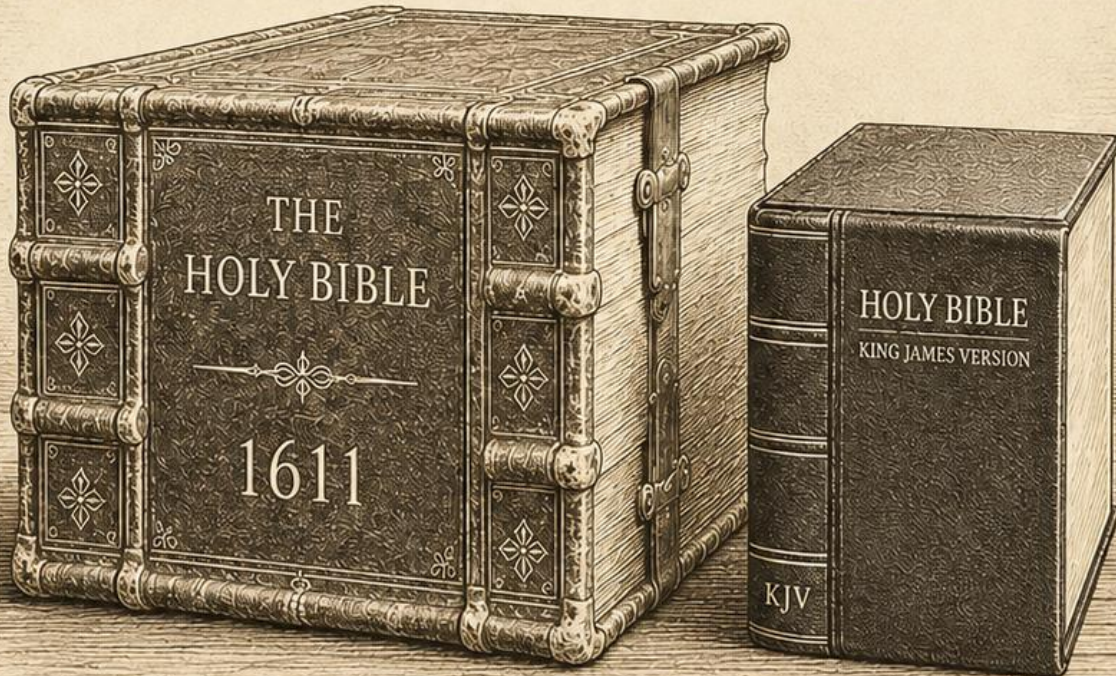




REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

HAVE BOOKS BEEN REMOVED FROM THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE?

2 TIMOTHY 3:14–17 KJV



SERMON & PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley
Pastor & Teacher

Aloha, and welcome to Reason Together Church.

Whether you are joining us here on Oahu or watching from somewhere far beyond these islands, I am grateful that you are here.

At Reason Together Church, we believe sincere questions do not threaten the Word of God.

They give us another reason to open it.

So bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

If this is your first time with us, we would love to know that you were here.

The guest card asks only for your first name and your email address.

We are not asking for your home address, your telephone number or the name of your third-grade teacher.

We simply want the opportunity to welcome you and thank you for worshipping with us.

After the service, please join us in the Reason Together Café.

The coffee is free.

The locally grown coffee is good.

And the refills on conversations are always free.

We do not pass an offering plate at Reason Together Church.

If you are visiting, we encourage you to support your home church.

For members who wish to give, the giving box and the online giving option are available without pressure or interruption.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

thank You for giving us Your Word.

Thank You that we do not have to be afraid of honest questions.

Give us wisdom to distinguish historical facts from assumptions,

helpful writings from inspired Scripture,

and confident faith from careless claims.

Help us honor those who taught us,

while testing everything beneath the authority of Your Word.

Open our understanding today.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Were books removed from the King James Bible?

And if they were,

is the Bible we hold today incomplete?

Our primary Scripture is 2 Timothy 3:14–17.

The Apostle Paul writes:

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

When I was growing up,

my great-grandmother had a Bible in her living room.

It was not merely a Bible placed there as decoration.

She read it every day.

I can still remember her telling me that the Bible I had was not the complete King James Bible.

She told me it had been changed.

And I remember her opening her Bible and showing me that it contained material mine did not.

I was young.

I did not fully understand what she was showing me.

And, if I am honest, I never completely trusted the claim.

It sounded like one of those things older relatives sometimes tell children that the children are expected to accept simply because an older person said it.

I wish I still had her Bible.

I do not know what happened to it.

I do not know who eventually received it.

I do not know the publisher,

the year it was printed,

or the exact edition she owned.

Those facts have disappeared with the Bible.

But the question did not disappear.

What exactly was she trying to show me?

Was her Bible unusual?

Was my Bible incomplete?

Had someone actually removed books from the King James Bible?

And after all these years,

I find myself returning to one very personal question.

Was my great-grandmother right?

Before we investigate that question,

we need to clarify what this study is not about.

This is not a study about the Ethiopian Bible.

This is not a study about the Book of Enoch.

This is not a study about the Book of Jubilees.

This is not a study about secret writings supposedly hidden by the Church.

And this is not a study about why some modern Bible translations place brackets around certain New Testament verses.

Each of those questions deserves its own careful investigation.

Today we are asking something narrower.

We are asking what appeared in the original King James Bible,
what later disappeared from most King James Bibles,
and whether that missing material was inspired Scripture.

Those are actually three different questions.

