

INSPIRATION

Introduction

How did we get our precious Bible? It did not drop from heaven, but it is heaven sent. It was not decided among men what the Bible is, but it was written by men. It is a gift from God no less miraculous than the miracle of creation or any of the miraculous works of Jesus. We'll be considering this as follows:

1. The Miracle of the Gift of Holy Scripture and of Its Reception
2. What is not Scripture
3. The Implications of Inspiration

Holy Scripture is a Miraculous Gift as well as Its Reception

A casual perusal of the Word gives us evidence that it is definitely God's Word to us and not an invention of man. First and foremost is 2 Tim. 3:16 "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." The word for inspired means 'God-breathed' indicating it is personally from God, as personal as His breath. And here we have the word 'all' which looks backward to the books of the Old Testament which were in ready use in Jesus' day, as well as looking forward to all the books of the New Testament being given.

2 Peter 1:20-21 reminds us that it is not man's word, but God's through men. "First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Clearly, THE author of the Word is God Himself, the Holy Spirit. He used men to write as we would use different writing utensils, though He used them with their various talents, language skills and backgrounds.

Our Lord as He walked on earth had constant reference to the Old Testament as God's Word and not to be tampered with. "For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Mt. 5:18-19 In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the Lord referred to the Old Testament in composite, "... They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'..." Lk. 16:30 He points out the Scriptures again in composite in Jn. 5:39, 8:31-32. And He delineates them as the Word of God. Mk. 7:13 This Word of God would be added to with the New Testament after He ascended, as Paul writes "All Scripture is inspired by God."

Paul refers to the Word of God in his writings. 1 Thess. 2:13 In 1 Cor. 2:13 he credits the Holy Spirit as the one who gives. That the Scripture is effective as we read in Heb. 4:13 is due to its being the Sword of the Spirit. Eph. 6:17

Some people think that councils decided what the Word of God was. The Jewish council of Jamnia which met in about 90 AD did not decide what the Old Testament was. They merely recognized what had already happened. God had given His Word written down from Moses to Malachi and the church had received it. When the Christians met at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397 they did not choose what the New Testament was. At that time in church father Athanasius' list there were 27 books. But these had been miraculously accepted by the church under the power of the Spirit, just as the Spirit had miraculously had men write those books.

Canon of Scripture

Athanasius of Alexandria

Each year, Athanasius, who was Bishop of Alexandria from 328-373, wrote an Easter letter to be read in the churches in Egypt. His 39th Festal Letter, written in 367, provides the oldest list of the New Testament canon that we have.

As the heretics are quoting apocryphal writings, an evil which was rife even as early as when St. Luke wrote his gospel, therefore I have thought good to set forth clearly what books have been received by us through tradition as belonging to the Canon, and which we believe to be divine. For there are in all twenty-two books of the Old Testament. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. After this comes Joshua, and Judges, and Ruth. The four books of the Kings, counted as two. Then Chronicles, counted the two as one. Then First and Second Esdras [i.e. Ezra and Nehemiah]. After these Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Cantica. To these follow Job, and the Twelve Prophets, counted as one book. Then Isaiah, Jeremiah together with the Epistle of Baruch, the Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Of the New Testament these are the books [then follows the complete list ending with "the Apocalypse of John"]. These are the fountains of salvation, that whoso thirsteth, may be satisfied by the eloquence which is in them. In them alone (*en toutois monois*) is set forth the

doctrine of piety. Let no one add to them, nor take aught therefrom.

I also add for further accuracy that there are certain other books, not edited in the Canon, but established by the Fathers, to be read by those who have just come to us and wish to be instructed in the doctrine of piety. The Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, Tobit, the Doctrine (*Didakh*) of the Apostles and the Pastor. And let none of the Apocrypha of the heretics be read among you.

