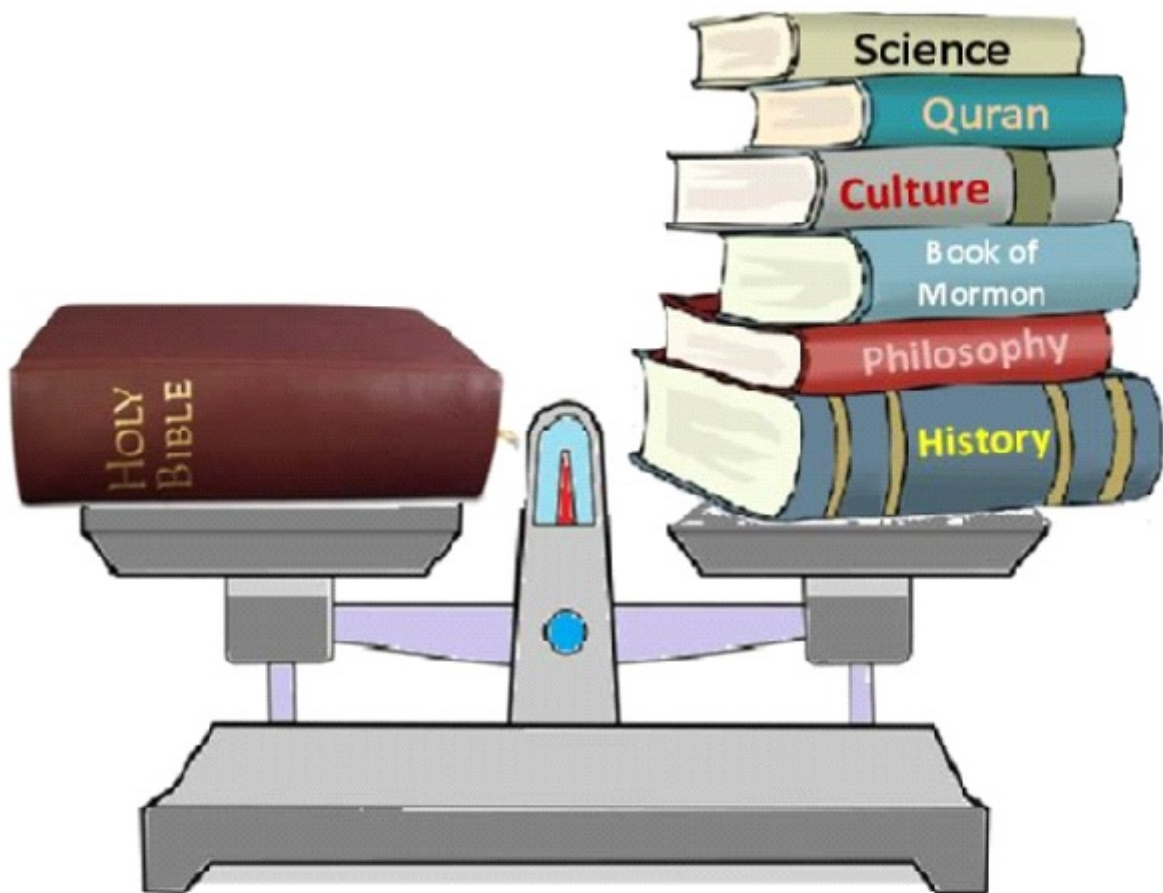


Dealing With Bible Difficulties



Forum Terrace Church of Christ
Wednesday Night Adult Bible Class Spring 2022

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The Inerrancy of the Bible

Some in this generation are rejecting the Bible as God's Word, because they assume that the Bible is filled with so many obvious discrepancies and errors, it would be impossible to believe it has a divine origin. They will ask such questions as: "How can you possibly believe a book that's full of errors?" Or they will claim: "Well, everybody knows the Bible has errors. You know, being so old and all..it has to."

How can people learn to trust the Bible as the inerrant Word of God? How can students of the Bible accept it as inspired when they are told they can not know which parts of the Bible to believe or not believe? Skeptics attack the Bible claiming its prophecies have failed, its history is not historical, its science is unscientific, its stories are myths, its facts are fables, its "truths" are not trustworthy. Historical inaccuracies, internal contradiction, or factual errors of any sort would leave us without confidence. In fact, without confidence in the Bible being God's Word how can one accept it's authority for their lives or accurately explain the Will of God.

Stephen T. Davis wrote, "I believe that the Bible is or ought to be authoritative for every Christian in all that it says on any subject unless and until he encounters a passage which after careful study and for good reason he cannot accept." (Stephen T. Davis, *The Debate About the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 116). This makes every individual reader the authority over the Bible based on their subjective reasoning.

Attacks on the Credibility of the Bible

In their interesting book, *Surveying the Religious Landscape: Trends in U.S. Beliefs*, George Gallup Jr. and D. Michael Lindsay addressed the shift in the attitudes of Americans toward the Bible. They stated: "More Americans are moving toward an interpretation of the Bible as a book of fables, history, and moral precepts. ...Attempts at demythologizing the Bible that have been ongoing in the academy for years seem to be moving more and more from the classroom to the pews.... As recently as 1963, two persons in three viewed the Bible as the actual word of God, to be taken literally, word for word. Today, only one person in three still holds to that interpretation" (1999, p. 36).

Assaults on the veracity of the Bible has been going on for centuries, if not millennia. In 1800 the French Institute in Paris had issued a list of 82 errors in the Bible which they believed would destroy Christianity. The famous French atheist Voltaire wrote, "One hundred years from my day there will not be a Bible in the earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity seeker." The American atheist Robert Ingersoll in a speech in 1881 said, "The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of the gentleman who reads it" (quoted from Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Cynical Quotations*).

Biblical Claim of Inerrancy

The Bible claims verbal and plenary inspiration. Paul wrote, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, (2 Tim. 3:16). The Greek term for "*inspiration*" literally means "Good-breathed or "form the mouth of God." The Psalmist declared, "*The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever*" (Psalm 119:160). God's words are not only true individually but also viewed together as a whole they are true.

The prophets of the Old Testament clearly believed their writings came from God. David claimed, "*The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue*" (2 Sam. 23:2). Isaiah wrote, "*And*

I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth, And say to Zion, 'You are My people.'" (Is. 51:16). Likewise Jeremiah declared, *"Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth'"* (Jer. 1:9). The phrases *"Thus saith the Lord"* or *"The word of the Lord came to me saying..."* occur at least 600 times in the Old Testament. All the writers of the Old Testament understood that they were reiterating not their words but God's words.

Jesus unquestionably believed Scripture to be inerrant. *"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled"* (Mt. 5:18). *"If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)"* (Jn. 10:35).

The Authors of the New Testament books and letters claimed to be inspired. The apostle Paul declares in 1 Cor. 2 that his speech is the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" and the "wisdom of God" (2:4,7). He explains that what he says is *"not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches"* (2:13). Peter wrote, *"But the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you"* (1 Pet. 1:25). They must have been either lying or insane or both. And if this was written by deceiving fanatics, then what hope is there for ever finding meaning and purpose in this world?

Law of Non-Contradiction

The law of non-contradiction, which is the basis of all logical thinking, states that a thing cannot be both a and non-a at the same time, in the same place, and in the same manner. It cannot be both snowing and not snowing at the same time in the same location. Or A does not equal Non A. Jesus died by crucifixion both at Jerusalem and at Nazareth at the same time would be a contradiction.

However, two statements can differ from each other without being contradictory. Something is contradictory when "either of two propositions related in such a way that it is impossible for both to be true or both to be false."

The Bible says that God cannot contradict Himself. *"God ...who cannot lie"* (Tit. 2:2). *"It is impossible for God to lie"* (Heb. 6:17,18). Therefore if the Bible is God's Word it must be inerrant.

The Bible is either the inerrant Word of God or else it is an imperfect writing by fallible men. All Scripture is from God and partakes of his perfection or a big lie. Therefore, the Bible cannot contain error. Josh McDowell: "If every utterance in the Bible is from God and God is a God of truth, ... then the Bible must be wholly truthful, or inerrant ... An attack on the inerrancy of the Bible is an attack on the character of God" [The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), p. 338].

Original Manuscripts Were Inerrant

Why is there mistakes or variation in some manuscripts? Did the human authors make mistakes? Did they misunderstand God's inspiration in some cases? Or did mistakes creep in later during copying and translating?

The original text of the Bible does not teach any error. Inerrancy is claimed only for the original manuscripts (autographs) of all the Biblical books and not for later copies or translations of them. "...the wealth of manuscripts, and above all the narrow interval of time between the writing and the earliest extant copies, make by far the best attested text of any ancient writing in the world." (John A.T. Robinson, Can We Trust the New Testament? (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), 36). Certainly no such thing as an infallible English or French or Spanish etc. translation of the Bible.

Most textual differences, such as spelling differences, do not affect the message being communicated in the Bible.

Recent discoveries of Biblical texts show that the Bible is substantially the same as when it was written; for example: the Dead Sea scrolls. The Bible is still in agreement with the earliest manuscripts on all issues, despite thousands of years of copying and translating.

Many Bible difficulties result from a minor error on the part of a copyist in the transmission of the text. Error in the Old Testament have resulted from the poor reading of the vowels; Hebrew was originally written in consonants only.

Variations exist among the different manuscripts. The alternative readings listed in the footnotes of your Bible are not contradictions. They are simply instances in which translators were unsure of the correct reading. Acts 7:16 says that the sepulcher of Shechem, where Joseph was buried, was brought by Abraham. In comparing Joshua 34:32 with Genesis 23:2-20 and 33:19, we see that Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah, whereas the field of Shechem was purchased by Jacob.

Overwhelming manuscript evidence exists demonstrating the New Testament has not been corrupted from its original form. All four Gospel accounts of Jesus' life were written within the time of the apostles who walked and talked with Jesus. All four of these Gospels are found in the Chester Beatty Papyri written in about 250 AD. They speak to the perfect accuracy and preservation of the Gospel for the past two thousand years. Over 5,300 manuscripts from the second to the fifteenth centuries all affirm the preservation of the New Testament. The John Ryland Fragment dated between 117-138 AD shows that the verses from John 18 have not been corrupted. Even if the New Testament had been corrupted by subsequent generations the 86,000 quotations of the New Testament by early Christian writers would have exposed this corruption and could be used to restore an accurate copy.

Only God could produce an inerrant book. "To err is human" but to fail to err would be Divine. If the Bible is an integrated whole that contains no contradictions, errors of fact, or inconsistencies among its various human writers, it must be from God.

Questions:

1. Why do so many reject the Bible as the Word of God?
2. What did Voltaire claim concerning the Bible?
3. What does the term "*inspiration*" mean?
4. How often do the phrases "*thus saith the Lord*" or "*The word of the Lord came to me saying...*" appear in the Old Testament?
5. What does Jesus statement mean "and the Scriputre cannot be broken" in John 10:35?
6. What is Law of Non-Contradiction? Give an example of your own.

7. When do two statements become contradictory?
8. If God cannot lie or it is impossible for Him to lie can He contradict Himself in the Bible? Explain.
9. If the Bible is filled with errors, what would this tell us about God?
10. What are autographs of the Bible?
11. Do variations in spellings of words in manuscripts mean the God's Word has errors and contradictions? Explain.
12. What do the writings of the early Christians have to do with the accuracy of the New Testament?

Application and Discussion:

1. Explain why only God could have written an inerrant book.

Homework: Go to lesson 13 and start making a list of Bible difficulties which you have come across.

How to Approach Bible Difficulties

Introduction

A. "The Bible is Filled with Errors"

1. Paul Rader in 1930 offered a thousand dollars to anyone who could come up with one single proof that the Bible contradicts one demonstrated scientific fact in any domain: history, geology, archaeology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, ethnology, etc. He never paid out the thousand dollars.
2. What Shall We define as "error"?
3. Verbal Plenary Inspiration
 - a. **2 Tim. 3:16** - *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,*
 - b. **Ps. 119:160** - *The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*
 - c. Verbal inspiration means that every word of Scripture is God-given.
 - d. Plenary means that "all parts" of the Bible are divinely authoritative.

B. Recommended Procedures in Dealing with Bible Difficulties

1. People want to employ a different set of rules in examining the Bible.

I. Give the Bible the Benefit of the Doubt

A. If a Bible student is determined to find error in the Bible, he will find it. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

1. **Tit. 1:2** - *God, who cannot lie*
2. **Romans 3:4** - *Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar.*

B. "The principle of charity"

1. Begin by giving the author the benefit of the doubt.
2. We would do well to search diligently for a solution.
3. We hold it innocent until proved guilty. The accuser must prove error.
4. Before Jumping to conclusions or convulsions.
5. Appear to be contradictory.
6. A Little Imagination - It doesn't take a lot of imagination to think of a solution.

C. The Bible is the most accurate historical record of ancient history available.

1. As an international panel of 34 scholars concluded in a 1987 study titled "The Historical Reliability of the Gospels: "It is fair to say that all the alleged inconsistencies among the Gospels have received at least plausible solutions."
2. The passage contains a demonstrable error. Our inadequate knowledge about the circumstances.
3. Historical and archaeological studies of "errors" have a wait-and-see attitude.
4. One of the greatest discoveries that a man could ever make is to discover that God might possibly know more than man does, that God might possibly be right and he, the man, might be wrong.

D. Look first for a possible harmonization.

II. Never Assume Human Views Are Correct

A. When the Bible and another Source Contradicted it is Assumed the Bible is Wrong

1. Whenever a pagan record disagrees with the Biblical account, it must be the Hebrew author that was in error.
 2. When the Bible and another book of ancient history do not agree critics assume that the other record is more accurate.
 3. It is a violation of the rules of evidence to assume that the Bible statement is wrong every time it disagrees with a secular inscription or manuscript of some sort.
 4. Bible is itself an archaeological document of the highest caliber.
- B. Sometimes an ancient source flatly contradicts a Biblical one.**
1. Josephus, who places the revolutionary Theudas before the revolutionary Judas the Galilean.¹⁴
 2. **Acts 5:36** - *For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.*
 3. Josephus dates a Theudus in AD 65, a full decade after Gamaliel speaks in the book of Acts.
 4. Does not correspond with our knowledge of Luke's historical trustworthiness. It is far more probable that Luke is referring to another insurrectionist named Theudus otherwise unknown to us and who lived before Judas.
- C. The Assyrian Siege of Jerusalem**
1. Ancient regimes did not often publish embarrassing or self-incriminating information. **2 Ki. 19:35** - *And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.*
 2. Pagan kings practiced self-laudatory propaganda.
 3. While Assyria's King Sennacherib was besieging Jerusalem (701 BC), his army suffered catastrophic loss at the hand of the Lord.
 4. Sennacherib boastful words were recorded in cuneiform in the Taylor Prism (before 681 BC).
 5. "As for Hezekiah, the Judean who did not submit to my yoke, I surrounded and conquered 46 of his strong-walled towns and innumerable small settlements around them by means of earth ramps and siege engines and attack by infantry men...He himself I shut up in Jerusalem, His royal city, like a bird in a cage."
 6. Admits he failed to breach the walls of Jerusalem.
 7. Political spin Greek history Herodotus (484-425 BC).

III. Remember Difficulties Do Not Equal Contradictions

- A. The Bible Admits to Difficulties**
1. **2 Pet. 3:16** - *as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*
 2. Daniel fasted for three weeks chapter ten of Daniel because of the complexity of his visions.
 3. When our finite mind tries to understand the infinite mind, there is bound to be difficulty.
 4. Some verses are in fact hard to understand, and misunderstanding such verses can be destructive.
- B. A distinction between a contradiction and a difference.**
1. Verses can be difficult to understand without being contradictory.
 2. The difficulties are but mountains yet to be scaled and lands yet to be conquered.

