



“All scripture is inspired by God” (2 Timothy 3:16 NAB). Increasingly claims are made that books were omitted from the Old Testament of the Bible. The Hebrew Scripture canon of inspired books was closed by circa 400 BCE, with the completion of the books of Nehemiah and Malachi. This means that any more books produced after that time were considered not inspired by God, according to the Jews. What evidence do we have that our current 39 book Old Testament doesn’t omit any inspired books?

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE CANON OF BOOKS — CLOSED BY ABOUT 400 BCE

The earliest documented proof of the existence of what we today call the Old Testament canon of books is from the uninspired apocryphal book called **Ecclesiasticus**, also called, **The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach**, or simply **Sirach**, which was written about 180 BCE:

“Many great teachings have been given to us through the Law and the Prophets and the other books that followed them . . . my grandfather Jesus, who had devoted himself especially to the reading of the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors” (Prologue to Ecclesiasticus NRSV). The books of the Hebrew Scriptures are divided into three sections, namely, “the Law and the Prophets and the other books.” The writer of Ecclesiasticus considered the Hebrew scripture canon closed by his grandfather’s day which would have been in the 200’s BCE.

HOW WE KNOW WHICH OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS WERE INSPIRED BY GOD

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, himself, referred to the same three sections of inspired books, when he mentioned: **“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44 NIV)**. These verses refer to what we today call the Old Testament, and its writings were completed by about 400 BCE, long before his time on earth. These books of the Hebrew Scriptures comprise about 75% of the Bible.

EVIDENCE OF EXACTLY HOW MANY OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

Were books omitted from the Old Testament of the Bible? Yes, there were, and of them for good reason! There were many uninspired books omitted.

“Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first [the inspired 39 book Old Testament], and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last [the uninspired Apocryphal books], in order to give them to the wise among your people”—2 Esdras 14:45,46 NRSV

The Jews considered “twenty-four books” as inspired by God, while acknowledging there were many others that were not inspired by God. The following are the exact books in each of the three sections.

THE LAW WRITINGS)	THE PROPHETS	THE PSALMS (THE
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Proverbs
Leviticus	Samuel	Job
Numbers	Kings	Song of Solomon

Deuteronomy	Isaiah	Ruth
	Jeremiah	Lamentations
	Ezekiel	Ecclesiastes
	The Twelve Minor Prophets.	Esther
		Daniel
Nehemiah		Ezra-
		Chronicles

Later, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah, were split into two books each, and the Twelve Minor Prophets, was split into 12 books, adding 15 books to the 24 books. This equals our 39 book Old Testament canon of books today.

UNINSPIRED BOOKS REFERRED TO IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In its record of the history of God's people, the Old Testament refers the readers of that time to other books to check for further information. But that is not an acknowledgment of their inspiration by God. The fact is that these books are no longer extant today. Below is a list of some of these named, but uninspired, historical books.

“The Book of the Wars of Yahweh” (Numbers 21:24 LSB)

“The book Jashar” (Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18 LSB)

“The book of the acts of Solomon” (1 Kings 11:41 LSB)

“The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel” (1 Kings 14:19 LSB)

“The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” (1 Kings 15:7 LSB)

CONCLUSION

“All scripture is inspired by God” (2 Timothy 3:16 NAB). Based on an abundance of strong evidence, we can be completely sure that our 39 book Old Testament that no inspired books were omitted from the Old Testament.

For more information related to this subject, please see the following articles on this website:

“What Is The Apocrypha, or Deuterocanonical Books? –

<https://bibleauthenticity.com/the-apocrypha-deuterocanonical-books/>

“Should Pseudepigrapha (Books by Fake Authors) Be In the Bible?” –

<https://bibleauthenticity.com/the-bible-and-pseudepigraphical-literature/>

Apocrypha – Inspired by God or Invented by Humans?