THE CHURCH IN CHRIST

A Hot Study Of...



THE LOST BOOKS

How To Discern God’s Word in an Age of Confusion

Introduction and Reason:

This study began with a thoughtful challenge from a sister in the Lord...Naika, who asked some important questions: 'regarding the lost books?" Rather than dismiss the concern or offer a quick answer, her question invited a deeper exploration of how we know which books belong in Scripture, and why others do not.
Questions such as these are not signs of doubt but signs of engaged discipleship, a road I hope we all journey on. As we study...and question reasons offered we start to understand the foundations of our faith, to test what we've heard, and to seek clarity in a world full of competing claims. Throughout church history, believers have faced similar challenges, and each generation has had to rediscover the reliability of the Scriptures God has preserved. This can only be safely achieved, I believe within a place of fellowship where the gifts are active under the Holy Spirits guidance!
Naika's challenge has been taken seriously, and it is important that we approach this topic together with openness and clarity. As we look at the books that are sometimes discussed in conversations about the canon, along with the claims and questions surrounding them, our aim is not to defend a position or to argue against alternatives. Instead, we want to understand the issues carefully and thoughtfully.

This is very important to take on board as we go through this study, the difference between the lost books and the extra books in the Catholic Bible: People often hear about the "lost books of the Bible," but these were never part of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures. Writings like 1 Enoch or the Gospel of Thomas were known in the ancient world, yet no community treated them as inspired Scripture. However the extra books in the Catholic Bible are a different category. The Intertestamental Books (meaning the gap between Old and New Testament writtings), best known as Deuterocanonical Books, were written during the 400 silent years between the 'Old and New' Testaments

This study gives us space to explore the historical and spiritual factors that shaped the Scriptures we have today, to consider the wider literature that people often ask about, and to reflect on how believers have navigated these questions across the centuries. My hope is that we engage this topic with humility and curiosity, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us as we learn together.

Naika's question reminds us that faith grows when we are willing to ask, to seek, and to examine. And it is often through such challenges that the Spirit deepens our understanding and anchors our trust in the Scriptures He inspired.

May the Lord add His blessings to this as together we seek His Truth!

Books outside the Bible



We are commanded to Discern God's Word in an Age that offers Confusion

1 Thessalonians 5:21 "Test everything; hold fast what is good."

I want us to discuss these points not to establish any book that rests outside the Bible but to show that we can trust, and should only trust, the sixty-six books of the Bible! All others pale in relation! I need to explain why I state this, as without a credible explanation it just becomes my own folly.

1/ The sixty-six books of God were written over roughly 1,500 years.

2/ They were put together through three different languages... Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

3/ They come from three different continents... Asia, Africa, and Europe.

4/ They do not only agree in message and direction, but they continue the same consistent revelation from Moses through to the New Testament writings.

5/ Many of these authors lived thousands of miles apart, and even centuries apart and had no natural way to organise their message with others. No daily mail drop, no email, phone...etc.

6/ Many of the world's greatest historians, scientist, and scholars over all times have tried and failed to overturn or disprove the Bible's dependability and consistent unified direction.

7/ The total number of contributing authors is understood to be about 40.

8/ But above all, Scripture teaches that **God Himself** is the ultimate Author, breathing out His Word through human writers (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21). Many of these men suffered and died defending and delivering these Scriptures, placing the sixty six Books in the highest place of truth under the authority of the Spirit of Life Himself.

God has declared that He watches over His Word and preserves it. He is not a liar, nor is He a God of confusion. Therefore the sixty-six books stand as the testimony He has kept by His own hand, they are constant in message, unwavering in purpose from generation to generation. To turn from such a witness is to turn from the very truth God has sworn to guard. These sixty six books are perfect in design.

Every other book and letter has been found with fault, untruth, and assumptions... There is **NO FAULT** in our God... Therefore these books are not from Him... He does not attach Himself to deception, lies, or guess work in anyway!

We must also make a clear distinction: Prophets and Apostles were capable of writing ordinary letters, just as any person can, they did not walk 24/7 as inspired men, only Jesus gets that glory and honour! Not everything they ever wrote, said and thought was inspired, and Scripture never claims it was.

Anyone that had a letter or book placed into the Holy Bible was called of God the Father and filled 'for that writing' by the Holy Spirit...such could only be a Prophet or Apostle, one chosen to have the Lord speak and write through them. Both Paul and Peter wrote other letters... Scripture itself tells us such, yet God did not include them in the canon. This proves that inspiration is not tied to the writer, but to the Spirit who chooses when to speak. The canon is not a collection of everything holy men ever wrote; it is:

1/ The collection of what God Himself breathed out.

2/ What God Himself has preserved.

3/ And what He has declared to be His Holy soul saving Word.

This study began after some sincere questions regarding the blessed Bible... can it really be trusted. How do we know when it is God or man's voice? How do we truly know the Scriptures we are reading are from God and not man driven?

P2

These, and other question regarding the word are not foolish. They demand and deserve careful and respectful answers. In fact, they often invite other questions! This is not just an academic discussion for scholars or historians. It will at sometime affect every believer one way or another. Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. What happens when you hear 'the word of God'? Faith comes! And faith is a 'living power'; in those words we have a part-answer to these questions.

In answering as best as I can Naika's questions, I hope the Holy Spirit will shape and direct our confidence as we read Scripture, allowing us to feel secure in what we believe.
1 John 5:13 "These things I have written ....that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." The Spirit does not just help us 'once' to believe, He keeps us believing, He aids us to see Christ clearly. always looking forward never backwards.
John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."
Jesus clearly tells us Scripture reveals the truth about the Almighty God! The sixty-six books do just that, they either powerfully point to His coming or speak of His past actions. In both cases, it is about the birth, death, and resurrection of 'The Son of God'.