What did the original 1611 King James Bible contain?

What did later publishers leave out?

And did they leave out part of the Word of God?

The first two questions can be answered historically.

The third must be answered Biblically.

Let us begin with the historical fact.

The original King James Bible published in 1611 contained more material than the ordinary King James Bible most of us carry today.

That is not a theory.

It is not a rumor.

It is not something we learned from a dramatic video on the internet.

Original copies still exist.

Exact facsimile reproductions still exist.

Libraries preserve copies that scholars can examine page by page.

The evidence is sitting in the binding.

The original publication contained the books of the Old Testament.

Then it contained a separate section identified as the books called Apocrypha.

Then it contained the books of the New Testament.

Most King James Bibles today contain the Old Testament and the New Testament,
but the section between them is gone.

So, if the question is simply,

“Was material removed from later printings of the King James Bible?”

the answer is yes.

My great-grandmother was right about that.

But we are not finished reasoning.

Because proving that something was removed from a publication is not the same as proving that
something was removed from Scripture.

The cover of a Bible can contain many things.

Some Bibles contain maps.

Some contain concordances.

Some contain introductions,

cross-references,

reading plans,

study notes,

family records,

and photographs.

Those materials can be valuable.

But nobody believes the map of Paul’s missionary journeys was given by inspiration of God
merely because the publisher placed it behind Revelation.

So we need to know what these additional books were,

why they were included,

and how the people who produced the KJV understood them.

The word “Apocrypha” has been used in different ways.

Sometimes people use it as a general label for almost any ancient religious writing outside the
Bible.

Sometimes it is used dismissively to mean false or secret books.

But in the original King James Bible,
it identified a specific collection of writings placed between the Testaments.

The section included First Esdras.

Second Esdras.

Tobit.

Judith.

The Rest of Esther.

The Wisdom of Solomon.

Ecclesiasticus, also called Sirach.

Baruch, including the Letter of Jeremiah.

The Song of the Three Holy Children.

The History of Susanna.

Bel and the Dragon.

The Prayer of Manasses.

First Maccabees.

And Second Maccabees.

Depending upon whether the Letter of Jeremiah is counted separately,
people sometimes describe the section as containing fourteen books and sometimes fifteen.

But notice what was not there.

The Book of Enoch was not in the 1611 KJV Apocrypha.

The Book of Jubilees was not there.

The uniquely Ethiopian books being promoted in many advertisements today were not simply
the books removed from later King James Bibles.

There is some overlap between broader Christian canons,
but these are not identical questions.

We should not combine them simply because both involve books unfamiliar to most Protestants.

Some of the KJV Apocrypha consists of complete books.

Some of it consists of additional passages connected with familiar books.

The Rest of Esther adds material to the Esther story.

The Song of the Three Holy Children,

Susanna,

and Bel and the Dragon are associated with Daniel.

The books of Maccabees provide valuable history from the centuries before the birth of Christ.

They help us understand the world between the Old and New Testaments.
They help explain why names such as Judas Maccabeus became important,
why the Jewish people were deeply concerned about foreign rule,
and why certain conflicts existed by the time we open the Gospel of Matthew.

These books are old.

They are significant.

They influenced Jewish and Christian history.

But age does not establish inspiration.

Historical value does not establish inspiration.

Spiritual language does not establish inspiration.

And placement inside a printed Bible does not establish inspiration.

Paul told Timothy,

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

The Greek word translated “inspiration of God” communicates that Scripture is God-breathed.

Scripture does not become God’s Word because a church approves it.

Scripture does not become God’s Word because a council votes for it.

Scripture does not become God’s Word because a king authorizes its translation.

And Scripture does not become God’s Word because a printer binds it in leather.

God is the source of Scripture.

The task of God’s people is not to manufacture inspired books.

It is to recognize and receive the books God inspired.

Why, then, did the King James translators include these other writings?

One reason is that they inherited a long publishing tradition.

Earlier English Bibles included the Apocrypha.

The Coverdale Bible included it.

The Great Bible included it.

The Geneva Bible included it.

The Bishops’ Bible included it.

The KJV did not invent the practice.

It continued the practice.

Another reason is that portions of these books were read in the worship and teaching calendar of the Church of England.

The Book of Common Prayer contained scheduled readings from them.

If those readings were going to be used in church,
an English translation was needed.

The King James translation project therefore assigned scholars to translate the Apocrypha.
They did real translation work.

They did not simply attach somebody else's pamphlet at the back.

But their willingness to translate those books still does not prove that they regarded every one of
them as canonical Scripture.

For that question,
we do not have to guess.

The Church of England had already stated its position before the King James Bible was
published.

Article VI is one of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

Those articles summarized the official doctrine of the Church of England,
the church that authorized and used the King James translation.

They were already established before the KJV appeared in 1611.

They do not tell us what every translator privately believed,
but they do tell us the doctrinal standard under which the translation was produced.

Article VI is titled,

"Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation."

It lists the canonical books.

Then it discusses the other books separately.

It says the Church reads those books for example of life and instruction of manners,
but does not apply them to establish doctrine.

That sentence is enormously important.

The church tradition that produced the King James Bible made a distinction.

These writings could be read.

They could be useful.

They could teach history.

They could provide moral instruction.

But Christian doctrine was not to be established from them.

That position may sound strange to us because we tend to place every religious book into one of
two boxes.

Either it is Scripture,

or we should throw it away.

But Christians have long recognized a third category.

A writing can be worth reading without being Scripture.

