

CANON OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLE (PART I)

First, let's answer the question of "what is canon?" The concept of canonicity of scripture is based on the word itself. "Canon" means a "boundary, rule, or a measuring Reed". This word may have come from the word "kaw-neh" in Hebrew as we see in **Ezekiel 40:3 (KJV)** "And he brought me thither, and, behold, *there was* a man, whose appearance *was* like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a **measuring reed (kaw-neh)**; and he stood in the gate". The important thing to remember about the Canon, or the accepted books of the Bible is this: man does not determine what books are to be included in the Bible. God determines which books are canonical and He makes them know to us.

The issue at hand in this study is that the Catholic Bible includes books which they call "Deuterocanonical" or "the second canon", but these books are not included in what we often call the "protestant" Bible. The books considered Catholic Canon have also changed over the years from their very first Catholic editions to what they now consider "Canon". Thus we will try to determine with scripture if their claim is true.

What Are The Differences Between the "Protestant" And "Catholic" Bibles?

The Catholic Bible has 73 books, while the most other Bibles contains 66 books. The deuterocanonical or "second canon" is a set of seven additional books which include: Sirach, Tobit, Wisdom, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and Baruch, as well as longer versions of Daniel and Esther. This list originally included additional books that the Catholic Church has since removed. The term typically given to these books is "Apocrypha." The Catholic Church claims their status as being part of the canon of Scripture was settled later in time but that in no way lessens their value, and as such regards them as Scripture. As we set to determine whether these books are inspired or not we will use John 17:17 as our guide. John 17:17 "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth". Therefore, we know that all Scripture is truth and will not contain error. If one could show error in these "Apocryphal" books, the fact would be shown that they indeed do not belong in the Canon. My task in this lesson is to show each of these books contain error, and include additional information as to why these books are not currently, and have never been Canonical.

Errors In The Book Of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)

First off, let me give some background information on the book or Sirach which is the longest of the Apocryphal books and is also called Ecclesiasticus. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia:

At the present day, the authorship of the book is universally and rightly assigned to a certain "Jesus", concerning whose person and character a great deal has indeed been surmised but very little is actually known. In the Greek prologue to the work, the author's

proper name is given as Iesous, and this information is corroborated by the subscriptions found in the original Hebrew: 1, 27 (Vulgate, 1, 29); li, 30. His familiar surname was Ben Sira, as the Hebrew text and the ancient versions agree to attest... the author of Ecclesiasticus, may be regarded as having lived and written his work between forty and sixty years before (between 190 and 170 B.C.)” (Gigot 266).

“The book is most commonly designated in the Latin Church as "Ecclesiasticus", itself a Greek word with a Latin ending. This last title — not to be confounded with "Ecclesiastes" (Eccl.) — is the one used by the Council of Trent in its solemn decree concerning the books to be regarded as sacred and canonical” (Gigot, p. 263).

As just noted, the Catholic Church does indeed claim that this book is part of their Sacred Canon and thus it must also be error free.

Let’s first notice two verses :Sirach 3:3 “Whoso honoureth his father maketh an atonement for his sins”, and Sirach 3:14-15 “For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten: and instead of sins it shall be added to build thee up. In the day of thine affliction it shall be remembered; thy sins also shall melt away, as the ice in the fair warm weather.” These two verses make the claim that if one honors his father his sins will be atoned for. This was not taught in either the Old Testament or the New Testament. In the Old testament sins were atoned for through sacrifices at the temple. Many examples of this are found in the book of Leviticus, but I will list just one for evidence: Leviticus 7:37 “This *is* the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings”. These verses not only contradict the old testament, but also the New Testament. Romans 5:11 “And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement”. Clearly we see that honoring parents does not atone for sins and is erroneous.

Next, Sirach 3:30 states that salvation comes from Alms Giving. Sirach 3:30 “Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins”. According to the Merriam Webster’s dictionary, alms giving is: “something (as money or food) given freely to relieve the poor. Clearly as stated above this does not meet the requirement in either the Old or New Testament as atoning for ones sins.

