

Roman Catholicism

Was Peter the First Pope?

by Phil Sanders

The media has constantly reported on the death John Paul II and the selection of a new pope. Roman Catholics regard Peter as the first pope. They believe Jesus gave the care of the entire church to him and that he, as bishop of Rome, passed down that authority to the succeeding bishops of Rome.

If Roman Catholics can establish the primacy of Peter and apostolic succession through the bishop of Rome, they have a foundation for their beliefs. But if Scripture does not regard Peter as a pope, then Roman Catholicism has no place to stand. Its authority is human and self-assumed, and one day it will be uprooted (Matt. 15:14).

What is the Pope?

The word pope literally means “papa.” This is just one of several titles for the bishop of Rome. He is also known as *Summus Pontifex*, *Pontifex Maximus*, *Servus servorum Dei*, Vicar of Christ, Vicar of God, prince of the apostles, and King of kings. A vicar is a person who is authorized to perform the functions of another, a substitute. Catholics believe the pope can perform the functions of Jesus Christ and is the supreme headship of the Church on earth. Pope Boniface VIII in 1302 AD decreed in the *Unam Sanctam* “that for salvation it is necessary that every human creature be subject to the authority of the Roman pontiff” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “*Unam Sanctam*”).

The Lord taught against religious titles, “But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ” (Matt. 23:8-10, NASB). If Jesus condemned religious titles, how much more will He condemn those who presume authority?

To claim that Peter and succeeding bishops of Rome become in turn the “head of the church” is to claim more than can be proved. Paul clearly said that God put Jesus “above all rule and

authority and . . . gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:21-23).

Seven Reasons to Reject Peter as the First Pope

1. Peter was a married man.

The gospels speak of Peter’s mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4: 38). Paul asked in 1 Cor. 9:5, “Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?” Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Tit. 1:6, 7 that an overseer [*episcopos* or bishop] must be “the husband of one wife.”

The Spanish Council of Elvira (295-302 AD), canon 33, imposed celibacy upon bishops, priests, and deacons. “If they continue to live with their wives and beget children after their ordination, they are to be deposed” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “*Celibacy of Clergy*”). The Council of Lateran imposed celibacy on all clergy was imposed in 1123 AD. Once more, men have forbidden precisely what God commands.

2. Peter did not regard himself as the Rock

Catholics point to Matthew 16 for proof that Jesus founded the church on Peter himself. Jesus said to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:17-19).

Catholics argue that Jesus in this passage said He would build his church upon Peter and gave the keys (authority) of the kingdom uniquely to him. The original Greek, however, distinguishes Peter from the rock. While Jesus gives Simon the name “Peter” (*petros*, masculine), He speaks of the rock (*petra*) with a feminine word. *Petros* refers to a stone that a man might carry, whereas *petra* refers to a huge rock,

cliff or ledge. The distinctions between masculine and feminine and between large and small are obvious.

Catholic scholars say Jesus did not speak Greek here but Aramaic, and the word “Cephas” is the same whether masculine or feminine. The Scriptures we have, however, are only in Greek; and Matthew, an apostle and eyewitness to this event, made the distinction. Jesus had already noted that wise men build upon the rock (*petra*) of His word (Matt. 7:24-27). Jesus built His church on Peter’s revealed confession that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, not on Peter.

If Peter himself were the rock upon which the church is founded, he did not know it. He pointed to Jesus as the chief corner stone; there is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:10-12). Peter said, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” Jesus was “A stone of stumbling, and a rock (*petra*) of offense” (1 Pet. 2: 4-8).

Peter introduced himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1) but never the “prince of the apostles” or the rock on which the church is built. In 1 Pet. 5:1 Peter says, “I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder.” In 5:4, he speaks of Jesus as the Chief Shepherd. Nowhere does he argue for supremacy, claim to be Christ’s vicar, or exalt himself above his fellow elders.

Paul points to Jesus as the foundation of the church. In Eph. 2:19-22, Paul says of God’s household is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

3. Peter did not render the decision at the Jerusalem council.

While Peter helped introduce the problem at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, James actually rendered the decision. James said, “Therefore it is my judgment...” (Acts 15:19-20) and attributed his authority to the Holy Spirit (15:28). If Peter were pope, he would have had the final word.

4. Paul rebuked Peter for hypocrisy.

“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision” (Gal. 2:11-12). If the pope indeed stands as a substitute for Christ, how is it that he could be rebuked for his behavior?

Paul argued that he ranked equally with Peter. Never once does he indicate he is subject to Peter in any way. Paul never reported to Peter about his mission trips. Paul said those of “high reputation” (James, Cephas and John), “pillars” (not the foundation), contributed nothing to me (Gal. 2:6-9). The impartial God assigned Peter to be the apostle to the circumcised, while Paul would be the apostle to the Gentiles. The idea that Peter was responsible for “all” churches is a myth.

Paul mentioned 26 people in his personal greetings to the Romans but not Peter. If Peter had been the bishop of Rome for 25 years prior to his death, as the tradition claims, why did Paul not even mention Peter in his epistle? If Peter is *Pontifex Maximus* and “prince of the apostles,” why does Paul neglect to greet him or acknowledge him?

5. There was to be equality among the apostles.

In Matthew 20:20-28, James and John with their mother requested, “Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left.” This is an odd request if Peter is supreme. If the Lord had given the chief place to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19, why would James and John ask this question in chapter 20? Upon hearing the brothers’ request, the other ten became indignant with the two brothers. Jesus did not want create “supreme pontiffs” but rather servants. Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:25-28).

6. Peter did not accept worship

When Peter entered his house, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am *just* a man" (Acts 10:25-26). Peter had no pretensions of divinity. Catholics require bowing before and displaying acts of worship to a man, the Pope. In presumption Popes have proclaimed themselves "God on earth" for all Catholics to adore. "The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, he is Jesus Christ himself" (*Catholic National* July, 1895). Leo XIII said, "We [popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." The title "*Lord God the Pope*" is found within a gloss of *Extravagantes of Pope John XXII*, title 14, chapter 4. The difference between the Peter of the Bible and the arrogance of popes is astonishing.