3. When we cannot solve a problem we admit it. We do not conclude, however, that it cannot be solved.
- C. Hard Work Pays Off**
1. **2 Tim. 2:15** “study” means to give diligence
 2. State in simple terms the alleged contradiction.
 3. List all key elements that seem to indicate a conflict.
 4. When the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense.
- D. Doesn’t Matthew make a mistake by attributing a prophecy to Jeremiah when it actually was given by Zechariah?**
1. **Matthew 27:9,10** - 9 *Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, 10 and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."*
 2. **Zech. 11:12,13** - 12 *Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.*
 3. Jeremiah’s priority in the Talmud.
 - a. Jeremiah was placed first in the ancient rabbinic order of prophetic books.
 - b. Matthew was then quoting from the collection of the books of the prophets.
 - c. The same thing is done in Luke 24:44 where Psalms is used when the entire third division of the Hebrew canon is in mind.
 4. Matthew is combining two prophecies.
 - a. Zechariah says nothing concerning the buying of a field, but Jeremiah states that the Lord appointed him to buy a field (Jer. 32:5-8).
 - b. Both (valley, Jeremiah 19; field, Matthew 27) become burial grounds and their names are changed to remind the people of God’s judgment. [This is] confirmed by the traditional location of the potter’s field...within the alley of Hinnom where Jeremiah pronounced his judgment by changing its name to “valley of slaughter.” 23/66

IV. Consider the Context

- A. Errors caused by taking verses out of context.**
1. “One can prove anything by the Bible”
- B. Context**
1. Means “to weave together”
 2. Pay close attention to the context. Every word in the Bible is part of a sentence, every sentence is part of a paragraph, every paragraph is part of a book, and every book is part of the whole of Scripture.
 3. Scripture interprets Scripture.
 4. Verse
 5. Paragraph
 6. Chapter
 7. Book
 8. Bible
- C. Consider The Whole of What the Bible teaches**
1. Faith only
 2. Baptism
 3. Grace only

4. Love of God Only
- D. What?**
1. Allegory of the Vine and the Branches,
 2. **Jn. 15:1-8** - 1 *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 **You** are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to **you**. 4 Abide in Me, and I in **you**. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can **you**, unless **you** abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, **you** are the branches. **He** who abides in Me, and I in **him**, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If **anyone** does not abide in Me, **he** is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If **you** abide in Me, and My words abide in **you**, **you** will ask what **you** desire, and it shall be done for **you**. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that **you** bear much fruit; so **you** will be My **disciples**.*
 3. One denomination is a "branch" of the church and that all denominations (branches) are pleasing to God.
 4. Jesus plainly teaches that a branch is a man, 6
 5. **1 Cor. 1:10** - *Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*
- E. Who?**
1. **Ps. 14:1** - *"There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works,*

V. Identify the Correct Genre

- A. Failure to Distinguish Genres of Literature**
1. Historical narrative/epic: Genesis and the first half of Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah, and possibly Acts
 2. Law: the last half of Exodus; also Leviticus, Deuteronomy
 3. Wisdom: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
 4. Poetry: Psalms, Song of Solomon, Lamentations
 5. Prophecy: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
 6. Apocalyptic: Daniel, Revelation
 7. Gospel: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and possibly Acts
 8. Epistle (letter): Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, Jude
- B. Much of the Bible is poetry - some 40%.**
1. **Ps. 58:3** - *The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.*
 2. Unbelievers actually begin lying before they are born. The language is hyperbolic.
 3. When the psalms refer to God as a rock. The psalms often use such metaphors.
 4. Hebrew poetry do not use the standards of English poetry to judge.
- C. Failure to interpret them according to their correct genre has resulted in fantastic interpretations.**

VI. Consult Bible References

A. Research:

1. Research necessary areas. This may include original languages, culture, and sentence structure.
2. Difficulties Resolved Through better Information
3. Consult history and culture. Western mind-set. Jewish marriage rites, burial rites, family practices, farm practices, business practices, the monetary system, methods of warfare, slavery, the treatment of captives, and religious practices.
4. Ethiopian "How can I, unless someone explains it to me?" So Philip sat with him and explained everything to him, **Acts 8:27-31**

B. Books to consult.

1. **2 Tim. 4:13** - *Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.*
2. Many of these can be found FREE on-line such as the Blue Letter Bible
3. Bible Computer Software
4. Translations - consult more than one
5. Strong's Concordance to find verses: one another
6. Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias: Lucifer
7. Commentaries
8. Timelines
9. Bible Handbooks: Introductions to the books of the Bible
10. Word Studies in Hebrew and Greek

Conclusion

1. Be fully persuaded in your own mind that an adequate explanation exists, even though you have not yet found it. How a bumble bee can fly when some scientists have claimed its wings are insufficient to support it in flight?

Questions:

1. In your own words what is "verbal plenary inspiration"?
2. True False If a Bible student is determined to find error in the Bible, he will find it. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.
3. What is the principle of charity in relation to the inerrancy of the Bible?
4. Who is more likely to be right on a subject God or man? Explain.
5. True False When the Bible and a human source contradict, it is normally assumed that the Bible is wrong.

6. How does Josephus contradict Acts 5:36?
7. Why do you think Sennacherib failed to mention the destruction of his army of 185,000 recorded in 2 Kings 19:34 in the Taylor prism?
8. Does the Bible admit that there are some passages difficult to understand?
9. What does the word "*study*" mean in 2 Timothy 2:15?
10. Doesn't Matthew make a mistake by attributing a prophecy to Jeremiah when it actually was given by Zechariah?
11. What is the context of a word or phrase in the Bible?
12. What are the branches in the context of John 15:1-8?
13. What is the literary genre of Psalms?
14. What is the literary genre of Revelation?

Application & Discussion:

1. How does context help resolve the problem of those who claim the Bible teaches "faith only" or "grace only" salvation?

Homework: Go online and find free translations you can compare verses with, a Bible Concordance to find verses, Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias too look up words and various subjects, commentaries to get a different viewpoint from other Bible students, timelines, Bible Handbooks and word studies in Hebrew and Greek.

Biblical Terms Must Be Defined By Their Context

Introduction

A. Multiple Meaning Riddles

1. What has a horn and delivers milk? - A milk truck!
2. What has a tongue but cannot talk? – A shoe!
3. Why do leopards have a hard time hiding? –They are always spotted !
4. How do you fix a broken pizza? – Tomato paste !
5. Which object is king of the classroom?- A ruler !
6. A double entendre or adianoeta which means word or expression that has two different meanings.

B. The Word “strike”

1. “The prospectors made a strike yesterday up in the mountains.”
2. “The union went on strike this morning.”
3. “The batter made his third strike and was called out by the umpire.”
4. “Strike up the Star Spangled Banner.”
5. “The fisherman got a good strike in the middle of the lake.”

C. Homographs are words that are spelled the same but may or may not be pronounced differently.

I. Levite

I. People from the Tribe of Levi

1. A member of the tribe of Levi but not descended from Aaron and, if male, chosen to assist the Temple priests.
2. **Ex. 2:1** - *Now a man from the family of Levi married a Levite woman.* (HCSB)

B. Servants of the Temple

1. **Num. 4:2,3** - *“Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their fathers’ house, 3 from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.*

II. Church

A. God’s People Called Out Into Kingdom

1. From ekklesia
2. Local
 - a. **1 Th. 1:1** - *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*
 - b. **Rom. 16:16** - *The churches of Christ greet you.*
3. Universal
 - a. **Matt. 16:18b** - *on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

B. A Gathering or Congregating of People

1. **Acts 7:38** - *"This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us,*
2. **Acts 19:39** - *But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly.*
3. **Heb. 2:12** - *saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."* quoting Psalm 22:22

III. Elder

A. Older Person

1. **1 Tim. 5:1,2** - *1 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.*

B. Leader Among the Jewish Religious Leaders

1. **Luke 7:3** - *So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.*

C. Leader in the Community or Jews

1. **Matt. 16:21** - *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

D. Leader in the Church

1. **1 Tim. 5:17** - *And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.*
2. **Tit. 1:5** - *For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you*

IV. Shepherd

A. Keeper of Sheep

1. **John 10:2-4** - *2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.*

B. God and Christ

1. **Heb. 13:20** - *Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,*

C. Leader in the Church

1. **Eph. 4:11** - *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,*
2. **Acts 20:28** - *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

V. Overseer

A. Government Administrator

1. **Gen. 41:34** - *Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years.*
2. Greek word appears 6 times in the NT

B. Christ

1. **1 Pet. 2:25** - *For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

C. Leader in the Church

1. **Phil. 1:1b** - *To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*
2. **1 Tim. 3:1** - *This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.*

VI. Servant

A. A Slave

1. From the Greek term *diakonos*
2. **Jn. 2:5,6** - *5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." 6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.*

B. Christ

1. **Rom. 15:8** - *Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,*

C. A Christian Slave

1. **Eph. 6:21** - *But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;*

D. A Servant of the Church

1. **1 Tim. 3:8** - *Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,*
2. **Phil. 1:1b** - *To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*

E. Deaconess

1. **Rom. 16:1** - *I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea,*

VII. Breaking of Bread

A. Eating a Common Meal

1. **Acts 2:42,46** - *42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,*

B. Eating a Spiritual Meal

1. **Acts 20:7,11** - *7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.*

VIII. Laying on of Hands

A. Blessing Someone

1. **Matt. 19:15** - *And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.*

B. Healing Someone

1. **Mark 1:31,41** - *31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them. 41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am*

willing; be cleansed."

C. Giving Someone a Spiritual Gift

1. **Acts 8:17,18** - *17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money,*

D. Appointing Someone to a Position

1. **Acts 6:6** - *whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.*
2. **Acts 13:2,3** - *the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.*

E. Arresting Someone

1. **Acts 5:18** - *and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.*

Conclusion

A. World

1. The Physical World God created.
2. **John 3:16** - *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*
3. **1 John 2:15** - *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Questions:

1. What is an adianoeta or double entendre?
2. List all the other means of the word "lead" you can find. Use a dictionary.
3. What is a homograph?
4. List to different types of Levites?
5. True False The word "church" always refers to a religious gathering of Christians in the Bible?
6. Which is NOT a Biblical use of the term "elder" in the New Testament?
 - a) older person
 - b) leader among the Jewish religious leaders
 - c) missionary
 - d) leader in the community of Jews
 - c) qualified leader in the church

7. To whom does *"shepherd"* refer to in Ephesians 4:11 and Acts 20:28?
8. To whom does the term *"overseer"* refer to in the New Testament?
9. How is it that a Christian can be called a *"slave"*?
10. How can one tell whether the phrase *"breaking of bread"* refers to partaking of the Lord's Supper or eating a common meal?

11. Matching: Laying on of Hands [remember to check the context]

_____	Healing Someone	Matt. 19:15 - And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.
_____	Giving Someone a Spiritual Gift	Acts 6:6 - whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.
_____	Appointing Someone to a Position	Acts 5:18 - and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.
_____	Arresting Someone	Acts 8:17,18 - 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money,
_____	Blessing Someone	Mark 1:31,41 - 31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

Application & Discussion:

1. In some transactions Phoebe is referred to as a "deaconess" of the church in Cenchrea. Does this prove that there is an office in the local congregation of deaconess? Explain.

Homework: Find other words or phrase that have multiple meaning in the Bible.

Bible Difficulties Involving Translations

Introduction

A. Typos in the History of the English Bible

1. The of the Ten Commandments stated "Thou shalt commit adultery" in a 1631 edition of the KJV.
 2. The Camel's Bible of 1823 took the nickname from the misprint in Genesis 24:61, church read, "And Rebekah arose, and her camels" instead of "her damsels".
 3. A Bible printed in Oxford, England, in 1792 has been dubbed the Denial Bible. In this Bible Philip is said to be the disciple who denied Jesus in Luke 22:35, rather than Peter.
 4. Produced during the reign of King Charles I in the 1600s, Psalm 14:1 reads, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is a God."
 5. In the 1970 first edition of the King James II New Testament, John 1:5 reads, "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness overcomes it."
 6. The Unrighteous Bible of 1653 said, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the Kingdom of God" 1 Cor. 6:9.
- B. If a book, say, on WWI had some errors, it might not affect the book as a whole. The author might have written a rather competent history. The Bible receives no such consideration.

I. Errors in Translations of the Bible

A. Who Killed Goliath, David or Elhanan?

1. **1 Sam. 17:50** - So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David.
2. **2 Samuel 21:19 Masoretic text** - *Elhanan the son of Yaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed Golith the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.*"
3. **1 Chr. 20:5** - *Again there was war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. (NKJV)*
4. 2 Samuel is apparently missing "brother of."
5. Through the science of textual criticism.
6. Come to a near certainty as to what the original text must have said.
7. Only the original manuscripts are inspired and inerrant. Manuscript copies are inspired and inerrant to the extent that they reflect the original documents.

B. Is the King James Version Inspired?

1. If it was good enough for Matthew it is good enough for me.
2. The KJV Bible was first published in 1611. Subsequent printings or editions corrected a number of translation errors (in 1612, 1613, 1616, 1660, 1683, 1727, 1762, 1769, and 1873).
3. Edited editions:
 1. John 20:17 "*touch me not*" should be "do not keep on holding me"
 2. 1 Th. 5:22; "*abstain from all appearance of evil*" should be "every form of

evil”.

3. “Then cometh Judas” in Matt. 26:36 “Then cometh Jesus”.

C. Differences in Modern Versions

1. The word translated disciples in Acts 11:26 is rendered “believers” in the paraphrased Living Bible. There is of course, no contradiction in the original text.
2. **Ps. 100:3 (NIV)** - “It is he who made us, and we are his.” The Hebrew word for “his” was mistaken for the word “not” because of a common spelling variant.
3. **Psalms 100:3 (NKJV)** - *It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*

II. Use of Archaic Language

A. Living Languages Change

1. Some alleged discrepancies occur because of the way that language has changed.
2. Hebrew has changed very little over the centuries.
3. English is a language undergoing constant major change.
4. The divergence between British and American English.
5. “Thee” and “thou”
6. A term of respect. In fact, the use of “thou” is much more specific. It is used to refer to the close friend or relative. A Lancastrian father would refer to his school friends as “thee” but to his teacher as “you.” Therefore, to refer to God as “thou”, while certainly not being disrespectful, implies a degree of intimacy usually associated with families or close friends.

B. “Replenish”

1. **Gen. 1:28** - *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*
2. Tyndale uses the word “fill”.
3. in 1611 replenish meant to fill completely.
4. The word replenish did not imply doing something against as many words beginning with re do. Its etymology is common with the word replete, which still today carries no connotation of a repeated action.

C. Prevent

1. KJV translators chose the best English words at the time.
2. **Ps. 88:13, KJV** - *But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.*
3. **Ps. 88:13, NKJV** - *But to You I have cried out, O Lord, And in the morning my prayer comes before You.*
4. In 1611, the word prevent meant to come before.

D. Mansion

1. **Jn. 14:2 (KJV)** - *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*
2. **Jn. 14:2 - (NKJV)** - *In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*
3. English Standard Version reads: *In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?*

E. Wine

1. English: wine
2. Greek: oinos
3. Hebrew: yayin

4. Latin: vin
5. Originally meant "grape juice"

III. Inadequate Translation of Words

A. Did the Early Church observe Easter?

1. **Acts 12:4 (KJV)** - *And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.*
2. **Acts 12:4 (NKJV)** - *So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.*

B. Did Samuel sleep in the Temple?

1. How could the young Samuel have been sleeping in the Temple when the Temple was not built until much later?
2. **1 Sam. 3:3 (KJV)** - *And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;*
3. **1 Sam. 3:3 NKJV** - *and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down,*
4. The Heb. word is "hekal" the word is lit. as large building or edifice.
5. Samuel was sleeping in the holy of holies. The NKJV gets it correct. He was lying down in this very holy place.
6. Because the translation is not as accurate.

C. Did Christ Spend Three Days in Hell?

1. **Acts 2:27 (KJV)** - *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*
2. **Acts 2:27 (NKJV)** - *For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*
3. "Hell" is the place of eternal punishment. "Hades" is the place where souls go after death and await the resurrection from the dead. Hades includes a place of torment and paradise.

IV. Difficulty Transcribing Numbers

A. Approximate Numbers

1. The Bible often uses round numbers and other approximations.
2. **Matt. 14:21** - "about 5000 men" only adult males are reckoned.
3. **Acts 2:41; 4:4** - *41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*
4. Israelites As Slaves
 - a. Genesis 15:13 God predicts that the Israelites "*will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years*" yet Exodus 12:41:
 - b. A general rounded-off figure in one place but an exact one, "to the very day" (Ex. 12:41).

B. Mistranslation

1. A number referred to in one Old Testament account sometimes differs from that recorded in another account. The Hebrew language letters are used for numbers.
2. How should the 40,000 stalls in these verse be reconciled tot he parallel reference in 2 Chronicles 9:25 to 4000 stalls?

