

Questions About Missing Books of the Bible

By Pastor Ed Anderson

It seems odd that given how God always works in perfect numbers that there are 66 books of the Bible. Seems like it should be 70. Are four missing? And if so which ones can be trusted?

Answer:

That's a thoughtful question—and you're not alone in wondering whether **God's use of perfect numbers** (like 3, 7, 10, 12, 40, 70) would suggest a different count than **66 books** in the Bible.

Let's explore this biblically, historically, and spiritually.

1. Is 66 an Imperfect Number?

At first glance, the number **66** might seem unusual:

- It's not a "biblical" number like 7 or 12.
- Some even note that **666**, the number of the beast, shares a similarity — but this is **numerology**, not theology.

Important Note: God never uses numerology to determine the authority of Scripture. Instead, **inspiration**, **preservation**, and **transformation** are the true tests.

2. Why 66 Books?

The **Protestant Bible** contains:

- **39 Old Testament books**
- **27 New Testament books**

These 66 books were:

- **Canonized** over centuries with great scrutiny
- Confirmed by **Jesus, the apostles, and the early church**
- Passed down faithfully through **persecution, councils, translation, and printing**

Jesus Himself quoted from all major divisions of the Hebrew Bible (Law, Prophets, Writings), confirming the Jewish canon that forms our Old Testament.

3. What About the “Missing Books” or Extra Writings?

A. Apocrypha / Deuterocanonical Books

- Included in **Roman Catholic** and **Eastern Orthodox** Bibles (e.g., Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, 1-2 Maccabees)
- **Not part of the original Hebrew canon**
- **Never quoted by Jesus or the apostles**
- Often contain **historical and doctrinal inconsistencies**

These books may be useful historically, but **not inspired or authoritative** for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16).

B. Gnostic Gospels & “Lost Books”

Examples: Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Judas, Book of Enoch, etc.

- These **appeared centuries after Christ**
- Contain **heresies, contradictions, and mythical content**
- Rejected unanimously by early Christian leaders

They are **not trustworthy** and were **never part of the biblical canon**.

4. Does the Bible Mention 70 Books?

Yes—in **2 Esdras 14:45–47**, a non-canonical Jewish writing, it says:

“Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first and let the worthy and the unworthy read them, but keep the seventy that were written last, to give to the wise among your people.”

Some take this to imply there were **hidden or sealed books**, but:

- This is **not Scripture**.
- It **contradicts Jesus**, who taught from the **same canon** we have today (Luke 24:44).

- God's word is meant to be **revealed**, not hidden (Deuteronomy 29:29).

5. Does the Bible Itself Warn of Additions?

Yes:

“Do not add to His words, or He will rebuke you and prove you a liar.”

— *Proverbs 30:6*

“If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.”

— *Revelation 22:18*

✚ That includes books, visions, or writings **outside the 66-book canon**.

6. What Is the Real Test of Trustworthy Scripture?

Here are the consistent marks of inspired books:

| Test | Description |
|---------------------|---|
| Prophetic Origin | Written by a prophet or apostle |
| Consistency | Agrees with previously revealed truth |
| Christ-Centered | Uplifts God's character and redemptive plan |
| Power to Transform | Changes lives, convicts hearts, gives hope |
| Preservation by God | Accepted and preserved by God's people under the Holy Spirit's guidance |

The **66 books of the Bible** pass every one of these tests.

7. Is There a Spiritual Meaning to 66?

Some have noted this:

- **6 + 6 = 12**, a biblical number representing **governmental perfection** (12 tribes, 12 apostles).

- There are **22 letters** in the Hebrew alphabet.
- Multiply by 3 (symbolic of the Trinity) = 66
- The Bible is also written in **3 major languages**: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

While not definitive, this shows God may have orchestrated even the number **66** with divine design.

Final Encouragement: You Can Trust the 66

The Bible you hold today:

- Was **affirmed by Jesus**,
- **Preserved by the Holy Spirit**, and
- **Defended through fire, sword, and martyrdom.**

“Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.”

— *Psalms 119:89*

“All Scripture is God-breathed...that the man of God may be complete.”

— *2 Timothy 3:16–17*