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What books were removed from the catholic bible

Last week, my friend who is a Baptist was visiting and came with me to Mass. The first reading was from the second Book of Maccabees. She had never heard of that book. I said, "It is in the Bible." She said, "It is not in my Bible." Is there a difference? Yes, there is a difference between Catholic and Protestant editions of the Bible. However, to appreciate this question and its answer, one must first remember that almighty God never handed anyone a complete Bible and said, "Here it is." Rather, over the centuries of salvation history, the Holy Spirit inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write down God's revelation to us. As time went on, the Church compiled these books to form a Canon — an authoritative set of Sacred Scripture — and declared it "God's Word." The books of the Old Testament were written probably between 1000 and 100 BC, and are usually distinguished as four sets: The Law (or Torah, our first five books of the Old Testament), the Historical Books, the Prophets, and the Writings. (The books of I & II Maccabees belong to the historical set, being written between 150 - 100 BC.) Even in the New Testament itself, we find references to the reading of the Law and the Prophets in synagogue services (e.g. Luke 4:16-19, Acts 13:15). After the Fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Jewish rabbis convened the Council of Jamnia (90-100), at which time they established what books would be considered their Sacred Scripture. At this time, some controversy still existed over what are called the seven "deuterocanonical books" — Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, and I & II Maccabees — although they had been incorporated in their entirety or at least partially in versions of the Septuagint, the official Greek translation of the Old Testament (c. 100 BC). Part of the reason for the controversy was because these were the latest writings of the Old Testament and were written in Greek rather than Hebrew; the other books of the Old Testament — the "protocanonical books"— were older and originally written in Hebrew. Modern scholars note that Jamnia did not exclude any books definitively; a rigid fixing of the Jewish canon does not occur until at least 100 years later, and even then other books— including the deuterocanonical books— were read and honored. Many Scripture scholars, however, have no doubt that the apostolic Church accepted the deuterocanonical books as part of its canon of Sacred Scriptures. For instance, Origen (d. 245) affirmed the use of these books among Christians even though some of the Jewish leaders did not officially accept them. Meanwhile, the writing of the New Testament books occurred between the time of our Lord's death and the end of the first century. (Recent studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls by some scholars suggest a date of the earliest writings closer to the time of our Lord's death, whereas much scholarship seems to place the writings between 50 and 100 AD). After the legalization of Christianity in 313, we find the Church striving to formalize what writings of the New Testament were truly considered inspired and authentic to the teachings of our Lord. St. Athanasius in his Paschal Epistle (367) presented the complete list of 27 books of the New Testament saying, "These are the sources of salvation, for the thirsty may drink deeply of the words to be found here. In these alone is the doctrine of piety recorded. Let no one add to them or take anything away from them." This list of 27 books along with the 46 books of the Old Testament (including the deuterocanonical ones) was affirmed as the official canon of Sacred Scripture for the Catholic Church by the synods of Hippo (393), Carthage I & II (397 and 419). The letter of Pope St. Innocent I in 405 also officially listed these books. Although some discussion arose over the inclusion of other books into the Church's canon of Sacred Scripture after this time, the Council of Florence (1442) definitively established the official list of 46 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New Testament. With this background, we can now address why the Protestant versions of the Bible have less books than the Catholic versions. In 1534, Martin Luther translated the Bible into German. He grouped the seven deuterocanonical books (Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, and I & II Maccabees) of the Old Testament under the title "Apocrypha," declaring, "These are books which are not held equal to the Sacred Scriptures and yet are useful and good for reading." Luther also categorized the New Testament books: those of God's work of salvation (John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, I Peter, and I John); other canonical books (Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, rest of Pauline epistles, II Peter, and II John); and non-canonical books (Hebrews, James, Jude, Revelation, and books of the Old Testament). Many Church historians speculate that Luther was prepared to drop what he called the "non-canonical books" of the New Testament but refrained from doing so because of possible political fall-out. Why Luther took this course of action is hard to say. Some scholars believe Luther wanted to return to the "primitive faith," and therefore accepted only those Old Testament books written in Hebrew originally; others speculate he wanted to remove anything which disagreed with his own theology. Nevertheless, his action had the permanent consequence of omitting the seven deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament in Protestant versions of the Bible. The 39 Articles of Religion (1563) of the Church of England asserted that these deuterocanonical books may be read for "example of life