- a. **1 Ki. 4:26** - *Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.*
 - b. **2 Chr. 9:25** - *Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.*
 - c. In Hebrew language, the number 40,000 looks very similar to 4000. The ratio of horses to chariots is much more reasonable in the account in 2 Chronicles 9:25.
3. How many did David Kill?
- a. **2 Sam. 10:18** - *Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there.*
 - b. **1 Chr. 19:18** - *Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians, and killed Shophach the commander of the army.*
4. How many did David Kill?
- 1. **2 Sam. 10:18** - *Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there.*
 - 2. **1 Chr. 19:18** - *Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians, and killed Shophach the commander of the army.*
 - 3. In the war against Hadadezer of Zobah, David won a significant victory near Hamath.
 - 4. The word for chariotry (rekeb) omitted in 2 Sam. 8:4.
 - 5. But in all probability the Chronicles figure is right and the Samuel numbers should be corrected to agree with it.

C. Additional Information

- 1. Why are 24,000 said to have died at Ball-Peor, while 1 Cor. 10:8 reports it as 23,000?
 - a. **1 Cor. 10:8** - *Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;*
 - b. 1 Cor. Speaks of the number of people who died in a single day.
 - c. Num. 25 refers to the total number of casualties.
 - d. Paul affirms that 23,000 died in the incident of the golden calf, while Ex. 32:28 places the figure at 3000. Ex. 32 records only those killed by the sword.
 - e. 1 Cor. 10 refers to those killed by the sword as well as a plague.

Conclusion

- 1. Mistranslated? There are actually very few real mistranslations.
- 2. Robert Dick Wilson: "I have come to the conviction that no man knows enough to attack the veracity of the Old Testament. Every time when anyone has been able to get together enough documentary "proofs" to undertake an investigation, the Biblical facts in the original text have victoriously met the test. 14:21
- 3. As Charles Hage says, these matters have no more to do with the totality of the text than a tiny streak of sandstone appearing here and there in the marble of the Parthenon would affect the entire building. 14:17
- 4. Two or three little rips and an insignificant patch in an ancient royal robe could in no wise detract from the august origin and prestige of the garment. If it looked flamboyantly new,

its age and authenticity might well be open to question.

Questions:

1. How would typos reflect negatively on the inerrancy of the Bible?
2. Who killed Goliath, David or Elhanan?
3. Is the King James Version inspired? Explain.
4. Explain the variation in translations of Psalm 100:3 in the New International Version and the New King James Version.
5. What is the meaning of "*replenish*" as used in Genesis 1:28, King James Version?
6. What is the meaning of the term "*mansion*" as used in John 14:2?
7. True False The term "wine" always refers to an alcoholic beverage when used in the Bible.
8. Did Christ spend three days in hell before His resurrection from the dead? Explain.
9. Why is there such a problem with translating numbers in the Bible?
10. Explain the difference between the number killed in Numbers 25 and 1 Corinthians 10:8.

Application & Discussion:

1. Is the use of "*easter*" in the King James Version a correct translation of the words used in the original Greek manuscripts. [see tract on "No Easter Egg Hunt, Today" in the foyer].

Homework: Explore the translation you normally use. Find apparent contradictions known to your English version of the Bible.

Alleged Historical and Scientific Discrepancies in the Bible

Introduction

A. Two Views:

1. *Time* magazine quotes John Van Seters of the University of North Carolina: "there was no Moses, no crossing of the sea, no revelation on Mount Sinai."
2. "It must be extremely significant that, in view of the great mass of corroborative evidence regarding the Biblical history of these periods, there exists today not one unquestionable find of archaeology that proves the Bible to be in error at any point" (Henry M. Morris, *The Bible and Modern Science*, [Chicago: Moody Press, 1956]).
3. The word archaeology literally means "study of ancient things." Biblical archaeology a study of ancient things related to biblical people, places, and things.
4. Proves the accuracy and reliability of numerous customs, places, names, and events that the Bible mentions.

I. Alleged Historical Discrepancies in the Bible

A. The Hittites

1. Critics derided the Bible because of its frequent references to the Hittites - 47 times.
 - a. Time of Abraham, Gen. 23:10-20
 - b. Uriah the Hittite
2. 1906 archaeologists unearthed massive amounts of archaeological evidence Hittite nation (1600-717 BC).
3. University of Pennsylvania offers a masters degree in Hittite language, and the University of Chicago offers a PhD in Hittite studies.47 times
4. Then, in 1906 excavations were begun at Bogazkoy (90 miles east of Ankara, Turkey), which proved to be the capital of the Hittite empire.
5. The University of Chicago even offers a doctorate in Hittite Studies.

B. Handwriting during the time of Moses

1. Not only do we have proof that before the year 2000 BC the Babylonians and the inhabitants of Ur of the Chaldees knew how to write, but men have also found the tables of square roots and cubes which they used in their schools.
2. Code of Hammurabi was written during the time of Abraham.

C. Sodom and Gomorrah

1. Genesis 13:12,13 The five Cities of the Plain included Sodom, Gomorrah, Zoar, Admah and Zeboim.
2. University of Rome excavators, Giovanni Pettinato and Paolo Matthiae have translated tablets taken from the ruins and report that on one of the tablets a trade list is recorded which includes the Cities of the Plain.
3. Archibald Sayce translated an Akkadian poem describing cities that were destroyed in a rain of fire, written from the view of a person who escaped the

- destruction; the names of the cities are not given
4. Archaeologists found that buildings used to bury the dead were burned by a fire that started on the roof.
- D. Noah's World-Wide Flood**
1. 300 floods myths from around the world.
 2. Fossil graveyards around the world attest to the universal flood of Noah's day.
- E. Nineveh. Capital of Assyria**
1. **Jonah 3:3** - *So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent.*
 2. Voltaire ridicules the biblical description of that phantom metropolis.
 3. The city was immense, the palace of Ashurbanipal, having seventy-one halls and rooms, with a library, still intact, containing 21,000 cuneiform texts.
- F. Pharaoh Shishak**
1. The Old Testament mentions an Egyptian Pharaoh named Shishak (or Shechonk), who attacked Jerusalem in the time of King Rehoboam (2 Chron. 12:2).
 2. Archaeologists have found Shishak's record of this military campaign inscribed on a wall in a temple in Karnak in Egypt.
 3. The Bible claims that he did not capture Jerusalem, but imposed a heavy tribute on the people there. The record in Egypt says exactly the same thing.
- G. Sargon and Tartan**
1. **Is. 20:1** - *In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it,*
 2. 1842 at Khorsabad (a suburb of Nineveh), Otto, the consul of France, discovered Sargon's own palace.
 3. "Tartan" the title of the top general of the Assyrian army.
- H. Belshazzar**
1. **Dan. 5:1** - *Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.*
 2. Nabonidus was quartered at Tema in North Arabia at the time of Cyrus's invasion of Babylonia. His son, Belshazzar, who was in charge of Babylon itself.
 3. Excavations at Ur turned up an inscription of Nabonid containing a prayer, first for himself, then for his firstborn son, Bel-shar-usur. Such prayers were offered only for the reigning monarch.
 4. Belshazzar had been forgotten by the time of Herodotus (ca. 450 BC), it is clear that the author of Daniel 5 must have written this work a good deal earlier than 450 BC.
 5. "The third place in the kingdom."
 6. Belshazzar was under his father Nabonidus and consequently could offer only the third place,
- I. Quirinius**
1. **Luke 3:1** - *1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,*
 2. An inscription found at Tiber and later substantiated by another from Antioch establishes that Quirinius twice governed Syria as imperial legate. The first time was between 10 and 7 B.C. Quirinius was the military governor. Text does not give him a title.
- J. Returning to Home Town for Roman Census**
1. "Gaius Vivius, prefect [Roman officer] of Egypt. Because of the approaching

census it is necessary for all those residing for many cause away from their own districts to prepare to return at once to their own governments, in order that they may complete the family administration of enrollment for each so that they may retain the tilled lands belonging to them.” Robert Boyd, Handbook of Practical Apologetics, 185,6

K. Jacob’s Well, Jn. 4:12

L. The grave box of Caiaphas, Jn. 9:7

M. Pontius Pilate

1. A stone discovered at a Roman theater in Caesrea bears the name of Pontius Pilate

N. Pool of Bethesda

1. John’s Gospel mentions a healing at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. According to John, this pool had five porches.
2. For centuries, no one found evidence of any such place. Then in 1888 diggers found the remains of a public bathhouse in Jerusalem that had fiver porches (colonnades).

O. Altar to Unknown God

1. An altar to “an unknown god” was found in Athens (Acts 17:23).

P. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

1. Every time an archaeologist stabs the earth with his spade and uncovers an artifact from Bible times it supports the Bible.
2. Just because modern archeology lacks evidence of the existence of a person place, event or thing mentioned in the Bible does not serve a proof of a historical error.

II. Alleged Scientific Discrepancies

A. Does the Bible Teach the Earth is Flat?

1. Passages under questions
 - a. **Gen. 15:17** - *And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.*
 - b. **Gen. 19:23** - *The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar.*
 - c. **Rev. 7:1** - “Four corners” to the earth,
2. Phenomenological Language
 - a. “Have you ever seen a beautiful sunset?”
 - b. The effect to the sun disappearing over the edge of the earth as it rotated away form the sun.
 - c. The sun only appears to “rise” and set”?
 - d. If that charge is just, then it equally apples to our century.
 - e. Perfectly acceptable phenomenal terminology. A common figure of speech. The terms sunrise and sunset are phenomenological - that is, they describe phenomena as they appear rather than as they truly are. The Bible uses popular expressions rather than technical language to express ideas.
 - f. Precise scientific terminology was not the medium of communication.
 - g. The Bible speaks of the ends of the earth without implying that the earth is flat and square.
 - h. Science and its terminology are constantly changing and if the Bible had been written in the terminology of the science yesterday, it would be outmoded today and if it were written in the terminology of science today,

it would be out of date a few years sense.

- i. We still speak of sunrise. North pole is “on top’ of the earth and Australia is “down under”.
 - j. The words for “east” and “west” in most of the Semitic languages are literally “place of rising” and “place of setting.”
 - k. The word for “corners” means “wings”.
 - l. To indicate the four directions: north, south, east, west..
3. The Bible Teaches Earth is a sphere
1. But as for the shape of the earth, all speak of hte earth as a hug “circle”, “disk” or possibly even “sphere”.
 2. **Job. 22:14** - *Thick clouds cover Him, so that He cannot see, And He walks above the circle of heaven.'*
 3. **Prov. 8:27** - *When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,*
 4. **Is. 40:22** - *It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.*

B. Rabbits Chewing the Cud?

1. **Lev. 11:5** - *the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you;*
2. **Lev. 11:6** - *the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you;*
3. Chew the chud lit. “raising up what has been swallowed”
4. True ruminants normally have four stomachs.
5. Neither the hyrax nor the hare can be called ruminants. So convincing is this appearance that even Linnaeus at first classed them as ruminants.
6. A practical guide for the ordinary Israelite as he was out in the wilds looking for food.
7. They did not have hooves at all and therefore cold not meet the requirements for clean food.
8. Refection, in which indigestible vegetable matter absorbs certain bacteria and is passed as droppings and then eaten again. The term chewing the cud is not to be taken in its modern technical sense.

C. Are Bats Really Birds?

1. In the Book of Leviticus, bats are described as birds, Lev. 11:13-20
2. The KJV uses the word “fowls” instead of “birds.”
3. The KJV also describes insects as “fowls” in verse 20. Heb. word is owph. Although “bird” is usually a good translation of owph, it more accurately means “has a wing.”
4. Bats and birds are naturally grouped together.
5. Both are flying animals.

D. Is the mustard seed really the smallest of all seeds?

1. **Matt. 13:31,32** - *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."*
2. Knowledgeable botanist.
3. The black mustard
4. It is highly questionable whether Jesus was discussing all plat life on planet Earth.
5. Palestinians planted anything that bore a smaller sed than that of the black

mustard.

6. Some mustard plants grow to a height of ten feet; if so, its branches would certainly be suited for smaller birds to nest in.

E. The number of the stars.

1. **Gen. 15:5** - *Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*
2. **22:17** - *blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.*
3. Estimate by the astronomer Ptolemy, number exactly 1,022 Now who was it that rightly described the number of astral bodies as incalculable?

F. Geocentricism

1. An immobile earth as center of the universe.
2. When the Roman Church condemned Galileo for teaching the rotation of the earth.
3. The church also defended the geocentric model against the heliocentric theory.
4. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) put it well: "The Holy Spirit intended to teach us in the Bible how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go."
5. God speaks to us through the Scriptures, not in order to make us mathematicians or biologists or historians but in order to make us children of our Heavenly Father.
6. The point was not to correct current notions of cosmology, geography, or medicine.
7. The Bible was not given as a textbook on science. When the Bible touches on biology or other scientific matters, it is accurate.

Conclusion

- A. In Paris's Louvre museum there is a library with three and a half miles of bookshelves that hold thousands of science books.
- B. Thought to be accurate in their day but contained incorrect information. Proof that even learned humans make volumes of mistakes.
- C. Dr. H. L. Willmington of Liberty University: "In 1861, the french Academy of Science produced brochure of fifty-one Scientific Acts which supposedly contradicted the Bible. These were used by atheists of the day in ridiculing Christians. Today, all fifty-one of those facts are unacceptable to modern scientists." (That Manuscript from Outer Space, p. 108).

Questions:

1. How would you define "Biblical Archaeology"?
2. What are the two views of the Bible in regard to scientific facts and Historical accuracy?
3. At one time scholars rejected the Bible's claims about the existence of the Hittites. Now they all full accept they were a people during Biblical times. What changed?

4. What evidence is there that handwriting existed in the time of Moses?
5. What two extra-biblical evidence is there to support the world-wide flood of Noah's day?
6. What evidence exist for the support of quirinius in Luke 3:1?
7. True False There is no archeological evidence to support the existence of Pontius Pilate in the time of Jesus.
8. Explain: Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.
9. Does the Bible teach the earth is flat? Explain.
10. Does the Bible claim the mustard seed is the smallest of seeds throughout all of nature?
11. Does the Bible teach that the earth is the center of the universe? Did Galileo contradict the Bible? Explain.

Application & Discussion:

1. Make a list of persons, places, things, and events which have been rejected as unscientific or historical discrepancies that you have come across over the years. Explain how these are not errors on the part of God.
- 2, Who created nature or the laws of science?

Homework: Make of list of persons, places, events or things which the Bible knew about before modern history and archeology. Also make a list of those laws of nature the Bible knew about long before modern science discovered these laws.

Failure to Reconcile Parallel Accounts

Introduction

A. Mormon Elders Why they Need the Book of Mormon

1. Because the Bible is filled with errors but not the Book of Mormon.
2. What did Paul's Companion's hear?
 - a. **Acts 9:7** - *And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.*
 - b. **Acts 22:9** - *And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me.*
 - c. Did they hear the Voice from heaven or did they not?
 - d. In the original Geek, however, there is not real contradiction between these two statements.
 - e. Hearing a sound as a noise and hearing a voice as thought-conveying message.
 - f. Paul's companions heard the Voice as a sound.
 - g. Paul alone heard it intelligibly.
3. Acts 22:9 says that they saw the light, but Acts 9:7 make sit clear that they did not see the Person who displayed Himself in that light.

B. Critics or Students?

1. In Matt. 9:34, why did the people of the city beg Jesus to leave?
 - a. In Luke's account of this story he tells us why. *"The whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, FOR THEY WERE SEIZED WITH GREAT FEAR. And He got into the goat and returned."* (Luke 8:37).
 - b. When studying the synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, and Luke) it is good to compare parallel accounts to gain additional information.
2. Don't the resurrection accounts repeatedly contradict themselves? Do not the many discrepancies in the four Resurrection narratives cast doubt on the historicity of he resurrection itself?
3. Those who read the Bible in order to criticize it will always be able to find something that seems to support their belief that the Bible is filled with errors.
4. A Bible student who read and study with the extent to first investigate these alleged discrepancies.
5. The first group are looking for mistakes whereas the second group is looking for the truth.