A sermon can be worth hearing without being Scripture.

A hymn can teach sound doctrine without being Scripture.

A commentary can help us understand the Bible without being Scripture.

A book written by a faithful Christian can encourage us without being Scripture.

And an ancient Jewish writing can illuminate history without being Scripture.

Useful does not mean inspired.

Uninspired does not mean useless.

That distinction allows us to speak honestly.

We do not have to pretend these books never existed.

We do not have to be afraid to read them.

And we do not have to grant them the authority of Scripture merely because they contain something interesting.

This distinction was not created in 1611.

Centuries earlier,

Christian leaders wrestled with the difference between canonical books and books approved for reading.

Athanasius wrote a famous letter in A.D. 367 identifying books he received as canonical.

He also named other books that were not included in his canon but could be read for instruction.

His exact Old Testament arrangement was not identical to every modern Protestant list, but the category itself is important.

Canonical Scripture and profitable church reading were not automatically the same thing.

Jerome, who produced the Latin Vulgate, emphasized the books recognized in the Hebrew canon and distinguished other writings.

Augustine and some other church leaders accepted a broader collection.

Different Christian communities did not always draw every boundary in precisely the same place.

We should not rewrite that history to make it simpler than it was.

Catholic Christians recognize several of these writings as deuterocanonical Scripture.

The word “deuterocanonical” does not mean unimportant.

It identifies books whose canonical status was disputed or recognized differently in the history of the Church.

The Catholic Old Testament includes Tobit,

Judith,

Wisdom,

Sirach,

Baruch,

First and Second Maccabees,

and additions associated with Esther and Daniel.

But even the Catholic canon is not identical to the entire KJV Apocrypha.

Eastern Orthodox traditions generally include a broader Old Testament,

although their precise lists can vary.

Historic Anglicanism treated the books as readable but not authoritative for establishing doctrine.

Protestant and Baptist churches recognize the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

That gives us the familiar sixty-six-book Bible.

It would be easy to turn this into a competition of slogans.

Catholics added books.

Protestants removed books.

Publishers hid books.

Councils controlled the truth.

But slogans are not careful history.

The disputed writings circulated long before the Reformation.

Some Christians treated them as Scripture.

Some treated them as church reading.

Some followed the Hebrew collection more strictly.

The differences were real,

and they developed across centuries.

Our task is not to select the most dramatic slogan.

Our task is to ask which conclusion is best supported by Scripture and history.

The Protestant Old Testament follows the books preserved in the Hebrew Bible.

Those books are counted differently in Jewish tradition because several books that Protestants separate are combined.

Samuel is one book in the Hebrew reckoning.

Kings is one book.

Chronicles is one book.

The twelve Minor Prophets are counted together.

So a difference in the number does not always mean a difference in content.

The same basic collection can be counted as twenty-two,

twenty-four,

or thirty-nine,

depending upon how the books are arranged and divided.

Romans 3:1–2 asks:

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

God entrusted the Old Testament revelation to the Jewish people.

That does not mean every religious writing valued by every Jewish group was Scripture.

The Dead Sea Scrolls contained Biblical manuscripts,

community rules,

commentaries,

prayers,

and other religious writings.

Discovering a book in an ancient religious library proves that the book existed and was read.

It does not automatically prove that the community placed it inside the canon.

My office contains Bibles,

commentaries,

theology books,

sermons,

and church records.

If someone excavated my office two thousand years from now,

I hope they would not conclude that I considered every book on every shelf inspired by God.

Jesus spoke of the law of Moses,

the prophets,

and the psalms.

Luke 24:44 records His words:

“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”

Jesus recognized an established body of sacred writings.

He treated those Scriptures as authoritative,
unbreakable,
and fulfilled in Him.

John 10:35 says,

“the scripture cannot be broken.”

The New Testament writers quote the Old Testament continually as authoritative Scripture.

They introduce passages with expressions such as,

“It is written,”

“the Scripture saith,”

and “the Holy Ghost saith.”

The New Testament does contain language and ideas that resemble other ancient writings.

Jude even cites a prophecy associated with Enoch.

Paul quotes pagan poets.

Quoting a true sentence from a source does not canonize the entire source.

If I quote a line from a hymn in today’s sermon,

I have not added the hymnal to the Bible.

The question is not whether Biblical writers knew other literature.

The question is what writings they received and used as the authoritative Word of God.

The early Church also recognized the New Testament books through their connection with the apostles,

their agreement with the rule of faith,

their widespread use among the churches

and their spiritual authority.

The Church did not sit down centuries later and create Scripture by majority vote.

The Church gradually recognized the writings God had already given.

That process involved discussion because recognition is a human responsibility carried out by imperfect people.

But disagreement during the process does not mean God failed to preserve His Word.

It means Christians took seriously the responsibility of distinguishing apostolic Scripture from other religious writings.

Now someone may ask,

“If the Apocrypha was not Scripture, why did they put it in the Bible?”

Because inclusion and canon were not treated as identical.

The books were historically valuable.

They were used for church readings.

They were part of the inherited format of English Bibles.

And readers were expected to understand the separate heading and the Church’s stated doctrinal distinction.

Someone else may ask,

“If the books were useful, why remove them?”

There was not one single reason.

The omission happened gradually.

Puritan and Reformed Christians objected to placing noncanonical books inside the same volume as Scripture.

The Westminster Confession stated plainly that the Apocrypha was not divinely inspired and possessed no authority in the Church of God.

