over America. Jehovah has providentially preserved His Book in its entirety throughout all the centuries. Jesus once said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The Bible will live to the end of time. All attempts in the past to destroy the Bible, or any part of the Holy Scriptures, have always failed. All attempts in the future will likewise fail. Truly, the Word of God abides! **It lives!**

In giving to the world the New Testament, Jesus promised His apostles that after His leaving, He would send to them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would guide them into **all** Truth. Note His language:

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26 [emp. mine, PBC]).

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:...(John 16:13 [emp. mine, PBC]).

So **all Truth** has been given in the books of the New Testament. But, are any of the books that were written missing from our Bibles? Or, do we have all of them?

WHAT ABOUT APOCRYPHAL BOOKS?

There are fourteen books that are included in the Old Testament found in the Roman Catholic Bibles which are not included in our English Bible. These are referred to as "the apocryphal books." Dictionaries define the word "apocrypha" as meaning "of doubtful authorship or authority." So, they are not admitted to the Bible in the Authorized Version, being not canonical. These apocryphal books which non-Catholics reject are Tobit, Judith, Sirach, parts of Esther, the Wisdom, First, Second, and Third Books of the Maccabees (the Third Book of Maccabees, however, is not included in the Vulgate), Baruch, the Hymn of the Three Hebrew Children, Susanna and Bel the Dragon.

The contents of those books on careful examination show that they are not of equal authority with those of the inerrant Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures as accepted by non-Catholics. All of these were never really acknowledged by the Jews or the early Christians to be canonical, inspired, or authoritative. These books were never in the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament. One thing worthy of note is that there are about 263 direct quotations from passages in the Old Testament, yet there is not a single reference by Christ or any of His apostles to the apocryphal writings as recorded in the New Testament.

The Greek Church, in A. D. 363, at the Council of Laodicea, denied that the apocryphal books were inspired, and prohibited their use in churches. Yet the Pope declared as late as April 1546, that the Apocryphal Books are canonical and authoritative. Protestants never accepted that, and the Hebrews never accepted them as canonical.

OTHER SPURIOUS BOOKS

Too, there were several spurious books which began to appear in the second century. These are of unworthy stories of Christ and the apostles, and have never been regarded as divine, or included in our Bible. Some things said in them are utterly absurd. We mention only three of these books: *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, *The Passing of Mary*, and *The Gospel of Joseph the Carpenter*.

We could also mention the Koran, the book alleged to be the scriptures of the Mohammedans, containing the professed revelations to Mohammed, of Arabia, by the angel Gabriel. The Koran teaches much that is in contradiction to what God's Book says. Reference can also be made to the Book of Mormon of the religion of Mormonism, and of Joseph Smith, another proclaimed prophet of God. We could also mention the writing of Ellen G. White, of the Seventh Day Adventist church. All religious people should heed the three solemn warnings against any attempt to add to or alter God's inspired Book, as found in Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6 and Revelation 22:18-19. We must reject all of these so-called additions to the Scriptures. Some may think that perhaps there may yet be found some books or teachings which are not presently included in our Bible, thereby denying the idea of the completeness of our Bible. This cannot be proved (cf. Galatians 1:6-9). The Bible is the only Book to be supernaturally inspired, not one of many "sacred writings." This would also exclude the writings of Hinduism and Buddhism.

In March, 1947, some scrolls of ancient Scripture were found by a young Arab shepherd boy in a cave near the Dead Sea, seven and one-half miles south of Jericho. These later became known as "The Dead Sea Scrolls." But after careful examination by scholars, it was determined that they did not contain any teaching that was not already in our Bible. The jars containing several leather scrolls of portions of Scripture were thought to have belonged to the religious sect of the Essenes about the time of Christ. This has often been referred to as the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion from this study is that we today have the complete, true, inspired Word of God in the sixty-six books of our Bible. The Bible is not incomplete, and there are no books missing from the Bible. If there are lost books (revelation), then God did not do His job in preserving His Word. We know better than this. By a simple study of the Scriptures, we know that we have what God would have us to know. All other things belong to God (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Furthermore, we believe that Bibles in the languages of the people, when correctly translated from the Hebrew and the Greek, should be made available to all people in every nation on earth. They should be encouraged to read it with an honest and sincere heart to learn God's Will for them. We do not need the human decrees of Church Councils and the Traditions of men to supplement the teachings of God's divine Word in our Bibles. Neither do we accept any of the so-called "direct

revelations” of the Holy Spirit to some man today who claims to be a prophet of God with a new message. This would subvert the authority of the Holy Scriptures (cf. Matthew 7:15).

So, to answer the question, “Do we have now in our Bible today the complete cannon of the Scriptures?” **YES.** “Do we have the **whole** Will of God?” **YES!** Although other books may have been written, our conviction is that we do have all that God cared to give for our instruction (John 20:30-31; 21:25; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). No man, or any group of men, can by a decree make some writing “scripture,” which in its own nature is not Scripture. How can an apple tree be declared to be an apple tree? By the fruit it bears (Matthew 7:15-17). Can a grapevine be declared to be an apple tree by man and it be changed into an apple tree? Indeed not! So it is with the books of the Bible, the canon of Scripture. All of these other books we have referred to, and many others we could mention, were never intended to be included in the canon of sacred Scripture. So, let them be considered as “lost books,” for they were never a part of divine Scripture in the first place.

From this study, it should be our desire to hold in our hearts the Bible in a firmer and more lasting position than it has ever been held. It is the only divinely given, verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant and complete Message from God our Creator, Christ our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit who inspired it. We should read the Bible and love its Truths.

Blessed Bible, how I love it!
 How it doth my bosom cheer!
 What has earth like this to covet?
 Oh, what stores of wealth are here!

Man was lost and doomed to sorrow,
 Not one ray of light or bliss
 Could he from earth's treasures borrow
 Till his way was cheered by this.

Yes, sweet Bible, I will hide thee,
 Hide thee richly in this heart,
 Thou through all my life will guide me,
 And in death we will not part!

Part in death? No, never, never!
 Through death's vale, I'll lean on thee,
 Then in world's above forever
 Sweeter still thy truths shall be.

Anonymous

David declared: “O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97; cf. 19:7-11)