I. Examples of Harmonizing Parallel Accounts

A. Harmonizing the two creations, Gen. 1 and 2

1. This furnishes the starting point for the "documentary theory".
2. **2:4** - *This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,*
3. **Gen. 2:19** - *Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.*

- a. NIV “had formed”
 - b. Tyndale “had made”
 - 4. Not necessarily chronological. Otherwise, it would be as though God created man (7) before having made a place to put him (8); or else He would have had a place him in th garden at two different times (8 and 15).
- B. How many Animals on the Ark: 2 or 7?**
 - 1. **Gen. 6:19** - *And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.*
 - 2. **Gen. 7:2,3** - *You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; 3 also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth.*
 - 3. Having seven of the clean species is perfectly evident: they were to be used for sacrificial worship after the flood.
 - 4. **Gen. 8:20** - *Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*
 - 5. Rendered extinct by their being sacrificed on the altar.
- C. Who Encouraged David to Number the People**
 - 1. God incited the king O.T. number the people.
 - a. **2 Sam. 24:1** - *Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."*
 - 2. Satan is responsible for having done it.
 - a. **1 Ch. 21:1** - *Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.*
 - 3. God Allowed Satan to Tempt David
 - a. **Job 1:12** - *And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*
 - b. **2:6** - *And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."*
- D. Who was Jotham's father: King Uzziah or King Azariah?**
 - 1. **Matt. 1:9** - *Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah.*
 - 2. Matt. 1:9 speaks of “Uzziah the father of Jotham”
 - 3. **1 Chr. 3:12** - *Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son,*
 - 4. 2 Kings 15; 1-7 called him Azariah
 - 5. vv. 32,34 call him Uzziah.
 - 6. Azariah is referred to as Jotham's father (2 Ki. 15:1-7).
 - 7. Later in 2 Kings, he is referred to as Uzziah (15:32,34). Likewise he was referred to elsewhere as Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26; 27:2; Is. 1:1; 6:1; 7:1).
 - 8. Azariah means “God has helped.” Uzziah means “God is my strength.” 4
- E. Harmonizing the Two Genealogies of Jesus**
 - 1. Matthew's Genealogy, Matt. 1:1-16
 - a. Matthew wrote to Jews and offered his legal lineage through Joseph
 - b. Matthew deals with the legal title to the throne of David.
 - c. Under Jewish law and tradition, any claim of Davidic descent and title to the Davidic throne would have to be established through the father's side of the family.
 - d. The “of whom was born Jesus” (Matt. 1:16) includes a feminine relative pronoun, clearly indicating that Jesus was the physical child of Mary and that Joseph was not His physical father.

- e. Matthew The Greek word for “Was the father of” (traditionally, “begat”) - *egenneesen* - is used in the entire genealogy from Abraham to Joseph. Instead, Joseph is called the “husband of Mary.” 6
 - f. Matthew obviously did not list every individual in the genealogy. Jewish reckoning did not require.
 - g. Matthew written to Jews promised Messiah.
 - h. A fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3) and the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-14).
2. Luke’s Genealogy, Lk. 3:23-38
 - a. Luke wrote to Gentiles and gave his actual descent though Mary.
 - b. Luke’s genealogy traces Mary’s lineage.
 - c. Luke declares categorically that Christ had no human father; thus the meaning is that He was the grandson of Heli, the father of Mary.
 - d. Joseph was mentioned as the “son” of Heli, who was his father-in-law.
 - e. Jesus was the Son of man.
 - f. Luke’s genealogy was concerned with the Messiah as related to the entire human race.
 - g. Luke was a Gentile and connected Jesus with the entire world through Adam.
 - h. **Gen. 3:15** - *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*
 3. There is one genealogy for each of Jesus’ human parents.
 1. Luke on the ancestry of Mary, the human progenitor of Jesus.
 2. Matthew male line to Joseph. Jesus was the legal heir of Joseph.
 3. Ancient genealogies did not need to be complete.

F. Harmonizing the Temptations of Jesus

1. Matt. 4:5-7
 - a. Turn stone into bread
 - b. Pinnacle of the Temple
 - c. Kingdoms of the world
2. Luke 4:5-12
 - a. Turn stone into bread
 - b. Kingdoms of the world
 - c. Pinnacle of the Temple
3. A Sequencing Contradiction?
4. Neither claim to be giving a chronological order of events.

G. Healing of the Centurion’s Servant

1. Who came to Jesus, a centurion or Jewish elders?
2. In Matt. 8:5-13 a centurion approached Jesus directly to request the healing of his sick servant.
3. Luke 7:2 some elders of the Jews were sent.
4. The centurion’s servant In Matthew the centurion personally asks Jesus to heal his servant, whereas in Luke we read that he sent some elders of the Jews to put the question of Jesus. 3

H. Who asked to the Seats Next Jesus Throne?

1. Who approached Jesus about James and John?
2. Matt. 20:20,21 indicates that the mother of James and John.
3. Mark 10:35 states that it was James and John themselves.
4. Mother presented it first, followed by the sons.

I. Healing of the Blind Men at Jericho (Matt. 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43)

1. How many blind men?
 - a. Matthew reports two blind men.
 - b. Mark and Luke mention only one.
 - c. Mark gives the name "Bartimaeus"
 - d. There would be a contradiction only if Mark and Luke had said there was only one blind man involved.
2. Entering or Leaving Jericho?
 - a. Matt. 20:29 indicates that Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho when he healed two blind men.
 - b. Luke mentions one blind man but indicates Jesus was entering Jericho.
 - c. Mark names the blind man (Baritmaeus), and Luke indicates a "certain blind man," indicating that one of them had some distinction.
3. Four possibilities.
 - a. The healing took place as Jesus was leaving old Jericho and was nearing new Jericho. The Old Testament city of Canaanite Jericho was near the New Testament city of the same name. Jesus was simply going from one to the other.
 - b. Two blind men in need of healing. If the blind men were healed between the two Jerichos. The second blind man may have joined him somewhere along the route.
 - c. The blind men pled with Jesus as He entered, but they did not receive their actual healings until Jesus was leaving Jericho.
 - d. Jesus healed on blind man as He was entering Jericho,, and healed two other blind men as he was leaving Jericho.
 - e. The difficulties are not without the possibility of a plausible solution. It would therefore be presumptuous for a critic to use this as a case of proved error in the bible.
 - f. Non contradiction but are complementary.

J. When did Jesus Curse the Fig Tree?

1. The Fig Tree - A Sequencing Contradictions?
2. Jesus went straight to the Temple to expel the "money changers" (Matt. 21:10-12).
3. He does not speak of "cursing the fig tree" until verse 18.
4. Mark, on the other hand, seems to indicate that the "Temple incident" occurred after the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:12-16).
5. Matthew tended to place importance on topics.
6. Both Agree that Jesus went immediately to the Temple upon his arrival on Palm Sunday.
7. Both Agree that the cursing of the fig tree occurred the day after Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, when he was on his way back to the Temple.

K. The Thieves on the Cross

1. Matthew mentions both thieves as speaking against Christ (Matt. 27:44),
2. whereas Luke mentions only one thief as speaking against Him (Lk. 23:9ff). Matthew's mentioned the initial attitude of both thieves.
3. Luke's purpose, highlight the repentance and salvation of one of the thieves.

L. How many angels at Jesus' Tomb?

1. Matthew says an angel came down, opened the tomb, then sat on the stone. His appearance was like lightning, and he was dressed in white clothes,
 - a. **Matt. 28:2** - *And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from*

the door, and sat on it.

2. Mark says a young man dressed in a white robe was sitting on the right,
 - a. **Mk. 16:5** - *And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.*
3. Luke says two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them (the women -
 - a. **Luke 24:4** - *And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.*)
4. John says two angels were seen at the head and foot of where Jesus had been laid. This was after the earlier trip and after Peter and John had visited
 - a. **Jn. 20:11,12** - *But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*
5. Matthew and Mark mention one angel, yet Luke and John mention two.

M. How many women at Jesus Tomb?

1. Matthew says Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (Matt. 28:1)
2. Mark says Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (Mk. 16:1).
3. Luke says "the women" Lk. 24:10).
4. John says Mary Magdalene, Jn. 20:1
5. "The writer of the John gospel describes Mary Magdalene was accompanied by 'Mary the mother of James and Joseph'" 79/138
6. John focused on Mary Magdalene alone, while Matthew focused on the group.
7. None of the Gospels say that only Mary Magdalene went to the tomb.

N. How did Judas Die?

1. How would you explain the inaccuracy between Judas "went away and hanged himself" in Matthew 27:5 and "falling headlong, he burst open" in Acts 1:18?
 - a. **Matthew 27:5** - *Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.*
 - b. **Acts 1:18** - *(Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.*
2. Matthew does not say that Judas did not fall; neither does Peter say that Judas did not hang himself.
3. The word "prenes" used in Acts 1:18 for Judas is a controversial expression. It can mean "fell down," but several specialists suggest the meaning "swollen" or "distended."
4. Judas hanged himself on a tree on the edge of a precipice that overlooked the valley of Hinnom. After he hung there for a time, the limb of the tree snapped or the rope gave way and Judas fell down the ledge, mangling his body in the process.
5. The fall could have been before or after death as either would fit this explanation. Rocky terraces 25 to 40 feet in height and almost perpendicular.
6. This is unlikely from the most severe of falls unless some degree of decomposition and distension had already occurred.
7. Neither account alone is complete. Taken together, we have a full picture of what happened to Judas.

II. Benefits of Harmonizing Parallel Accounts

A. Clearer Picture of Events

1. clarity to a historical event
 2. The differences, however, add depth, meaning, and insight.
 3. Viewed the transaction from a slightly different perspective. We gain a fuller understanding of the event.
 4. Two sides of a Coin
 5. By putting the different accounts together, one often comes up with a more complete picture of the episode than any one account could provide.
 6. No individual Gospel writer gives every detail about what happened.
 7. In no way does it logically follow that a partial account is a false account.
- B. Added Credibility with addition witnesses.**
1. Verbal exactness in paraphrasing is not a contradiction. In your own words tell the jury...
 2. There is a benefit to having both similarities and differences in eyewitness accounts.
 3. Witness1: "a lady was hit by a truck. Two men watched on the sidewalk. One was about 5'10" and wore a black shirt; the other was tall and wore a red shirt."
 4. Witness 2.
 5. Three witnesses to an event who testified about it in court would hardly be expected to give their testimony with precise verbal agreement.
 6. "Cookie cutter" group.
 7. The information was identical. Thus collusion.
 8. Just as journalists who each cover the same story may report different details.
 9. Inerrancy does not require verbal agreement in parallel accounts of the same event.
- C. Different Chronology of events**
1. The chronology indicates no contradiction.
 2. Chronology is not necessarily critical.
 3. Just as in a court of law today, witnesses often relate different events in different events in different time frames.
- D. Addressed different readers for different purposes**
1. Synoptic Gospels
 2. One author's purpose may be different from that of another.
 3. No details given in one Gospel contradict a detail given in another Gospel.

Conclusion

- A. Any attorney who has faced the task of piecing together apparently conflicting courtroom testimony can understand how difficult it is to reconcile an apparent contradiction between two witnesses.
- B. In 1983 Gerd Heidemann a reporter for the German magazine Stern claimed to have uncovered 60 volumes of secret diaries of Adolf Hitler. There were anachronisms, repeated historical slips, and inconsistencies in the manuscripts.
- C. The Bible does not contradict itself about the Plan of Salvation.

Questions:

1. Why do more claim that all men today need the book of Mormon and not just the Bible?
2. Explain the apparent contradiction between Acts 9:7 and Acts 22:9.

3. What is the difference between someone who reads the Bible as a critic and others who read it as a student?

4. Are there two accounts of the creation: one is Genesis chapter one and the other in chapter two? Explain.

5. True False Noah only brought the animals into the ark two by two - one male and one female. [defend your answer]

6. Who encouraged David to number the people of Israel? Why is it said that God as behind David numbering the people?

7. Who was Jotham's father: King Uzziah or King Azariah?

8. How can one harmonize the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew's account with the one in the Gospel of Luke?

9. Is the difference in Matthew's and Luke's sequence of the temptation of Jesus a contradiction? Explain.

10. How many blind men do you think Jesus healed at Jericho?

11. How many angels were there at the tomb of Jesus?

12. What are the benefits of taking the time in Bible study to harmonize parallel accounts?

Application & Discussion:

1. To be saved from sin the New Testament teaches that the sinner must hear the Word of God, believe its testimony that Jesus is God, repent of their sins, and confess verbally and publicly their belief in Jesus and be baptized to wash away their sins. However, no one passages teaches on five of these steps. How can a study of various accounts of conversions in Acts help demonstrate these five steps in the plan of salvation?

Homework: Obtain a copy of the harmony of the Gospels and read the parallel passages of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to gain a full understanding of each event.

Alleged Bible Contradictions Related to Personal Failures

Introduction

A. Often Difficulties Arise from our Personal Failures

1. Illustration: The Church began in 33 AD because it was listed in the margin of a New King James Version in Acts 2.
2. Remember reference verses are not always correct passages to help in understanding the text currently being read.

I. Personal Presumptions

A. Date of Creation

1. God created the world in 4004 BC
2. Largely calculated by means of the names that are given in the genealogies in Genesis.
3. The Bible never states when the earth was created; 4004 BC
4. James Ussher, the Anglican Archbishop deduced that the first day of creation began at nightfall preceding Sunday, October 23, 4004 BC
5. Beginning in the early 1700s, the notes in many King James Bibles included this date.
6. The Chronicon of Eusebius (early 4th century) dated creation to 5228 BC
7. Jerome (c. 380, Constantinople) dated creation to 5199 BC.

B. Author of Deuteronomy

1. In Dt. 34 we read of the death of Moses - which is remarkable if Moses wrote all of Deuteronomy.
2. **Deut. 34:6** - *So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.*
3. **Deut. 34:12** - *But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, 11 in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, 12 and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.*
4. There are timing issues in the text that do not seem to fit right if Moses is the author.
5. There are references to the division of the land of Canaan that was not a reality until after it was conquered and recorded in Joshua 13-19.
6. There are references to Moses, his ministry, and his works that seem to be best understood as someone, later, eulogizing Moses.
7. Psalms of David, but David did not write all of them.
8. Solomon did not write all of Proverbs

C. Number of Wisemen

1. Three wisemen. It only mentions three different gifts.
2. **Matthew 2:11** - *And when they had come into the house, they saw the young*

Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

3. The magi were men who
 - a. read and believed God's Word,
 - b. sought Jesus,
 - c. recognized the worth of Christ,
 - d. humbled themselves to worship Jesus,
 - e. obeyed God rather than man.

II. Failure to Accept the Miraculous

A. Jonah and the Whale

1. Jonah Everybody knows that the throat of a whale is so narrow that no man could possibly go down it.
2. The Bible never says "whale". A great fish.
 - a. **Jonah 1:17** - *Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*
3. "Whale" the Greek refers to a "sea monster," while the Hebrew story expressly states that God "prepared a great fish" The word "whale" is not used either in the Greek New Testament story or in the Hebrew Old Testament story.
4. Jonah exhibits a literary style befitting a historical account, not myth, parable or allegory.
5. Second Kings 14:25 lists Jonah as an actual Jewish prophet.
6. Jesus Himself certainly took the story to be literally true. Matt. 12 and Luke 11.
 - a. **Matt. 12:40** - *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*
7. Jonah's preservation within the body of the fish was miraculous, as was the creature's unique bout of nausea.
8. God had power to create the universe. He could not intervene within the created order. Miraculous acts of God are logically possible.
9. One time there came home from Sunday School a little boy who said to his father that he did not believe the Sunday School lesson that day. When the father asked the lad what the lesson was about, the little boy replied that it concerned Jonah and the whale and that he did not believe the story. The father took the little boy on his knee and said: "Son, I also have difficulty with that story. You tell me your difficulty and I will tell you mine." The little boy replied: "Well, Daddy, my difficulty is that I just do not believe such a thing ever happened. I do not believe that a man could live in the stomach of a whale for three days and come out alive." The father then replied "Son, by difficulty with the story is not quite what yours is. My difficulty is this: I cannot understand how God could make a whale. If I could understand those two things, it would be very easy for me to understand how God could put the two together." Could Jonah Really Have Survived in the Belly of a Whale?

