

Apologetics - Scriptures

Why does the Protestant and Catholic Bibles have a different number of books in the OT?

Scripture reference: 2 Peter 1:20-21; *"First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God".*

Response: The Protestant OT is based upon the Palestinian canon used by the Hebrew speaking Jews while the Catholic OT is based upon the Alexandrian (or Greek) canon used by the Greek speaking Jews. The Greek translation was very popular since it was the most common language at the time – and Hebrew was a dying language. The Hebrew canon was established around 100 AD – perhaps in a reaction to the early Christian church. These Jews rejected the books of Wisdom, Sirach, Judith, Baruch, Tobit and 1 and 2 Maccabees simply because they could not find any original Hebrew versions of them. Take note that partial copies of these in Hebrew were eventually found in the Dead Sea scrolls. Finally, the canon of the Bible was officially determined in the 4th century by Catholic councils and Popes.

The Bible alone?

Scripture reference: 2 Thessalonians 2:15; *"Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours".* John 21:25; *"But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written".*

Response: Most Protestants follow the principle of **"Sola Scriptura"** – which is not found in scriptures. This doctrine claims that

only the Bible is the source for matters of the faith. Christ left a church to teach and govern until His return. The Bible also confirms that *"not everything Jesus said and did is recorded in Scripture"* (John 21:25). It is clear – from the Bible - that we need more than just the Bible alone and that the authority of the Church helped us to grow in understandings. Inspired by the Holy Spirit - the Church grew in wisdom and holiness during those early days of the Christians right up to modern times. Keep in mind that this concept of scripture alone did not exist for the first 1500 years of the church – until after the Reformation.

Also keep in mind the difference between Tradition with a capitol "T" and tradition with a small "t". Those Traditions – with a capitol T – are unchangeable. An example of a Tradition is the Eucharist which has remained unchanged in our beliefs for almost 2000 years. Some tenets of the faith can change as these traditions – with a small t – are expressions of the faith. An example of a tradition – which did change – is the prohibiting of eating meat on Fridays.

Salvation by faith alone?

Scripture reference: James 2:18-29; *"But some one will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. . . .Do you want to be shown, you foolish fellow, that faith apart from works is barren?"*

Response: Salvation is a gift of God – and nothing that we have earned. It is also independent of how we use this gift. It is also clear – and makes sense – that faith alone will not save us and that we must do more than simply believing in Jesus. We must put the faith to work and do something about it.