7. No apostle or inspired writer ever hinted that Peter was supreme.

If Peter were pope, the Scripture would have revealed it. Inspired men were obligated to reveal the truth—the whole truth and the whole counsel of God (John 16:13; Acts 20:27). One finds no evidence that Peter regarded himself as supreme or that others taught he was supreme. One finds no evidence of Peter being treated like a god or being the final answer to questions. In the absence of any Scriptural evidence, surely one must admit that Peter was never a pope.

If Peter were a pope, one would expect him to act like popes do. Peter never celebrated Mass; prayed to Mary or to "Saints"; used beads to pray; used "holy water"; practiced celibacy; or presented his ring or foot to be kissed. If he doesn't look like a pope, walk like a pope, or talk like a pope, he isn't a pope.

<p style="text-align: center;">Is the Pope Infallible? Phil Sanders</p>

In the days of Jeremiah, presumptuous men arose and claimed to speak for God. Jeremiah said, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from

the mouth of the Lord'" (Jeremiah 23:16, All quotations from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted).

The desire to speak for God is still tempting, and some men thinking they have this gift deceive themselves (23:26). The Lord said, "I did not send *these* prophets, but they ran. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied" (23:21). Tragically, they told the people what they wanted to hear and claimed, "The Lord declares." Claiming to speak from God and truly speaking from God are two different things.

In 1870 the Vatican council proclaimed,

We teach and define that it is a dogma Divinely revealed that the Roman pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the Divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves and not from the consent of the Church irreformable (Session IV, Const. de Ecclesiâ Christi, c. iv).

The belief is that God supernaturally protects popes from making errors. This infallibility applies to all Roman Catholic popes and church councils: past, present, and future (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 891). What this means is that the *ex cathedra* statements of all the church councils and all the popes must agree with one another. Further, the papacy depends upon a direct line of authority back to the apostle Peter, one bishop passing on the primacy to the next. If there is a break in the apostolic succession, then the papacy falls. If the popes are not infallible, the Roman Catholic Church has lost its unique leadership and apostolic authority.

Truth does not contradict truth. If indeed the *ex cathedra* pronouncements of popes and councils are infallible, they will never

contradict other infallible pronouncements. If there is even one contradiction, then the doctrine of infallibility cannot be correct.

(Readers, I hesitate to give a title to any man which the Lord forbids. Since “pope” means “papa,” and since Matt. 23:8 forbids calling any man “father,” I will use their names with the understanding that Roman Catholics and others recognize them as popes.)

Zosimus (417-418) reversed the pronouncement of a previous pope and retracted a doctrinal pronouncement he had himself previously made. The Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681) condemned Honorius as a heretic. Leo II also condemned Honorius. This means that “infallible” popes condemned other “infallible” popes as heretics.

In 495 Gelasius issued a decree which regarded the Assumption of Mary as heresy and its proponents as heretics. In the sixth century, Hormisdas also condemned this doctrine as heresy. These infallible popes declared a doctrine to be heresy; yet, on November 1, 1950, Pius XII the Roman Catholic Church officially declared the Assumption of Mary to be a dogma of their faith and required people to believe it without question. Pope Pius XII's definition regarding the [*Assumption of the Virgin Mary*](#), has these words: "Hence if anyone, which God forbid, should dare willfully to deny or to call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith." One must wonder whether Gelasius and Hormisdas were infallible or whether Pius XII was infallible. Someone believes a heresy.

In 1864 Pius IX “infallibly” declared the idea of freedom of conscience and freedom of worship is “insanity,” “evil,” “depraved,” and “reprobate” (Syllabus of Errors, section 3). He also declared that non-Catholics living in Catholic countries should not be allowed to publicly practice their religion. In 1888 Leo XIII “infallibly” declared that freedom of thought and freedom of worship are wrong (“On the Nature of Human Liberty,” paragraph 42). In spite of this, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) gave a

“Declaration on Religious Liberty” that states all people have a right to freedom of religion.

Popes and councils through the ages have introduced many new teachings unknown to the Scriptures. Here are just a few:

- In 431 the Council of Ephesus taught the worship of Mary as the Mother of God.
- In 593 Gregory the Great declared the doctrine of purgatory, and in 1439 the Council of Florence declared it a dogma of the church.
- In 607 Boniface III declared himself the universal bishop and took the title Pope. (Gregory, who served as bishop of Rome before him was very much opposed to any universal bishop.)
- John XV decreed the canonization of dead saints, putting them into a special class. The Scriptures instead call all Christians saints (Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2).
- In 1079 Hildebrand decreed priests and other clergymen were to be celibate. If Hildebrand is infallible in this decree, was Paul wrong when he said bishops *must* be husbands (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:5-6)? Was Peter sinning when he traveled with his wife (I Cor. 9:5)?
- In 1184 the Council of Verona decreed the inquisition and death of heretics.
- In 1215 Innocent III. in the Lateran Council decreed Confession of sin to the priest at least once a year. The Bible commands us to confess our sins directly to God and to one another (James 5:16; I Jn. 1:8-9).
- Innocent III decreed the dogma of Transubstantiation in 1215. By this doctrine the priest pretends to perform a daily miracle by changing a wafer into the body of Christ, and then he pretends to eat Him alive in the presence of his people during Mass.
- The Council of Trent in 1546 declared that the Apocryphal Books were to be included in the Bible, although neither Jesus nor the apostles recognized them as inspired.
- On March 5, 1616 a council of Cardinals called by Paul V warned Galileo against holding the heretical views of Nicholas Copernicus, who said the earth moves around the sun. If Paul V were inspired and infallible,

he would know that what Galileo taught was true. Paul V was not alone in this; Urban (1633) and Alexander VII (1664) confirmed and republished Paul V's decree against Copernicus.

Popes against Popes

Not all Catholics have assented to the infallibility of the pope. Adrian VI in 1523 said, "It is beyond question that he [the pope] can err even in matters touching the faith. He does this when he teaches heresy by his own judgment or decretal. In truth, many Roman Pontiffs were heretics." In 1324 John XXII condemned as heresy both the Franciscan way of life and Nicholas III's commendation of it. The Franciscans believed in papal infallibility and criticized John for his lavish lifestyle. To justify contradicting another pope, John produced his Bull *Qui quorundam*, a dogmatic assertion of doctrine made to the entire Church and thus infallible by today's rules. In it John XXII reviled the doctrine of papal infallibility as "the work of the devil."