*(An excerpt from from the XXXIX Festal Epistle of Athanasius, translated in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Father*)*

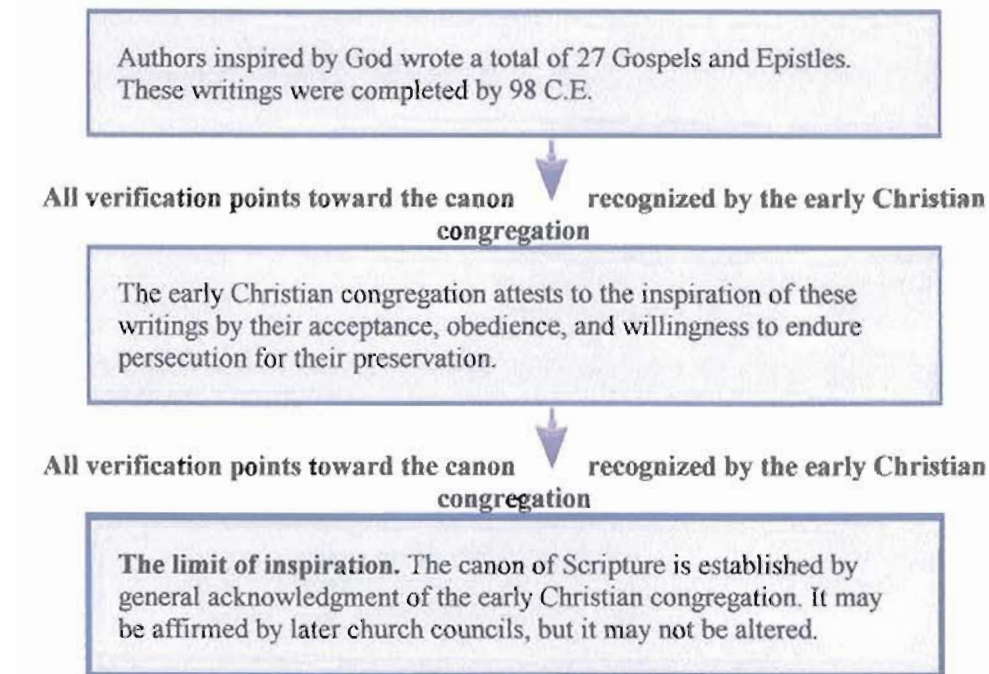
Athanasius clearly recognized what God had done in giving the church the New Testament and that other books not of the Bible could be read and learned from but were not God's Word.

The word used above of 'canon' comes from Scripture meaning 'rule' or 'norm.' 2 Cor. 10:13, 15-16, Gal. 6:16, Phil. 3:16. What was the Word of God according to the norm? Above all it had to be the truth of God and agree with all the rest of Scripture. And as the Spirit had men write, so He had men accept what was written as God's Word.

Just think how no man or group of men could have produced the Bible we have in its unity. There are 66 books written over a period of 1500 years by 40 authors in three languages in 10 different countries. God did it through men who He inspired. And then see how the Bible does not contradict itself as men's writings do. The Bible explains itself as no other book can, self-interpreting. It is a self-contained book and self-authenticating. It fits together perfectly of course because it is the product of the eternal Spirit Himself. Think how the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament record. And there is our own personal testimony as to its inspiration, for our hearts burn within us as we read and study the Bible. It is just as when Jesus walked and talked with Luke and Clopas on the way to Emmaus. Lk. 24:32 As the Spirit worked on those two men's hearts so He works on our hearts to recognize the Word of God, as He worked down through the years on the hearts of God's people to accept the inspired books as they were written and delivered.

The Old Testament canon was long established and recognized by the time Jesus was born of Mary and grew to adulthood. The New Testament was given over the period of 45 to about 100 AD. The twenty books of what is called the homologoumena were accepted readily. The seven books of what is called the antilegomena had some questions raised about them, but also were accepted by the power of the Spirit of God Himself working in the hearts of men.

Here is a diagram of the miracle of reception.