The Bible has many themes within Scripture, but each one of them...every one of them points to and promotes Jesus Christ, God's perfect plan. Lets have a quick look at some of these themes:

1/ **We open with Creation** Creation reveals God's power, wisdom and intent, but its purpose is to prepare the stage for Christ, through whom all things were made and in whom all things hold together, for such was the plane before Creation (see 1 Peter). The story of all of Creation and man's beginnings comes from no less than three short chapters, and in the last chapter we see the first sacrifice made by God to cover Adam and Eves sin... the way that it would finish started in Eden...Christ's Sacrifice.

2/ **Angels and Heavenly Beings:** Angels are spoken of in the sixty six books they appear as servants and messengers, but never take the centre stage. Their ministry always supports God's plan in Christ. Any book that promotes angels 'above what we read in the revered Word of God' promotes them wrongly.

3/ **Covenants:** Every covenant... from Noah to Abraham to David, provides us with a true insight for the need and drive toward the New Covenant in Christ's blood.

4/ **The Law:** The Law did it's job in exposing our sinfulness and showing our need for a Saviour. The law is a Godly push of love pointing us to Christ.

5/ **Sacrifice and the Priesthood:** All sacrifices and priests foreshadow the one perfect Sacrifice and the one perfect High Priest...being Jesus Christ.

6/ **Kings and Kingdoms:** Earthly kings rise and fall, but they point to the true King whose kingdom will never end, this was revealed through Melchizedek as one that foreshadowed Christ.

7/ **Prophecy:** Such does not exist for curiosity or to make one feel good about themselves but to reveal Christ, His coming, His suffering, His glory, and His return.

8/ **Wisdom Literature:** Wisdom calls us to fear the Lord, to listen, learn of Jesus...Christ is the wisdom of God made flesh so we can learn of Him.

9/ **Suffering and Deliverance:** Every story of suffering and rescue with the sixty six books points to the ultimate Deliverer who saves us from sin and death.

10/ **The Temple and Tabernacle:** These were shadows of the true dwelling of God with humanity, fulfilled in Christ, who is both the Temple and the Presence.

11/ **Judgment:** reveals God's Holiness, but it also magnifies the mercy found in Christ, Who bore Judgment for us; any judgment without Christ equals eternal hell, so judgment always for a wise person speaks of the Saviours Grace, Mercy, and Love for them!

12/ **Mercy, Grace and Salvation:** The outcome of the whole book. First seen in point one Adam and Eve received that which they did not deserve, we receive that which we do not deserve.

The Son of God displayed mercy and grace at Calvary which opened the door to Salvation.

13/ **The Church:** Speaks of the body of Christ, His people, His mission, His plan, His witness in the world. Sixty six books speak of God and His children, both from the old and new Testaments; How one becomes His child through Faith in Jesus and what He did on the cross.

14/ **The End Times**: Revelation is not about beasts and symbols, yes they are mentioned in the final book but not deliberated on; it is the unveiling of Jesus Christ, the Lamb who reigns forever. The one who walks amongst the Candlesticks, the one who is seated on the throne!

I have touched on most of the main themes from the sixty six books but only touched on them... the main point is to show that the Bible is about Jesus, other books outside of its acceptance speak greatly on matters that satan can and does use to bring confusion.

Eternal life, Salvations Truth can only be found in Scripture... as such is from God!

I write this to challenge our self beliefs, understandings, current traditions and if need be... 'reverently' our church beliefs.

Here are points of both importance and interest within this study I wish to address:

1/ The understanding of how Scripture truth is to be recognised.

2/ To be able to distinguish between correct biblical (God given) authority from that which is simply past on by the traditions of man.

3/ To appreciate and learn from early Christian history...without over-projecting it.

4/ To learn to read and use outside-biblical sources wisely and soberly, if needed!

5/ To believe God has preserved His Word... Such is important!

6/ To trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us safely in and onto all truth!

We live in a time when trust in the Bible is being quietly weakened, not by the world but by lukewarm believers who water it down. This does not always happen through open rejection or mockery of Scripture, but through artful directives that sound reasonable and even spiritual.

Paul warns us in Colossians 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. Hence do not move away from the book of truth!

Today, many are encouraged to question the Bible's authority itself, as if doubting God's Word is a mark of maturity or spiritual depth, this is both an incorrect and evil approach towards the holy writings. However people often speak about lost books, hidden writings, or alternative Christian texts, the Roman Catholic or even the Ethiopian Bible which has been around for the past 1400 years, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that. These can invite thoughtful, open-minded, and hopefully intellectually discussions. But from these we have ended up with Naika's questions!

Who has the authority to decide what is of God and what is not?

John 12:48 Jesus said... "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him, the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."

Jesus is making it clear the OT word was already written and the NT word was going to come into being through the Apostles, and what the Spirit writes through them will condemn those that reject it. Jesus is saying in no uncertain way...His words will be correctly recorded and kept... That means they will not be scattered around as a book here, a letter there, but rather logic would express all shall be placed together, within one book! For all to see and read. The sixty six books of the Bible!

There are other books that were never part of the canon, they were never excepted as God's inspired word by the early church, yet as we were warned in the end days such shall arise:

a) 'Forbidden truths'....such sounds exciting to an etching ear.

b) 'Missing pieces of Christianity' such stirs the imagination of dreamers.

c) 'Evidence the church hid uncomfortable doctrines' a spellbinding accusation that the 'Lords Church was and is corrupt'.Yet historical evidence reveals the simple truth: these writings were never hidden. They were:

P4

1/ **Known**. 2/ **Read**. 3/ **Discussed**. 4/ **Evaluated**. 5/ **Rejected**... not out of fear, but through God-given discernment. We know these writings were thoroughly tested and rejected because the early church fathers wrote about them openly. They examined these books carefully and rejected them because they failed the test of Apostolic Truth... and did not bear the witness of the Spirit.