B. Without Miracles the Bible is just another Book

1. "Miracle" is a signature of God.
2. Bible without miracles would be a Bible without God
3. Miracles are a stumbling block to the naturalist
4. The problem is philosophical, not scientific, in nature.
5. If God exists, then He is free to work.
6. The question of miracles is an historical one. The scientist observes, tests, and

experiments. Proof is empirical. Historical proof in this sense simply does not exist. Historical evidence depends on the credibility of witnesses.

7. The miracles in the Bible were not constant and frivolous as in Mythology.
8. Miracles were clustered at the introduction of an era to validate God's intervention: miracles attended Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the prophets in the divided kingdom, Christ, and the apostolic church.
9. The provision of the bread for the hungry crowd pointed to the Bread of Life. All the miracles of Christ were signs showing who He was.

C. Naturalist Try to explain away Miracles

1. *"Technology and a better understanding of natural processes may explain how these seemingly impossible events occurred. ...Now - with the help of high-tech methods including radar imaging, computer simulation and chemical analysis - scientists are becoming convinced that there may be another dimension to these miraculous tales. What the Bible's authors interpreted as miracles may have been phenomena of nature. ... Popular Mechanics reports these latest scientific explanations of some of the most awe inspiring miracles of the Bible."* (Mike Fillon "Science Solves The Ancient Mysteries of the Bible", by, Dec. 1996, Popular Mechanics. pp. 39,40).
2. How a solar eclipse could cause the darkness at Jesus' crucifixion when in fact Passover takes place when the moon is full. 32
 - a. But the Bible nowhere mentions an eclipse.
3. An unbelieving teacher told her class there were no real miracles in the Bible. She said, "Take for instance, the crossing of the Red Sea. We know this body of water was only about six inches deep." A boy toward the back of the room shouted, "Praise God for the miracle!" The irritated teacher asked, "What miracle?" "god drowned the whole Egyptian army in just six inches of water," said the boy. "That had to be a miracle!"

D. Joshua's Long Day

1. Joshua God's lengthening the day in the battle of Gibeah in the valley of Ajalon.
2. Herodotus, the great Greek historian tells us that the priests of Egypt showed him a record of a long da.
3. Chinese writings state that there was such a day in the reign of a long-ago emperor.
4. The ancient Mexicans also have a record that the sun one time tarried above the horizon far beyond the regular length of day.

III. Preconceived False Doctrines

A. Faith Only

1. Martin Luther decided to insert the word "alone" after faith in his personal translation of Roman's 3:28.
2. Rom. 4 speaks of Abraham as being justified by faith.
3. Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?
4. **Js. 2:21** - *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?*
5. Luther called the Epistle of James an epistle of straw.
6. He even separated the epistle of James for the Bible relegating them to an appendix.
7. **Js. 2:24** - *You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*

B. Kingdom Yet in the Future

1. Matthew 16:28 as a failed prophecy.
 2. **Matt. 16:28** - *Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*"
 3. Pentecost Acts 2, event took place in the lifetime of many who were present to hear Jesus make the statement of Matthew 16:28.
- C. Some Reject the Bible because it does not agree with their beliefs.**
1. Role of Women
 - a. Paul was just a grouchy old bachelor.
 2. Homosexuality

Conclusion

- A. Mark Twain: "My problem is not with the parts of the Bible I don't understand but with those I do!"
- B. Not problems of understanding but problems of faith or of the will.
- C. People do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them.

Questions:

1. Does the information in the center column, margins or footnotes in your Study Bible equivalent to the inspired Words of God in the verses? Explain.
2. Does the Bible ever give an exact date as to the time of the creation?
3. How could Moses have written Deuteronomy when it records his death and events which took place after his death?
4. Why do some people think that there were three wisemen who visited with Jesus?
5. Does the Bible teach that Jonah was swallowed by a whale? Is it unscriptural to say he was swallowed by a whale? Explain.
6. True False Bible without miracles would be a Bible without God.
7. True False A miracle that can be explained by the laws of nature is not a Biblical miracles.
8. Why could the three hours of darkness at Jesus crucifixion not be explained by an eclipse?

9. List some false doctrines which result from personal failures to correctly study the Bible.

10. List some personal beliefs people have today which causes them to reject the Bible.

Application & Discussion:

1. Make a list of good Bible study habits and attitudes which could help students avoid difficulties with the Bible.

Homework: Examine your personal failures at proper Bible study attitudes and habits and start correcting them this week.

More Reasons for Alleged Bible Discrepancies

Introduction

A. Someone will argue: “The Bible is Full of contradictions.”

1. Response: “Name one.” He was unable to produce one.
2. He was merely echoing an assumption he’d heard.
3. Grossly exaggerated.
4. We do disagree with the initial premise that the Scriptures are full of mistakes. It is easy to accuse but another matter to prove.
5. Their information is only secondhand and provides them with an easy excuse for not reading or obeying the Bible. Found not to be errors after all.

B. The Bible is Inerrant

1. **2 Tim. 3:16,17** - *16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
2. **Ps. 119:160** - *The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*

C. Review of other Reasons

1. Personal Presumptions
2. Failure to Accept the Miraculous
3. Preconceived False Doctrines
4. Failure To Reconcile Parallel Accounts
5. Errors in Translating the Bible
6. Use of Archaic Language
7. Inadequate Translation of Words
8. Difficulty Transcribing Numbers
9. Alleged Historical Contradictions
10. Alleged Scientific Contradictions

I. Different Methods for Telling Time

A. When Was Jesus on Crucified?

1. At which hour was Jesus crucified? “Third hour” (Mark 15:25), while John indicates that his trial was still going on at the sixth hour (John 19:14).
2. Without clocks or even calendars rough approximations are the best we get in ancient literature.
3. Sundown to sunrise to sundown - marking time in 12 hour increments.
4. Noon to midnight - marking time in 12 hour increments from either.
5. 9:00 AM “the third hour” from sunrise John was counting from midnight around 6:00 AM
6. Based on John 1:39 there is good reason to think John used the Roman method

of counting from midnight.

B. How Long Was Jesus In the Tomb?

1. Three days and three nights in the tomb?
 - a. **Matt. 12:40** - *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*
 - b. Crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday.
 - c. He was in the tomb two full nights, one full day and part of two days.
 - d. "One day and one night" was an idiom employed - indicating a day.
 - e. Jerusalem Talmud, "We have a teaching, 'A day and a night are an Onah and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it.'" An Onah simply means, "a period of time."
2. After Third day = third day
 - a. **Mark 8:31** - *And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.*
 - b. **Matt. 16:21** - *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*
 - c. **Matt. 27:63** - *saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.'*
 - d. If the phrase, "After three days," had not been interchangeable with the "third day," the Pharisees certainly would have asked for a guard for the fourth day.
 - e. Child will be born before midnight December 31. 11:59 PM, the IRS as being born 365 days and 365 nights of that year.

II. Different Standards of Weight

A. How Many Talents?

1. **2 Ki. 18:14** - *Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.*
2. When the archaeologists discovered the Assyrian record of this transition, the accuracy of which no one questions since it was Sennacherib's own account, the amount of tribute there was stated as being 800 talents of silver, not 300 talents.
3. The standard of calculating talents of gold was the same in Judea and Assyria, but the standard for calculating the talent of silver was all together different for calculating the talent of silver was altogether different in each country. In fact, it took exactly 800 Assyrian talents of silver to equal 300 Heb. talents.

B. Korean Bible cost \$13,000 or \$18 it all depends on whether you use the Korean won or the U.S. dollar.

III. Use of Doublets

A. Do Doublets or Triplets (repeated stories in the Bible) prove contradictions?

B. Examples.

1. The fact that Abraham lied the first time about his wife (who was, in reality, his half sister) would rule out the possibility that he did the same thing a second time (Gen. 12:10-20 and 20:1-13). When Isaac, later on, fell into the same sin, the "doublet"

- suddenly becomes “triplet” Gen. 26:7-11.
2. The two rocks struck by Moses (Ex. 17:1-7; Num. 20:1-3).
 3. The double giving of the tables of the law Ex. 31:18; 32:19 and 34:1-4,28
 4. Comparison of the visit of the angel to Joseph (Matt. 1:18-25) and the announcement made to Mary (Lk. 1:26-38).
 5. The repetition of the Lord’s Prayer, Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4
 6. The Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5-7 and Luke 6:20-29
 7. The two multiplications of bread, Matt. 14:15-21 and 15:32-38
 1. Feeding of the 5000
 2. Feeding of the 4000
 8. We cannot see any reason why Jesus could not have repeated which kind of miracle under slightly different circumstances.
 9. Christ said similar things on different occasions.

IV. Generalizations

A. Perfect Parenting?

1. **Prov. 22:6** - *Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it. Prov 22:6 (NKJV)*
2. Possible meanings:
 - a. “Dedicate the child to God,”
 - b. “Prepare the child for his future responsibilities
 - c. “Exercise or train the child for adulthood”
3. Though he may stray during his young adulthood, he will never be able to get away completely from his parental training and example of a God-fearing home.
4. Does this verse furnish us with an iron-clad guarantee that all the children of conscientious, God-fearing, nobly living parents will turn out to be true servants of God? Will there never be any rebellious children.
5. These maxims are meant to be good, sound, helpful advice.
6. Highlights the correlation between godly instruction and how our children turn out. This is a generalization, not an ironclad promise.
7. **Prov. 22:15** - *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.*
8. The rate of success in child-rearing is extremely high when the parents follow the guidelines of Proverbs.
9. **Eph. 6:4** - *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*
10. They have done their best before God. The rest is up to each child himself.

B. Maxims or generalizations are not contradictions.

1. Many wisdom saying in the book of Proverbs, for example, are not intended to be promises. Maxims of Moral wisdom intended to guide one’s life.
2. We also jump to conclusions by assuming a biblical passage contains the entire truth on a subject. Proverbs are generalizations about life.
 - a. **Prov. 16:3** - *Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts will be established.*
 - b. **Prov. 26:4,5** - *4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. 5 Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.*

V. Figures of Speech

A. What is it?

1. If he meant what he said in a literal way, it is wrong to take it figuratively; but if he meant what he said in a figurative way, it is wrong to take it literally.
2. Jesus often spoke in metaphor and figures of speech.
 - a. He called the Pharisees blind guides (Matt. 23:37)
 - b. Herod a fox (Luke 13:32)
 - c. "I am the true vine" Jn. 15:1.
 - d. "I am the gate" Jn. 10:9
 - e. "This is my body" Matt. 26:26
 - f. Was Jesus referring to His physical body?
 - g. **John 6:53** - *Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."*

B. Hyperbole

1. **Luke 14:26** - *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."*
2. Luke 14:26 does Jesus advocate hating one's mother, father, spouse, and children for His sake?
3. Jesus' teaching leaves no room for truly hating anyone.
4. We are to love even our enemies, Lk. 6:27.
5. The first commandment of the law was to love God and to obey His voice.
6. **Ex. 20:12** - *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you."*
7. Hyperbole (an exaggeration or extravagant statement used as a figure of speech).
8. To hate means to love less
9. Our supreme love must be for Him alone. Everything else (and everyone else) must take second place.
10. **Matthew 10:37** - *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*
11. Measuring our supreme love for Christ against other lesser loves may make these lesser loves seem like hate by comparison.
12. He is speaking here of something relative, as Jesus did when He said that we are to "hate" father and mother (Lk. 14:26).

2. Metaphor

1. **Luke 9:60** - *Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."*
 - a. Certainly the burial of the dead of a father is an important thing. But the demands for the kingdom were even more important in Jesus' view.
 - b. "Let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead. You, however, have a higher priority, for I have now called you to the greater work of proclaiming the kingdom of God to other people".
 - c. The man's son was essentially saying that he wanted to wait to serve the kingdom until the future time.

VI. Progressive Revelation

A. The Bible Does not give every detail at first.

1. The doctrine of Satan was partially worked out in the Old Testament but completed in the New.
2. First-grade teacher never told us about long-division.

3. My algebra teacher did not explain trigonometry either.
 4. Trinity
 5. Holy Spirit
- B. How could Zechariah son of Berechiah be the last of the martyrs?**
1. **Matt. 23:34,35** - *Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.*
 2. Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, who was stoned to death in the court of the temple at the order of King Joash, because Zechariah had the temerity to rebuke the government and the citizenry for their cultivation of idolatry.
 3. **2 Chr. 24:20-22** - *20 Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, He also has forsaken you.' " 21 So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord. 22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The Lord look on it, and repay!"*
 4. Zechariah ben Jehoiada, who died 800 BC, was by no means the last of the OT martyrs.
 5. Zechariah, son of Berechiah (Zech. 1:1), whose ministry began around 520 and ended a bit later than 480 BC
 6. 27 different individuals mentioned in the OT bear the name Zechariah.
- C. Where in the Old Testament are we told that Jannes and Jambres were the magicians who opposed Moses?**
1. **2 Tim. 3:8** - *Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;*
 2. Not a single O.T. verse provides this information.
 3. Due to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 4. Ex. 7:11; 9:11
 5. This legend appears in Pseudo-Philo, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Talmud, Targums, Pliny the Elder AD 23-79 and Apuleius AD 130. The pythagorean philosopher Numenius (second century AD) also speaks for these two.

Conclusion

- A. Bernard Ramm: "A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and the committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put. No other book has been so chapped, sliced, sifted, scrutinized and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology or bells letters of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenant? The Bible is still loved by millions and studied by millions. (Protestant Christian Evidences, 232,33).
- B. We should never let the few parts we can't understand keep us from obeying the many parts we can.

Questions:

1. Is it honest and logical to claim the Bible is full of mistakes before making an effort to investigate the Bible? Explain.
2. When was Jesus crucified?
3. How long was Jesus in the tomb?
4. What is a doublet? Give two Biblical examples.
5. What is a generalization?
6. What don't all children who are trained up properly, stay faithful? Is the Bible wrong?
7. Explain why Jesus is not promoting cannibalism in John 6:53?
8. What is the definition of a hyperbole?
9. What is the hyperbole in Luke 14:26?
10. How could Zechariah son of Berechiah be the last of the martyrs?
11. Where in the New Testament and where in the Old Testament are we told that Jannes and Jambres were the magicians who opposed Moses?

Application & Discussion:

1. How should a Bible student react when coming across an apparent Bible contradiction?

Homework: Pray to God this week for help and wisdom in dealing with apparent Bible contradictions and errors.

Biblical Inerrancy Vs. The Qur'an's Perfection

In the Qur'an can be found over one hundred and thirty references to the Law of Moses (Taure) the Psalms of David (Zabur) and the Gospels (Injil). Just how do Muslims view the Old and New Testaments? The Qur'an declares these to be inspired works of Allah. However, since the Bible conflicts with the Qur'an on many historical events and doctrines and does not mention the coming of Muhammad as Allah's final prophet many Muslims believe the Bible has been corrupted.

Islamic Attacks on the Inerrancy of the Bible

- **Doctrine of Tahrif**

The Muslims teach that the Jewish and Christians scriptures have been corrupted. They call this the Doctrine of tahrif.

"The first five books of the Old Testament do not constitute the original Torah, but parts of the Torah have been mingled up with the other narratives written by human beings and the original guidance of the Lord is lost in that quagmire. Similarly the four Gospels of Christ are not the original Gospels as they came from Prophet Jesus...The original and the fictitious, the Divine and the human are so intermingled that the grain cannot be separated from the chaff. The fact is that the original Word of God is preserved neither with the Jews nor with the Christians. Qur'an on the other hand is fully preserved and not a jot or tittle has been changed or left out of it" (10.6 Alhaj A. D. Ajjola, The Essence of Faith in Islam, 79).

Islam does not hold to the idea that all or most of the Bible has been corrupted and that it contains no truth. The doctrine of tahrif mostly targets the teaches that contradict the Qur'an, such as, the misinterpretation of the coming of Muhammad, the incarnation of Christ, the Trinity, etc.

Jewish Christian Conspiracy Theory

Muhammad goes so far as accusing the Jews and the Christians of conspiring to change the Old Testament for their personal benefit (surah 5:13-15). However, the Jews and Christians were so hostile to each other during these centuries it would be hard to conceive of them co-operating on such a monumental task. First of all, where is the historical evidence of such meetings or conferences ever taking place. The number of copies of either the Old or New Testaments in existence at the time would have made it impossible to change all of them. To successfully alter the Bible they would have had to make similar alterations in all the various translations as well. If they made these changes, why didn't they remove all the unfavorable statements about the Jewish nation found throughout the Old Testament?

