

## WHICH BOOKS CONSTITUTE “SCRIPTURE”? 190-265 CE

Any claims to the effect that the touchstone doctrines of early Christianity are “unscriptural” must account for the fact that the early Christian churches recognized a larger number of books as “holy scripture” than Protestants do today. The following quotes (to which many more could be added) demonstrate the recognition of 2 Maccabees, Sirach, and Baruch as inspired texts in ancient Christian churches. Catholics retain these books in their Bibles, as well as the doctrines they advance.

Clement of Alexandria (c. 195 CE)

For that reason, the Scripture most strenuously exhorts, “Do not introduce everyone into your house, for the snares of the crafty are many” [Sirach 11:29]. (*The Paedagogus* 3; Bercot).

Hippolytus of Rome (c. 210 CE)

But the case stands not thus; for the Scriptures do not set forth the matter in this manner. But they make use also of other testimonies, and say, Thus it is written: “This is our God, and there shall none other be accounted of in comparison of Him. He hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it unto Jacob His servant (son), and to Israel His beloved. Afterward did He show Himself upon earth, and conversed with men” [Baruch 3:25-38]. (*Against the Noetus* 2).

Origen of Alexandria (c. 230 CE)

But that we may believe on the authority of holy Scripture that such is the case, hear how in the book of Maccabees, where the mother of seven martyrs exhorts her son to endure torture, this truth is confirmed; for she says, “ask of thee, my son, to look at the heaven and the earth, and at all things which are in them, and beholding these, to know that God made all these things when they did not exist” [2 Maccabees 7:28]. (*Fundamental Principles*, 2:2).

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (c. 250 CE)

Holy Scripture teaches and forewarns, saying, “My son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in righteousness and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation” [Sirach 2:1,4]. And again: “In pain endure, and in thy humility have patience; for gold and silver is tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation. [Sirach 2:5]. (*Treatise 7,9*).

Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (a. 265 CE)

But listen to the divine oracles: “The works of the Lord are in judgment; from the beginning, and from His making of them, He disposed the parts thereof. He garnished His works for ever, and their principles unto their generations” [Sirach 16:24-25]. (*On Nature 3*).