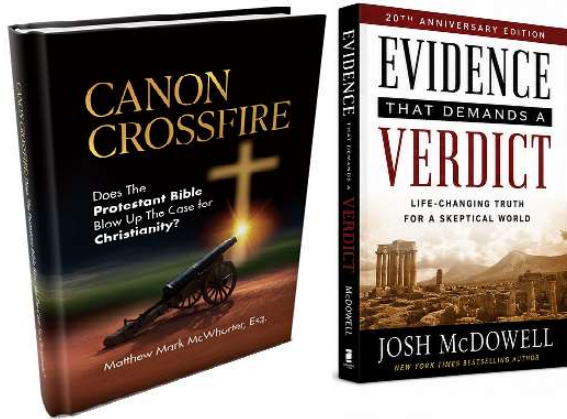


Canon Crossfire:

How The **Protestant Bible** Blows Up The Case For Christianity



Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* makes the case against the books not included in the New Testament (i.e., New Testament "Apocrypha") and explains why they are not canonical ("authentic and authoritative"):

Geisler and Nix sum up the case against the canonical status of these books: "(1) None of them enjoyed any more than a temporary or local recognition. (2) Most of them never did have anything more than a semi-canonical status.... (3) No major canon or church council included them as inspired books of the New Testament. (4) The limited acceptance enjoyed by most of these books is attributable to the fact that they attached themselves to references in canonical books"

Notice: **every single item relates to acceptance by the earliest Christians.** And the standard for proving that acceptance (and thus authenticity) is "more than a temporary or local recognition" and inclusion by a "major canon or church council"—i.e., **consensus**.

On the New Testament, the consensus of the earliest Christians proves which books were truly passed down from the Apostles.

Evidence That Demands a Verdict also explains why most Protestants exclude the Deuterocanon (books accepted by Catholics and most of the world's Christians) from their Canon (and instead label them "Apocrypha").

Why Not Canonical? Unger... while granting that the Old Testament apocryphal books do have some value, cites four reasons for excluding them from the Hebrew canon: 1. They abound in historical and geographical inaccuracies and anachronisms. 2. They teach doctrines that are false and foster practices that are at variance with inspired Scripture. 3. They resort to literary types and display an artificiality of subject matter and styling out of keeping with inspired Scripture. 4. They lack the distinctive elements that give genuine Scripture its divine character, such as prophetic power and poetic and religious feeling.

Notice: **not one of these four reasons has anything whatsoever to do with the earliest Christians and their acceptance or rejection of Deuterocanonical books.** We see that the real Protestant belief is actually that accepting them is the wrong decision.

The silence from McDowell is a hint that the evidence actually shows that **the CONSENSUS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS opposed the limited Protestant Old Testament.**

In fact, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* gives the game away when it provides a Protestant synopsis of the "*Historical Testimony of Their Exclusion*" while **ignoring all the evidence of a Christian consensus** against the testimony they are about to mention:

Geisler/Nix give ten testimonies of antiquity that argue against recognition of the Apocrypha:

1. Philo, Alexandrian Jewish philosopher 20 B.C.-A.D. 40), quoted the Old Testament prolifically... but he never quoted from the Apocrypha as inspired.

Philo was a Jew, not a Christian. This and the concept called "Hebraica Veritas" actually relate to **"proof" that the early Christians were "mistaken,"** not that they rejected the "Apocrypha." Even if the Jews rejected them, where is the evidence that the early Christians did?

2. Josephus (A.D. 30-100), Jewish historian, explicitly excludes the Apocrypha, numbering the books of the Old Testament as twenty-two. Neither does he quote the apocryphal books as Scripture.

Josephus was also a Jew, writing long after the New Testament is usually alleged to have been written; and in fact there are many indications in Josephus' writings that his 22 was not limited to the modern Jewish/Protestant 22 (e.g., he notes two books of Ezekiel, not one: see *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book X, Chapter 5).

3. Jesus and the New Testament writers never once quote the Apocrypha, although there are hundreds of quotes and references to almost all of the canonical books

Again, this is really a claim that the consensus beliefs and testimony of the earliest Christians (after the Apostles) were wrong. And thus, the claim is that the New Testament itself proves that the early Christians—those who were cited to prove the New Testament—were wrong (even lying) when they testified to other books. Notice also the two double standards: allowing "almost" to suffice for their personal canon, and ignoring all the references made to the "Apocrypha" (Protestant New Testament scholars recognize hundreds of references made to the "Apocrypha").

4. The Jewish scholars of Jamnia (A.D. 90) did not recognize the Apocrypha.

Again they cite the Jews, and evidence coming after the writing of the New Testament (if its early dates are accepted). Jewish scholars teach that their limited canon came after Christ (i.e., after the Temple), not before: see, e.g., the Jewish Study Bible, <https://a.co/d/053bhwyQ>.

