

What should we tell Catholics about the Apocryphal books? (open session)

Roman Catholics often complain about the correctness of protestantism since it rejects the Apocryphal books like the books of Maccabees.

1. What is the accuracy of the books of the Maccabees?

Malachi 4:5-6

Amos 8:11-12

Historically they are accurate but spiritually they are not considered to be accurate. They cover the time period between Malachi and Matthew. During this time period, the Maccabean wars took place during which Judas Maccabee and his brethren as they fought against the Greco-Roman Empire.

2 Maccabees is used by the Roman Catholic church to support their doctrine of Purgatory. That doctrine is not raised by any of the accepted doctrines. Furthermore, the Jewish leaders did not accept any of the Apocryphal books as scripture and if they would be considered as scripture, they would only be considered to be Jewish Scripture. If the Jews rejected them as Jewish Scripture, the Protestant fathers followed their lead and likewise reject them.

Although it is true that the Protestants remove the Apocryphal books from the Bible, they did so because the Roman Catholic church added them in about 50 or so years before the Reformation took place. Since they did not belong there, they were rightly removed.

2. What is it about the Roman Catholic Church that enables them to keep the Apocryphal?

Matthew 23:9-10

Matthew 15:2-6

John 17:17

Matthew 6:24

Jesus dealt with the issue of authority. In Matthew 23, Jesus indicates that the Magisterium is not to hold authority over Christ and Christ's words. In Matthew 15, Jesus indicates that tradition is not to hold authority over the words of God. Jesus also specifically identifies scripture as being "truth". Furthermore, Jesus addresses the concept associated with trying to have multiple authorities. It is impossible to have more than one authority since at some point in time the authorities will disagree and when they disagree, it is now essential for one authority to be rejected while the other is accepted or endorsed.

1 Timothy 4:1-3

This shows a conflict between scripture, tradition and the Magisterium. Roman Catholic tradition teaches that Priests cannot marry, but scripture teaches that to forbid to marry is to speak a lie in hypocrisy. Furthermore, during the period of Lent (and Fridays in general), the Roman Catholic church teaches that the people must keep away from meat, but God's word says that it is a lie in hypocrisy to teach such doctrine.

3. Do Protestants completely reject tradition and the magisterium?

James 1:1

Which James wrote the book of James. The Bible does not say which James. Since the Bible speaks of at least 4 people named James, just stating “James” is insufficient. It is by tradition that we believe that James the brother of Jesus wrote the book. Tradition can be viewed as authoritative as long as it does not contradict scripture. Furthermore, it is acceptable to receive the word of the Protestant Magisterium as long as it does not violate held tradition nor scripture. Magisterium is allowed to challenge held tradition as long as his view does not violate scripture but it has sufficient implicit support by scripture.

4. How does the association of the law and tradition vs scriptural authority fit together?

Exodus 20:3-7

Exodus 20:12-17

Exodus 20:8-11

Numbers 15:32-36

The focus of the different segments of the law is either on the Person of God or other people or on characteristics that are used to identify a person as being a Jew. To demonstrate this third group, it is helpful to look at the carrying out of the Sabbath day law. In Numbers 15, a man is stoned for death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath day. To us, that seems like a very harsh judgment but understand that in effect, this man was refusing to identify himself with the Lord GOD of Israel and God communicated with the nation that if a person does not want to be identified as belonging to God, then God is justified to honor that man's desire and reject him from amongst His people.