

Increasingly claims are being made that many worthy books were omitted from the Bible, and thus raising doubts in people's minds that **"the Scriptures"** of the Bible are **"the word of God"** (**John 10:35 NLT**). Pseudepigrapha, meaning "false title," or books by fake authors, refers to Jewish books that falsely claimed to have been written by Moses, Enoch, Abraham or some other ancient hero of the faith, and are supposedly arbitrarily omitted from the Bible



Should Pseudepigrapha books be in the Bible?

Most pseudepigrapha, or books by fake authors, were written between 250 BCE and 200 CE. The Pseudepigrapha books compared with what is genuinely **"all Scripture . . . by God"** (**2 Timothy 3:16 LSB**) solves this puzzle. A few examples are as follows:

- **Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs:** A series of documents claiming to be the "testaments" of the patriarchs of the tribes of Israel, in which they by turn give exhortations to their descendants. This work was probably written in the second century BCE, but its present form seems to reflect revision by a Christian. Depending upon interpretation, it may present a doctrine of two messiahs: a priestly messiah (from Levi) and a royal messiah (from Judah). In a manner typical of intertestamental Judaism, this work describes the Mosaic Law as the wisdom of God but reflects also the influence of Stoicism, a Hellenistic school of philosophy.
- **Testament of Solomon:** An outlandish tale, in which Solomon receives a magical ring from the archangel Michael and uses it to control demons, the book may have been written during the first or second century CE
- **Testament of Moses:** A text in which Moses purportedly predicts the history of Israel

from the conquest under Joshua to the postexilic period, the book's principal concern is the apostasy of Hellenistic Jews. The date of its composition is disputed; some suggest that it was composed during the first century CE

- ***Psalms of Solomon***: This is a first-century BCE collection of psalms written in reaction to the Roman occupation of Palestine. These psalms anticipated the coming of a “Lord Messiah” who would lead pious Jews to overthrow the Roman forces occupying the land. They are important for illustrating the Messianic fervor and religious turmoil that prevailed among the Jews in the days prior to Jesus’ birth.
- ***Jubilees***: Claiming Mosaic authorship, this work, essentially a retelling of Genesis and Exodus written between the second century BCE and the first century CE, has some curious emphases. For example, it devotes a great deal of attention to Rebekah and considers the slaughter the men of Shechem (**Genesis 34**) to have been a praiseworthy event. The book is also intensely concerned with priestly matters.
- ***First Enoch***: Early mystics of both Jewish and Christian background were fascinated by Enoch, the man who, after having walked with God, “was no more” (**Genesis 5:24**). First Enoch is the first of many “accounts” detailing Enoch’s ascent into heaven, but even this work is a composite of texts written from approximately the third century BCE to the first century CE. The narrative is highly fantastic in nature. For example, **1 Enoch 6-11** describes the rebellion of the “watchers,” the angels who, according to **Genesis 6:1-4** (cf. **Jude 6**) took the daughters of men to be their wives. In **1 Enoch 72-82**, a section referred to as the Astronomical Book of Enoch, Enoch is given a tour of the heavens by the angel Uriel and sees the gates out of which the sun and moon rise and set. This section is also highly concerned with calendar issues.

Jesus and the New Testament writers frequently quoted from or alluded to “**the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms**” (**Luke 24:44 NIV**), our 39 book Old Testament, but avoided the Pseudepigrapha, although Jude is often claimed to have made use of it in two places. In **verse 9** he alluded to a story concerning Michael and the devil that is found in a version of **The Assumption of Moses** (as noted by Clement and Origen; the actual text is lost). Also, in **verse 14 Jude** possibly quoted from **1 Enoch 1:9**: “**See, the Lord is coming**

with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones.” (NIV) It is possible that through God’s providence some pseudepigrapha have preserved some genuine truths and that Jude was able to discern the true from the false. Another possibility is that **1 Enoch** quoted from **Jude**. Given the nature of these books, however, it would be perilous to treat them as reliable sources. It is also helpful to keep in mind that citation of a given work by a Biblical writer does not in and of itself imply endorsement. Paul cited pagan poets (**Acts 17:28; 1 Cointhians 15:33; Titus 1:12**), and Jude’s references to **1 Enoch** do not imply that he thought the book had canonical authority.

One source of this material: New International Version Archaeological Study Bible