- **Bible Writers Not Directly Inspired**

Muslims believe that the Bible is not accurate since God did not write it Himself. The Qur'an was given to Muhammad word for word by the angel Gabriel. Although much of the Qur'an is in first person there are many places where it speaks from human point of view. The first surah is an example of this. "Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds: The Beneficent, the Merciful: Owner of the Day of Judgement. Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help Show us the straight path" (surah 1:2-6).

The fact that the Bible speaks from a human perspective does not negate the idea of Divine inspiration. Throughout the Old Testament the reader will find over and over again the phrases: "Thus says the Lord" or "The word of the Lord came to me" (Is. 1:10,18; 6:8; Jer. 1:4; Ezek. 1:3). Several passages of the New Testament claim that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16a) through the agency of the Holy Spirit. "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13). "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

- **Many Versions**

Muslims argue that there are many different versions of the Bible. This is not an accurate representation of the facts. The King James, the New King James, the Revised Standard, the American Standard, or the New International are not contradicting versions. These are merely different translations of the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts into English. The Bible has been translated into nearly 2000 different languages or dialects. Instead of representing different versions they are merely the same message in a different language.

The Qur'an as well has been translated into several different languages. Would it be fair to argue that there are many different or differing versions of the Qur'an. The message of the Qur'an has not been changed. Neither has the message of the Bible been changed by various translations.

- **4000 Different Gospels**

Muslim apologist Ahmed Deedat claimed "Out of over four thousand differing manuscripts the Christians boast about, the church fathers just selected four which tallied with their prejudices and called them Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John" (8.20 Ron Rhodes). Although there may be many different copies of ancient manuscripts in existence these do not represent different or differing gospels. We have thousands of manuscripts of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Several hundred of these may be of Matthew or Mark or Luke or John. This would not add up to be several hundred different gospels, but multiple copies of the four Gospels.

The four Gospels may differ in content, but they are the same. One may provide different details or events of the life of Jesus, but they do not contradict each other. Many have been able to harmonize the four Gospels into one story. This would not be possible if they were differing Gospels.

Muslims may be confusing the various manuscripts with the pseudo-gospels written by gnostics starting in the late second century. At most there are a dozen different gnostic gospels not 4000. These are not included in the New Testament because they contradict the rest of the Bible and each other. Only the Gospels which are considered inspired by God have been included into the New Testament.

Historically Unreliable

Muslims attack the historical reliability of the Bible. Time and space will not permit an exhaustive list of the supposed historical inaccuracies.

Before the flood of Noah's day the descendants of Adam lived to be over nine hundred years of age. God told Noah He would shorten it to "one hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3). Yet, Muslims argue that the descendants of Noah lived far beyond that age. God never promised the age reduction would be immediate. It instead came about gradually. In fact, the inspired author of these words, Moses, lived to be exactly one hundred and twenty years (Deut. 34:7).

Islam also sees a historical contradiction with the genealogical lists of Matthew and Luke. According to Luke Jesus' grandfather was Heli, but Matthew lists Jacob as the name of Jesus' grandfather. The answer to this alleged discrepancy is simple. While Matthew traces Jesus' paternal genealogy through his legal father Joseph, Luke traces it through His mother, Mary.

In fact, no other book of antiquity is as historically accurate as the Bible. Nelson Glueck wrote, "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of Archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible" (11.46 Geisler).

- **Scientific Inaccuracy**

A modern Muslim apologist, Maurice Bucaille, contends that Genesis 1 is “a masterpiece of inaccuracy from a scientific point of view” (10.28 Geisler). Each point and day of creation is shown to be illogical and scientifically unacceptable. The scientific information used to refute Genesis 1 is from the highly speculative theories of evolution. Indeed the creation of the sun and moon after the creation of the Earth does not work with the prevailing views of science about the evolution of our solar system (Gen. 1:14-19). However, the scientific inaccuracies are only valid if you believe in evolution. In the Bible God is the all-powerful creator and in the Qur’an Allah is the mighty one who can do all things. Therefore, whether you are a Muslim or a Christian creation is a supernatural event that cannot be explained by scientific laws.

Defense of Biblical Inspiration

◆ **The Qur’an Borrows from the Bible**

As mentioned in a previous lesson, much of the content of the Qur’an can be traced back to the Bible as its original source. To attack the inspiration of the Bible and its content is to indirectly discredit the Qur’an. To remove all the Biblical influence found in the Qur’an would destroy it. Muslims also use select passages from both the Old and New Testaments to prove the prophethood of Muhammad. Ironically, Islam claims this very Bible to be corrupt.

◆ **The Bible Considered Inspired by Qur’an**

The Qur’an validates the legitimacy of the Bible. Allah commanded Muhammad to seek help from those who read the Bible in order to eliminate any doubts. “And if thou (Muhammad) art in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto thee, then question those who read the Scripture (that was) before thee. Verily the truth from thy Lord hath come unto thee. So be not thou of the waverers” (surah 10:94). The Qur’an specifically supports the inspiration of the Torah and the Gospel “He hath revealed unto thee [Mohammed] the Scripture with truth, confirming that which was (revealed) before it, even as he revealed the Torah and the Gospel” (surah 3:3). In fact, the Qur’an goes to great lengths showing the many prophets of the Bible that were inspired by Allah. “We divided them into twelve tribes, nations; and We inspired Moses” (surah 7:160). “And We inspired Moses and his brother” (surah 10:87). “Lo! We inspire thee as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him, as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as We imparted unto David the Psalms;” (surah 4:163). It even claims the Allah inspired the teachings of Jesus through the Holy Spirit (surah 2:87). Sublime titles are given by the Qur’an to the Bible, such as: “The Book of God,” “The Word of God,” “the lucid Book,” “A light and guidance to man,” “A decision for all matters,” “A guidance and mercy,” “The illumination,” etc.

Oddly enough the Qur’an suggested that the same God produced both the Qur’an and the Bible. “And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better save with such of them as do wrong; and say: We believe in that which hath revealed unto us and revealed unto you; our God and your God is One, and unto Him we surrender” (surah 29:46). “We believe in God and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Tribes, to Moses, Jesus and that given to all prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between them and bow to God in submission” (Surah 2:136).

The Qur’an claims that the Bible is the Word of God and should be followed by both Jew and Christians (surahs 2:285; 3:3; 48; 70; 184; 5:44; 46:77; 5:68; 6:91, 154; 11:110; 17:2,4,14; 19:12,30; 21:7; 23:49; 24:35; 28:2, 43,52; 29:46; 32:23; 37:117; 40:53; 41:45; 45:16; 57:25, 26,27a; 62:5; 98:4).

◆ **The Bible is Immutable**

Muslims claim that the Bible is “The word of Allah” (surah 72:75). The Qur’an claims that God’s Word (both the Qur’an and the Bible) is inerrant and cannot be changed. “there is none to change the words of Allah [meaning that the Bible could not be altered], and certainly there has come to you some information about the messengers” (surah 6:34). “HE said: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a book [the Bible]; my Lord neither errs nor forgets” (surah 20:52). “And recite that which hath been

revealed unto thee of the Scripture of thy Lord. There is none who can change His words, and thou wilt find no refuge beside Him" (surah 18:27). "There is no changing the Words of Allah" (surah 10:64). Therefore, the Bible must be inerrant and has not been changed.

The Bible argues against the possibility of corruption. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Is. 40:8). "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

If Allah has the ability to preserve the Qur'an from corruption for fourteen centuries, why could he not do the same for the Bible. If Allah cannot preserve his word then he is not omnipotent. Either Allah can protect his word from corruption or he cannot. If he cannot then the Qur'an is wrong about its claims about Allah and is not inspired by him.

If the Bible has not been preserved than Allah is not its author. The Qur'an claims he is the author. Therefore, the Qur'an is wrong. If the Qur'an is wrong it is not from Allah, because Allah is perfect. The Bible and the Qur'an contradict each other to such a point that they must have two different authors.

◆ **The Qur'an Condemns Those Who Reject God's Word**

Those who reject the words of Allah are unjust and will be punished. "But the unjust deny the communications of Allah" (surah 6:33). "Surely they do disbelieve in the communications of Allah, they shall have a severe chastisement; and Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution" (surah 3:4). Muslims reject the words of Allah by rejecting the Old and New Testaments, therefore they will be punished. Islam cannot escape these conclusions without rejecting the Qur'an.

◆ **The Qur'an Contradicts the Bible**

The older revelation must be the judge of all so-called new revelations. Thus the Bible must be the standard which judges all new revelations including the Qur'an itself. Even the Qur'an treats the Bible as the barometer of truth. "And that which we have revealed to you of the Book [Bible], that is the truth verifying that which is before it; most surely with respect to His servants Allah is Aware, Seeing" (34:31). If Allah inspired the Bible, the Quran will never contradict the Bible, otherwise Allah would be contradicting himself.

The fact is, the Qur'an does contradict the Bible. Concerning the crucifixion of Jesus it states, "They killed him [Jesus] not, nor did they cause his death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them as such" (surah 4:157). The Bible claims the Jesus is the Son of God. The Qur'an emphatically denies this. Therefore, The Qur'an does contradict the Bible.

Since both the Bible and the Qur'an cannot be right. The Qur'an states the Bible is Allah's word that cannot be changed. Then it follows that when the Qur'an disagrees with the Bible it must be in error. Perhaps, it is the Qur'an and not the Bible that has been corrupted.

◆ **Massive Manuscript Evidence**

Allah would not have encouraged Muhammad to rely on a corrupted Bible. Muhammad would not have asked fellow Muslims or Christians or Jews to accept a corrupted version of the Bible. Thus, some Muslims say that the Bible must have been corrupted after the time of Muhammad.

The number of Bibles that predated Muhammad are numbered into the thousands. Many more Bibles in various languages were made during and since the time of Muhammad. The content of both groups of Bibles are virtually identical.

At Qumran near the Dead Sea in 1947 a vast set of well preserved manuscripts of the Old Testament were found in two caves. When compared to the oldest manuscripts used at the time the accuracy was incredible. No corruption of the text had taken place. The text of the Old Testament is the same today as it was six hundred years before Muhammad.

◆ **Few Variants**

One Muslim writer argues, "It is admitted by the most learned men in the Hebrew language, that the present English version of the Old Testament contains at least 100,000 errors (this would amount to approximately three errors in every verse)" (8.9 Ron Rhodes).

The above statement does not represent the facts. There are about 200,000 errors or variants

found among the thousands of different ancient copies of the Bible. Most of these are variant spellings or grammatical errors or a change in word order. To put these in a proper perspective of the 5,300 manuscripts of the New Testament one word with one letter change in 2000 manuscripts would equal 2000 variants. This alone would account for one percent of the 200,000 errors. Over ninety-nine percent of these errors or variants are insignificant and do not affect the meaning of the text. For example, if five variants are found among five manuscripts you would still be able to understand the meaning of the original writer.

- 1) Jesus Christ is the Son of God
- 2) Christ Jesus is the Son of God
- 3) Jesus Christ is God's Son
- 4) Jesus is the Son of God
- 5) Jesus Christ is hte Son of God

Because of its age and the number of manuscripts available for comparison the Bible is the most accurately transcribed book in the world. The Qur'an is only a medieval book. Uthman had all the divergent copies of the Qur'an burned so that he could standardize the text.

Summary

It is easy to make a claim that the Bible has been corrupted. Providing genuine proof that it has been corrupt is not so easy. Just because the Bible contradicts the Qur'an is not proof of its corruption.

According to Islamic doctrine the Bible cannot be corrupted. The Qur'an accepts the Bible as the Word of God. The Qur'an says the Word of God cannot be corrupted. Therefore, the Bible is not corrupted.

Questions:

1. What is the Muslim doctrine of tahrif?
2. Why is a Jewish/Christian conspiracy to change and thus corrupt the Old Testament very unlikely?
3. True False Muslims believe that the Bible is not accurate since God did not write it Himself.
4. True False The Qur'an is always written in first person with Allah doing the speaking?
5. List passages showing the Bible claims to be inspired of God.
6. Why do Muslims believe there are many different and differing Bibles?
7. The Muslims argue that there were over 4000 gospels and that Christians on chose the four the liked to be included in the New Testament. Explain why this is not true.

8. Give an example of where Muslims say that the Bible is historically unreliable? Explain.
9. Give an example of where Muslims say that the Bible is scientifically inaccurate? Explain.
10. Why is it ironic for Islam to claim that the Bible is unreliable because it has been so corrupted?
11. True False Allah commanded Muhammad to seek help from those who read the Bible in order to eliminate any doubts.
12. List the Biblical prophets that the Qur'an claim were inspired by Allah?
13. According to the Qur'an can the Word of God be changed or corrupted?
14. According to the Qur'an what will happen to those who reject the Word of God?
15. Give an example of how the Qur'an contradicts the Bible?
16. Explain how the Dead Sea scrolls can be used to refute the Muslim argument that the Bible has been corrupted throughout the years.
17. Are there there errors to every verse in the Bible? Explain.

Application & Discussion:

1. *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).* How does this verse apply to this lesson?

Homework: Talking to a Muslim neighbor about his need to read the Bible.

Is the Bible Filled with Myths Like Unicorns?

Unicorns are mentioned in the King James version of the Bible nine times, in five different books (Numbers 23:22; 24:8; Deuteronomy 33:17; Job 39:9,10; Psalms 22:21; 29:6; 92:10; and Isaiah 34:7). They are mentioned by at least five different authors: by Balaam, Moses, David, Isaiah, and even God himself in the book of Job. In some of these passages unicorns are included among known species of animals.

According to the current definition of a unicorn in the English language a unicorn is “a fabled creature symbolic of virginity and usu. represented as a horse with a single straight spiraled horn projecting from its forehead...Lat., having one horn: unis, one;...cornu, horn...” (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 3rd edition, 1475).

The mention of a fabled creature as if it were a real animal has given many skeptics cause to attack veracity of God and His Word. From a wide variety of sources on the internet one can find many of their arguments:

- ▶ “I’m an a-unicornist, just like I’m an a-theist.”
- ▶ “I don’t believe in unicorns, nor do I believe in God.”
- ▶ “There’s as much evidence for unicorns as for God.”
- ▶ Atheist’s apologist Richard Dawkins is pleased however, having “disproved” the existence of unicorns to extend his method to the question of God.
- ▶ “If you believe in God, you believe in unicorns.”
- ▶ “If we are going to use the bible for science we have some tough things to explain. What are you going to do? Where are the unicorns talked about in the Bible?”
- ▶ “No scientist has ever found a fossil of one.”

Is the Bible just a collection of fair tales including such mythical creatures as the unicorn? Do the Bible’s unicorns parallel the mythological monsters, such as, Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster.

It is true that legends of the unicorn abound throughout many cultures. The Chinese philosopher Confucius was believed by his mother to be special because she was visited by a unicorn. In 551 B.C. Confucius’ pregnant mother met one in the woods and was given a small jade as the unicorn placed its head in her lap. At the end of his life Confucius himself saw a unicorn and believed it to be an omen concerning his coming death. The unicorn also figures into Jewish legends. The Midrashim associate the unicorn with Adam. When he left Eden with Eve the unicorn came with them as a simple of virtuousness and decency. The creature is also referenced in the Talmud. Folk tales among the Jews claim the unicorn to be the more fierce animal able to kill even an elephant with a single thrust of its horn. According to folklore all died out because they were too large for Noah to stow on the ark. However, another tale claims they swam the duration of the flood. Various forms of Christianity throughout the ages have made mention of the unicorn. Augustine claimed its single horn symbolized the unity of the church. The unicorn was considered a type of Christ who spiritually provided man with the horn of salvation. Other Christian legends used the unicorn as an emblem of chastity.

The horn of a unicorn has been sought by many famous figures of history. King James I of England paid ten thousand pounds sterling for a unicorn horn. Another pseudo unicorn horn went for

twelve thousand pieces of gold paid by Pope Paul III. These fake horns have turned out to be in many cases a stag's horn or an elephant's tusk. The most realistic looking horns often depicted in art are the spiral horns from the male narwhal. It is a species of whale found in the arctic ocean.

Why is it important to explore the concerns over the use of the term "unicorn" as it is mentioned in the Bible? It is of grave concern if the Bible does pander to pagan mythology. If the Bible treats one fabled creature as if it is real how can anyone trust the Bible in regard to its claims concerning the miracles of the Bible or the existence of heaven or hell or God as Creator or Jesus Christ as His Son? Christians are to defend the Bible. Peter commanded, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

Are the Unicorns of the Bible Symbolic Creatures?