Publishers also faced practical questions.

Printing several hundred additional pages cost money.

Additional pages required more paper,

more ink,

larger bindings,

more shipping weight

and higher purchase prices.

Bible societies wanted to place affordable Bibles into as many hands as possible.

When the books were not being used to establish Protestant doctrine,

many publishers saw little reason to keep increasing the cost of every Bible by including them.

In 1826,

the British and Foreign Bible Society decided that its funds would not be used to print the Apocrypha.

That decision was influential because Bible societies were distributing enormous numbers of Bibles.

But 1826 was not the year a secret council suddenly cut inspired books from every King James Bible.

Some English Bibles had omitted the Apocrypha earlier.

Some continued to include it later.

You can still purchase a King James Bible with the Apocrypha today.

The books were not destroyed.

They were not locked away.

They were not erased from history.

They were increasingly omitted from ordinary Protestant editions.

Someone may then turn to Revelation 22:18–19:

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book,

If any man shall add unto these things,

God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy,

God shall take away his part out of the book of life,

and out of the holy city,

and from the things which are written in this book.”

Those words are solemn.

We must never tamper with what God has spoken.

But in its immediate context,

“this book” refers to the prophecy of Revelation.

The warning was not originally printed beneath a sixty-six-book table of contents.

The principle certainly reminds us not to add to or subtract from God’s Word.

But it does not answer the historical question of which ancient books God inspired.

We cannot settle the canon merely by quoting the warning at the end of one canonical book.

We must first determine what belongs to the canon,

and then refuse to add to it or subtract from it.

Proverbs 30:5–6 gives the same principle:

“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

We must be equally careful in both directions.

We must not remove a word God inspired.

And we must not call a writing God’s Word merely because we wish it had been inspired.

Faithfulness requires both restraint and courage.

At this point,
some may feel uneasy.

If Christians disagreed about some books,
how can we trust the Bible?

The answer is that the disputed edges should not cause us to ignore the overwhelming agreement at the center.

Across Catholic,
Orthodox,
Anglican
and Protestant traditions,
the books of the New Testament proclaim the same Jesus Christ.

The four Gospels are received.

Acts is received.

Paul's letters are received.

The general epistles are received.

Revelation is received in the Christian canon.

The shared Old Testament proclaims creation,

the fall,

the covenant,

the law,

the prophets,

the promise of redemption

and the coming Messiah.

No teaching essential to the gospel depends upon recovering a hidden Apocryphal book.

Paul told Timothy that the holy Scriptures were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of Scripture is not to satisfy every curiosity about ancient history.

Scripture reveals God,

exposes sin,

points us to Christ,

teaches truth,

corrects error,

trains us in righteousness

and equips us for every good work.

The Bible is not incomplete because it does not answer every question we can imagine.

Genesis is not incomplete because a later writing gives a name to someone Genesis leaves unnamed.

The gospel is not incomplete because a merchant promises that another book will fill in the gaps.

God told us what we need to know.

And where God chose not to speak,

another ancient writer cannot force God to finish the sentence.

So where does Reason Together Church arrive?

We recognize the sixty-six books of the Protestant Bible as inspired Scripture.

We give primary weight to the King James Version in our teaching while using other translations and historical sources for careful comparison.

We recognize that the Apocryphal books are ancient,
historically important

and sometimes profitable to read.

We do not use them to establish doctrine.

We do not pretend they were never printed in the King James Bible.

We do not describe their later omission as proof of a conspiracy.

And we do not confuse the KJV Apocrypha with the separate question of the Ethiopian canon.

Now we are ready to answer the personal question.

Was my great-grandmother right?

Was material removed from most later King James Bibles?

Yes.

Did her Bible probably contain material mine did not?

Based upon what I remember her showing me,
that is a strong possibility.

Was the Bible I carried an exact reproduction of everything published in 1611?

No.

Was she remembering a genuine historical change?

Yes.

Did that automatically mean my Bible was missing inspired Scripture?

No.

That final conclusion requires evidence she may or may not have discussed with me.
I was a child,
and I cannot reconstruct a conversation I did not fully understand.
I will not place words in her mouth merely because I wish I could ask her today.
But I can say this honestly.
My great-grandmother knew something I did not know.
She knew that older King James Bibles contained books that mine did not.
She tried to show me.
I did not understand.
And many years later,
I finally know enough to say that her basic historical claim was true.
There is something humbling about discovering that.
Sometimes we assume older generations were confused because they did not explain something
in the vocabulary we use today.
Sometimes they preserved memories that later generations forgot.
Sometimes the family Bible contains history that the newest Bible on the shelf does not display.
That does not make every inherited claim correct.
But it means inherited questions deserve respect.
First Thessalonians 5:21 tells us,
“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”
It does not say,
“Believe all things because your family said them.”
And it does not say,
“Reject all things because you have never heard them.”
Prove all things.
Examine the evidence.
Hold fast to what is good.
That is what reasoning together requires.
We respect the person.
We preserve the question.
We open the Bible.
We examine history.
We distinguish what is established from what is possible.

And we follow the truth wherever it leads.

This study also teaches us to preserve family Bibles.

An old Bible may contain birth records,

marriage records,

funeral notices,

handwritten prayers,

underlined promises

and evidence of what a family believed.

Its greatest value may not be measured by the price printed inside the cover.

It may carry the spiritual fingerprints of someone who opened it every morning.

I wish I knew where my great-grandmother's Bible was.