Sergius III agreed with Stephen VII in pronouncing all ordinations by heretical popes invalid. In *Cum ex Apostolatus officio*, Paul VI declared "by the plenitude of papal power" that all of the acts of heretical popes were null and void. That infallible declaration leaves "apostolic succession" in ruins.

The Sixth Ecumenical council (678-87) condemned Honorius (625-38) as a heretic for believing in monothelitism, *i.e.*, believing Jesus only had one will that was divine and not human. Leo II (682-683), publicly condemned Honorius I for undermining the faith of the Church. For centuries each new pope taking office was required to swear by an oath that Honorius had been a heretic and that the council had acted properly in condemning him.

Two people holding opposite opinions can't both be right. Yet popes have almost made a business of contradicting one another on key issues. Agapetus (535-536) burned the anathema which Boniface II (530-532) had solemnly issued against Dioscorus (530). The later is shown as an antipope, but Agapetus, who sided with him, is shown as a true pope.

Adrian II (867-872) said civil marriages were valid; Pius VII (1800-1823) declared them invalid. Both men are shown as legitimate popes.

Nicholas V (1447-1455) voided all of Eugenius IV's (1431-1447) "documents, processes, decrees, and censures against the Council [of Basle]... to be regarded as having never existed," yet both remain on the official list of popes today.

On July 21, 1773, Clement XIV issued a decree suppressing the Jesuits, only to have it reversed by a decree restoring them, issued by Pius VII on August 7, 1814.

Eugenius IV condemned Joan of Arc (1412-31) to be burned as a witch and heretic, but she was beatified by Pius X in 1909 and canonized by Benedict XV in 1920.

Bishop Joseph Georg Strossmayer gave a speech at the Vatican Council of 1870 opposing the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope. Among many other damaging things, Strossmayer said,

"Well, venerable brethren, here history raises its voice to assure us that some popes have erred. You may protest against it or deny it, as you please, but I will prove it. Pope Victor (192) first approved of Montanism, and then condemned it. Marcellinus (296-303) was an idolater. He entered into the temple of Vesta, and offered incense to the goddess. You will say that it was an act of weakness; but I answer, a vicar of Jesus Christ dies rather than become an apostate. Liberius (358) consented to the condemnation of Athanasius, and made a profession of Arianism, that he might be recalled from his exile and reinstated in his see. Honorius (625) adhered to Monothelitism: Father Gratry has proved it to demonstration. Gregory I (590-604) calls any one Antichrist who takes the name of Universal Bishop, and contrariwise Boniface III, (607,8) made the parricide Emperor Phocas confer that title upon him. Paschal II (1099-1118) and Eugenius III (1145-53) authorized dueling; Julius II (1509) and Pius IV (1560) forbade it. Eugenius IV (1431-39) approved of the Council of Basle and the restitution of the chalice to the church of Bohemia; Pius II (1458) revoked the concession. Hadrian II (867-872) declared civil marriages to be valid; Pius VII (1800-

23) condemned them. Sixtus V (1585-90) published an edition of the Bible, and by a bull recommended it to be read; Pius VII condemned the reading of it. Clement XIV (1769-74) abolished the order of the Jesuits, permitted by Paul III, and Pius VII reestablished it.

If the pope were infallible, most Catholics prior to 1870 did not know it. George Salmon tells of Keenan's Catechism, published with the imprimatur of Scotch Roman Catholic bishops, containing the following question and answer—"Q. Must not Catholics believe the Pope in himself to be infallible?" "A. This is a Protestant invention: it is no article of the Catholic faith: no decision of his can oblige, under pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching body; that is, by the bishops of the Church" (Salmon, 26).

Why Christians Should Reject the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility:

First, the doctrine of papal infallibility imposes an additional source of truth that goes beyond the Bible. It demands subjection to the pope as the head of the universal church and condemns any who will not submit. It further demands that one treat the Apocrypha as if it were Scripture, since the Council of Trent in 1546 with papal authority proclaimed these books as inspired. Neither Jesus nor Peter ever recognized the inspiration or authority of the Apocrypha. This perversion of the gospel finds condemnation from the Scriptures themselves (Gal. 1:6-9). Paul condemns adding a source authority beyond the gospel that he as an apostle of Christ preached. Just as the Judaizers of Galatia were condemned for adding the Law to the Gospel, so Paul condemns anyone who adds church tradition and papal authority to his gospel.

There can only be one Lord and one head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:20-23; 4:4; Col. 1:18, 23). He must have first place in everything (Col. 1:15). He alone will judge mankind on the last day (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-15). Jesus is the only Chief Shepherd (I Pet. 5:4). Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome (590-604), argued vehemently against anyone assuming a place of universal authority. He said,

Whosoever calls himself, or desires to be called, Universal Priest, is in his elation the precursor of Antichrist, because he proudly

puts himself above all others. Nor is it by dissimilar pride that he is led into error; for, as that perverse one wishes to appear as God above all men, so whosoever this one is who covets being called sole priest, he extols himself above all other priests (Gregory the Great, 226).

Second, this doctrine presumes that Peter was the first pope and that he passed that authority down to the bishop of Rome alone. It must also assume that each bishop in order received this infallible authority and passed it down. This apostolic succession must remain unbroken from bishop to bishop. If just one pope proves fallible, then the authority ends. One cannot pass on what one does not have. Surely history shows the truth: no pope was ever infallible.

Third, this doctrine denies the all-sufficient, eternal authority of the Bible. Catholics find their authority in tradition and in the latest *ex cathedra* statement coming from Rome. To them God's message is never quite finalized; the standards change from pope to pope and council to council. That is the unquestionable history of Roman Catholicism. It ever evolves from the imaginations of those who claim to speak for God (Jer. 23:16-40). In contrast, New Testament Christians must "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3). They look back to the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it (Jer. 6:16).

Endnotes:

Gregory the Great, "Letter to Emperor Mauricius Augustus" (against assumption of title "universal" by Patriarch of Constantinople) in his Epistles, bk. 7, letter 33, trans. in Post-Nicene Fathers, 2d series, Vol. 12, p. 226.

George Salmon, *The Infallibility of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1959 reprint).

Strossmayer, Georg Joseph, speech against Papal Infallibility at the Vatican Council, 1870, <http://www.john3-16.connectfree.co.uk/pope.html>.