F. F. Bruce, a respected biblical scholar across Protestant, Evangelical, and even many Catholic circles, stated: "The early church councils did not create the canon; they recognised it." Such is a gift of the Holy Spirit!

Above we started with the question **Why this matters** regarding what makes up the Canon! When Naika asked the questions I did not have the answer. But I feel what the Spirit is showing me goes a long way to aiding us in providing a doorway to biblical sanity! At least we have something we can speak, debate, and pray over. And this matter greatly.

1/ It matters because God only recognises correct faith, we are a people of faith...we must therefore guard our faith! We must trust that the Lord will continue to use the same method He used when He first opened our eyes.

2/ It matters because testing everything helps ensure we are not misled by ideas or writings that distort the truth of Christ.

3/ It matters because holding fast to what is good keeps our hearts and minds locked into God's word. This speaks of the simple truth you first heard: "Jesus Christ loves you… Jesus Christ died for you." From that stronghold every other truth has sprung forth, hasn't it? Faith must remain on the simple path of Christ, bound to the written word God has given, which up until this moment has through the Holy Spirit changed you into a wonderful child of God! We are not to be drawn away into other writings.

4/ It matters because the truth protects us from deception. Believers today are surrounded constantly by teachings, traditions, and extra-biblical claims, satan is working hard to pull believers down. These things must be tested together, as a group, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit always points us back to the truth and person of Jesus Christ, confirmed by the word!

5/ It matters because Scripture calls us to discern what we hear and read, separating truth from error. This can only be done through the power of the Spirit of Life. A person may even feel a sense of peace while reading a book that is not from God, and they may even learn some helpful ideas from it... just as one may feel peace watching a movie that is not of God. But this makes the exercise even more so dangerous, because that feeling of peace does not make it true. Only the Spirit confirms truth, and He does so through the written word God has given. Sixty-six book.

6/ It matters because study of the written word, under the power of the Holy Spirit, strengthens spiritual maturity. As we grow, the Spirit opens the same Scripture to us again and again, revealing fresh layers of depth within the same passage. The word does not change, but our understanding deepens as the Spirit teaches us. Only the Bible can do such, as the Living God only recognises one word, that which He handed you from the beginning.

7/ It matters because the process of testing His word never leaves the foundational truth of Christ... Such develops wisdom, understanding, and discernment. It may take time and demand one to be humble, but the word will always bring the believer back to Jesus and His Sacrifice.

8/ It matters because faith becomes active, thoughtful, and resilient, not passive or naive. If what you are learning comes from the Father then it shall present the wisdom and Mercy of the Son of God, and what He has done... there is the test! Does it point to Jesus and not to you?

9/ It matters because it encourages and even demands responsible engagement with the wider body of believers and the Holy Spirit. The truth is seen in the body of Faith.

Ancient writings can be interesting, meaningful, or morally helpful. But the issue is in who holds the '**authority**':

Matthew 7:29 for Jesus taught them as one having **authority**, and **not** as the scribes. God spoke in a clear and final way, His Word is authoritative, recognisable, trustworthy, and preserved, we read

in Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Faith cannot grow strong if it rests on uncertainty, it is either the Bible or the other books!
James 1:8 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
When people fall into arguments about which books belong in the Bible, they often miss the real point. How does God communicate truth that is binding, trustworthy, and authoritative for His people?
The Bible does not present itself as a collection of human thoughts about God; it is God Himself speaking through human writers, delivering His own truth with His own authority. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God…" (2 Timothy 3:16–17). All Scripture... not this Epistle or that Book... all, are inspired by God. The Lord watches over what His servants the Prophets and Apostles have written, many of whom sealed their testimony with their lives. "The words of the Lord are pure words… You shall keep them, O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever" (Psalm 12:6–7). And again, He declares, "I am watching over My word to perform it" (Jeremiah 1:12). Our Father in Heaven actively oversees His blessed Word, He stated such and is not a liar. He does not speak and then step back; He speaks and then guards, upholds, and fulfils what He has spoken. Therefore the preservation of Scripture is not left to human effort. As with all the works of the Lord, He leaves nothing for man to complete, so that the glory belongs to Him alone, and the task is done without fail. This Divine care for His Word is the backbone of my entire point about the sixty-six books: God breathed them out, God preserved them and still does, He watches over them today, and He performs what He has spoken. He has placed them all into one book...the Bible.

Simply, Scripture carries authority because it is inspired by God, not because the church later approved it. No man, and no council of men, has the power to create or confer authority upon the living word of God. The very idea that human beings could invent, assemble, or "decide" what would save a soul is folly. Scripture is powerful because God breathed it, God oversees it, and God protects it, and He alone has gathered these writings under one Book cover. All sixty-six books we call the Bible exist together because God Himself preserved and united them, there was no man or council of men that He would allow to decide what stays or goes regarding The Word of Salvation!
Therefore, the church does not grant authority to the Bible, it recognises it by the authority of the Holy Spirit Who is always covering His word. To say anything else is to call God a liar.
The Spirit of Truth places that recognition within the believer. As Paul wrote, "you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The written word they received by faith is also in you, the same Holy Spirit used the same word to save your soul. And Christ Himself declared, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). His words endure because they are His, they are written... and the Holy Spirit has placed them into the correct place... one book, not because any human institution approved them. Understanding opens the pathway, but belief must come first. The church did not create Scripture; it recognised it through the Power of the Holy Spirit who gave them faith to achieve such a mission.

