



When we open a Protestant Bible and compare it with a Catholic Bible, we find a fundamental difference: **books are missing**. This is not just an insignificant detail but a crucial omission that impacts the understanding of the Christian faith.

But what does this mean? Why were these books removed? How does this affect Protestant theology? And most importantly: **why is this so relevant for our spiritual life today?**

In this article, we will explore this topic in depth, debunk myths, and explain why the Catholic Bible is the complete and authentic version of God's Word.

Which Books Are Missing from the Protestant Bible?

The Catholic Bible contains 73 books, while the Protestant Bible has only 66. This is because the 16th-century Reformers **removed seven Old Testament books** and portions of others. These are:

1. **Tobit**
2. **Judith**
3. **Wisdom**
4. **Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)**
5. **Baruch**
6. **1 Maccabees**
7. **2 Maccabees**

Additionally, parts of **Daniel and Esther** were removed in the Protestant version.

These books, known as the **Deuterocanonicals**, were always considered Sacred Scripture by the Church and were part of the **Septuagint**, the Greek translation of the Old Testament used by the apostles and by Jesus Himself.

Why Did Protestants Remove These Books?

Martin Luther and other Reformers **rejected these books** because they contradicted several of their doctrines. It was not a decision based on history or apostolic tradition but on their own theological interpretation.

Let's look at some examples of what these books teach and how they challenge Protestant theology:



1. Prayers for the Dead and Purgatory

In **2 Maccabees 12:45-46**, the practice of praying for the dead is clearly mentioned:

"But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin."

This teaching supports the doctrine of **Purgatory**, something that Protestantism rejects. If they accepted 2 Maccabees, they would have to accept intercession for the dead and the process of purification after death, which contradicts their belief in **sola fide** (salvation by faith alone).

2. The Importance of Good Works

Protestant theology insists that **we are saved by faith alone (sola fide)**. However, the Deuterocanonical books emphasize the importance of works along with faith.

For example, in **Sirach 15:16-17**, we read:

"If you choose, you can keep the commandments; they will save you. If you trust in God, you too shall live. He has placed before you fire and water; stretch out your hand for whichever you choose."

This passage reinforces the Catholic teaching that we have **free will** and that our choices matter for our salvation. Luther, who taught the **total depravity of man**, rejected this idea and preferred to exclude these books from the Bible.

3. The Intercession of Saints

The book of **Baruch** speaks of how the righteous can intercede for the people:



“Lord Almighty, God of Israel, hear the prayer of the dead of Israel and of their sinful sons” (Baruch 3:4).

This concept of intercession is key in Catholic theology, as it explains the communion of saints and the role of Mary and the saints in interceding for us. However, Protestants reject this teaching, and removing these books makes it easier to argue against it.

4. The Veneration of Sacred Images

Many Protestants argue that the Bible forbids the use of images, but in **Wisdom 14:7**, we find a revealing passage:

“Blessed is the wood by which righteousness comes.”

This refers to sacred objects used in the worship of God, justifying the use of religious images and statues with a pious purpose.

Who Decided Which Books Belong in the Bible?

It is important to understand that the Bible did not fall from heaven already bound with 73 books. **The early Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, defined the biblical canon in the Councils of Rome (382), Hippo (393), and Carthage (397).**

Saint Augustine, a great defender of the Deuterocanonical books, insisted on their divine inspiration. But Luther, in his effort to uphold his doctrines, unilaterally decided to exclude them.

Protestants argue that the Jewish canon, finalized in the 1st century A.D. at the Council of Jamnia, did not include these books. However, **the apostles and the early Church used the Septuagint, which did include them.**

In other words, Protestants follow the Jewish canon that was established **after Christ**, while Catholics follow the canon that was used by the apostles and the early Christians.



Why Does This Matter Today?

Some people might think: "Well, if I believe in Jesus, does it really matter which books are in the Bible?"

The answer is a **resounding yes**.

1. **If part of the Bible is missing, part of the truth is missing.**
2. **Protestant doctrines are incomplete because they are based on an incomplete Bible.**
3. **The removed teachings affect our understanding of faith, salvation, and Christian life.**

Accepting the Catholic Bible means accepting the **fullness of Revelation**. We cannot base our faith on a reduced version of God's Word.

What Can You Do Today?

1. **If you are Catholic, dive into the Deuterocanonical books.** They are often ignored even by Catholics. Read them and discover their spiritual richness.
2. **If you are Protestant, research why your Bible has fewer books.** Ask who decided which books to include and why.
3. **Share this information.** Many Christians do not know that their Bible is incomplete. Help others discover the truth.

Conclusion: The Fullness of the Faith

The Bible is the Word of God, but the Protestant Bible **is not complete**. The removal of the Deuterocanonical books was not a decision inspired by God but a human strategy to justify doctrines contrary to apostolic teaching.

If we want to live in the fullness of the Christian faith, we must accept the Bible in its entirety, as it has been handed down by the Church from the beginning.

May this knowledge help us draw closer to God and live with a deeper and more authentic faith.