In the prophecies of Daniel is mentioned a singled-horned goat. "And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes" (Daniel 8:5). However, this is an obvious use of figurative language used in apocalyptic literature.

In the King James Version in the nine times "unicorn" is used in this translation, it symbolizes power. This is true even in those passages where the unicorn is treated as a real animal.

- ▶ Numbers 23:22 - "God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an **unicorn**."
- ▶ Numbers 24:8 - "God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an **unicorn**: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows."
- ▶ Job 39:9 - "Will the **unicorn** be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?"
- ▶ Job 39:10 - "Canst thou bind the **unicorn** with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?"
- ▶ Psalms 29:6 - "He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young **unicorn**."
- ▶ Psalms 92:10 - "But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an **unicorn**: I shall be anointed with fresh oil."
- ▶ Deuteronomy 33:17 - "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of **unicorns**: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."
- ▶ Psalms 22:21 - "Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the **unicorns**."
- ▶ Isaiah 34:7 - "And the **unicorns** shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness."

Are Unicorns Real?

Unicorn horses are unknown in natural history. However there are genetic disorders of horned animals. In Italy a roe deer was discovered with one horn in the middle of its forehead in 2008. However, it was an unusual genetic mutation which did not give the animal more power or strength.

The Bible does indeed treat unicorns just as real as the well known animals found mentioned within the same context. In the book of Job God is asking the patriarch a list of questions concerning his knowledge concerning zoology. God cites the unicorn in the context of familiar animals, such as, peacocks, lambs, lions, bullocks, goats, donkeys, horses, dogs, eagles, and calves (Job 39:9f). In this passage God reminds Job of the unicorn "whose strength is great" and is ineffective for agricultural work. An imaginary fantasy animal would have defeated the purpose of God's illustration. In other passages it is pointed out they are known to skip like calves (Psalm 29:6), traveling like bullocks, and bleeding when

they die (Isaiah 34:7).

After an honest investigation of the use of “unicorn” in the Bible and the contexts in which it is used, this writer has come to some conclusions. First, unicorns in at least some places in the Bible are real creatures. Secondly, based upon an understanding of what is being referred to in the Bible as unicorns, it is also believed they are real animals which can be found in nature and zoos today. An explanation will come in next week’s article.

Nine times in the King James Version unicorns are mentioned as bona fide creatures right along with well-known animals. Did unicorns exist in Bible times? Yes they did! Do they now exist? This author has seen several up close at multiple zoos across the country.

How Do Modern Translations Read?

Today the Bible student is blessed with having the Bible translated into English and many other languages over and over again. This often aids in research by giving various scholars a chance to interpret the meaning of some rare or obscure words found in the Hebrew or Greek texts. Translators are widely divided over how to translate the Hebrew term used for unicorn into modern English. Consider the list below showing the various number of translations which differ and how many claim it was a “wild oxen.”

- wild oxen - 18
- buffalo - 1
- rams - 1
- oxen - 1
- bullocks - 1
- wild animals - 1

Many of the foreign translations also differ as to how to render the term. The four French versions all refer to buffalo (buffles). The dozen Spanish versions also refer mostly to buffalo (búfalos), but with wild oxen (bueyes salvajes) and wild bull (toros salvajes) as variants.

The Hebrew word is translated as “ox” or “wild ox” in every other English version of the Bible. Why do so many modern translations use “wild oxen”? Technically, there is not such thing as a wild ox. An ox is a domesticated bull. The English word “unicorn” in modern Hebrew is had-keren, which is the compound of two words: qeren meaning “horn” and “had” (from ‘echad) meaning one. The term is clearly equivalent to the meaning of uni (one) and -corn (horn).

Some believe the Hebrew term re'em is actually derived from an Assyrian word for a auroch which was a wild bull. Note the similarity between the Assyrian word rimu and the Hebrew word re'em. When they are depicted on Ashurnasirpal II's palace wall and the stone prism of Esarhaddon their profile gives the appearance of a one-horned bovine. However, it is highly unlikely the Hebrews or Assyrians borrowed terms from their unrelated languages in this case.

Why Did the King James Version Use “Unicorn”?

The King James version followed the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Septuagint which translated re'em with a term meaning a “one-horned” beast. Martin Luther also translated it into a similar German term. Words change in mean over time, it is also prudent for translators to understand the meaning of a term as it was understood by the audience who read these Old Testament books. This is also true of the readers of the King James version when it was published four hundred years ago. In the original printing of the King James, the term unicorn found in Isaiah 34:7 has a footnote which reads, “Or Rhinoceros.” In the Latin text of Job 39:9 the Hebrew term is translated “rinoceros.” (numquid volet rinoceros servire tibi, aut morabitur ad praesepe tuum). Out of the nine scripture verses that mention unicorns, there are five different Latin words that are being used:

- rinoceros
- rinocerotis
- rinocerota
- unicornium
- unicornis

Back in 1828 if one looked up the definition of unicorn in Noah Webster's Dictionary, they would find the following definition: "An animal with one horn; the monoceros. this name is often applied to the rhinoceros." If they turned back to the read the meaning of "rhinoceros", they would find: "A genus of quadrupeds of two species, one of which, the unicorn, has a single horn growing almost erect from the nose. This animal when full grown, is said to be 12 feet in length. There is another species with two horns, the bicornis. They are natives of Asia and Africa." So, whether one goes to the English of four hundred years ago or two hundred years ago they would discover "unicorn" was another term from "rhinoceros."

When compared to the Biblical references portraying the characteristics of unicorns it is easy to see how the rhinoceros fits the description. A full-grown rhino has great strength (Num. 23:22; 24:8). They are not easily penned in an animal coral (Job 39:9). It would be suicide to try to hitch them up to a plow (Job 39:10). They have been known to skip when they are moving fast (Ps. 29:6). They have one horn (Ps. 92:10). Rhinos can push with their horns (Deut. 33:17). One would need great help to be delivered from the threat of their horns (Ps. 22:21).

Today, science recognizes five distinct species of rhinoceros. Three of these have two horns and the two other species have one horn. In fact, the scientific name of the Asian One-Horned Rhinoceros (also known as the Indian Rhinoceros or the Javan Rhinoceros) is *rhinoceros unicornis*. This in contrast to the two-horned Black Rhino known in science as the *dicerus bicornis* (two-horned). *Unicornis* and *bicornis* are Latin words. Scientists often refer to an adult male rhinoceros as a bull. Eric Dinerstein's book about the one-horned rhinoceros is titled: "The return of the Unicorns."

The Greek term for unicorn is *monoceros*. It was the term found in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. They were aware of the Indian rhino. Pliny the Elder mentions the an Indian ox as one-horned beasts, as well as "a very fierce animal called the monoceros which has the head of the stag, the feet of the elephant, and the tail of the boar, while the rest of the body is like that of the horse; it makes a deep lowing noise, and has a single black horn, which projects from the middle of its forehead, two cubits in length" (Book 8. Chapter 31).

Marco Polo described the one-horned rhino as "scarcely smaller than elephants. They have the hair of a buffalo and feet like an elephant's. They have a single large black horn in the middle of the forehead... They have a head like a wild boar's... They spend their time by preference wallowing in mud and slime. They are very ugly brutes to look at. They are not at all such as we describe them when we relate that they let themselves be captured by virgins, but clean contrary to our notions."

So called-prehistoric man depicted one-horned woolly rhinoceros in their pictographs. Scientist know of a now extinct *elasmotherium sibiricum* which was a giant one-horned rhinoceros often referred to as "The Giant Unicorn."

Today's definition of the word "unicorn" says absolutely nothing about a rhinoceros, and today's definition of "rhinoceros" says absolutely nothing about a unicorn. The definitions have changed over time. However, it is clear that the translators of the King James Version were referencing the one-horned rhinoceros and not the fabled horse like creature of mythology with a single-horn protruding from its forehead.

If you cannot trust God to know the difference between a mythical creature and reality how can you call His word inerrant? If His Word is errant how can you thrust your soul's salvation to an fraudulent Bible? But God's Word is truth, it is not filled with myths. Our Bible is trustworthy or reliable.

Questions:

1. How many time are "unicorns" mentioned in the King James Bible?

2. Unicorn in Hebrew is Had-keren which means...

- a) one horn
- b) auroch
- c) wild ox
- d) hello kitty

3. Matching

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| _____ Confucius | a. horn used as a fake unicorn horn |
| _____ Jewish folklore | b. when they left paradise the unicorns went with them |
| _____ drown in Noah's flood | c. able to kill an elephant with a single blow |
| _____ atheists | d. paid 10,000 pounds sterling for a fake unicorn horn |
| _____ Adam and Eve | e. believe the Bible to be filled with myths |
| _____ Augustine | f. unicorns too big to fit in ark |
| _____ Narwahl whale | g. Believed the horn of the unicorn to be a symbol of the unity of the faith of the church |
| _____ King James I | h. His mother met unicorn in woods which foretold his birth |
| _____ Pope Paul III | i. Paid 12,000 pieces of god for one |

4. True False Unicorns are known for their great power in the Bible.

5. True False Single-horned animals are never found in the animal kingdom.

6. True False The book of Job lists the unicorns among real animals like peacocks, lambs, lions, bullocks, goats, donkey, horses, dogs, eagles, and calves.

7. From Noah Webster's Dictionary (1828). _____ an animal with one horn; the monceros, this name is often applied to the rhinoceros.

8. From Noah Webster's Dictionary (1828). _____ a genus of quadrupeds of two species, one of which, the unicorn, has a single horn growing almost erect from the nose. This animal when full grown, is said to be twelve feet in length. There is another species with two horns, the bicornis. They are natives of Asia and Africa.

9. In Isaiah 34:7 in the original printing of the King James Version, when the word "unicorn" is used there is a footnote that said "or _____".

10. The scientific name for the Asian one-horned rhinoceros is: _____

11. Which for the following words have been translated in the place of “*unicorn*” in some translations?
- a) wild oxen
 - b) elephant
 - c) hippo
 - d) buffalo
 - e) oxen
 - f) wild animals
 - g) rhino
 - h) dinosaur
 - i) rams
 - j) bullocks

12. Matching:

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ Pliny the Elder | a. mentions a very fierce animal called the monoceros meaning “one horn” |
| _____ Marco Polo | b. Place where one can see a real live “unicorn” |
| _____ woolly rhinoceros | c. wrote that the unicorns have the hair of a buffalo and feet like an elephant. They have a single large black horn in the middle of the forehead. |
| _____ zoo | d. a book about the single-horned rhinoceros |
| _____ “The Return of the Unicorns”
a book by Eric Dinerstein | e. single-horned extinct animal |

Application & Discussion:

1. There are thirty-four references to “*dragons*” in the King James Version. How can you explain this when most people believe that dragons are mythical creatures?

Homework: Explain to someone that the Bible is not filled with myths. However, many misunderstand the Bible words. Use unicorns as an example.

Does God Condone or Overlook Lying?

God hates lying. *“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight”* (Proverbs 12:22). He hates *“a lying tongue”* and *“a false witness that speaketh lies”* (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Although all men can and do lie God does not. *“Let God be true but every man a liar”* (Rom. 3:4). *“And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent”* (1 Samuel 15:29). God will never break one of His promises. *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* (Numbers 23:19). For God to hate lying and then lie would be the very height of hypocrisy.

As previously noted from Scripture God cannot and does not lie. He never has or will He ever practice any form of dishonesty. Are there instances when lies or deceptions are appropriate, justified or at least to be overlooked by God? Would God ever reward lying?

According to the observation of some students of the Bible it would appear there are times when God allows men and women to lie with impunity and even with God's blessing. Does the Lord have a double-standard? Is God dishonest about the sinfulness of lying?

The God of the Bible never commends, commands or rewards lying. However, men of God have never been perfect or flawless. Sometimes their faith in God is lacking. They attempt to save themselves from trouble. Momentarily they fail to realize that God could have delivered them from evil without them fabricating a story. Even though the people who told lies in the Bible did not always get in trouble, God knew and disapproved of the lies they were involved in. This is true even when He does not specifically address the sin or punish them for it. Again, this does not necessarily mean that God approves or condones such a sin.

The Bible is filled with myriads of illustrations of good men of faith in God resorting to telling lies instead of trusting in God. Abraham, a friend of God, falls into this category. On two occasions Abraham passed off his wife Sarah as his sister in order to save himself from getting killed. In the first instance Abraham lied by omission to Pharaoh. A famine afflicted Canaan so severely that Abraham felt he had to move to Egypt to survive. *“And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. ...Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.” ... And Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?”* (Genesis 12:11,13,18). In fact, Abraham was asking Sarai to tell the truth - she was his “sister.” This is partly true. Yet he implores her to leave out the part about being married. Nevertheless, he obviously meant to convey non-marriage with Sarah. The threat to his life was real. Pharaoh could have murdered Abraham to seize his beautiful wife for the kings' harem. Abraham's ploy did not keep Sarah from being taken into Pharaoh's harem. Note, she was still beautiful after sixty-five. In return the king of Egypt bestowed lavish gifts upon Abraham (Gen. 12:16;13:2). God showed his disapproval of this situation by striking Pharaoh with a sudden illness. He could not take Sarah to his bed before he fell deathly ill. After finding out Sarah was Abraham's wife, Pharaoh's conscience was pained with the thought he came close to committing adultery with another man's wife. Although Pharaoh realized Abraham had acted logically to save his life, he felt deceived. He sent Abraham out of Egypt with the gifts. This does not imply God approved of Abraham's lie. Instead, the patriarch's lack of faith was

manifested by this entire episode.

Later, Sarah laughed at the promise of God to bless her with a son within the year. When confronted with this irreverent response to God's promise, she lied to God. Angels sent by God asked Abraham, *"Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, 'Here, in the tent.' And He said, 'I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.'* (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.) Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, *'After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?'* And the Lord said to Abraham, *'Why did Sarah laugh, saying, "shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?" Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.'* But Sarah denied it, saying, *'I did not laugh,' for she was afraid. And He said, 'No, but you did laugh!'"* (Genesis 18:9-15). God kept His promise and gave her the miraculous son of promise: Isaac. "Isaac" means "He will laugh." The fact Sarah lied and was still blessed by God does not prove God approved of her lie. It only proves God always keeps His promises.

Once more out of fear for his life Abraham deceived Abimelech concerning the true nature of his relationship to Sarah, his wife. After the ruse was discovered Abraham explained the situation to Abimelech. *"Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife"* (Gen. 20:11-12). He was given a thousand shekels by way of atonement for Abimelech's having taken Sarah into his palace. Although he had not touched Abraham's wife. God is not allowing Abraham to be blessed because he lied, but in spite of his lie. God is keeping His promise that He would bless His servant.

Abimelech was also told this same lie for the same reason by Abraham's son, Isaac. *"So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife," because he thought, "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold."* Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, *"Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, 'She is my sister?'"* Isaac said to him, *"Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.'" And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us."* So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, *"He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."* Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him. *The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him"* Gen. 26:6-14). Again, God kept His promises to bring blessings to Abraham and Isaac in spite of the fact Isaac lied to protect himself.

After God blesses Isaac and Rebekah with twin sons, the lies continue. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for some bread and a bowl of lentils. As God prophesied the young brother, Jacob, supplanted his elder brother, Esau. (Genesis 25:31-34). With the help of his mother, Jacob lied to his father saying, *"I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."*²⁴ Then he said, *"Are you really my son Esau?"* He said, *"I am"* (Genesis 27:19,24). Once more God permits a liar to be blessed while God Himself keeps His promises.

At a later date Jacob's wife Rachel lies to her father Laban. Rachel was deceptive regarding idols she had stolen (Genesis 31:34-35). God no more approved of her lying than He did her stealing or her idolatry. God's grace is at work in men even though men are at work in unrighteousness.

At this point the pattern of lying found in the lineage of Abraham makes deception a family tradition. Jacob's sons lied to him about what really happened to their little brother, Joseph. At least ten sons of Jacob conspired to sell their brother, Joseph, into slavery. They then lied to their father by deceiving him into believing he was killed by wild beast. Decades later Joseph would allay their fears concerning what

they had done to him when he was but a youth. He said, *“God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt...But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.”* And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them” (Genesis 45:7,8; 50:20,21). While all men keep on lying, all the while God keeps His promises. By Divine providence their sins resulted in God’s mercy. This in no way exonerated them from the evil they did their brother? In fact, they suffered with guilty consciences over the matter.