1/ **The understanding of how Scripture truth is to be recognised!**

Scripture truth is recognised because the Spirit of God opens the eyes of the believer to see it. Truth is not discovered by human cleverness, nor by academic skill, but by revelation. The Spirit bears witness to the word He inspired, and He causes the believer to recognise the voice of the Shepherd in the pages of Scripture. This is why Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice.” Recognition is a work of God, not man.

2/ **To distinguish between true biblical authority and the traditions of men!**

Biblical authority flows from God’s breath, not from human tradition. The church has many customs, habits, and inherited ideas, but only Scripture carries Divine Authority. The believer must learn to separate what God has spoken from what man has added. This is discernment, the ability to test every teaching, every claim, and every tradition against the written word of God. What agrees

with Scripture stands; what does not must be laid aside.

3/ **To appreciate and learn from early Christian history… without over-projecting it!**
Early Christian history is valuable, but it is not infallible. It helps us understand how believers lived, suffered, worshipped, and defended the faith, yet their writings are not Scripture. We honour their testimony without placing it on the same level as the word of God. History can enlighten, but only Scripture can command life. We learn from the past, but we do not build doctrine upon it.

4/ **To learn to read and use outside-biblical sources wisely... if one must read them!**
Outside-biblical sources can (very rarely) be helpful when used with wisdom and restraint. They may provide background, context, or historical insight, but they do not carry the authority of Scripture. A believer must handle such writings with carefully, testing them and never allowing them to shape or create doctrine. They may inform, but they must never rule. Only the word of God has the right to govern faith and life. Many outside biblical sources are dangerous carrying hidden deceptions.

5/ T**o believe God has preserved His word... such is important, as He said He would!**
It is essential to believe that God has preserved His word. Scripture is powerful because God breathed it, God oversees it, and God protects it, and He alone has gathered all sixty-six inspired books under one cover. The Bible exists as one Book because the Author Himself preserved and united it. If we do not believe in Divine preservation, we cannot have confidence in Divine authority and protection. But God has declared in Psalm 12:6–7 His word stands as He keeps it.

6/ **To trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us safely into all truth!**
The Spirit is our Teacher, Guide, and Protector. He leads us into all truth, guards us from deception, and opens the Scriptures to our understanding. He who inspired the word now enlightens it. The Holy Spirit does not lead us into confusion or error, but into the knowledge of Christ. Trusting the Spirit is essential, for without Him no one can rightly understand the word, no one! God has placed His truth in one Book, sixty-six Spirit-breathed writings... because even these require the light of the Holy Spirit for us to grasp it's truth. The Scriptures are simple enough for a child to believe, yet so masterfully arranged that only the Spirit can unfold their eternal riches, which changes the heart of man.

Why Are People Drawn to the so called 'Lost Books'

Throughout history, many writings existed alongside the Scriptures. The Apostle Luke acknowledges these writers plainly: Luke 1:1 "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative…" Meaning many people had taken to writing about Jesus, angels, end times, laws and rituals etc. Early Christians knew about these writings. Some were read. Some were discussed. A small group of them became valued for historical or even devotional reasons. They were not hidden, suppressed, or secretly destroyed. They simply were not received as God's inspired Word.
Why? Because God does not change His order of purpose. Only Prophets and Apostles were authorised to write Scripture, and only they received the Spirit-given authority to do so. All other writings, ancient or modern, are only the words of men, no matter how sincere or helpful they may be, they carry minor to great error.
Yet today these writings are often promoted as 'suppressed truths' 'missing pieces of Christianity' or 'evidence that the church hid information.' None of these claims are close to being true. There is nothing missing from the Lord's Word, and the true Church of God has never hidden any of the Scriptures. These writings do not offer a deeper or more advanced spiritual path; they offer a distraction. They pull hearts away from the sufficiency of Christ and the authority of the Word God has given.

Why do these ideas attract so much interest?

The idea of 'hidden truth' can be so appealing to many believers? Here are some possible reasons, with my own personal reflections following:

a) Curiosity for knowledge outside the work of Jesus' Ministry and what He did at Calvary.

Curiosity itself is not evil. God made us with minds that want to know, explore, and understand. But curiosity becomes dangerous when it leads us away from the central truth of Scripture, what we are meant to be learning, the person and work of Jesus Christ. If curiosity is not born from a desire for Christ to rule the heart, it becomes misdirected.
Many people ask: Why doesn't the Bible talk about Jesus' schooling? Why not His teenage years? Why not His life between age 12 and 30? And the answer is simple and deeply important:
Because those details are not necessary for Salvation. God gave us exactly what we need, nothing more, nothing less. No confusion, no drawing one away from what is beyond important, Salvation.
The Scriptures focus on:

1/ His identity (Son of God)
2/ His mission (to save sinners, you and I)
3/ His ministry (revealing the Father)
4/ His death (atonement and victory)
5/ His resurrection (victory and proof)
6/ His teachings (truth)

During His ministry, Jesus never spoke about His childhood, His youth, or His private past. Everyone else talks about their history, their father, brothers, friends, memories. Jesus never did.
Why? Because salvation is not a story about His past, the outcome of His Ministry life was beyond super serious, it was Christ's mission was about the future existence of billions of peoples eternal lives. His focus was absolute, solid and true. Scripture says: Isaiah 50:7 "Therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed." and Luke 9:51 "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." His face was like flint, fixed, unshaken, set toward the cross.

The Bible is not a history lesson, it is a revelation, a showing of who we are and how much we need the Saviour, who Jesus is, why He came, what He accomplished, and how we must respond.
This is why the 'missing years of Jesus' theories are so attractive to some people. They appeal to curiosity, not to faith. They offer 'secret knowledge,' not saving truth. They distract from the cross, where salvation was accomplished. Curiosity that does not lead to Christ leads away from Him!

b) Fear that the church hid the truth:

Some believers fear that the church has hidden parts of the truth, and we must be honest: throughout history, the visible church has been caught in greed, corruption, sexual sin, and even horrific abuse. These failures are real, and they have wounded many. But these sins expose the weakness of people, not the weakness of God. Human failure does not undo Divine faithfulness.