Sirach 33:26-28 states it is okay to torture and torment evil servants. Sirach 33:26-28 “A yoke and a collar do bow the neck: so are tortures and torments for an evil servant. Send him to labour, that he be not idle; for idleness teacheth much evil. Set him to work, as is fit for him: if he be not obedient, put on more heavy fetters”. This verse completely contradicts the teaching in the New Testament. Ephesians 6:9 “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing (to do without) threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect

of persons with him”. This should be sufficient for this study to show that this book contains error and should not be included in the Canon of Scripture.

Errors In The Book Of Tobit (Tobias)

The Catholic Church claims the book of Tobit was written during the time of Babylonian Captivity around the 7th century B.C. (Drum 257). However most non-Catholic scholars date the book around 280 B.C. (Drum 257). The book is considered by many to be nothing more than a form of religious romance and definitely not part of the Canon. However as noted below, the Catholic Church does believe this to be part of the canon and therefore error free.

“The Book of Tobit (Tobias) is deuterocanonical, i.e. contained not in the Canon of Palestine but in that of Alexandria. That the Jews of the Dispersion accepted the book as canonical Scripture is clear from its place in the Septuagint. That the Palestinian Jews revered Tobias as a sacred book may be argued from the existence of the Aramaic translation used by St. Jerome and that published by Neubauer, as also from the four extant Hebrew translators. Then, most of these Semitic version were found as Midrashim, or hagganda, of the Pentateuch... Despite the rejection of Tobias from the Protestant Canon, its place in the Christian Canon of Holy Writ is undoubted. The Catholic Church has ever esteemed it as inspired” (Drum 251).

Let’s address some of the errors in the book of Tobit. First, prior to the flood people lived for a long time, but by the time of the book of psalms people lived about 70 or 80 years on average (much like today). Psalms 90:10 “The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away”. Notice, according to Catholic dating, this book is written about 300 years after David Died. Let’s notice two passages:

Tobit 1:3-5 “I Tobit have walked all the days of my life in the ways of truth and justice, and I did many alms deeds to my brethren, and my nation, who came with me to Nineveh, into the land of the Assyrians. And when I was in mine own country, in the land of Israel being but young, all the tribe of Nephthali my father fell from the house of Jerusalem, which was chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, that all the tribes should sacrifice there, where the temple of the habitation of the most High was consecrated and built for all ages. Now all the tribes which together revolted, and the house of my father Nephthali, sacrificed unto the heifer Baal”.

Tobit 1:10 “And when we were carried away captives to Nineveh, all my brethren and those that were of my kindred did eat of the bread of the Gentiles”.

From the above two verses Tobit and Tobias lived from the time Solomon’s’ temple was consecrated and built (931 B.C.) to the carrying away to Nineveh in 721 B.C. He would have

been at least 210 years old at the time of this carrying away. Does this seem logical? The Bible does not show anyone living this long, and this also contradicts the timing of average life given in the book of psalms. Next, in Tobit 14:11 we will see another error. Tobit 14:11 “Wherefore now, my son, consider what alms doeth, and how righteousness doth deliver. When he had said these things, he gave up the ghost in the bed, being an hundred and eight and fifty years old; and he buried him honourably”. Tobit 14:11 states he was 158 years old when he died. How is this possible if he was over 210 years old at the carrying away. Does either seem logical?

In Tobit 6:1 he lists the Tigris river as the river he crossed going from Nineveh. Tobit 6:1 “And as they went on their journey, they came in the evening to the river Tigris, and they lodged there”. The Tigris River is west of Nineveh; Persia is east. This cannot be the correct river! Tobit 9:2-6 states this is a one day journey, however it would have taken at least 11 days according to many commentators. The journey was from Ecbatana to Rages and could not have been made in 1 day.

