

Why does the Catholic bible have more books than the Protestant bible?

Answer: In the third century BC a project was undertaken to translate the Jewish scriptures into Greek. This took place in Egypt, under the rule of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who wanted a copy of the law of his Jewish subjects. It was known as the Septuagint, a reference in Greek to the 70 scholars who translated the bible. This translation contained books that are not in Protestant bible; 1 and 2 Maccabees, Sirach, Wisdom, Baruch, Tobit, and Judith. Also included in the Septuagint were sections of the books of Daniel and Esther which are not included in the versions of these books contained in Protestant bibles.

These books are commonly referred to as deuterocanonical, or part of the second canon, because they were written in Greek and not Hebrew. The Septuagint was the Old Testament used by the first Christians, which is why the Catholic Church still accepts all of these books as genuine parts of the bible. In the 16th century Protestants rejected those books of the Old Testament which were not originally written in Hebrew. So they cut out 7 entire books of the Old Testament, and parts of 2 other books. The Protestant Reformers in the 16th century applied a false standard as to what was and wasn't scripture, rejecting everything in the Old Testament that was originally written in Greek.

Some people would argue that these books shouldn't be in the Old Testament because some of them aren't quoted in the New Testament. But neither are the books of Ecclesiastes, Esther, and Song of Songs. All Christians agree these books do belong in the Old Testament. Also the New Testament book of Jude does quote the Assumption of Moses. St. Paul quotes the pagan poets Menander, Aratus, and Epimenides. All Christians agree that these books don't belong in the bible. So the fact that a book is or

isn't quoted in the New Testament isn't enough to determine whether it is or isn't scripture.¹ Also, it is worth noting that in all likelihood the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees, Sirach, and Wisdom are quoted in the New Testament.²

Some Protestants will also claim that the extra books weren't considered to be part of scripture until the 1500s when the Council of Trent, a meeting of the bishops of the Catholic Church that occurred largely as a reaction to the Protestant Reformation, said they were. This is a very misleading claim. The Council of Trent stated with a higher level of authority than had ever been used previously the full list of books that were contained in the bible. Trent was a universal council of the Church, not just a collection of local bishops. No such group had ever previously spoken on the list of the books that were to be in the bible. This was because there wasn't a need to. There had been such complete acceptance of all the books of the bible, including the deuterocanonical books, that the matter was considered to be closed. So Trent spoke more formally about these books being included in the bible than had been done previously, but it did the same thing for all the books of the bible. So any argument against the canonicity of these books that refers to the Council of Trent would also be argument against any and all of the books that are included in the bible.

This article might prove helpful if you wish to learn more about the Septuagint, and why the books contained in this translation of the Old Testament are part of the Catholic bible.

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/ANSWERS/DEUTEROS.htm>

¹ Shea, Mark., *By What Authority: An Evangelical Discovers Catholic Tradition*. (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1996), 61-63.

² *Ibid*, 67-71.