

## Who took the Apocrypha out of the Bible?

Originally it was effectively against the law to print the Bible in America, because the Crown held the copyright on the King James Version (it still does in England) but did not license any printers in their American colonies. The American Revolution made the United States an independent country. Since there were no international copyright treaties at the time, it was possible to print an English Bible in the United States. Shortly after the Revolution, the First Great Awakening created a big demand for Bibles.

For the first time, it was both profitable and legal to print English-language Bibles in America.

American printers discovered that they could leave out the Apocrypha and sell the Bible for the same price, and no one would care because it wasn't used much. So they left out the Apocrypha to increase their profits. Some of the homegrown religious groups naïvely assumed that whatever was not in their Bible was not in the canon. Later, when Catholics became a significant segment of the population, a non-Catholic would say, "That's not in my Bible" to a Catholic, completely unaware that it was the printer who left it out. A Lutheran pastor told me that one of his parishioners was insistent that the Lutheran Church did not recognize the Apocrypha as Scripture. The parishioner was astonished when he saw the church by-law that says it is. The parishioner had assumed that his copy of the Bible was complete when it wasn't.

Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Christians use the Apocrypha and it is part of the Bible for them. Many independent churches and low-church denominations are only aware that it is not in their printing of the Bible, and think it is a Catholic addition when it is really a printer's subtraction.

In other words, printers removed the Apocrypha from the Bible, not any church.

## What is the value of the Apocrypha?

The Apocrypha contains a number of edifying stories (some fictional, such as the detective story in which Daniel cross-examines witnesses and saves Susanna from an accusation of adultery) and some good wisdom (Sirach says "Then give the physician his place, for the Lord created him; do not let him leave you, for you need him. There may come a time when recovery lies in the hands of physicians, for they too pray to the Lord that he grant them success in diagnosis and in healing, for the sake of preserving life.")

The most valuable book is 1 Maccabees, which is required reading for anyone studying the New Testament, because it contains an account of the Maccabean War, which took place about a century before the New Testament. It's a better source than Josephus. Many of the religious parties that appear in the New Testament, such as Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots, were founded during that time. That war also led to the Jewish misconception that the Messiah would be another Judas Maccabee.

The Apocrypha also contains a lot of polemic against idolatry (such as Bel and the Dragon), which helps us understand what form it took in that era, and that is good background information for studying the Old Testament and the New Testament.

## **KJV Revision of 1880 left out the Apocrypha**

Up until the **1880's** every Protestant Bible (not just Catholic Bibles) had 80 books, not 66! The inter-testamental books written hundreds of years before Christ called "The Apocrypha" were part of virtually every printing of the Tyndale-Matthews Bible, the Great Bible, the Bishops Bible, the Protestant Geneva Bible, and the King James Bible until their removal in the **1880's**! The original **1611** King James contained the Apocrypha, and King James threatened anyone who dared to print the Bible without the Apocrypha with heavy fines and a year in jail. Only for the last **120** years has the Protestant Church rejected these books, and removed them from their Bibles. This has left most modern-day Christians believing the popular myth that there is something "Roman Catholic" about the Apocrypha. There is, however, no truth in that myth, and no widely-accepted reason for the removal of the Apocrypha in the 1880's has ever been officially issued by a mainline Protestant denomination.