Roman Catholicism and the New Testament Church
Which is built on the Rock and which is built upon the sand?

Matthew 7:24-27

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Roman Catholic	The New Testament Church
The Bishop of Rome is the universal bishop	Jesus is the Chief Shepherd and Head of the Church (1 Pet. 5:1-4; Eph. 1:22-23)
Religious Title of “Father” for Clergyman: priests, bishops, the pope	Matt. 23:7-10 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.
Compulsory celibacy for clergyman: priests, bishops, and deacons	1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:6-7 Overseers, bishops must be the husband of one wife. 1 Tim. 3:12 let deacons each be the husband of one wife. 1 Tim. 4:1-3 false religions forbid marriage
The Bible is said to be an inadequate rule, because there are so many differences of opinion between those who profess to follow its guidance. The Creed of Pius IV requires all Catholics to promise: "I admit Holy Scripture according to that sense which has been and is held by Holy Mother Church, whose province it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of Scripture"; and, further, to say: "Nor will I ever receive or interpret it except according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers."	In John 8:32 Jesus promised his disciples that they would know the truth and the truth would set them free. In John 12:48 Jesus said he would judge us by His words. How cruel it is to suggest that we will be judged by a Word that we cannot understand. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 says the word is adequate to equip us to every good work. Chrysostom: "All things are plain and simple in the Holy Scriptures; all things necessary are evident." (2 Thess., <i>Hom. III.</i> , vol. xi., 528). Despite her arguments on the differences of opinion and the difficulty of Scripture, the real reason Rome discouraged Bible reading is that she knew students of the Bible would soon note that the system of the NT is very unlike modern Romanism.
The doctrine of Purgatory was proclaimed as a dogma of faith by Council of Florence in 1439. “The purpose of purgatory is to cleanse one of imperfections, venial sins, and faults, and to remit or do away with the temporal punishment due to mortal sins that have been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance” (Pocket Catholic Dictionary). If a person sins after baptism, even when these sins are forgiven (in terms of eternal punishment in hell) through the sacrament of penance, the temporal punishments remain. These punishments can be expiated (or compensated for) by penitential works in this life, or in the future (following death) in purgatory. Purgatory gives people the final cleansing (through torment) to	There is not one word in the Bible that supports the concept of a purgatory. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins. (Read 1 John 1:7-9; 2:1-2; John 5:24; Rom. 8:1). The salvation of Jesus Christ is good news. It is a salvation of grace, not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9). Through the blood of Jesus, believers are made “blameless” and have no need of an imagined purgatory (Jude 1:24). According to Paul, when a believer dies he goes directly to be “with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:21-23). Being at home “with” the Lord suggests a very close, face-to-face fellowship. The doctrine of purgatory denies this happens.

<p>make them prepared for heaven.</p>	
<p>Indulgences. An indulgence is the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishment due, in God's justice, to sin that has been forgiven, which remission is granted by the Church in the exercise of the power of the keys, through the application of the superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints, and for some just and reasonable motive.</p> <p>Roman Catholicism teaches that the church is the steward of a vast reservoir of merit, called the "Treasury of Merit." This treasury was supposedly filled up by the works and prayers of Jesus Christ, His mother Mary, and the saints of all ages. The treasury of merit is so vast that it can never be depleted. Catholics teach that the church has the power to dispense from this reservoir "indulgences," which are said to cancel the debt of temporal punishments.</p>	<p>The idea that the blood of Jesus can remit sin but not the temporal punishment due is a human notion. For Catholics an indulgence "means a more complete payment of the debt which the sinner owes to God." This suggests the death of Jesus was not sufficient to remit the whole debt. To suggest a sin debt is forgiven but must still be paid is double-speak. In Christ, our sins are completely forgiven (1 John 1:7-2:2; Rom. 8:1).</p> <p>Romans 3:24 tells us that God's declaration of righteousness is given to believers "freely by his grace." Indulgences play no role whatsoever in gaining merit with God.</p> <p>Jesus is the Savior, and the church is the saved (Eph. 5:23-25). Catholics point to John 20:23, suggesting that the apostles were given the power to forgive sin, and this power was passed down to bishops by apostolic succession.</p> <p>Merrill Tenney in the Expositor's Bible Commentary noted:</p> <p>The commission to forgive sins is phrased in an unusual construction. Literally, it is: "Those whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven; those whose sins you do not forgive have not been forgiven." The first verbs in the two clauses are aorists, which imply the action of an instant; the second verbs are perfects, which imply an abiding state that began before the action of the first verbs. God does not forgive men's sins because we decide to do so nor withhold forgiveness because we will not grant it. We announce it; we do not create it.</p> <p>This is the essence of salvation. And all who proclaim the gospel are in effect forgiving or not forgiving sins, depending on whether the hearer accepts or rejects the Lord Jesus as the Sin-Bearer.</p>
<p>The dogma of Transubstantiation was decreed by Pope Innocent III, in the year 1215.</p> <p>By this doctrine the priest pretends to perform a daily miracle by changing a wafer into the body of Christ, and then he pretends to eat Him alive in the presence of his people during Mass. The <i>Council of Trent</i> declared: "The sacrifice (in the Mass) is identical with the sacrifice of the Cross, inasmuch as Jesus Christ is a priest and victim both. The only difference lies in the manner of the offering, which is bloody upon the cross and bloodless on our altars"; and, in Canon I stated: "Whosoever shall deny that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there are truly, really, and substantially contained the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus</p>	<p>The Bible condemns such absurdities; for the Lord's Supper is simply a memorial feast of the sacrifice of Christ. The spiritual presence of Christ is implied in the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-20; John 6:35; I Cor. 11:26).</p> <p>The Scripture forbids the drinking of blood to Christians (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; Acts 15:29). This doctrine of Transubstantiation would not have made much sense to the apostles who attended the Jerusalem Council, if first century Christians thought they had actually drunk the real blood of Jesus.</p> <p>The Hebrew writer makes it clear that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was once for all time (Heb. 10:12; cf. 9:28). The Hebrew writer makes a clear contrast</p>