The homologoumena (four Gospels, Acts, 13 Epistles of Paul, 1st John, 1st Peter) and the antilegomena (Hebrews, 2nd Peter, 2nd & 3rd John, James, Jude and Revelation) make up the New Testament.

Just as before Moses wrote down the first five books, the Word of God was told orally, so in the New Testament time before the books were written the Spirit had the oral record given by men. This is not strange as many cultures have their oral tellers at the campfires relating what the tribe or clan did before. These tellers learned well the stories and lessons and related them from generation to generation.

The Word stands because it is the Word of God. "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God will stand for ever." Is. 40:8, 1 Pet. 1:24-25 While we do not have the original 'autographs' of the writers, that is the original writing, we do have manuscripts that are copies of the original. And again to whom may we offer thanks for this but the Holy Spirit who miraculously had men write, then miraculously had the church accept and finally also miraculously preserved the Word.

Here is a chart that shows how the New Testament was accepted. You notice that some raise questions over certain books and then they are accepted. The books in italics had questions raised. Marcion was an opponent of Christians. Yet even from him we have testimony of what the church had accepted to that time.

Athanasius (b. 296)	Origen (b. 185)	Irenaeus (b. 130)	Marcion* (b. 85)
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	
Mark	Mark	Mark	
Luke	Luke	Luke	Luke
John	John	John	
Acts	Acts	Acts	
Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans
1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians
Galatians	Galatians	Galatians	Galatians
Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians
Philippians	Philippians	Philippians	Philippians
Colossians	Colossians	Colossians	Colossians
1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy	1 Timothy	1 Timothy	
2 Timothy	2 Timothy	2 Timothy	
Titus	Titus	Titus	
Philemon	Philemon	Philemon	Philemon
Hebrews	Hebrews	<i>Hebrews</i>	
James	<i>James</i>	<i>James</i>	
1 Peter	1 Peter	1 Peter	
2 Peter	<i>2 Peter</i>	<i>2 Peter</i>	
1 John	1 John	1 John	
2 John	<i>2 John</i>	<i>2 John</i>	
3 John	<i>3 John</i>	<i>3 John</i>	
Jude	<i>Jude</i>	<i>Jude</i>	
Revelation**	Revelation	Revelation	

What is not Scripture

We have to remember that the devil despises God's Word and will try to have men doubt it and reject it. He even tries to replace it or add to it. Malachi was the last book given by inspiration in Old Testament times. Then there were four hundred years of silence until the coming of the angel Gabriel. The devil was not idle in those years of silence but very active to have men accept books as if they were the Word of God. By these books, the apocrypha, the devil could dilute the true teachings and contradict them. The confusion he sought and the means by which he sought it was typical of his nature. In the intertestament period the apocrypha was presented by the devil as also the Word of God, but it was not. Following are the books of the apocrypha.

HISTORICAL BOOKS

[1 Esdras](#)

[2 Esdras \(4 Ezra\)](#)

[Tobit](#)

[Judith](#)

[Judith Gets A Head of Holophernes](#)

[Esther, The Rest of](#)

[1 Maccabees](#)

[2 Maccabees](#)

POETICAL BOOKS

[Wisdom of Solomon, The](#)

[Sirach, Wisdom of or Ecclesiasticus](#)

[The Song Of The Three \(Prayer of Azariah\)](#)

[Prayer of Manasseh \(Addition to Daniel\)](#)

PROPHECY

Baruch

Daniel, Bell and the Dragon (addition to Daniel)

Daniel and Susanna (addition to Daniel)

Letter of Jeremiah (Baruch Chapter 6)

EXTRA

3 Maccabees

4 Maccabees Append in Greek Bible

Psalm 151

Testament of Job

Following we have what one man has written are 21 reasons why the apocrypha is not inspired.

