

Question About Why We Don't Use the Apocrypha

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Can you send me an article or information as to why 7th day Adventist do not refer to the revised Apocrypha when it was approved by the churches of Christ in the USA in 1989.

Answer:

Why Seventh-day Adventists — and All Protestant Christians — Do Not Accept the Apocrypha as Scripture

1. Not Found in the Hebrew Old Testament (Tanakh)

The Apocryphal books (e.g. *Tobit*, *Judith*, *1 & 2 Maccabees*, *Wisdom of Solomon*) were **never part of the Jewish canon**.

- Jesus and the apostles consistently quoted from the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings — but **never once** from the Apocrypha.
- The Jewish historian **Josephus (1st century)** affirmed that the Hebrew canon consisted of **22 books**, aligning with the 39 books of the Protestant Old Testament when arranged differently.

“We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us...but only twenty-two books which are justly believed to be divine.” – Josephus, *Against Apion*

2. No Apostolic Endorsement in the New Testament

While the New Testament includes hundreds of direct Old Testament quotes, **it never quotes any Apocryphal text** as authoritative Scripture.

- Even though the Septuagint (Greek OT) was commonly used, Jesus and the apostles **did not endorse** the Apocryphal additions.
- For Protestant Christians who hold to *Sola Scriptura*, this silence is *significant*.

3. Doctrinal Conflicts and Errors

Several Apocryphal texts **contradict foundational doctrines** of both Judaism and Christianity:

Salvation by works/almsgiving:

“For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin.” – Tobit 12:9 (NRSV)

This directly **contradicts salvation by grace** (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Prayers for the dead: 2 Maccabees 12:45–46

Promotes the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, which Protestants reject.

These contradictions **undermine biblical authority**, and no Protestant Christian should build doctrine on such books.

4. Rejected by Reformers and Church Fathers

- **Martin Luther** placed the Apocrypha in a separate section, calling them “useful and good to read, but not equal to the Holy Scriptures.”
- The **Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)** declared the Apocryphal books to be “**of no authority**” in the church and **not to be used** to establish doctrine.

“The books commonly called Apocrypha...are not of divine inspiration...and therefore are of no authority in the church of God.” – Westminster Confession, Ch. 1, Sec. 3

5. Undermines the Sufficiency of Scripture

Protestant Christianity teaches that **Scripture is complete and sufficient** for salvation and godly living (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

- Adding Apocryphal texts introduces confusion and **opens the door to unsound doctrine**.
- It **dilutes the clarity** of the gospel and the central role of Christ.

SDA and Protestant Resources You Can Share

- What About the Apocrypha? – Adventist Biblical Research Institute
- Reasons Why Apocrypha Is Rejected – Elder’s Digest (SDA)
- The Apocrypha and the Bible – Blue Letter Bible
- GotQuestions.org – Why don’t Protestants accept the Apocrypha?

In Conclusion

No Protestant Christian — whether SDA, Baptist, Methodist, or Evangelical — should accept the Apocrypha as inspired Scripture because:

- It was **never accepted by Jesus, the apostles, or the early Jewish community,**
- It **contains teachings that contradict core biblical truths,**
- And it has been **clearly rejected by Protestant confessions of faith** for over 500 years.

These books may have historical or literary value, but they are *not* the Word of God.