



February Each week, we shine a spotlight on the pure, unchanging Word of God—examining Scripture with clarity and conviction. Our mission is to uncover truth, confront heresy, and correct religious fallacy by teaching the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Because here, we stay in the WORD.

February



**Apocrypha (also called Deuterocanonical books)**

## **The Apocrypha and the Preservation of God’s Inspired Word**

The question of the Apocrypha’s authority often arises alongside a broader inquiry: Did God fully preserve His inspired Word, or were divinely inspired books lost, hidden, or excluded? Scripture itself affirms that God neither withheld nor misplaced any portion of His revealed truth. The Bible presents a consistent testimony that God faithfully safeguarded His Word and ensured its preservation for His people.

Christ declared in Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” This statement expresses divine confidence in the enduring preservation of God’s

revelation. If God is sovereign over creation, He is likewise sovereign over the preservation of His Word.

## **Divine Preservation Through Historical Custodians**

The preservation of Scripture began with inspired writing accompanied by entrusted custodianship. Moses recorded God's Law and delivered it to the priests for safekeeping. Deuteronomy 31:24–26 records that the written Law was placed beside the Ark of the Covenant as a perpetual witness to Israel. This demonstrates both divine inspiration and human stewardship working together in Scripture's preservation.

Israel's priests and Levites were assigned primary responsibility for guarding the Law. According to Malachi 2:7, priests were expected to preserve knowledge and faithfully teach God's Word. Over time, trained scribes emerged as professional copyists and interpreters of Scripture. Ezra is described in Ezra 7:6 as "a ready scribe in the Law of Moses," and in Nehemiah 8:1–8 he publicly read and explained the Law to the people. This tradition of careful copying and public teaching contributed significantly to the accurate transmission of Scripture.

Multiple manuscript copies circulated among communities, reducing the likelihood of loss or corruption. Kings also played protective roles. When the Book of the Law was rediscovered during the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22–23), national reform followed, demonstrating that preservation involved prophets, priests, scribes, rulers, and the believing community collectively.

## **Prophets, Apostles, and the Expanding Canon**

While priests and scribes often preserved Scripture, prophets and apostles served as its inspired authors. Prophets such as Jeremiah recorded divine revelations (Jeremiah 30:2), while New Testament apostles wrote under Christ's authority. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13), and apostolic writings were circulated among churches (Colossians 4:16). Thus, Scripture grew through inspired revelation even as it was faithfully preserved.

The believing community also shared responsibility for preservation. Scripture was read publicly (1 Timothy 4:13), taught across generations (Deuteronomy 6:6–9), and copied for distribution among congregations. Even during war, exile, and political upheaval—such as the Babylonian captivity—God's people gathered, affirmed, and preserved authoritative writings, as reflected in post-exilic reforms associated with Ezra.

This historical "chain of custody" may be summarized as follows:

**Moses and the Prophets → Priests and Scribes → Apostles → Early Manuscripts → Canon Recognition → Medieval Copying → Printing Press → Modern Scholarship**

Throughout this process, the consistent testimony of Scripture remained intact. As 2 Peter 1:21 affirms, holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and the message was widely proclaimed.

## **Criteria for Canonicity and the Apocrypha**

The first five books of Scripture—the Pentateuch—established doctrinal standards for subsequent writings claiming divine inspiration. Any text contradicting foundational revelation would naturally be excluded from the recognized canon. From this perspective, certain teachings found in the Apocryphal books appear inconsistent with the theology of Moses and the prophets.

Historically, these writings were not included in the Hebrew canon recognized by Jewish custodians of Scripture. Additionally, neither Christ nor His apostles explicitly quoted them as authoritative Scripture. The early biblical scholar Jerome expressed reservations about including these books in his Latin translation, noting their absence from the Hebrew manuscripts he considered authoritative.

## **Doctrinal Concerns Raised About Apocryphal Texts**

Several teachings within Apocryphal literature have raised theological concerns among many Protestant scholars:

- Some passages, such as Tobit 6:5–8, describe using physical objects to ward off demons, whereas the New Testament attributes exorcism authority to Christ’s name alone (Mark 16:17; Acts 16:18).
- Tobit 12:8–9 and Ecclesiasticus 3:33 appear to associate almsgiving with cleansing sin, while the New Testament emphasizes redemption through Christ’s blood (1 Peter 1:18–19).
- 2 Maccabees 12:43–46 references prayers for the dead, whereas passages like Hebrews 9:27 suggest final accountability after death.
- Some interpret Wisdom 3:1–4 as implying postmortem purification, a concept debated among Christian traditions.
- Certain narratives contain historical or theological tensions when compared with canonical texts.

These concerns have contributed to ongoing debates regarding the Apocrypha’s doctrinal authority.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the authority of any religious teaching must be measured against God’s revealed Word. Isaiah 8:20 states, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” From this standpoint, many Christian traditions conclude that the sixty-six books commonly recognized as the Bible sufficiently contain God’s inspired revelation for faith and practice.

The discussion surrounding the Apocrypha continues in theological scholarship, yet the central conviction remains that God has faithfully preserved His Word. The enduring harmony of Scripture across centuries stands as a testimony to divine providence in both inspiration and preservation.