<p>Christ, together with his soul and divinity, and consequently Christ entire, but shall affirm that he is present therein only in a sign and figure, or by his power, let him be accursed.” Catholics believe that during Mass the bread miraculously turn into the body and blood of Christ. This happens at the prayer of consecration of the priest. Even though the bread and wine still look and feel and taste like bread and wine, they supposedly change into Jesus in full deity and humanity.</p> <p>Once the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus by this prayer, the Lord sits upon the altar as a sacrificial victim. The priest prays: “We offer to you, God of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice, the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.” This sacrifice of Mass is said to soothe God’s wrath and cover people’s sins. Catholics sometimes appeal to Hebrews 9:12 in support of this doctrine.</p> <p>Catholics regard the refusal to attend Mass as a mortal sin. Deliberately missing mass is a damning sin.</p>	<p>between the once-for-all-time sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the repetition of offerings made by the old covenant Levitical priests (Heb. 10:3). Instead of believers having assurance their sins are forgiven, the Mass gives a constant reminder of sins and the remaining guilt to be atoned for week after week. The death of Jesus on the cross was the final and sufficient sacrifice for our sins. When Jesus said, “It is finished,” He paid for our sins in full. No further sacrifice is needed.</p> <p>Hebrews 9:12 says, “not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” John Paul II said, “The Church is the instrument of man’s salvation. It both contains and continually draws upon the mystery of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ constantly enters into God’s sanctuary thus obtaining eternal redemption (cf. Hebrews 9:12)” (<i>Crossing the Threshold of Hope</i>). Hebrews 9:12 says that Jesus “entered” the holy place, an aorist verb indicating a one-time past action. John Paul says “constantly enters” and leaves out “once for all.” John Paul ignores the phrase “having obtained eternal redemption” and substitutes “thus obtaining eternal redemption.” John Paul had to change the meaning of this verse in order to support the ongoing sacrifice of Mass.</p> <p>No man has a right to change Scripture.</p>
<p>Catholicism discourages Bible reading by the laity</p>	<p>2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21-22</p>
<p>Confession of sin to the priest at least once a year was instituted by Pope Innocent III., in the Lateran Council of 1215.</p>	<p>James 5:16 says that we should confess our sins one to another and pray for one another. 1 John 1:9 urges us to confess our sins directly to the Father.</p>
<p>The Council of Trent, held in the year 1545, declared that Tradition is of equal authority with the Bible. Catholics argue that the Bible cannot be correctly interpreted without the tradition of the early church fathers. For them, the Bible alone (without their tradition) “is not a safe guide as to what we are to believe.” Catholics argue that the Bible does not argue for the Bible alone but teaches the authority of tradition.</p>	<p>Catholics argue for tradition based on what they have learned from tradition. This is arguing in a circle. That the Bible alone is inspired is clear (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 2:11-12). While we may have respect for the traditions of church councils, the Scriptures do not regard such traditions as “apostolic.” They are not God’s revelation and do not have authority equal to that of the Scripture.</p> <p>Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for neglecting the commandment of God in order to hold to the traditions of men (Mark 7:8). Colossians 2:8 warns against being taken captive by the traditions of men. Any tradition that conflicts with Scripture is surely to be rejected.</p> <p>Catholics argue that the Church gave us the Bible, and so the church has authority even over the Bible.</p> <p>This simply is not true. As we have seen, the</p>

	<p>Roman Catholic Church as we know it today was nothing like the church of the first century. Yet in the first century, Paul recognized Luke’s writings as Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18; cf. Luke 10:7). Peter recognized Paul’s writings as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:16; cf. 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 2:13). It is God who determines the canon; men merely discover the canon. F. F. Bruce said the NT canon was not demarcated by the arbitrary decree of a council. He realized this: “When at last a Church Council—the synod of Carthage in 397 AD—listed the 27 books of the New Testament, it did not confer upon them any authority which they did not already possess, but simply recorded their previously established canonicity.” (<i>The Books and the Parchments</i>, p. 111).</p> <p>Church history reveals there are contradictions in the many traditions of Rome. Abelard (1079-1142) recognized hundreds of such contradictions. For instance, some church authorities accepted the Immaculate Conception of Mary, while others did not. This means that tradition is not infallible, nor is it authoritative.</p>
<p>The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1834.</p>	<p>The Bible states that all men, with the sole exception of Christ, are sinners. Mary herself had need of a Savior. (Read Rom. 3:23; 5:12; Luke 1:30, 46, 47).</p>
<p>The apocryphal books were added to the Bible also by the Council of Trent in 1546.</p>	<p>Neither Jesus nor any writer of the NT ever recognized any book of the Apocrypha as Scripture. The early church fathers rejected the Apocrypha and did not count it as part of the canon. (See the next section on the Apocrypha.)</p>
<p>In the year 1870 after Christ, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of Papal Infallibility.</p>	<p>See the previous section, “Is the Pope Infallible?”</p>
<p>In the year 1931 the same pope Pius XI, reaffirmed the doctrine that Mary is "the Mother of God." This doctrine was first invented by the Council of Ephesus in the year 431. Catholics hold that Mary participates as a mediatrix in our salvation – another redeemer. Mary is more merciful than Christ or God, as mothers are more merciful than fathers. Mary is called Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Apostles, Queen of the Angels, Mother of God, Door of Paradise, Our Life, Gate of Heaven, Mother of Grace, and Second Eve.</p>	<p>Scripture condemns such nonsense (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom 8:34; I Tim 2:5; I John 2:1). It is obvious to anyone who knows God that Mary is not His mother: He is her Creator.</p> <p>Mary did not give rise to the divinity of Jesus but was only the human instrument through whom the incarnation took place. Jesus has always been in the form of God (John 1:1; Phil. 2:5-8).</p>
<p>Cardinal Newman, in his book, "The Development of the Christian Religion," admits that ... "Temples, incense, oil lamps, votive offerings, holy water,</p>	<p>Col. 2:20-23. Human traditions are condemned as vain (Matt. 15:1-14).</p>