But perhaps the fact that I cannot find it makes the memory speak more clearly.

Books can disappear.

Possessions can pass from one home to another.

Names can be forgotten.

But a question planted in the mind of a child can wait for decades until he is finally prepared to investigate it.

And maybe that is part of what she left me.

Not merely a claim about missing books.

A reason to keep opening the Bible.

A reason to ask careful questions.

A reason to understand what we believe and why we believe it.

The most important part of our primary passage is not the number of books on a contents page.

Paul tells Timothy what Scripture is able to do.

It is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

You can own a Bible with sixty-six books and never receive Christ.

You can own a Bible with the Apocrypha and never receive Christ.

You can own several translations,

study editions,

facsimile editions

and shelves filled with commentaries,

and still miss the One to whom Scripture points.

The central message of the Bible is not that human beings need a better table of contents.

It is that sinners need a Savior.

The Bible teaches that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Sin separates us from the holy God who created us.

We cannot erase our guilt through good works,

church attendance,

religious knowledge

or ownership of the correct edition of the Bible.

But God loved us.

Jesus Christ,

the sinless Son of God,

died on the cross for our sins.

He was buried.

And He rose again.

Salvation is God's gift,

received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

If you understand that you are a sinner,

if you believe Jesus died and rose again,

and if you are ready to trust Him rather than yourself,

you can call upon Him today.

A prayer does not save you because the words are magical.

Repeating a formula without faith does not make someone a Christian.

Jesus saves.

Prayer is simply how you may express to God the faith and repentance of your heart.

You may pray something like this:

Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner.

I believe You died on the cross for my sins.

I believe You were buried and rose again.

I cannot save myself.

I turn from trusting myself,

and I place my faith in You.

Forgive me,

save me

and help me follow You.

Thank You for giving me eternal life.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

If you trusted Christ today,

please speak with me before you leave.

We would be honored to pray with you,

answer your questions

and help you begin following Jesus.

If you are joining us remotely,

visit www.ReasonTogether.Church and contact us.

Tell us that you trusted Christ or that you want to speak with someone about salvation.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

thank You for preserving Your Word.

Thank You for the people who placed Bibles in their homes,

opened them daily

and tried to teach the generations who followed them.

Thank You for my great-grandmother

and for the question she placed in my memory so many years ago.

Give us humility when history is more complicated than we expected.

Give us courage to examine unfamiliar claims.

Give us restraint so that we never call speculation Scripture.

And give us faith to trust everything You have spoken.

For anyone who trusted Christ today,

give assurance,

guidance

and a faithful church family.

Help all of us continue in the things we have learned,

knowing that Your Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ

Jesus.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Thank you for reasoning together with us today.

To our first-time guests,

Aloha Nui Loa.

REASON TOGETHER STUDIES

PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

WAS MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER RIGHT?

The Missing Books of the KJV

2 Timothy 3:14–17 KJV

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Pastor & Teacher

Commentary in Brief

CENTRAL CONCLUSION The original 1611 King James Bible contained a separately identified Apocrypha section between the Old and New Testaments. Most modern Protestant KJV editions omit that section. This is a genuine and documented publishing change, but it does not by itself prove that inspired Scripture was removed from the canon.

The books in question were not the Book of Enoch, Jubilees or the broader Ethiopian canon. The KJV Apocrypha contained works such as First and Second Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, First and Second Maccabees and additions associated with Esther and Daniel.

The Church of England tradition that produced the KJV already distinguished these writings from the canonical books. Article VI of the Thirty-nine Articles said they could be read for example of life and instruction of manners but were not to be used to establish doctrine. Their presence inside the volume therefore did not necessarily mean that every reader or translator regarded them as inspired Scripture.

Later omission happened gradually. Protestant conviction, Puritan and Reformed objections, printing expense, portability and the policies of Bible societies all contributed. The British and Foreign Bible Society's 1826 decision accelerated the practice, but 1826 was not the moment every KJV publisher suddenly removed the books.

Dr. Hawksley's great-grandmother was right about the basic historical fact. An older Bible could contain material absent from a modern KJV. Because her Bible is no longer available, its exact edition and contents cannot be established. The most honest verdict honors what she knew while refusing to place words in her mouth concerning inspiration or canon.

1. A Question That Waited for Decades

A Bible in the Living Room

Some theological questions begin in a classroom. This one began in a living room. Dr. Hawksley remembers his great-grandmother reading her Bible every day. It was not simply displayed as family furniture. She opened it, read it and treated it as part of the daily life of the home.

She told him that the Bible he carried was not the complete King James Bible. She said it had been changed. More importantly, he remembers her opening her own Bible and showing him material that his Bible did not contain. He was young, did not fully understand the demonstration and did not know enough to evaluate it.

What Memory Can and Cannot Prove

The actual Bible is now missing. Its publisher, date, place of printing and table of contents are unknown. Memory cannot recover those facts with certainty. It would be irresponsible to invent an edition merely because one explanation seems likely.

Memory can still preserve a legitimate question. Older KJV editions and modern KJV editions do differ in supplementary contents. Once that publishing history is established, the childhood recollection becomes historically plausible rather than mysterious.

REASON TOGETHER PRINCIPLE Honor the person, preserve the question, examine the evidence and distinguish what is certain from what remains possible.

2. What Was Printed in 1611?

The Physical Evidence

The first King James Bible was printed in 1611 by Robert Barker, the King's Printer. Surviving copies and facsimile editions show a clear arrangement: the Old Testament, a separately titled Apocrypha section and the New Testament. Anyone comparing that edition with an ordinary modern Protestant KJV will find substantial pages present in the older volume that are normally absent from the newer one.

