

## **Why are Catholic and Protestant Bibles Different?**

To answer that question fully, we must first determine if and how Catholic and Protestant Bibles differ. When examining the New Testament of each Bible there is little to no difference between the two. Differences in the New Testament are very minor and very few – mostly translation differences associated with phraseology, not related to content or meaning. However, the Old Testament of the Catholic Bible contains seven additional books (Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach and Baruch) and addition material in Esther and Daniel. How did these differences come about?

In the three centuries before the Christian church separated from the Jewish religion, there were two groups of Jews that became somewhat disconnected from each other - the Jews in Palestine and the Jews who settled around the rest of the Mediterranean basin. In about 300 BC the Jews in Alexandria, Egypt asked the permission of the High Priest in Jerusalem to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek. They did so and included the materials found in the Catholic Old Testament. In about 200 AD, the high priests in Jerusalem finally and completely purged the Christian Sect from the Temple. Christians (particularly Paul) had been using the Greek Old Testament translation in their New Testament writings. It has been suggested by some in the academic community that the simultaneous purge of the Greek Bible allowed the Palestinian Jewish Leadership to recapture conservative prescription by then editing the texts in the Hebrew Bible. By the fifth century AD the Hebrew text had been solidified in its current form.

The Christians adopted and continued to use the Greek translation of the Old Testament until the time of the Protestant Reformation when Luther argued that the Catholic Church had no right to determine which Books should be in the Old Testament. He therefore chose to use the Hebrew version of the Old Testament and at the same time relegated the New Testament Books of Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation to an appendix. Subsequent Protestant leaders and scholars restored these Books to the New Testament – resulting in today's differences in the Catholic and Protestant Bibles!