The Scriptures were never preserved by the goodness of leaders but by the power of the Holy Spirit. God has guarded His word faithfully. The Bible is not kept safe by human strength, institutions, or traditions, it is kept safe by the God who spoke it.

Fear grows when confidence in God's preservation is weakened by man's rebellion. Confidence grows when we trust the Spirit.

When someone fears that truth has been hidden, it often comes from wounded experiences, shaken trust, or uncertainty about the Spirit's guidance. And yes, some fears are fed by a religious spirit, a mindset that focuses on suspicion and human failure instead of resting in the faithfulness of God. But the truth remains unshaken: **The Holy Spirit and His true Church have never lost the word of God.** The same Spirit who inspired Scripture has kept it, guarded it, and delivered it to us... complete and whole.

b) A sense that Scripture leaves gaps:

Some hope these hidden books will 'fill in the blanks.' But the Holy Spirit reveals Christ, and Christ is the fullness of God's revelation. The sixty-six books are living books; the Spirit opens them to us as we grow. What He has given is enough.

c) A desire for drama or mystery:

Some want faith to feel more exciting. But true spiritual life is found in the living word of God. When the Spirit opens Scripture, it produces more conviction, movement, and holy "drama" than any secret text ever could.

d) The longing for a special spiritual identity:

Some want to feel more advanced or enlightened. But spiritual maturity is not found in secret knowledge, it is found in obedience to the Spirit of truth, who reveals our sins and shapes us into Christ's likeness.

e) A desire for 'more' than God has revealed:

This is dangerous. God warns us not to add to His word (Deut. 4:2). Wanting 'more' often comes from dissatisfaction with the simplicity of the gospel or a belief that Scripture is not enough. But the sixty-six books are complete, sufficient, and perfect for God's purpose.

f) Distrust of God-given authority:

When God's authority is rejected, people become their own authority. Scripture becomes something each person interprets however they wish. This leads to confusion, instability, and spiritual danger (Judges 21:25).

g) Curiosity driven by novelty:

Some chase whatever is new simply because it is new (Acts 17:21). This happens when Scripture no longer satisfies, not because Scripture is lacking, but because the heart has stopped feeding on it.

h) Mystery preferred over obedience:

Some crave spiritual excitement instead of simple obedience. But obedience is where the Spirit gives light and understanding. Secret knowledge produces instability; truth produces freedom (John 14:15).

We can safely test what Scripture offers, such a test separates truth from fiction. We are encouraged to question the Bible, but we are commanded to discern it correctly Acts 17:11... in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. They received the word eagerly they were teachable and more than willing. They searched the Scriptures daily, and they testing every claim by the written Word correctly! They were seeking one thing: the truth, and the Holy Spirit accommodated them, opening their eyes to the truth of Christ. And notice what they did not seek: novelties, mysteries, hidden meanings, another truth

which in fact is another jesus, another gospel. Their hunger was not for excitement, but to understand the eternal truth and because of that, the Holy Spirit kept them safe, grounded, and discerning. Scriptural testing must have a focus:
Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith...What we are reading or hearing about must be based on... Jesus Christ and what He did for humanity.
1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the Author of confusion but of peace:
This of course speaks of the Holy Spirit, He shall in no way allow anyone that really desires to know the truth to stumble.
John writes in 16:13–14 However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own Authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.
The Holy Spirit will only speak about Jesus, everything He does points to Christ, the Son of God, the perfect Sacrifice. Any teaching, book, or tradition that distracts from Christ or weakens the Gospel fails the test
Galatians 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
The Holy Spirit through Paul preached 1 Corinthians 2:2 Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. That is the gospel truth. As I wrote above He did not offer some new spiritual roller coaster or a deeper secret vision, nor did he go on about angels, new revelations, spirits, the rejection of demons, or any other human scheme, novelty, mystery etc. Yes He does touch on angels and the like but that is only in passing... the Holy Spirits focus was and is on Jesus Christ and what He did for mankind, His Ministry, death, and Resurrection.

So there is the test! Remain faithful to what you first heard, what first took you from darkness into His glorious light of truth! It was simple faith then and it is still simply faith today, and it must stay that way.
We must trust Holy Spirit given discernment as He always aligns us in His revealed truth. Romans 12:22 and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Amen!

How God's word was and is recognised!

Scripture itself shows how God's word is recognised John 17:15-17 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth**.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 believers are commended because they received the message not as human opinion, but as the word of God. They did not grant authority; they recognised it. And the evidence was see through the power of transformation. Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. If one is not being changed on the inside then one needs to stop and look at what they are reading, hearing and acting on!

The Bible tells us God's word is living and active Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. When it is received one shall prosper, it produces faith, obedience, and fruit is the outcome.

How the early church recognised Scripture!

The early church did not ask, "Which books should we make authoritative?" They asked, "Which writings already carry the authority of Christ?"
Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority** has been given to Me in **heaven and on earth**..."

Four consistent markers emerged:

1/ There had to be an apostolic connection Ephesians 2:20 "Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." A recognised book had to come from an apostle or a recognised apostolic witness such as Luke.

2/ Doctrinal agreement Jude 3 "...I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." When Jude talks about the faith, he's not talking about a believers level of understanding or feelings, rather he means the full truth regarding Jesus Christ and His sacrifice... the very truth Jesus was born to teach, live and die by... this and only this truth is what His apostles passed on to others. So in simple terms: nothing could be called Scripture if it went against the original message about Jesus that had already been given by the original Apostles.

