What's wrong with Pseudo-scriptures?

For further information:* ***Click Here* *to read the article; "What are the pseudepigrapha?" from, the website Got Questions.*

It seems as if Pseudo-scriptures have always existed, but recently they have become fashionable again, at least on the internet.

So, what does the term Pseudo-scripture mean? Pseudo-scripture refers to a collection of writings which imitate Canonical or inspired books of the Bible.

Most of these books are written using the names of other people meaning that the authorship of these books is spurious as best. These unknown authors do this to attempt to gain readership by claiming to be written by famous Biblical characters.

The article I mentioned above gives us a great example:
"...a book called the 'Testament of Abraham' has a better chance of being read than the 'Counterfeit Testament of an Unknown Author.'"

These books gather a lot of attention and create a lot of speculation, but they are not in the Bible for some very good reasons, let me list a few.

1. As I just mentioned, Pseudo-scripture books are usually written under false names. If those who wrote them cannot be truthful about authorship, then how can readers trust what they wrote.

2. Many Pseudo-scripture books contain historical errors. The same article from Got Questions, gives this example:

> "In the Apocalypse of Baruch, the fall of Jerusalem occurs "in the 25th year of Jeconiah, king of Judah." The problem is that Jeconiah was 18 years old when he began to reign, and he only reigned 3 months (2 Kings 24:8). There is no way to reconcile the "25th year" statement with the Biblical account."

3) Pseudo-scripture works often contain heresy.
In the pseudepigraphal Acts of John, for example, Jesus is presented as a spirit or phantasm who left no footprints when He walked, who could not be touched, and who did not really die on the cross.

Perhaps that is why the real Apostle John starts his first letter with these words; "That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard,** which we have **seen** with our eyes, which we have **looked upon** and our **hands** have handled concerning the Word of Life." 1 John 1:1
(Emphasis mine.)

We trust the writings of the Apostle John because he was a historical person who was an eyewitness to Jesus' life, ministry and teachings. John saw, heard, and touched the real Jesus.

Even Paul dealt with false teachers spreading erroneous teaching and warned the church at Thessalonica not to believe any message or writings which discounted the truths they had previously received, even if those sending the message claimed to be Paul or someone connected to him. (2 Thessalonians 2:2).

As early as 30 years from Jesus' ministry people were trying to mislead the followers of Jesus with forged letters and false teachings.

There are many books that fall under the category of pseudo-scripture including the "*Testament of Hezekiah, the Vision of Isaiah, the Books of Enoch, the Secrets of Enoch, the Book of Noah, the Apocalypse of Baruch, the Rest of the Words of Baruch, the Psalter of Solomon, the Odes of Solomon, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Testament of Adam, the Testament of Abraham, the Testament of Job, the Apocalypse of Ezra, the Prayer of Joseph, Elijah the Prophet, Zechariah the Prophet, Zechariah: Father of John, the Itinerary of Paul, the Acts of Paul, the Apocalypse of Paul, the Itinerary of Peter, the Itinerary of Thomas, the Gospel According to Thomas, the History of James, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Epistles of Barnabas."* (Got Questions)

So, what do you do when you hear about other gospels or letters which some people claim were left out of the Bible? My first suggestion is to dig in and learn the truth; here are a couple of books you can read.

Can We Still Believe the Bible, Craig L. Blomberg, Brazos Press.

The Canon of Scripture, F. F. Bruce, Intervarsity Press

Second, don't believe everything you read on the internet, in a magazine, or hear from a friend.

Third, pray and ask God for wisdom.

Fourth, trust what God says before you trust what man says.

In Acts 20, Paul warns the Elders from the church in Ephesus to "Be on guard" and to "Be on the alert" for strange doctrines and teaching which will harm God's people. Those are great words to live by.

Love God and Love others
Pastor John