

**Is The Old Testament Apocrypha Canonical:  
Yes or No?**

<b>Some arguments offered for inclusion</b>	<b>A Protestant response</b>
The N. T. mostly quotes from the Grk. version of the O. T., the Septuagint (LXX), which included the Apocrypha.	While Jesus and N. T. authors did quote from the Jewish canon in the LXX, at no time do they ever quote from the Apocrypha or indicate it to be authoritative.
The LXX inclusion of the Apocrypha indicates Jewish recognition of the Apocrypha as canon.	The LXX was a compilation of various Jewish Hebrew or Aramaic literature translated to Grk, and was not understood by the Jews to dictate Jewish canon. The Jews considered their canon to be closed at the cessation of prophecy, well before the writing of the Apocryphal books.
Some early church fathers accepted the Apocrypha as canonical.	While some did, many church fathers rejected it as canonical. Of particular note was Jerome (a contemporary of Augustine), translator of the Latin Vulgate, the Catholic standard for centuries, who (contra Augustine) rejected the Apocrypha.
Early church councils accepted the Apocrypha. (Notably Hippo [393] and Carthage [397]).	Those were only local councils, not binding on the whole church, and were dominated by the pro-Apocrypha Augustine. Further, the Jewish canon was not under the province of the Christian church to determine canonicity of the O. T. Jews regard the canon limited to 22 (24) books which coincide with the Protestant 39 books of the Protestant O. T.

The Council of Trent (1546) “infallibly” dictated the Apocrypha as part of the O. T. canon. (The Council of Florence [1442] similarly embraced the Apocrypha, though w/o the claim of infallibility.)	Trent was a reaction to the Protestant Reformation, and the motivation to include the Apocrypha in the Catholic canon was in part a response to Reformation rejection of prayers for the dead and purgatory, to which some Catholics believe the Apocrypha lends support. Both Trent and Florence disregard the Jewish position on the Jews’ own canon and early church history.
The Hebrew versions of the Apocryphal books were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls.	The discovery at Qumran of the Dead Sea Scrolls includes a library of hundreds of Hebrew texts in the Qumran library. Discovery of Apocryphal texts is not evidence that the Essenes considered them canonical. Significantly, there were no commentaries of the Apocrypha found as there were of the canonical books, nor were any Apocryphal books on the special parchment and using the special script of the canonical books.

Sources:

Norman Geisler, “Apocrypha,” in *Baker’s Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, (Baker Books, 1999)  
 David G. Dunbar, “The Biblical Canon,” in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. by D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, (Academic Books, 1986)