21 reasons why the Apocrypha is not inspired:

1. The Roman Catholic Church did not officially canonize the Apocrypha until the Council of Trent (1546 AD). This was in part because the Apocrypha contained material which supported certain Catholic doctrines, such as purgatory, praying for the dead, and the treasury of merit.
2. Not one of them is in the Hebrew language, which was alone used by the inspired historians and poets of the Old Testament.
3. Not one of the writers lays any claim to inspiration.
4. These books were never acknowledged as sacred Scriptures by the Jewish Church, and therefore were never sanctioned by our Lord.
5. They were not allowed a place among the sacred books, during the first four centuries of the Christian Church.
6. They contain fabulous statements, and statements which contradict not only the canonical Scriptures, but themselves; as when, in the two Books of Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes is made to die three different deaths in as many different places.

7. The Apocrypha inculcates doctrines at variance with the Bible, such as prayers for the dead and sinless perfection.

And the day following Judas came with his company, to take away the bodies of them that were slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen, in the sepulchers of their fathers. And they found under

the coats of the slain some of the donaries of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbiddeth to the Jews: so that all plainly saw, that for this cause they were slain. Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord, who had discovered the things that were hidden. And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought him, that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain. And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. **It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.** (2 Maccabees 12:39-46)

8. The apocrypha contains offensive materials unbecoming of God's authorship.

Ecclesiasticus 25:19 Any iniquity is insignificant compared to a wife's iniquity.

Ecclesiasticus 25:24 From a woman sin had its beginning. Because of her we all die.

Ecclesiasticus 22:3 It is a disgrace to be the father of an undisciplined, and the birth of a daughter is a loss.

9. It teaches immoral practices, such as lying, suicide, assassination and magical incantation.
10. The apocryphal books themselves make reference to what we call the Silent 400 years, where there was no prophets of God to write inspired materials.

And they laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, **till there should come a prophet**, and give answer concerning them. (1 Maccabees 4:46)

And there was a great tribulation in Israel, such as was not since the day, that **there was no prophet seen in Israel**. (1 Maccabees 9:27)

And that the Jews, and their priests, had consented that he should be their prince, and high priest for ever, **till there should arise a faithful prophet**. (1 Maccabees 14:41)

11. Josephus rejected the apocryphal books as inspired and this reflected Jewish thought at the time of Jesus

"From Artexerxes to our own time the complete history has been written but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records **because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets**." ... "We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine..."(Flavius Josephus, Against Apion 1:8)

12. The Manual of Discipline in the Dead Sea Scrolls rejected the apocrypha as inspired.
13. The Council of Jamnia held the same view rejected the apocrypha as inspired.

They debated the canonicity of a few books (e.g., Ecclesiastes), but they changed nothing and never proclaimed themselves to be authoritative determiners of the Old Testament canon. "The books which they decided to acknowledge as canonical were already generally accepted, although questions had been raised about them. Those which they refused to admit had never been included. They did not expel from the canon any book which had previously been admitted. The Council of Jamnia was the confirming of public opinion, not the forming of it." (F. F. Bruce, *The Books and Parchments* [Old Tappan, NJ.: Fleming H. Revell, 1963], p. 98)

14. Although it was occasionally quoted in early church writings, it was nowhere accepted in a canon. Melito (AD 170) and Origen rejected the Apocrypha, (Eccl. Hist. VI. 25, Eusebius) as does the Muratorian Canon.
 15. Jerome vigorously resisted including the Apocrypha in his Latin Vulgate Version (400 AD), but was overruled. As a result, the standard Roman Catholic Bible throughout the medieval period contained it. Thus, it gradually came to be revered by the average clergyman. Still, many medieval Catholic scholars realized that it was not inspired.
 16. The terms "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical" are used by Catholics to signify respectively those books of Scripture that were received by the entire Church from the beginning as inspired, and those whose inspiration came to be recognized later, after the matter had been disputed by certain Fathers and local churches.
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17. Pope Damasus (366-384) authorized Jerome to translate the Latin Vulgate. The Council of Carthage declared this translation as "the infallible and authentic Bible." Jerome was the first to describe the extra 7 Old Testament books as the "Apocrypha" (doubtful authenticity). Needless to say, Jerome's Latin Vulgate did not include the Apocrypha.
 18. Cyril (born about A.D. 315) – "Read the divine Scriptures – namely, the 22 books of the Old Testament which the 72 interpreters translated" (the Septuagint)
 19. The apocrypha wasn't included at first in the Septuagint, but was appended by the Alexandrian Jews, and was not listed in any of the catalogues of the inspired books till the 4th century
 20. Hilary (bishop of Poitiers, 350 A.D.) rejected the apocrypha (Prologue to the Psalms, Sec. 15)