The simplest historical answer is therefore yes. Material printed in the original KJV was later omitted from most editions. That answer should not be weakened because someone fears where the discussion may lead. Honest theology begins with honest history.

A Separate Section Matters

The Apocryphal writings were gathered together between the Testaments. They were not mixed without distinction among Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah and the other canonical Old Testament books. Their separate placement signaled that the publishers and church tradition recognized a category distinction.

HISTORICAL FACT The original KJV contained more printed material than most modern Protestant KJV editions, but the additional material was presented as a distinct Apocrypha section.

3. What Does "Apocrypha" Mean?

The word Apocrypha is used in several ways. In popular conversation it may mean almost any old religious book outside the Bible. Some speakers use it for secret or fraudulent writings. In discussions among Christian traditions, it may refer to books that one community receives as Scripture and another does not.

In the history of the King James Bible, the term identifies a specific collection printed between the Testaments. The label should not be stretched to include every ancient Jewish or Christian text. A claim that "the Apocrypha was removed" remains too vague until the speaker identifies which books and which edition.

Apocrypha and Deuterocanonical

Roman Catholic Christians commonly call several of these writings deuterocanonical. The term does not mean unimportant or second-rate Scripture. It refers to books whose canonical recognition had a more disputed history but which Catholic teaching receives as canonical. Protestant usage places those books, along with some additional works, under the broader label Apocrypha.

VOCABULARY GUARDRAIL Always identify the collection under discussion. Similar labels do not guarantee identical lists.

4. Which Books Were in the KJV Apocrypha?

The 1611 KJV Apocrypha contained First Esdras, Second Esdras, Tobit, Judith, the Rest of Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus or Sirach, Baruch with the Letter of Jeremiah, the Song of the Three Holy Children, the History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasses, First Maccabees and Second Maccabees.

Why Some Lists Say Fourteen and Others Fifteen

The total is commonly described as fourteen books. Some lists count the Letter of Jeremiah separately from Baruch and report fifteen. Other differences arise because additions associated with Esther and Daniel may be counted as independent items or grouped with the familiar canonical books.

Complete Books and Additional Passages

Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach and Maccabees appear as complete works. The Rest of Esther expands the Esther narrative. The Song of the Three Holy Children, Susanna and Bel and the Dragon are associated with Daniel. These differences in form help explain why book totals can vary even when editions contain substantially the same material.

READING VALUE First and Second Maccabees are especially important for understanding Jewish history between the Old and New Testaments, but historical usefulness does not by itself establish inspiration.

5. What Was Not in the KJV Apocrypha?

Not the Book of Enoch

The Book of Enoch was not part of the 1611 KJV Apocrypha. Jude's citation of a prophecy associated with Enoch has made the book familiar to many readers, but the original King James translators did not place Enoch in their Apocrypha section.

Not Jubilees

The Book of Jubilees was not in that section either. Claims that later publishers removed Jubilees from the original KJV confuse different ancient collections and different Christian canonical traditions.

Not the Ethiopian Bible

The Ethiopian Orthodox canon is broader and deserves its own careful study. It cannot be reduced to "the original KJV before books were removed." The two collections have different histories, languages, church settings and canonical arguments. They may overlap in certain writings, but they are not interchangeable.

SCOPE CLARIFICATION RTS-015 concerns the historical KJV Apocrypha. Enoch, Jubilees and the Ethiopian canon belong to a separate Reason Together Study.

6. Useful Does Not Automatically Mean Inspired

Age Is Not Enough

A book may be ancient without being Scripture. Many old writings illuminate the beliefs, conflicts and vocabulary of their time. Age proves that a work belongs to history. It does not prove that God breathed its words.

Spiritual Language Is Not Enough

A writing may contain prayers, moral instruction or true statements about God without becoming canonical. Sermons, hymns and commentaries can faithfully teach Biblical truth, yet Christians do not add them to Scripture.

Placement Is Not Enough

A printer may bind maps, concordances, creeds, lectionaries, study notes and family-record pages together with the Biblical text. Physical inclusion tells us something about the purpose of the edition. It does not make every page equally inspired.

CONTROLLING DISTINCTION Useful does not mean inspired, and uninspired does not mean useless.

7. What Makes Scripture Scripture?

God Is the Source

Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The Greek word translated “given by inspiration of God” communicates that Scripture is God-breathed. Its authority begins with God, not with the approval of a king, printer, scholar or council.

The Church Recognizes; God Inspires

The people of God receive, preserve, copy, translate and recognize Scripture. That recognition occurred through history and sometimes involved disagreement at disputed edges. Human recognition does not create inspiration any more than discovering a star creates the star.

This distinction protects confidence without pretending that history was simple. Councils and communities gave formal expression to what they recognized. Their decisions matter as historical witnesses, but divine authority does not begin with a majority vote.

AUTHORITY PRINCIPLE Scripture does not become God’s Word because a church approves it. The Church receives it because God has spoken.

8. Why Did the KJV Translators Include These Books?

An Inherited English Bible Tradition

The King James translators did not invent the practice of printing the Apocrypha. Earlier English Bibles, including the Coverdale Bible, Great Bible, Geneva Bible and Bishops’ Bible, included Apocryphal material in a distinguished section. The KJV continued a recognizable publishing tradition.