5. **No canon or council** of the Christian church recognized the Apocrypha as inspired for nearly four centuries.

Notice that this point undermines their own citation to canons and councils in item 3 of their New Testament argument, above. In fact, the first councils ever held were held in the fourth century, period. **The claim also relates to a label ("the Apocrypha") and is clearly false when one looks at specific books within the label.** E.g., Origen (see next item) died in 254 AD.

6. Many of the great Fathers of the early church spoke out against the Apocrypha—for example, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Athanasius.

“Many” is not consensus. But also, Origen, Cyril, and Athanasius all expressly accepted the Epistle of Jeremiah (different from the Book of Jeremiah): it is listed by name on all of their “canon lists”—as anyone can check for themselves. In point of fact, the Protestant canon position on the Epistle of Jeremiah is that each and every single one of the authorities they just cited was dead wrong, even when they spoke unanimously on what is authentic and what is not. Obviously, **everyone always condemns “apocrypha”!** The issue is always what they define as “apocrypha”—**and not a single early Christian ever agreed with the Protestant canon definition.** The Protestant Old Testament canon is built on the belief that every early Christian was wrong to accept at least some of the Deuterocanon as full canonical Scripture.

7. Jerome (A.D. 340-420), the great scholar and translator of the Latin Vulgate, rejected the Apocrypha as part of the canon. Jerome said that the church reads them “for example of life and instruction of manners,” but does not “apply them to establish any doctrine.” He disputed with Augustine across the Mediterranean on this point. At first Jerome refused even to translate the apocryphal books into Latin, but later he made a hurried translation of a few of them. After his death and “over his dead body” the apocryphal books were brought into his Latin Vulgate directly from the Old Latin Version.

They (a) focus on Jerome (even detailing his life story), as the closest support for their canon (e.g., he at least contradicts the unanimous testimony of Origen, Cyril and Athanasius on the Epistle of Jeremiah); and (b) do so **in an attempt to have even one single outlier override their own standard of proof of the New Testament: consensus.** In fact, what they describe is actually Jerome’s opposition to the consensus, which included the councils impugned as “four centuries” after Christ in item 5—hundreds of Bishops (70 attended in

393 AD, 44-48 in 397 AD, and 217 in 419 AD) voted to reject the views of Jerome (a single Priest who died in 420 AD) and affirmed all of the Deuterocanon.

But even Jerome did not agree with the Protestant canon definition of “apocrypha.” He expressly stated that “I repeat what the Jews say against the Story of Susanna ... the man who makes this [rejecting it as part of Daniel and thus as canon] a charge against me proves himself to be a fool and a slanderer; for **I explained not what I thought but what they commonly say against us.**”² **Jerome and the Christians (“us”) did not reject Susanna as “apocrypha.”**

8. Many Roman Catholic scholars through the Reformation period rejected the Apocrypha.

This has nothing to do with the early Christians (and changes the standard from consensus to “many”).

9. Luther and the Reformers rejected [their] canonicity.

This has nothing to do with the early Christians.

10. Not until A.D. 1546, in a polemical action at the counter-Reformation Council of Trent (1545-63), did the apocryphal books receive full canonical status by the Roman Catholic Church.

This has nothing to do with the early Christians. Notice also that Catholic actions are prejudged as “polemical,” but not those of Luther, the Reformers, the Jews, etc.

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Evidence That Demands a Verdict’s Old Testament arguments (a) attack the proof of canons and councils (item 5), (b) cite a few fathers as if that proves more than consensus (item 6), (c) extensively discuss one single father (Jerome, in item 7) as if only unanimity can show us what was authentic, and (d) **otherwise try to prove that the consensus views—in fact, in some cases,**

the unanimous views—of early Christians led to the wrong result on each book of the Deuterocanon.

The Old Testament arguments impeach the credibility of their own witnesses and “admit” that consensus of the early Christians—the standard used to prove the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, and thus the truth of Christianity itself—cannot be trusted.

Read ALL The Evidence

A full review of ALL the evidence shows that the earliest Christians (a) formed a consensus on books that (most Protestants claim) contain errors and doctrines that were not preached by Christ, the Apostles, the Jews, etc., and (b) made THOUSANDS of “false” claims about those books, such as that they were authentic Jewish Scriptures delivered by the Apostles as authoritative, etc.³

Anyone can now read all the “false” claims for themselves (and thus verify the consensus). Scan the QR Code below to go to www.canoncrossfire.com, where you can read ALL the evidence, decide for yourself what the consensus of the early Christians was, and determine whether to follow the evidence to the truth.



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¹ E.g., at www.bible-researcher.com/origen.html, www.bible-researcher.com/cyril.html, www.bible-researcher.com/athanasius.html.

² www.newadvent.org/fathers/27102.htm

³ For example, see the “false” claims about the Epistle of Jeremiah on the canon lists from McDowell’s own witnesses: Origen, Cyril, and Athanasius (as discussed above).