<p>holidays and season of devotions, processions, blessing of fields, sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure (of priests and monks and nuns), images ... are all of pagan origin..." (Page 359).</p>	
<p>Perpetual virginity of Mary</p>	<p>Jesus was Mary's firstborn Son, not her only Son (Matt 1:25; Luke 2:7). Joseph did not know Mary "till" she had Jesus (Mat 1:25); being a just man, he then did (I Co 7:3-5). If Mary did not have sex with Joseph after the birth of Jesus, she was a wicked woman (I Cor 7:3-5). Jesus had at least four brothers and three sisters by Mary (Matthew 13:53-56; Acts 1:14). When Scripture intends cousin, it says cousin, not brother or sister or nephew (Luke 1:36, 58). Jesus literally fulfilled an OT messianic prophecy: "I have become estranged from my brothers, and an alien to my mother's sons" (Psalm 69:8). Since verse 8 is a messianic reference to Christ's alienation from "my mother's sons," it's clear that Mary had other children besides Jesus.</p>
<p>Pope Pius XII's encyclical in 1943 said, "She is the mother of our head." Catholicism claims Mary is full of grace, therefore free of original sin and kept from all <i>actual</i> sin. The pope's encyclical agreed, claiming Mary is free from any personal or inherited sin.</p>	<p>The Scriptures do not teach that Mary never sinned. Only one is good, that is God. Scripture also says Stephen, Elizabeth, Barnabas and others were "full of grace." Yet no one claims they were sinless.</p>
<p><i>Mary's role as co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces.</i> This doctrine holds that the obedience and sufferings of Mary were essential to secure the full redemption bought by Christ. <i>Mary's right to veneration and/or worship.</i> This teaching argues that because of her unparalleled role in the economy of salvation, Mary is worthy of special adoration.</p> <p>Mariology is defined as the study of that theology "which treats the life, role and virtues of the Blessed Mother of God" and which "demonstrates... her position as Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces." Thus, Catholic popes have always glorified Mary. Although the Catholic Church would reject the designation, Mary <i>does</i> function as a kind of secondary Savior in Catholic teaching and practice.</p> <p>Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) stated in his Rosary encyclical, "<i>Octobri mense</i>" (1891): "From that great treasure of all graces which the Lord has brought, <i>nothing according to the will of God comes to us except through Mary</i>, so that, as nobody can approach the Supreme Father except through the Son, similarly <i>nobody can approach Christ except through the mother.</i>"</p>	<p>1 Tim. 2:5, "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."</p> <p>Mary cannot assume any role as co-redeemer because Mary is a mere human. As a human Mary is defiled by sin (Rom. 3:10-12, 23; 5:12). Mary herself is in need of a Redeemer (Luke 1:47). There is salvation in no one but Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).</p>

The Apocrypha: Inspired of God?

by Wayne Jackson

Christian Courier: Archives

The qualified teacher needs to be able to give a reasonable explanation to his Catholic friends for the absence of those seven books in the versions we use.

The disputed books

The “Apocrypha” is a collection of documents, generally produced between the 2nd century B.C. and the 1st century A.D., which were not a part of the original Old Testament canon. The names of these books are: I Esdras, II Esdras, The Rest of Esther, Song of the Three Holy Children, History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasses, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, I Maccabees, and II Maccabees. The last seven of these are incorporated into Roman Catholic editions of the Bible. The Catholic Council of Trent (1546) affirmed the canonicity of these books, as found in the Latin Vulgate, and condemned those who reject them.

The title, “Apocrypha,” is a transliterated form of the term *apokruphos*, meaning “hidden.” A plural form of the word is used in Colossians 2:3, where Paul declares that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are “hidden” in Christ. The adjective “apocryphal” has come to be applied to those books that do not bear the marks of divine inspiration. There are several reasons why the Apocrypha is to be rejected as part of the Bible.

General Principles

1. There is abundant evidence that none of these books was ever received into the canon (that which conforms to “rule”) of the Hebrew Old Testament. Though they appear in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament - known as LXX), that is not necessarily a reliable criterion. Professor G.T. Manley notes: “[These books] do not appear to have been included at first in the LXX [3rd/2nd centuries B.C.], but they found their way gradually into later copies, being inserted in

places that seemed appropriate...” (**The New Bible Handbook**, Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1962, p. 39).

2. The apocryphal books are not in those most ancient works which allude to the Old Testament Scriptures. For example:

(a) Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria (20 B.C. - A.D. 50), wrote prolifically and frequently quoted the Old Testament, yet he never cited the Apocrypha, nor did he even mention these documents.

(b) Josephus (A.D. 37-95) rejected them. He wrote: “We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine...” (*Against Apion* 1.8). By combining several Old Testament narratives into a “book,” the thirty-nine of our current editions become the twenty-two alluded to by Josephus.

(c) The most ancient list of Old Testament books is that which was made by Melito of Sardis (cf. A.D. 170); none of the apocryphal books is included (cf. Eusebius, **Ecclesiastical History** 4.26.14).

(d) In the early 3rd century A.D., neither Origin nor his contemporary, Tertullian, recognized the books of the Apocrypha as being canonical.

(e) Though some of the apocryphal books were being used in the church services by the 5th century A.D., they were read only by those who held inferior offices in the church (see: T.H. Horne, **Critical Introduction to the Holy Scriptures**, Philadelphia: Whetham & Son, 1841, Vol. I, p. 436).

3. The apocryphal books were produced in an era when no inspired documents were been

given by God. Malachi concludes his narrative in the Old Testament by urging Israel: "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances." He then projects four centuries into the future and prophesied: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come..." (Mal. 4:4-5). This text pictured the coming of John the Baptist (cf. Mt. 11:14; Lk. 1:17). The implication of Malachi's prophecy is that no prophet would arise from God until the coming of John. This excludes the apocryphal writings.

Josephus confirms this when he declares:

"It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time."

He further says that no one "has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them . . ." (*Against Apion* 1.8).

F.F. Bruce contended that there "is no evidence that these books were ever regarded as canonical by any Jews, whether inside or outside Palestine, whether they read the Bible in Hebrew or in Greek" (**The Books and the Parchments**, London: Pickering & Inglis, 1950, p. 157).

4. Jesus Christ and His inspired New Testament penmen quoted from, or alluded to, the writings and events of the Old Testament profusely. In fact, some 1,000 quotations or allusions from thirty-five of the thirty-nine Old Testament books are found in the New Testament record. And yet, significantly, not once is any of these apocryphal books quoted or even explicitly referred to by the Lord, or by any New Testament writer. Noted scholar Emile

Schurer argued that this is really remarkable since most of the New Testament habitually quoted from the LXX (**Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge**, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1894, Vol. I, 99).