Epiphanius (the great opposer of heresy, 360 A.D.) rejected them all. Referring to Wisdom of Solomon & book of Jesus Sirach, he said "These indeed are useful books & profitable, but they are not placed in the number of the canonical."

The devil failing to get these books accepted then launched his attempt in New Testament times. The books he put forth are appropriately called the pseudepigrapha, or false writings. These were openly rejected as the devil presented them as the Word.

The pseudepigrapha includes: The Gospels of Andrew, Bartholomew, Barnabas, Matthias, Thomas, Peter, and Philip; The Acts of John, Paul, Peter, Andrew, Thomas, Matthias, Philip, and Thaddaeus; The Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans; The apocalypse of Peter, Paul, Thomas, and John the Theologian.)

There was also a propounded set of books that are called the New Testament apocrypha, which also are not inspired, though may yield some interesting things.

The New Testament apocrypha includes: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, The Epistle of Barnabas, The First & Second Epistles of Clement, The Shepherd of Hermas, The Apocalypse of Peter, The Acts of Paul, The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, The Seven Epistles of Ignatius, The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, The Protevangelium of James, The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, The Gospel of Nicodemus, The Gospel of the Saviour's Infancy, The History of Joseph the Carpenter.

As the Spirit moved the church to accept, He also moved the church to reject.

Implications

First of all we treat the Bible with reverence as it is the Word of God. We seek to be accurate and faithful to the text of the Bible. The original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek we search to know the exact wording and grammar usage. The principles of interpretation we use are drawn from the Bible itself and common sense. This and more we call the 'high view' of Scripture.

Because it is God's Word to us it is inerrant, that is it has no errors or mistakes. There can be mistakes in translation, which are minor, but no error in the true text of Scripture. In whatever area the Scriptures speak they speak as the Word of God. Touching geography, science, morals, or whatever other field of study, they speak the truth. Jn. 17:17 The Bible is not part man's word and part God's Word.

It is THE authority in the church. No bishop, pastor, congregation, church body, tradition or any other source can be above the Word of God. It rules as the Master and guides us in a trustworthy and beneficial way. Ps. 119:105 We can rely on it completely with our simple child-like faith.

Not everything written by one of the authors of Scripture is inspired. We know that Paul wrote three letters to the Corinthians. Two were inspired and are present for us today to learn from. Even if an author quotes from a profane or secular source in the Bible

that quote is then inspired. But it does not carry over to the rest of the work from which a quote is taken. Paul quotes at least three non-Christian sources rather verbatim. The Holy Spirit is not limited in how He operates. Being God He uses, corrects and censors what He would have written.

- Acts 17:28 “for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’” The first is from Epimenides and the second from Aratus in Phaenomena 5.
- Titus 1:12 “One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’” This is from Epimenides again.
- 1 Cor. 15:33 “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’” This is from Menander.

We also have numerous references in the Bible to books dealing generally with religious or spiritual matters yet not part of the Bible except for the references. One man’s list from his study of these follows.

