

## *Extra-Biblical Books*

Joe Slater

No doubt you have heard on TV about the “Lost Books of the Bible.” Ever since the first century AD, pretenders have been writing books claiming to be inspired Scripture. Sometimes they even forged the signature of an apostle or other well-known Christian to give the fake book an air of legitimacy. But I’d like to suggest that there really are at least eight books that some folks seem to have in their Bibles that are not in yours or mine. See if you recognize any of these:

### ***THE BOOK OF SPECULATIONS***

This little jewel is chock full of “might have” and “could have.” “It might have happened like this.” “He could have said that.” Eventually, these morph into statements of fact: “They did it just so.”

### ***THE BOOK OF TRADITIONS***

We’ve always done it this way, so it must be the right way. Eventually this morphs into “the only way.”

### ***THE BOOK OF OPINIONS***

I think thus & such, so that’s how it ought to be. Statements from this book are generally treated as binding law.

### ***THE BOOK OF REGULATIONS***

Many things God did not bind, so the author of this book completed the task.

### ***THE BOOK OF SUPPOSITIONS***

Possibly same author as Speculations.

### ***THE BOOK OF REGURGITATIONS***

I’ve always been taught such and such . . . – so I regurgitate whatever I was spoon-fed.

### ***THE BOOK OF PONTIFICATIONS***

May be a companion volume to Regulations.

### ***THE BOOK OF ASSUMPTIONS***

I’d really like for these things to be true; therefore, they are so.

## **A Caring Father**

*"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"*  
(Matthew 6:26)?

A friend from Oregon has a large number of quail that nest on his property. One day while working in the yard, my friend saw a male bird leading a covey of thirty to forty young quail through an open area. Without warning, an eagle swooped from the sky and carried away one of the babies. The male bird, realizing that one of the babies had vanished, began calling out for the bird to return.

As my friend and his wife shared their story, I detected great sadness in their voices. The bird's heartbreaking wail had lasted for several hours, and the sound disturbed them to the point that they went inside. Up until that point, my friend had been an avid quail hunter. Since that event, he has never hunted another bird. He could not bear to cause any creature that much distress.

My friend's story calls to mind Jesus' parables in Luke 15. In this chapter, much sadness ensued over the loss of a sheep, the loss of a coin, and the loss of a son. Sadness turned to festivity and joy when each returned, but certainly many tears and great sorrow preceded the celebration. It reminds each believer of God's love and the heartbreak He feels when one of His children goes astray. When a lost one comes home, celebration takes place in heaven (Luke 15:7, 10, 20 - 24).

I will always be thankful for God's unending love.

--Kenny Westmorland (Celina, TN)

## ***IF JESUS COULDN'T, CAN I?***

Expectations have much to do with our contentment. One who places unrealistic expectations upon himself is generally discouraged, and feels as though he is a failure. I’m convinced that if a person had proper expectations, he would not be so soon moved to discouragement, depression, and despair. An obvious step to “reeling in” our expectations is to understand the fact that “if Jesus couldn’t do something, we need to stop believing we can.” Consider:

- Jesus couldn’t make His own family believe that He was the Son of God (John 7:1-6), so why then do we beat ourselves up for sometimes failing to do the same?
- Jesus couldn’t avoid sadness and sorrow (Isaiah 53:5), so why do we sometimes act as though we expect life to be a bed of roses?
- Jesus couldn’t go without rest (Mark 6:31), so why do we feel guilty if we aren’t on the go 24/7?
- Jesus couldn’t avoid making enemies (John 15:18), so why are we so surprised when people hate us for our faith?
- Jesus couldn’t cause all men to repent (Matthew 23:37), so let’s be content with our best efforts. We can’t obey for others.
- Jesus couldn’t even forgive all men of their sins, though He was willing (John 8:24; Luke 17:3), so why do we think we can forgive those who will not repent?

Maybe the first step to contentment is in shedding the guilt that comes from the unrealistic expectations we place upon ourselves. After all, if Jesus couldn’t do it, why do we think we can?

--Steve Higginbotham (via *Bulletin Gold*)