"Despite the fact that New Testament writers quote largely from the Septuagint rather than from the Hebrew Old Testament, there is not a single clear-cut case of a citation from any of the fourteen apocryphal books The most that can be said is that the New Testament writers show acquaintance with these fourteen books and perhaps allude to them indirectly, but in no case do they quote them as inspired Scripture or cite them as authority" (Merrill F. Unger, **Introductory Guide to the Old Testament**, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951, p. 101).

5. Finally, it must be observed that the apocryphal books, unlike the canonical books of the Old Testament, make no direct claims of being inspired of God. Not once is there a, "thus says the Lord," or language like, "the word of the Lord came unto me, saying." In fact, some of the documents actually confess non-inspiration! In the Prologue of Ecclesiasticus, the writer states:

"Ye are intreated therefore to read with favour and attention, and to pardon us, if in any parts of what we have laboured to interpret, we may seem to fail in some of the phrases" (**The Apocrypha**, New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1894).

6. Too, there is the matter of literary style. Dr. Raymond Surburg has written:

"When a comparison is instituted of the style of the Apocrypha with the style of the Biblical Hebrew Old Testament writings, there is a considerable inferiority, shown by the stiffness, lack of originality and

artificiality of expression characterizing the apocryphal books” (**The Christian News**, November 24, 1980, p. 7).

Evidence negating inspiration

The Apocrypha contains a great variety of historical, geographical, chronological, and moral errors. Professor William Green of Princeton wrote: “The books of Tobit and Judith abound in geographical, chronological, and historical mistakes...” (**General Introduction to the Old Testament**, New York: Scribner’s & Sons, 1899, p. 195). A critical study of the Apocrypha’s contents clearly reveals that it could not be the product of the Spirit of God. The following examples are ample evidence of this:

1. Rather than the creation being spoken into existence from nothing by the word of Almighty God, as affirmed in the Scriptures (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6-9; Heb. 11:3), the Apocrypha has God creating the world out of “formless matter” (Wisdom of Solomon 11:17).
2. According to the prophet Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem on the tenth day, fifth month, or the nineteenth year of his reign (Jer. 52:12-13). Subsequent to this, both the prophet and his scribe, Baruch, were taken into Egypt (Jer. 43:6-7). According to the Apocrypha, however, at this very time Baruch was in Babylon (Baruch 1:1-2).
3. There are two contradictory accounts of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, that dreaded enemy of the Jews. One narrative records that Antiochus and his company were “cut to pieces in the temple of Nanaea by the treachery of Nanaea’s priests” (II Maccabees 1:13-16), while another version in the same book states that Antiochus was “taken with a noisome sickness” and so “ended his life among the mountains by a most piteous fate in a strange land” (II Maccabees 9:19-29).
4. Tobit is said to have lived 158 years (14:11), yet, supposedly, he was alive back when Jeroboam revolted against Jerusalem (931 B.C.), and then still around when the Assyrians invaded Israel (722/21 B.C.)—a span of some 210 years (Tobit 1:3-5)!
5. The Apocrypha teaches the erroneous doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, suggesting that the kind of body one now has is determined by the character of his soul in a previous life. “Now I was a goodly child, and a good soul fell to my lot; Nay rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled” (Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20). The foregoing was a common belief among heathen peoples, but certainly it is contrary to the biblical view that the soul of man is formed with him at conception (Psa. 139:13-16; Zech. 12:1).
6. The Apocrypha teaches that prayer may be made for the dead. “Wherefore he made the propitiation for them that had died, that they might be released from their sins” (II Maccabees 12:45). Roman Catholics cite this passage to find support for their dogma of praying for the dead to be released from purgatory (obviously there’s no New Testament passage to buttress the notion), but the effort is vain.
7. The Apocrypha suggests that one may atone for his sins by the giving of alms. “It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: alms doth deliver from death, and it shall purge away all sin” (Tobit 3:9).
8. The moral tone of the Apocrypha is far below that of the Bible. Note some examples:
 - (a) It applauds suicide as a noble and manful act. II Maccabees tells of one Razis who, being surrounded by the enemy, fell upon his sword, choosing “rather to die nobly” than to fall into the hands of his enemy. He was not mortally wounded, however, and so threw himself down from a wall and “manfully” died among the crowds (14:41-43).
 - (b) It describes magical potions which are alleged to drive demons away (Tobit 6:1-17).

(c) The murder of the men of Shechem (Gen. 34), an act of violence which is condemned in the Scriptures (cf. Gen. 49:6-7), is commended and is described as an act of God (Judith 9:2-9).

These, along with various other considerations, lead only to the conclusion that the Apocrypha cannot be included in the volume of sacred Scripture.

Reasons For Rejecting The Apocrypha From The Canon

(Copied, with minor variations, from the fact sheet distributed by Clyde Woods in a session of Critical Introduction to the Old Testament in the fall of 1986).

- The books were never included in the Hebrew canon.
- Josephus expressly excludes them.
- Philo, the Jewish philosopher in Alexandria (ca. 20 BC – AD 40) quoted the O.T. Scriptures very frequently, yet never quoted the Apocrypha nor even mentioned these books.
- Targums (Aramaic paraphrases) were provided for the canonical books but were not provided for the Apocrypha.
- These books are never quoted in the New Testament
- Most of the Apocrypha material existed and was likely incorporated in Septuagint editions in the New Testament period, yet it is never cited by Jesus or the apostles. The oldest copies of the Septuagint now in existence date from the fourth century AD, plenty of time for them to have been incorporated in later editions.
- NT references rather allude to the commonly accepted Hebrew canon.
- Christian tradition offers no real support for accepting the Apocrypha as canonical.
- These books are not included in the canonical lists of the early centuries.
- Jerome expressly supported the strict Hebrew canon and emphatically rejected the Apocrypha as secondary.
- Books of the Apocrypha were considered suitable for reading and instruction but they

were not considered authoritative in the early centuries.

- The Apocrypha bears no internal marks of inspiration.
- No Apocrypha writer actually claims inspiration; indeed, some disclaim it.
- These books contain historical, geographical, and chronological errors.
- Doctrinally, the books at times contradict the canonical Scriptures.
- Stylistically, the books are inferior to the canonical Scriptures.
- Stories in the Apocrypha contain some legendary and fantastic materials.
- The moral and spiritual level is beneath that of the canonical Scriptures.
- Proper dating of the Apocrypha shows its non-canonical character.
- These books were written later than those of the Old Testament.
- Portions of these books even date from the Christian era.