- (1) The Book of the Wars of the Lord. (Num. 21:14-15)
- (2) The Book of Jasher. (Josh. 10:13, 2 Sam. 1:18)
- (3) The Book of the Acts of Solomon. (1 Kings 11:41)
- (4) The Chronicles of Nathan the Prophet. (1 Chron. 29:29, 2 Chron. 9:29)
- (5) The Chronicles of Gad the Seer. (1 Chron. 29:29)
- (6) The Records of Iddo the Seer. (2 Chron. 12:15)
- (7) The Annals of Jehu the Son of Hanani. (2 Chron. 20:34)
- (8) The Book of Records. (Ezra 4:15)
- (9) The Book of the Chronicles-of the Kings of Media and Persia. (Esther 2:23, 6:1, 10:2)
- (10) The Prophecy of Ahijah the Silonite. (2 Chron. 9:29)
- (11) The Visions of Iddo the Seer. (2 Chron. 9:29)
- (12) The Chronicles of Samuel the Seer. (1 Chron. 29:29)
- (13) The Records of Shemaiah the Prophet. (2 Chron. 12:15)
- (14) The Records of the Hozai. (2 Chron. 33:19) [“Hozai” means “seers”, prophets]

- (15) The Writings of David, King of Israel. (2 Chron. 35:4) [This might include some of the Psalms, but implies that they were other sorts of writings.]
- (16) The Writing of Solomon. (2 Chron. 35:4)
- (17) The Proverbs, Songs and Biology of Solomon. (I Kings 4:32-33) [This may be the same as (16) above and may overlap with parts of the Bible books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. The text says these were spoken, but they may have been written down because they are numbered: 3000 proverbs, 1005 songs, plus messages on botany and zoology-; perhaps scientific or maybe proverbial, like in Proverbs.]
- (18) Jeremiah's Scroll. (Jer. 36) [Jer. 36 gives some quotes from it, but the rest was thrown in the fire.]
- (19) Various unnamed books. (Ex. 17:14, Josh. 18:9, 1 Sam. 10:25, Esther 9:32) [Some of these may be among those listed above or maybe even part of Bible.]
- (20) Paul's Other Corinthian Epistles. (I Cor. 5:9, 11) [Scholars say I or 2.]
- (21) Letters from the Corinthians to Paul. (I Cor. 7:1) [Scholars say I or 2.]
- (22) The Epistle of the Laodiceans. (Col. 4:16) [Evidently a letter Paul wrote to the Church at nearby Laodicea, but the text says simply that they had it and not necessarily that it was written to them. Some scholars think it was a circular letter, possibly Ephesians. Some think it was Philemon. or even Hebrews]
- (23) Pseudo-Pauline Epistles. (2 Thess. 2:2) [Definitely not I Thess.]
- (24) Other Written Gospels. (Luke 1:1-4) [Some scholars think Luke meant Matthew and Mark]
- (25) The Tradition of the Elders. (Matt. 15:2, 3, 6) [This later was written down by the Jewish religious leaders and called the Mishnah. It is possible that many of these traditions were written in part by the time of Jesus.]
- (26) The Books and the Parchments. (2 Tim. 4:13) [Scholars make guesses: Paul's personal Old Testament in Hebrew or Greek, copies of Paul's own earlier letters, copies of inspired New Testament books by other Apostles, notes and logs, official Roman papers of citizenship such as passports, etc.]

I would just add to this list two.

- A Book of Enoch is from Jude 14 where we have reference to what is not in Scripture. Enoch 60:8

- It is possible from 2 Ch. 35:25 that a Book of Laments other than Jeremiah's was available incorporating other lamentations.

What the quotes from the 'other' books takes on is absolute truth because they are in the Word of God. It is like moving into a fog bank. All within it is coated with a sheen of moisture. You move into the fog bank and are also coated with what all else within is.

Conclusion

In the end what can we say except to praise God for such a wonderful miraculous work of giving and moving men to accept the Word of God. What a pure act of grace to man and especially the church that in this again God gives out of His great loving heart without reference to man's innate stubborn spirit, which He overcomes, overcoming it in both the writer and the receiver. To Him alone goes all glory.