Readings in the Church of England

The Book of Common Prayer appointed readings from some of these books. If those lessons were going to be read in worship, an English translation was needed. Scholars assigned to the KJV project therefore translated the Apocrypha seriously rather than attaching an unrelated modern supplement.

Translating a book proves that the translators considered it worth translating. Printing it proves that readers were expected to have access to it. Neither action, standing alone, proves that the book was received as inspired canon.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT The KJV continued a church and publishing practice already established before 1611.

9. What Did the Church of England Believe?

Article VI

The Thirty-nine Articles existed before the King James Bible was published and expressed the doctrinal position of the Church of England. Article VI is titled “Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.” It lists the canonical books and then treats “the other Books” separately.

Following Jerome, Article VI says the Church reads those other books for example of life and instruction of manners but does not apply them to establish doctrine. That sentence is decisive for understanding how books could appear in the KJV without automatically receiving the same authority as the canonical Scriptures.

A Category Modern Readers Often Miss

Modern readers often place every religious book into one of two categories: inspired Scripture or material that should be rejected and ignored. Historic Anglican practice maintained a third category. A writing could be valuable for reading, history and moral instruction while lacking authority to establish Christian doctrine.

ARTICLE VI PRINCIPLE The books could be read and could be useful, but Christian doctrine was not to be established from them.

10. Why Do Christian Bibles Differ?

The Protestant Old Testament

Protestant and Baptist churches recognize thirty-nine Old Testament books and twenty-seven New Testament books. The Old Testament content corresponds to the Hebrew Scriptural collection, though Jewish tradition counts and arranges the books differently. Samuel, Kings and Chronicles are combined, Ezra and Nehemiah are joined and the Twelve Minor Prophets are counted together.

The Catholic Old Testament

The Catholic canon includes Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, First and Second Maccabees and additions associated with Esther and Daniel. This does not equal the complete KJV Apocrypha because First and Second Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses are not received in precisely the same way.

Orthodox Traditions

Eastern Orthodox traditions generally receive a broader Old Testament, though lists and arrangements are not identical in every Orthodox community. The Ethiopian Orthodox canon is broader still and must be examined on its own terms.

These differences should not be hidden or weaponized. Fair representation allows the real disagreement to be understood. Protestants did not invent every canonical distinction during the Reformation, and Catholic Christians did not discover the disputed writings only at the Council of Trent. The roots of the discussion reach much earlier.

PASTORAL POSTURE Historical complexity should produce humility and careful reasoning, not insults or fear.

11. Why Were the Books Later Omitted?

Theological Conviction

Puritan and Reformed Christians increasingly objected to printing noncanonical books inside the same volume as Scripture. The Westminster Confession stated that the Apocrypha was not divinely inspired, was not part of the canon and possessed no authority in the Church beyond other human writings. This position was sharper than the Anglican allowance for church reading.

Cost and Portability

The Apocrypha added many pages. More pages required more paper, ink, binding space and shipping weight. Bible societies wanted to distribute affordable Bibles in enormous numbers. Removing material they did not regard as canonical lowered cost and made books smaller and easier to carry.

The 1826 Bible Society Decision

In 1826 the British and Foreign Bible Society adopted a policy that its funds would not support printing the Apocrypha. Because the Society influenced mass Bible distribution, the decision helped make omission normal in Protestant editions.

The date must not be turned into a conspiracy slogan. Some Bibles omitted the section earlier. Some included it later. KJV editions with the Apocrypha can still be purchased. The books were not destroyed, erased from history or locked away.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY The omission was gradual and reflected both theological conviction and practical publishing realities.

12. Does Revelation Forbid Removing These Books?

The Immediate Meaning

Revelation 22:18–19 warns against adding to or taking away from “the words of the book of this prophecy.” In its immediate context, “this book” refers to Revelation. John wrote those words before Revelation was bound as the final pages of a printed sixty-six-book Bible.

The Enduring Principle

The warning remains solemn. No person may tamper with what God has spoken. Proverbs 30 gives the same principle by warning against adding to God’s words. Faithfulness requires reverence in both directions.

What the Warning Does Not Do

Revelation 22 does not provide a complete table of contents. Before someone can accuse a publisher of subtracting from Scripture, the person must first establish that the disputed book belongs to the inspired canon. Quoting the warning cannot replace that investigation.

CANONICAL RESTRAINT We must not remove a word God inspired, and we must not call a writing God’s Word merely because we wish it had been inspired.

13. Can We Still Trust the Bible?

Disputed Edges and an Agreed Center

Canonical disagreements are real, especially around portions of the Old Testament. They should not be concealed. They should also not be exaggerated until readers imagine that Christians possess entirely different Bibles with unrelated messages.

Across Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant traditions, the New Testament proclaims the same Jesus Christ. The four Gospels, Acts, Paul’s letters, the general epistles and Revelation bear witness to His identity, death and resurrection. The shared Old Testament proclaims creation, fall, covenant, law, prophets, redemption and the coming Messiah.

No Hidden Book Completes the Gospel

No doctrine essential to salvation depends upon recovering a book secretly concealed by publishers. Second Timothy says the holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Scripture gives what God intended His people to have for doctrine, correction, righteous instruction and faithful service.

CONFIDENCE PRINCIPLE Disagreement at the edges does not erase the overwhelming agreement at the center or the saving message that points to Jesus Christ.

14. Was My Great-Grandmother Right?

The Historical Verdict

Yes. She knew that older King James Bibles could contain books absent from the modern KJV her great-grandson carried. That basic historical claim is true. She was not imagining that printed editions had changed.