The Apocrypha was first declared canonical by the reactionary Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1546). This conciliar decision was transparently dogmatic. This action was passed by a narrow majority.

The Apocrypha is rejected from the canon of Scripture for numerous reasons.

Besides the fact that Jesus and the apostles never once quoted from it; and aside from its obvious lack of inspiration (it "just doesn't sound like" scripture; "My sheep hear My voice," John 10; etc.) – there are many solid reasons for rejecting its contents from being included with the canonical scriptures. [Much of the following material comes from Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), 125.]

A. The Apocrypha contains chronological errors and statements contrary to history.

- Baruch 1:2 (comp. Jeremiah 43:6-7)
- Bel and the Dragon 22 (Xerxes did it); Bel and the Dragon 33
- Tobit 1:4 (Tobit is said to live in Nineveh in 722 BC, and yet he also saw the division of

the united kingdom in 931 BC. [1 Kings 12:19-20])

- Esther 11:2-4 (the dates of Mordecai's captivity [597 BC] and dream [485/484 BC] would make him 112 years old)
- 1 Esdras 5:56 has the second year of Cyrus rather than the second year of Darius; in 5:73 Cyrus (c. 530 BC) died more than two years before the reign of Darius (c. 522/521-486 BC.)
- Tobit 1:15 "But when Shalmaneser died, and his son Sennacherib reigned in his place," Shalmaneser died before the fall of Samaria, and Sennacherib was Sargon's son.
- Tobit 14:15 " Before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, and he saw its prisoners being led into Media, those whom King Cyaxares of Media had taken captive." Nineveh's conquerors were Nabopolassar and Cyaxares (612 B.C.).
- Judith 1:1 Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC) ruled over Babylon after Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC.
- Judith 2:1 Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Babylonians, and Holofernes [v.4] may be from a much later time.
- Judith 4:3-4 and 5:19 Nebuchadnezzar sent the Jews into exile, and they returned under Cyrus (538 BC).
- Bel and the Dragon 33 Habakkuk wrote before 612 BC [Hab. 1:6], making unlikely a visit to Daniel almost 75 years later (539 BC).

B. It contains geographical errors.

- Tobit 1:4; 6:1; 9:2 (This was an 11 day journey from Ecbatana to Rages but made to seem shorter.) The Tigris River is west of Nineveh; Persia is east.
- Judith 1:6 Hydaspes, a river in India, is erroneously placed in Mesopotamia.
- Judith 2:21 The 300 miles separating Nineveh and Bectileth makes a 3-day march impossible.
- Judith 2:24 The normal route is south from Cilicia to Damascus, not following the Euphrates River.
- 1 Maccabees 9:2 says "Gilgal" when it should have said "Galilee" (cf. Josephus, Ant. 12:11.1, sections 420-421)

C. Mistakes

- Baruch 6:1-3 (Epistle of Jeremiah) 70 years called seven generations
- 2 Esdras 6:42 says that God in creation gathered the waters to a seventh part of the earth, whereas in fact water covers 70% of the earth's surface.
- 2 Esdras 3:1 has Ezra in Babylon 30 years after the fall of Jerusalem, whereas Ezra lived a century later.
- 2 Maccabees 1:19 Persia should be Babylon (2 Kings 24:14)

D. Many false teachings are represented, and evil practices that the inspired Word of God condemns are condoned.

1. Prayers for the dead. 2 Maccabees 12:40-45. A post-death visit by Jeremiah in 15:14.
2. Salvation by good works (almsgiving, etc.). Sirach 3:3, 14-15 (kindness to parents atones for sin)
Sirach 3:30 (almsgiving atones for sins) 30:11-12 2; Esdras 7:7; 8:33, 36; Tobit 12:9, 8a; 14:11
3. The use of magic.
 - a. In demon exorcism. Tobit 6-8
 - b. In healing. Tobit 11
 - c. "Good luck" (fortune). Sirach 8:19
4. The intercession of angels. Tobit 12:15 (Raphael)
5. Suicide. 2 Maccabees 14:41-46
6. Mourning for the dead. Sirach 38:16-23 (especially verses 20-21)
7. Sinless lives of Old Testament personalities. Prayer of Manasseh 8
8. 2 Esdras 6:55 The Bible never says the world was created for Israel
9. 2 Esdras 8:4-5 possibly suggests the pre-existence of souls

E. Contradictions

1. 1 Maccabees 4:26-35 contradicts 2 Macc. 10:37-11:12, which puts Lysia's defeat after the death of Timothy.
2. 1 Maccabees 4:30-35 contradicts 2 Macc. 11:6-15, which says it was a negotiated peace.
3. 1 Maccabees 6:8-9 contradicts 2 Macc. 9:5-12, which says that the king was struck with a repulsive physical disease.

4. 2 Maccabees 8:9 contradicts 1 Macc. 3:38-4:25, which says that Gorgias, not Nicanor, was leader.
5. 2 Maccabees 8:13 contradicts 1 Macc. 3:56, which cites other reasons for the troop reduction.
6. 2 Maccabees 10:3 contradicts 1:19-2:1 on how altar fire was restarted and contradicts 1:54 and 4:52, which say 3 years instead of 2.
7. 2 Maccabees 10:37 contradicts 12:2, 18-25, where Timothy reappears (cf. 1 Macc. 5:11-40).
8. 2 Maccabees 11:13-15 contradicts 1 Macc. 4:35, which says that no peace was made.
9. 2 Maccabees 13:16 contradicts 1 Macc. 6:47, which says the Jews fled.

F. Some of the miracles and events described are simply fabulous and silly.

Tobit 6:2-7, 16-17, etc. (placing incense smoke on the organs of a man eating fish to ward off evil spirits; the demon was in love with the woman and had killed her last seven husbands on their wedding night)

G. Only three divisions of the Old Testament are described in Luke 24:44. Matthew 23:35

and Luke 11:51 also witness the arrangement and compass of the Old Testament – not allowing for any books outside the time from Genesis to 2 Chronicles. The books of the Apocrypha form no part of the canon, but rather serve as witnesses to life and thought in the intertestamental period.