Tobit 6:2-7 states to vex a demon you needed to smote a fish liver, but that is not how we see Jesus or the Apostles remove demons in the new Testament. Like the book Sirach, Tobit teaches works for salvation. Tobit 12:9 teaches giving to the poor purges away sin. Tobit 12:9 “For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness shall be filled with life”. This has already been proven false above and can be further emphasized by Ephesians 2:8-9 “⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast”. Further error in the book of Tobit is found in Tobit 14:15 “But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which was taken by Nabuchodonosur and Assuerus: and before his death he rejoiced over Nineveh”. Nebuchadnezzar did not take Nineveh, but rather Nabopolassar, Cyaxeres, and Arbaces took Nineveh. Many more examples can be listed, but these should suffice in showing Tobit is filled with error and should not be part of the Canon.

Errors In The Book Of Wisdom

The date and authorship of the book of Wisdom is unknown, although two suggested dates have been given. The timing given in the Catholic Encyclopedia is that of “the time of either Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-204 B.C.), or Ptolemy VII Physicon (145-117 B.C.)” (Gigot 668). Although timing and authorship are not clear, based on the fact that the Catholic Church claims it is part of the Canon and inspired, it should contain no errors in its contents. And yet, Wisdom 7:2 has even basic known facts wrong.

Wisdom 7:2 “And in my mother's womb was fashioned to be flesh in the time of ten months, being compacted in blood, of the seed of man, and the pleasure that came with sleep”.

Most people know, and science has shown that the gestation period in a mother's womb is nine months (40 weeks), but according to the book of wisdom the gestation period is much longer. The book of wisdom also has forms of Gnosticism in it. Gnosticism is from the Greek word meaning "γνωσις" meaning knowledge. These "Gnostics" believed they had a special or superior knowledge. Additionally they believed the flesh was evil, and therefore God was not or could not be involved in earthly matters where He would come in contact with "sin". This thought process is seen in Wisdom 7:25, which states "For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty: therefore can no defiled thing fall into her." It is this type of thought process, "that the wise do not worry about defilement" that gave them the title "Gnostics" or the "knowing ones". This would allude to the assumption that those with this special wisdom are above defilement (sin). Yet Romans 3:23 declares "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God", and 1 John 1:8 declares "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us". Even the wise must be careful not to sin.

Additionally, the book of Wisdom does not teach correctly when a person receives their spirit. Wisdom 8:19-20 "Yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled." Let me make a note before I go any farther. I am in no way talking about "Original" or "Adamic sin" but his state before he was in human form. Zechariah 12:1 clearly contradicts this verse, "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him". How was he good before he came into a body? God forms the spirit of man within him, and there is no "good" before that. Additionally, James 2:26 confirms this "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also". Until the body and spirit are together as one there can be no "good" or "bad".

Wisdom 9:14-15 also teaches "Gnosticism" or a form of "Calvinism" by claiming that man's thoughts and flesh are evil. Wisdom 9:14-15 "For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain. For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things." This statement makes it appear as if a man cannot be righteous. However let's combine two verses: John 17:17 "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" and John 8:32 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". These two verses clearly show when one knows God's word (truth) and faithfully abides in it, they are sanctified. 1 Cor. 6:11 also confirms this state of righteousness which is available to only Christians. 1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Additional error is seen in the claim that everything was made out pre-existing material. This claim rejects our Wisdom 11:17 "For thy Almighty hand, that made the world of matter

without form, wanted not means to send among them a multitude of bears or fierce lions”. This contradicts other plain verses as shown below.

Genesis 1:1-2 ¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. .

John 1:1-3 ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² The same was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Hebrews 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Although other errors could be mentioned, these errors alone in the book of Wisdom are proof for rejection in the canon of scripture.

Review Questions

Question 1) What is Canon, and who decides what books are canonical?

Question 2) What is the difference in a “Catholic” Bible as compared to a “Protestant” Bible?

Question 3) How can one tell if a book is inspired or not?

Question 4) How does the book of Sirach contradict other plainly understood verses? Which ones?

Question 5) What kind of errors in the book of Tobit show that this book is not inspired?

Question 6) What kind of errors in the book of Wisdom show that this book is not inspired?



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