3/ Widespread reception Colossians 4:16 "Now when this Epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea." A recognised book was embraced across the churches, not just in one region, and equally important the writings agreed with one another, hence they were to read, check and confirm the authority they gave. Writings such as the Didache and the Shepherd of Hermas were produced possibly by sincere believers and were valued in the early church. However, they were not recognised as inspired Scripture because they did not, and do not carry apostolic authority seen by the fact they do not align in clarity and doctrine truth with the apostolic message. For that reason, they are not authoritative in the same way as the sixty six books of the New Testament

4/ Spiritual connection with Christ 1 John 4:6 "We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Here, John is referring to the apostolic message as the standard of truth. Those who truly belong to God accept this teaching, while those in error reject it. In the same way, any writing claiming authority had to be consistent with the truth taught by Christ and His apostles. A genuine work would reflect the same message, it would in no way contradict or distort it.
Books failing these tests four tests were not removed; they were never received as Scripture.
The early church did not create the canon, they simply recognised what God had already established through the apostles and the Spirit's witness in the churches.

The Role of the Holy Spirit!

This of course is the greatest and most sure way of being kept in the word of truth! The same Spirit who inspired Scripture... today enables believers to recognise it. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Scripture is spiritually discerned, not authorised by the church John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are life. This leads to unity, not confusion. God has preserved His Word 100% faithfully.
However some shall still ask "But how do you know it is the Holy Spirit? And the answer to that question for a '**believer**' is easy; The Holy Spirit never reveals Himself apart from the word He inspired. The same Spirit who breathed out Scripture now works in believers to recognise, not create or confer, Scriptures '**authority**.' 1 Corinthians 2:12–13 "Now we have received, not the

spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God… taught by the Holy Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
This means Scripture is spiritually discerned, not religiously church authorised.
John 6:63 which we just read "the words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are life."
The result of this work is unity in truth, not doctrinal invention or confusion. God has faithfully preserved His word, and the Spirit faithfully bears witness to it.

Why this is not subjective reasoning!

A common objection is: "Doesn't everyone claim the Spirits voice?" Scripture itself answers this concern by giving clear boundaries.

1/ The Spirit is recognised by His consistency: He does not... in fact He cannot contradict Himself (John 16:13). He does not reveal new doctrines that override Apostolic teaching, that which He himself gave to those men. (Galatians 1:8). He only glorifies Christ, not institutions or traditions (John 15:26).

2/ The Spirit is here to give understanding, not new Scripture: The Holy Spirit helps God's people recognise Scripture for what it truly is, meaning 'He enlightens' our minds and hearts to grasp the truth already present in God's word.
To one to speak of church authorisation implies that the Bible became God's word once the church declared it so! Scripture rejects this idea. 2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is God-breathed…" The Spirit enables believers to perceive what is already true: the word comes from God, not from human endorsement.

3/ The church responds to revelation; it does not generate it: The early church received Apostolic writings as Scripture because they were God-breathed, not because councils later declared them so 2 Peter 1:20-21 tells us No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation… men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit Peter speaks of is the same mighty Holy Spirit that Jesus sent to direct mankind in His word! The Church recognised what God had already given due to the Spirit of truth; they did **not** bestow their own authority onto it.

4/ The Spirit produces shared recognition among believers: The early believers were not perfect, yet they consistently recognised the same Scriptures across churches and generations, facing many of the same challenges we do today, yet remaining faithful to what the Spirit had given them. This explains the historical unity of faith around the core canon long before misguided church involvement came in to being. Scripture teaches that God's people will collectively recognise His voice in His word John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
They receive it as God's word rather than man's Exodus 24:3 Tells us So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do."
And they shared that recognition across the churches and throughout all the generations Colossians 4:16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. The church bears witness to Scripture; it does not confer its authority.

Why This Matters

If the Holy Spirit's witness is replaced with institutional (church) authority:

a. The canon becomes expandable.
b. Doctrine becomes developmental rather than delivered.
c. Tradition becomes co-authoritative with Scripture.

But if the Spirit bears witness to God's already-given word:

1/ Scripture stands above the church.
2/ The church walks in the Spirit... not the other way round.

The canon is closed/sealed by Divine action, not human decree. Unity is preserved around His truth, not enforced by a human organisation.
In short folks:

We know it is the Holy Spirit because He does exactly what Scripture says He will do:

1/ He testifies to and of Christ.
2/ He reveals and enlightens God's word based on Christ and what He did.
3/ He brings recognition of Jesus' greatness, not an alteration.
4/ He produces unity welded in the truth of Jesus Christ Crucified and Resurrected!

Anyone or anything that claims being in or coming from the Spirit while decreasing, limiting, or changing Scripture is, by Scripture's own standard, not from or of Him.

He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches...**AMEN?**

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PART THREE... Faith Under Fire

Does quoting a foreign book within the Scriptures make that quotation Scripture?
The Bible sometimes includes words that originally came from outside the Scriptures, meaning God used a worldly point to reveal His truth. This can raise a fair question:
If a statement appears in the Bible, does that mean the original source of that should be seen as Scripture?
I feel the clear biblical answer is 'no'. When a biblical writer quotes someone else's writings (as Paul and Jude did) within the sixty six books of the bible it does not make the whole book, poem, or teaching they quoted from as inspired by God. Instead, God used a specific statement for a 'known outside source' for a specific purpose within His revealed word. The authority belongs to the Scripture that includes the quote, not to the source it came from.

