

13. "Why do many Protestants reject the apocryphal writings in the Catholic Bible?"

There are numerous reasons why many Christians (including the early church) have rejected the apocryphal books as authoritative or divinely inspired. Let me share with you four reasons.

First, the apocryphal writings contain numerous teachings that contradict authentic Scripture (including the practice of praying for the dead, the doctrine of purgatory, and the teaching that salvation is available through good works and the giving of alms). Second, the apocryphal writings contain numerous historical, geographical, and chronological errors. Third, Jesus and the apostles cite the Old Testament nearly 300 times in the pages of the New Testament (referring to it as Scripture), but they never quote any of the apocryphal books accepted by the Roman Catholic Church. Fourth, the apocryphal writings were never included in the Hebrew Bible. The Jews themselves, from whom the apocryphal writings came, did not accept the writings as divinely inspired. The apocryphal writings were not formally declared to be authoritative and inspired by the Catholic Church until the Council of Trent in AD 1546. The Catholic Church's acceptance of these writings into the canon of Scripture was an effort to counter the teachings of Martin Luther and the other leaders of the Reformation. These men were pointing out that many teachings of the Catholic Church came from the Apoc-rypha, not the 66 books of the Bible.

On the Authority of the Scriptures:

"Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

Martin Luther (1483-1546), He spoke these words at his trial at the Diet of Worms, April 18, 1521.