The Necessary Qualification

Her exact Bible cannot be identified from memory alone. It probably contained the KJV Apocrypha or some other material his edition lacked, but the physical book is unavailable. We also do not know precisely what she concluded about the inspiration of those books. A child may remember the demonstration without preserving the entire explanation.

What the Memory Now Teaches

Older generations sometimes preserve knowledge that later generations forget. They may not use the vocabulary scholars prefer, but their questions can still be accurate. This does not make every inherited claim true. It means inherited questions deserve respect and examination.

The missing family Bible also teaches the value of preservation. Title pages, publication dates, family records, marginal notes and unusual sections may become irreplaceable evidence. Before an old Bible is discarded, donated or rebound, its identifying pages and family entries should be photographed.

PERSONAL CONCLUSION My great-grandmother knew something I did not know. Many years later, I can finally say that her basic historical claim was true.

15. Why the Question Ultimately Leads to Christ

The Purpose of Scripture

The most important truth in Second Timothy 3 is not the number of books printed on a contents page. Paul tells Timothy what Scripture can do. It can make a person wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. It teaches truth, exposes sin, corrects error, trains in righteousness and equips the servant of God.

Edition Knowledge Cannot Save

A person may own a sixty-six-book KJV and never trust Christ. Another may own a KJV with the Apocrypha, several study editions and shelves of commentaries and still miss the Savior to whom Scripture points. The central human problem is not an incomplete bookshelf. It is sin and separation from God.

Jesus Is the Savior

All have sinned and come short of God's glory. The wages of sin is death, but God offers eternal life through Jesus Christ. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, died for our sins, was buried and rose again. Salvation is God's gift, received by grace through faith in Christ rather than by religious knowledge or good works.

FINAL ANSWER The original KJV contained an Apocrypha section that most modern Protestant editions omit. That publishing fact is real, but the canonical Scriptures remain sufficient to lead us to the Savior. The question of missing books should send us back to the Bible we already possess and to the Christ it proclaims.

Questions for Personal Reflection

Have I ever assumed that every page bound inside a Bible edition was equally inspired?

Can I explain the difference between a printed volume and the inspired canon?

Have I confused the KJV Apocrypha with Enoch, Jubilees or the Ethiopian canon?

Do I dismiss old family memories too quickly, or accept them without examination?

Am I willing to state a historical fact even when it requires theological qualification?

Have I allowed online claims about hidden Scriptures to produce fear rather than careful study?

Do I read the canonical Scriptures I already possess?

Has my knowledge of the Bible led me to personal faith in Jesus Christ?

A Personal Invitation to Salvation

The Scriptures were given to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. If you recognize that you are a sinner and cannot save yourself, you may come to Jesus Christ today. Believe that He died for your sins, was buried and rose again. Turn from trusting yourself and place your faith in Him alone as Lord and Savior.

Owning a Bible, knowing church history, walking forward, raising a hand or repeating a pastor's words cannot save you. Jesus saves. You may speak to Him in your own words, or you may use the following prayer to express sincere repentance and faith:

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins, were buried and rose again. I turn from trusting myself and place my faith in You alone. Forgive me, save me and help me follow You. Thank You for giving me eternal life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Those words are not a formula. If you sincerely turned to Jesus Christ and placed your faith in Him, Jesus saved you. Speak with a faithful pastor or mature Christian, begin reading the Bible and follow Christ through baptism, fellowship and discipleship. If you are reading remotely, visit www.ReasonTogether.Church and contact us. We would be honored to help you.

A Closing Prayer

Our Heavenly Father,

Thank You for giving and preserving Your Word. Thank You for the faithful people who placed Bibles in their homes, opened them every day and tried to teach the generations who followed them.

Give us humility when history is more complicated than we expected. Give us courage to examine unfamiliar claims. Give us restraint so that we never call speculation Scripture, and give us faith to trust everything You have spoken.

Thank You for the memory of a great-grandmother who knew something her great-grandson did not yet understand. Use the questions planted in childhood to draw people toward truth rather than fear.

Most of all, lead every reader to Jesus Christ, the Savior to whom the Scriptures point. Make us wise unto salvation through faith in Him and equip us for every good work.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Selected Sources

Primary Scripture

2 Timothy 3:14–17 KJV, with supporting use of Romans 3:1–2; Luke 24:44; John 10:35; Jude 14–15; Proverbs 30:5–6; Revelation 22:18–19 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

Gospel Scripture

John 3:16–18; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:8; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:9–13; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 and Ephesians 2:8–10.

Historical Records

The 1611 King James Bible and facsimile editions containing the separately titled Apocrypha section; the Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles, Article VI; the Book of Common Prayer calendar and lessons; the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1, section 3; records of the British and Foreign Bible Society Apocrypha controversy and its 1826 policy.

Historical and Canon References

David Norton, A Textual History of the King James Bible; Gordon Campbell, Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611–2011; David Daniell, The Bible in English; Bruce M. Metzger, An Introduction to the Apocrypha; Lee Martin McDonald, The Biblical Canon; Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade, The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity.

Pastoral Note

This commentary accompanies the approved Reason Together Study. It does not replace the sermon transcript or internal Study Vault. Its purpose is to provide a readable public explanation of the principal Biblical and historical reasoning, preserve pastoral cautions and help readers apply the study faithfully.

REASON TOGETHER *Bring your questions. Open your Bible. Let's Reason Together the Word of God.*