The Holy Spirit guides the biblical author in what to include, how to include it, and why it is included. That does not mean God approves of everything the original speaker or writer believed or taught. Rather it was, and is used to enforce the truth, to direct them from falsehood towards Jesus' truth. The Bible recorded words spoken by many different people; believers, unbelievers, rulers, false prophets, and even enemies of God. What matters is how God used these words.
When Paul quoted pagan writers, he is not teaching from their philosophy or pointing people towards their writings as spiritual guides. Rather he is using language familiar to his audience to show that even their own thinkers recognised something about God, though they did not fully understand Him. The truth does not come from the poets; it comes from God, who is able to use even human words to point toward Himself. Acts 17:28 Paul quotes both Cleanthes a philosopher and Aratus a Greek poet.
The same principle applies when Scripture refers to material known outside the Bible. God is not adding new revelation or correcting something missing from Scripture. He is confirming what He has already revealed by using a statement that fits within His truth. These coming words are greatly important....once that statement is removed from the Bible's context and placed back under it's original meaning it holds no authority, it cannot stand on its own.
This helps us see an important boundary. Scripture stands above all other writings. It is not one voice among many, and it does not share its authority. Other books may contain true statements, helpful history, or wise observations, but they do not speak with God's binding authority over faith and life.
All truth belongs to God, because all things come from Him. But only Scripture carries the weight of God's covenant word. It alone teaches with final authority, shapes doctrine, and binds the conscience of the believer. Everything else must be tested against it and remain under it.

For this reason, quoting a book does not make that book Scripture. The Bible does not borrow authority; it exercises authority. God's Word remains complete, sufficient, and supreme. Yes, Jude 14–15 quotes '1 Enoch' and later 'The Assumption of Moses' but as stated quotation does not equal living Scripture. Titus 1:12 states 'one of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' That is within Scripture but it is not itself God breathed... it came from a Cretan prophet, and used to point foolish man to Gods truth! Should we therefore bow to the wisdom of the writings it came from? I think not! Scripture remains the authority over all other sources. All truth belongs to God, but not all truth carries covenantal authority (Romans 11:36).

Rome, authority, and the Canon

It is important to understand the politics of the Roman Empire had nothing to do with which books were recognised as Scripture. What we so strangely call the 'lost books' were never part of the Jewish or Christian canon, and the additional books found today in the Catholic Bibles come from the Jewish world long before Rome held any influence over the church. Scripture was recognised within the Jewish community and later affirmed by the early Christians, not decided by Roman emperors or political councils. Rome's political power indeed aided to shape the later church structures, but it did not create, remove, add or control the Scriptures, they belong to and are watched over by the Almighty God. And that takes us onto:

The church in Rome and authority:

Imperial Rome was a political and pagan empire that often persecuted Christians. 'The Roman Church' was not part of that system, it was a Christian community that grew within the city of Rome and developed its authority gradually over many centuries. Hence 'the Roman Church'... was in Rome... but not under Roman power. Blending these two creates confusion.

The fall of the Roman Empire which had nothing to do with the church left a power vacuum in the west, and because the church in Rome was already a respected and stable institution, it naturally became a central point of trusted leadership. Its influence grew because of its location and continuity, it became a central hub for Christianity, and at that time it held no control over Scripture or suppressed books. However as the church developed in the city of Rome two very different models of authority became clear.

Two competing models of authority

1/ Scripture above the church: (as it must remain)

In this model, the church submits to God's written word. Jesus Himself affirmed this when He rebuked religious leaders for elevating tradition over Scripture. The church receives, teaches, and obeys what God has already spoken.

2/ The church above Scripture: (great in error)

In the opposite model, church authority determines how Scripture is understood, changed, or even overridden. Jesus warned against this approach as well, showing how human tradition can nullify the word of God.

These two models cannot coexist. Authority must rest in one place or the other. As Jesus stated plainly, Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters."

Why this difference matters!

Where final authority is placed determines everything that follows.

If **the Church** has the final authority:

1/ The canon can be expanded well beyond what was originally received!
2/ Doctrines develop in ways that go beyond or even reshape Scripture!
3/ Tradition begins to share authority with God's Word!

Scripture warns against this outcome, cautioning believers not to be taken captive by teachings rooted in human tradition rather than Christ (Colossians 2:8).

If **Scripture Has** Final Authority:

1/ The canon is closed sealed and protected from addition or alteration by the Spirit (Revelation 22:18–19)

2/ Doctrine is limited to what God has revealed (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

3/ Tradition is evaluated, corrected, and restrained by Scripture (Acts 17:11)

In this model, the church stands and lives under the word, not over it.

Many believe Catholics and Protestants agree on three crucial points:

1/ God has spoken.

2/ God's word is Authoritative.

3/ The church must listen and obey.

However, I struggle with how points 2 and 3 work within Catholic theology. The Catholic Church affirms that it must listen and obey, yet it also teaches that:

a/ The Church came **before** the canon.

b/ They hold **authority to declare** which books are Scripture.

c/ The Church's office **holds the power** to give binding interpretations according to their understanding of apostolic teaching.

d/ **Tradition and Scripture** together form faiths power.

In simple terms, this means the Catholic Church claims the authority to:
Define and interpret at will the Scriptures (Canon), whilst declaring philosophy not found within the sixty six books of Scripture (such as Marian doctrines, the immaculate conception, the perpetual virginity of Mary, the assumption of Mary, and Mary mother of the church /the queen of heaven).

Issues with the additional books

The books in question present teachings that conflict with the clear message of Scripture, particularly on matters such as salvation by grace, the role of works, praying for the dead, and the nature of Atonement.
Scripture teaches Salvation by grace through faith, not by human effort Ephesians 2:8–9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the Gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Grace wonderful grace.

It also affirms that judgment follows death Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment. Heaven or hell await, fullstop, that's it.