and instruction of manners," although they should not be used "to establish any doctrine" (Article VI). Consequently, the King James Bible (1611) printed the books between the New Testament and Old Testaments. John Lightfoot (1643) criticized this arrangement because he thought the "wretched Apocrypha" may be seen as a bridge between the two. The Westminster Confession (1647) decreed that these books, "not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of Scripture, and therefore are of no authority of the Church of God; nor to be in any otherwise approved, or made use of than other human writings." The British and Foreign Bible Society decided in 1827 to remove these books from further publications and labeled these books "apocryphal." However, many Protestant versions of the Bible today will state, "King James version with Apocrypha." The Council of Trent, reacting to the Protestant Reformers, repeated the canon of Florence in the Decree on Sacred Books and on Traditions to be Received (1546) and decreed that these books were to be treated "with equal devotion and reverence." The Catechism repeats this same list of books and again affirms the apostolic Tradition of the canon of Sacred Scripture. Score: 0% Rank: Correct Answer: Q. Why were some books removed from the Bible and is it a sin to read them? I believe you are talking about the so-called Apocrypha. That term refers to books that were written in Greek within the Jewish community in the centuries before Christ. Those books are distinct from the Old Testament because they were written in Greek, not Hebrew, and they are distinct from the New Testament because they were written before Christ came, not after. So there is already something about them that sets them apart as different from the books that all Christians accept as inspired Scripture. Nevertheless, after lengthy discussion and debate in the few centuries after Christ, regional councils in the western part of the Roman Empire, at Hippo in 393 and Carthage in 397, approved adding these books to the canon of Scripture, as long as this decision was ratified by the central authority in Rome. No action was taken in that regard for over 1,000 years. But finally, in 1546, the Council of Trent, largely in response to the way Martin Luther had separated out these apocryphal books and placed them between the testaments in his German translation of Bible, decreed that they were as fully canonical as the others. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic church still describes these books as deuterocanonical, meaning that they belong to a second group of books "whose Scriptural character was contested in some quarters," as opposed to the protocanonical books, the collection of "sacred writings which have been always received by Christendom without dispute." The Council of Trent also decreed that the Vulgate was the authoritative text of Scripture. That actually sent something of a mixed message about the Apocrypha, because St. Jerome's prologues were always included in the Vulgate, and in his prologue to the book of Kings, in which he surveyed the entire Old Testament, he specified that the books that had been translated from Greek, rather than from Hebrew, are "set aside among the apocrypha" (inter apocrypha seponendum) and "are not in the canon" (non sunt in canone). He made similar comments in the prologues to several of the apocryphal books themselves. So while the Roman Catholic Church's embrace of these books is explicit, its position on them is not without internal tensions. Eastern Orthodox Bibles include all the books in the Catholic Apocrypha along with several more. However, it classifies all these apocryphal books as Anagignoskomena ("worthy to be read"), meaning that they are read during services of worship, but that they are not as authoritative as the other books. Orthodox theologians sometimes call the apocryphal books deuterocanonical to indicate their secondary authority, using this term differently from Catholics, for whom it describes how these books were received after first being disputed. And Protestants, ever since Martin Luther, have not considered the Apocrypha canonical, except for Protestants in the Anglican/Episcopal tradition. So maybe the real question is not why some books were removed from the Bible, but why some books that were different from both the Old Testament and the New Testament were added to the Bible. The answer is that, as the Eastern Orthodox say, they are "worthy to be read." They provide important information about what happened in the years between the testaments, they tell inspiring stories of how people remained faithful to God during difficult trials in those times, and they add to the collection of wise advice for living that is found in the canonical wisdom books. So it is certainly not a sin to read them. Even Protestants, who do not consider them to be inspired Scripture, say that they are edifying, meaning that reading them can strengthen our faith and devotion to God. As a Protestant myself, I do not have these apocryphal books in the Bibles that I use regularly for study and devotions. But I do have copies of these books in some other Bibles that I own. I have read the apocryphal books and gotten a lot out of them. I hope this provides you with some helpful background to the issue. As I said, it would certainly not be a sin to read those books, and I think they would help you learn some useful things if you did read them. If you belong to a community of Christians, and if this issue is important within that community, you could explain to anyone you told about reading the books that you were not reading them as Scripture, but as edifying literature that has come down to us from within the tradition of our faith. I hope no one would be upset about that.

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