And Scripture insists that justification is separate from works of the law Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Because God's word is unified and consistent, inspired Scripture can not contradict itself as Psalm 119:160 tells us The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.
So when a writing teaches something that goes against what God has already revealed in Scripture, that writing cannot be considered inspired Scripture.
This does not mean the writers were evil, rebellious, or trying to tear down God's truth. Many of them were simply doing what people still do today... writing what they believed, possibly recording traditions, or trying to explain their spiritual ideas.
But sincerity does not make something Scripture. Only God does, and can do such.
So when we see teachings in these books that don't line up with the clear doctrine of the Bible, that alone is enough to show they are not part of God's inspired Word.
Clear examples of Doctrinal conflict:

A/ 2 Maccabees 12:44–45 commends prayers and offerings for the dead so they may be freed from sin. Such is a direct contradiction of the word/Scripture:
Hebrews 9:27 It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment. There is absolutely no New Testament instruction or example for the praying of the dead. Such introduces a doctrine absent from and contradicts the rest of Scripture...This suggests that one can sin willingly, reject the Holy Spirits calling and then find redemption after death!

B/ Tobit 12:9 teaches "**Alms giving delivers from death and purges away every sin**.'
Again direct contradiction with the Lords Scripture:
Ephesians 2:8–9 is clear salvation is not by works, giving an offering does not equal deliverance.
Hebrews 9:22 States... for one to receive forgiveness blood is required.
Isaiah Chapter 53 Tells us... sin is dealt with through substitution, and that substitution was Christ on a cross. Why this matters **Tobit 12:9** surrenders the saving power to a human action.

C/ Tobit 6:5–8 supplies the readers with the mystic power of magic and superstition, it endorses the '**use of fish organs to drive away demons**'.
Once again a direct contradiction with Scripture: Demons are cast out by God's authority, not rituals (Mark 1:27). Scripture condemns magical practices (Deut. 18:10–12).

D/ Tobit 12:15 Claims raphael to be '**one of the seven angels who stand before God**.' No capital letter for an 'unknown angel'! The problem with naming raphael is: Scripture names only Michael and Gabriel. Tobit goes on to introduce a speculative angel hierarchy absent from Scripture.

E/ Judith 1:1 presents historical errors: It claims **Nebuchadnezzar was king of Assyria in Nineveh**.
This contradicts both History and Scripture: Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon, not Assyria. Nineveh had already fallen. Scripture does not present historical fantasy as revelation.

F/ 2 Maccabees 15:38–39 There is an admission of error: The author apologies if his work is poorly written. You may ask why does this matter? An inspired writer would never apologies for the accuracy or authority in presenting the Lords Scripture.
Are there other errors? Yes, indeed but I have used what I have used to show the obvious problems with these books.

The Core Principle

A truly inspired book will always:

a/ Agree with and harmonise with the rest of Scripture (Luke 24:27)
b/ Point clearly to Salvation through faith in Christ (John 20:31)
c/ Deepen understanding without redefining the faith already given (Jude 3)
d/ Rest on Divine authority, not institutional approval (Hebrews 1:1–2)

The canon of Scripture stands not because a church, angel, king, empire or whatever endorsed it, but because God spoke, His people recognised His voice, and His word was and is continually proved faithful, consistent, and sufficient.

Just a little touch on claims Peter was the first pope!

PETER AND ROME

What the evidence actually shows:

1/ Absolutely no New Testament text places Peter in Rome, at anytime.
2/ Paul never mentions Peter while writing from Rome.
3/ Later tradition claims Peter's presence... but without detail

P16

The silence within the book of Acts is significant, it covers the journeys of the Apostles and makes mention of the great acts done by the followers but absolutely no where in that book does it make mention of Peter being any where near Rome, but even if he did visit Rome there is:

a/ No evidence he became their bishop.

b/ No evidence of succession of authority from that time line.

c/ No evidence as claimed by the Catholic church that he served a 25-year term of office as Bishop.

The truth is the Apostles actually established Churches led by plural elders...each had it's own Elder, Overseer etc. They did not have one man over the Churches! Fullstop. There was not a 'one sole bishop' over all the churches. The Bible does not teach such. The authority of each church flowed from, teaching, faithfulness and Christ-likeness of those who had been empowered by the Spirit to lead...not from an office of human power, one man over the whole body... That is Christ the Lords place! Amen?

A word of the Ethiopian bible

Some people today point to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and say, "Look, they have more books in their Bible so the Christian Bible must be incomplete." But this idea is based on many basic misunderstandings, not truth.

Ethiopia is an ancient Christian nation, and its church has a long and respected history. Over the centuries, they preserved many old writings... some Jewish, some early Christian, some devotional, and some historical. These writings were valued in their culture, and still are, so they have kept them and sometimes read them in church services.

But here is the key point:

Ethiopia included extra books for cultural and religious rite reasons, not because they believed those books were written by prophets or apostles.

Their wider collection reflects their local traditions, not the universal Christian understanding of Scripture.

Their canon was shaped by Ethiopian history, not by apostolic authority. We have already covered all these things above however as this is important to understand I shall repeat briefly what we have stated:

1/ No extra books are considered inspired Scripture by the early church.

2/ They were not written by prophets or apostles.

3/ They were not treated as equal to the Word of God.

4/ They were not hidden or suppressed by anyone.

5/ They were simply preserved because Ethiopia valued them culturally. In other words:

Ethiopia’s extra books do not expand Scripture... they reflect Ethiopia’s traditions.

THE FINAL WORD

Scripture does not need rescuing. It does not need an accessory add on. And it does not need the 'so called' hidden books.

Rather it needs, and in fact demands: Careful and prayerful reading, an honest understanding of history and our faithful obedience in Christ. On this subject I shall let Scripture finish this study!

Hebrews 4:12 “The word of God is living and active.”

Revelation 22:18–19 “You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it…”

Matthew 24:35 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”

Isaiah 55:10–11“So shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose.”

This study maintains that the church does not create the authority of Scripture, but recognised the authority of the Holy Spirit, as Scripture teaches and the historic church consistently testified. amen.

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