A lie was used to produce the lineage of King David, thus also leading to the Messiah (Ruth 4:12). Judah’s sons did not produce a son through Tamar. So Judah was tricked by Tamar, which led to his admission of wrongdoing and the birth of an heir of the promises of God (Genesis 38:1-30). Tamar was not directly punished for her lie, but God kept His promise that the Messiah would come through the lineage of Judah. God did not approve of her lie anymore than He approved of their fornication.

The daughter of Jacob, Dinah, was raped by Shechem. Two of her brothers, Simeon and Levi, confronted Shechem and acted like they were not going to seek revenge for this crime. *“But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister”* (Genesis 34:13). The two brothers killed all the men and took their possessions, wives, and children. It would seem they two got off free of punishment for lying and murdering. Levi’s lineage would become the Levitical priesthood of God for Israel. However, Jacob did rebuke and curse these two sons in his prophecy just before he died. (Genesis 49:5-7).

Regardless of all the lying done throughout the generations of Abraham, some things are very apparent: blessings or rewards were not for lying, God’s apparent failure to punishment immediately is not approval for lying, and God always keeps His word, even when men use their words to lie.

The Patriarchs were not the only ones who appear to be blessed even though they lied. Throughout the history of God’s chosen people, the Israelites, lying is common. Sometimes there are actual lies involved and at other times it has been assumed by students of the Bible that lying has taken place. For instance, the midwives are said to have lied to Pharaoh (Ex. 1:15-21). Out of fear concerning the ever increasing population of the Israelites Pharaoh commanded the Israelites midwives, *“when you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live”* (Ex. 1:16). First, they resorted to a strategy of delay. They postponed their response to the call from the woman in labor to such an extent that the baby was already born and safely tucked away in its crib by the time these midwives finally arrived at the house. *“And the midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them”* (Ex. 1:19). They simply did not divulge the fact that their tardy arrival was deliberately planned. They did not tell a lie to Pharaoh. He did not ask them why they were always too late for the delivery. At any rate, God blessed them for their willingness to incur personal danger in order to save the lives of innocent babies. *“And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them”* (Ex. 1:21). The midwives are commended for fearing the Lord and not killing the babies. Both in verse seventeen and twenty-one the motive for their actions is mentioned: they *“feared God.”* This is why they were blessed. The result was lives were spared. Even if they were lying in this situation such lies are not explicitly commanded or approved or rewarded by God.

One of the most famous lairs in both the Old and New Testaments was not an Israelite, but a pagan prostitute living in the doomed city of Jericho. Her name was Rahab. In this story of the destruction of Jericho, she told at least two lies. First, she lied when she said she did not know the two spies were Israelites. *“So she said, ‘Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them’”* (Josh. 2:4,5). The second lie came

when she told those searching for the spies that these Israelites had escaped the city by means of the main gate under the cover of night. Notice the spies never asked Rahab to lie. They may have never known about her lies, especially since they were hiding on the roof of her home (Joshua 2:8). The spies told her to place a scarlet cord in the window as a sign to the Israelite army that she and her family were to be spared because of her help. They were not trying to give approval for her lies but for her faith in risking her life for them. After she was spared in the destruction of Jericho, Rahab joined the Israelites and married Salmon of Judah. She bore him as son, Boaz. This is the same Boaz through whose lineage King David was born. Not only was she an ancestress of David but also of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5,6).

Twice in the New Testament Rahab is honored by God's inspired prophets. The Hebrew writer gave her as an example of faith that is pleasing to God. *"By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace"* (Heb. 11:31). Next James points out her example of justification by faith. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?" (James 2:25).

The actual problem with the story of Rahab is not whether she lied. Clearly she did tell lies. The concern here is whether or not God blesses Rahab as a result of her lies? She was blessed because of her active, obedient faith before God. God blessed her despite her lies.

God no more rewarded Rahab for her lying than he did for her being a harlot. Remember she was a prostitute who lived in a pagan city. Wayne Jackson has observed: "The case of Rahab is an example of where God honored a person due to their obedient faith in spite of a personal character flaw. Consider the following facts about this incident. Rahab was from a pagan environment. Her concept of morality and her personal lifestyle (she was a harlot) needed considerable refining. In spite of this sordid background, she had developed a genuine faith in Jehovah (Josh. 2:9ff.)" [1986, 22:23]. What is surprising here is not Rahab's lying to pagan government officials, but her faith in God. Both New Testament passages praise her faith, they do not mention her lies but her being a prostitute. If the Old Testament story proves God justifies lying to save the two spies, than the New Testament passages prove God justifies prostitution in certain situations. Who can believe it?

Rahab lied. Does this mean she remained a liar throughout her life? Can it be proven that God never held her accountable for her lies or never forgave her? Many men women of faith in the Bible committed sins for which there is not mention of God's direct condemnation or of their repentance. In James 2:23, Abraham is referred to as "the friend of God." Yet he agreed to Sarah's plan to help God's promises to be fulfilled by taking Hagar as a second wife and fathering Ishmael. Furthermore, the incomplete information about Rahab concerning her lies and prostitution in no way should be used to overlook on the plain passages of scripture which condemn the wickedness of both lying and fornication.

The next proof text used by some to claim God approves of lying is found when Rahab's descendant David is announced king of Israel by the prophet Samuel. What if one lies to protect his life or that of a loved one? Wouldn't lying at such a situation be acceptable to God? Some might find such a proof text with 1 Samuel 16: *"Now the LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.' And Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.' And the LORD said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you.' So Samuel did what the Lord said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, 'Do you come peaceably?' And he said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.' Then he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice"* (1 Sam. 16:1-5). Some believe God has instructed Samuel the prophet to lie to King Saul by his failure to tell the rejected king about the real purpose of his visit to the household of Jesse.

First, God reproved Samuel for his continued sorrow over God's rejection of Saul as king, then He sent Samuel to anoint a king from the household of Jesse. However, the old prophet was fearful of what would happen if Saul found out about his orders from God to anoint a new king. Samuel's faith was

not so strong as one would have expected, else he would not have feared the rage of Saul. However, God informed him to take a heifer for sacrifice and say, *"I have come to sacrifice to the Lord."* This statement by God has been interpreted by some as God suggesting that Samuel should lie.

What happened here is not at all inconsistent with the laws of truth; it was proper that Samuel should sacrifice when anointing a king. When Saul was made king there were peace offerings sacrificed at Gilgal. God has a right to request sacrifice. Samuel had a right and responsibility to sacrifice. He told the elders of Bethlehem in a matter of fact way: *"I have come to sacrifice to the Lord"* (v. 5, NASV). All of this was true and demonstrated the prophet's willingness to carry out the instructions of God Himself.

Was there a deception or lie taking place due to the fact that Samuel was not divulging the entire scope of his Divine mission? Only if the withheld information itself was deceitful. Note that it is the Divine prerogative of God to reveal as much of His will as He sees fit. The scriptures are replete with examples of God limiting knowledge of His designs to a few persons and also limiting the amount and pace of His revelation. For example, Moses was not at liberty to tell Pharaoh of God's entire plan for the Israelites (Ex. 7:16; 8:1, 9:13). God was merely setting the limit of the information His prophet was to reveal. This passage is in no way justification for an "expedient lie."

Do we tell all we know on a given subject to just anyone? Refusal to give out privileged and private information is not duplicity and falsehood, but wise. The same God who not only hates lying lips, but also hates those who stir up strife with their words (Prov. 17:14, 28; 20:3). Just think of the quarrels and hurt feelings that would result if we spoke all the facts all the time to all people. Remember, one can freely tell the truth, the whole truth, but still end up sinning with his tongue, by gossiping, stirring up strife, hate, etc.

Consider the previous chapter where Samuel informed Saul that God would take the throne from him. In describing the character of God he said, *"and also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent"* (1 Sam. 15:29). This is in keeping with Hannah's praise of God earlier in the book: "No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God" (1 Sam. 2:2). Surely, the God of 1 Samuel would not suggest His prophet should lie!

Is there evidence from the Word of Truth which would demonstrate God's blessings upon those who tell a lie provided that their motive is "just?" So far investigation of the passages in the Old Testament have shown no proof of this.

It is true that in many other passages, the Bible appears to commend people for using deception. The judge Ehud pretended to carry a message from God to Eglon, King of Moab, when his real mission was to kill him (Jg. 3:16-23). Jael invited the battle weary Sisera into her tent under the pretense of providing him safety, but after lulling him to sleep with warm milk, drove a tent peg through his head (Jg. 4:17-22). She is celebrated for this act that eradicated a mighty adversary of God's people (5:24-27). The Gibeonites deceived the Israelites and appear to be blessed for doing so (Jgs. 16:6-17). King Saul promised to give David his oldest daughter Merab in marriage, but gave her to Adrel instead (1 Sam. 18:17-19). It should not be any wonder that Saul youngest daughter, Michal lies to him. King Saul sent men to David's home to kill him. Michal put an image in the bed and lied to them saying David was sick. When King Saul confronted her concerning this deception, she lied again, claiming David threatened her life (1 Sam. 19:11-17). Were these justifiable lies since she was trying to save the life of her husband, David? Later, Saul's son, Jonathan lied to him. David and Jonathan were best friends. They realized Saul was out to take David's life. David was only going to risk showing up at Saul's table for the new moon feast. As son-in-law to the King he would have been expected to attend. He had Jonathan cover for his absence with a story about David going to Bethlehem to join the rest of his family in celebrating the new moon festival in the house of his father, Jesse (1 Sam. 20:6; 28,29). To protect a friend's life Jonathan was motivated to lie. Is this justifiable? Again in 1 Samuel chapter twenty-one, David lied to Ahimelech, professing to have a mission from the King, in order to obtain provisions and armor. In fact, David was not in King Saul's service; he was running for his life from him. And Jesus referred to the event in which David lied, and used this story as a lesson in Matthew 12:1-4. After Doeg killed on the

priests by order of King Saul, David had to acknowledge how inexcusably guilty he was when he lied to Ahimelech about this mission at Nob and gave the priest no opportunity to choose whether he was willing to court death for David's sake. "So David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have caused the death of all the persons of your father's house (1 Sam. 22:22).

David was described as a man after God's own heart, but he acted out a lie by feigning madness before the Philistines (1 Sam. 21:10-15). He lies to the Philistine king Achish a second time by telling him that he was attacking Jewish towns, when he was actually raiding other Philistine settlements (1 Samuel 27:8-12). Again, there is no censure from God and no penitence from David.

David's sent Hushai the Archite to confuse Ahithophel's council to Absalom. David told him to "say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I was your father's servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me" (2 Sam. 15:34). Hushai's council was better for the true King David. Hushai's council told the truth.

As David lay dying Solomon's succession to the throne was in jeopardy. Nathan the prophet told David's wife and Solomon's mother Bethsheba to go in and present an idea as if it were her own while Nathan came in later with the same message. This deception resulted in securing the throne for Solomon (1 Kings 1:1-34). Did God bless them for lying? No, God kept His word to make Solomon king despite the their deception.

In 1 Kings 22:20-23 there is the story of a "lying spirit" sent out by God to the false prophets of Ahab. Did God promote lies or did God allow a spirit to lie?

God's prophet, Elisha, appears to instruct Hazael to give Ben-hadad a false prophecy (2 Kings 8:10). Elisha was answering the King Ben-hadad's question about his current illness and whether or not he would die. From the sickness he would not die. Bible Knowledge Commentary states: "In response to Ben-Hadad's question, Elisha told Hazael to tell the king that he would certainly recover (as he would have if Hazael would not have interfered)..."

Jehu, while serving the Lord, lied to the worshipers of Baal in order to gain the advantage and destroy them (2 Ki. 10:18-28). Did Jehu sin in using deception in order to do God's will, destroying Baal worship in Israel, a worship for which capital punishment was prescribed?

Before the Kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonians King Zedekiah instructs Jeremiah to lie to the king's officials about the subject of Jeremiah's conversation with the king as a means of saving Jeremiah's life (Jer. 38:24-28). No condemnation is forthcoming from God towards Jeremiah when he follows this advice. Does the end justify the means? Was his lying acceptable behavior before God?

Those who support the view the Bible encourages lying especially when the end result is noble, have turned to New Testament for proof. Paul told the brethren at Corinth "but be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile" (2 Cor. 12:16). Guile is a form of lying. Did Paul use lie to catch the souls of men with the Gospel or lie for the Gospel's sake?

Much of the confusion to whether or not there are passages in the Bible where God encourages, approves, overlooks or just tolerates lying can be resolved with fair and proper methods of interpretation. First, keep in mind the Bible does not give every single detail of a story. Second, many of the events recorded in the Bible do not include any details as to whether God specifically is registering approval or disapproval. Third, God does not always immediately hold men accountable for every sin like with Ananias and Siphira. Fourth, God has been very clear that He will hold all lairs accountable for their words (Matt. 10:38; Rev. 21:8). Furthermore, "If critics of the Bible would consider the Scriptures in their entirety, rather than isolating individual passages in an attempt to justify their preconceived conclusion that the Bible contains contradictions and discrepancies, controversy over such matters would cease to exist" (Miller, Eddie J. (1983), "Did God Approve Rahab's Lie," Words of Truth, 19[12]:4, March 25). Also good students of the Bible will not left select scriptures out of the general context of the teachings of the Bible and use them as "proof-tests" to justify lying. It would be just as logical to point out the multiple wives and concubines of such men as Abraham, Jacob, and David, as proof-texts that God approves of polygamy despite the clear commands through the Bible that marriage was designed by God

to be one man joined with one woman (Mark 10:8; Gen. 2:21; Eph. 5:31). Finally, as Steve Lloyd wrote: "simply because something works out in the end does not imply that the means are justifiable before God" (1990, p. 356).

Questions:

1. Is it possible for God to lie? Explain.
2. Was Sarah in any way Abraham's sister? Did Pharoah and Abhimlech feel they were lied to by Abraham?
3. How did Sarah lie?
4. Is the fact that a liar is blessed by God prove that He approves of their lies? Explain.
5. In Exodus chapter one did the midwives lie to Pharoah?
6. What lies did Rahab tell?
7. How id Rahab honored in the Bible? Is she being honored for lying?
8. Did God command Samuel to lie in 1 Samuel 16:1-5? Explain.
9. List the lies of David?
10. What five fair and proper methods of interpretation should be employed when investigating one of these instances when it appears the God of Truth in encouraging, approving or overlooking the sin of lying?

Application & Discussion:

1. When someone does not divulge all they know is this always the same as lying by omission? Explain.

Homework: Look for the ways in your life you have approved, encouraged or overlooked lying in yourself and others and repent.

Examining Examples of Alleged Contradictions

Study the following examples of alleged Bible contradictions in their contexts. In the space provided resolve these difficulties.

1. God is satisfied with his works (Gen. 1:31)
God is dissatisfied with his works (Gen. 6:6)

2. God knows the hearts of men (Acts 1:24; Ps 139:2,3)
God tries men to find out what is in their heart (Deut. 13:3; Deut. 8:2; Gen. 22:12)

3. God is unchangeable (James 1:17; Mal 3:6; Ezek 24:14; Num 23:19)
God is changeable (Gen 6:6; Jonah 3:10; 1 Sam 2:30,31; 2 Kings 20:1,4,5,6; Ex 33:1,3,17,14)

4. God is to be found by those who seek him (Matt 7:8; Prov 8:17)
God is not to be found by those who seek him (Prov 1:28)

5. God commands, approves of, and delights in burnt offerings, sacrifices, and holy days (Ex 29:36; Lev 23:27; Ex 29:18; Lev 1:9)
God disapproves of and has no pleasure in burnt offerings, sacrifices, and holy days (Jer 7:22; Jer 6:20; Ps 50:13,4; Isaiah 1:13,11,12)

6. God tempts men (Gen 22:1; 2 Sam 24:1; Jer 20:7; Matt 6:13)
God tempts no man (James 1:13)

7. God's attributes are revealed in his works (Rom 1:20)
God's attributes cannot be discovered (Job 11:7; Isaiah 40:28)

8. There is but one God (Deut 6:4)
There is a plurality of gods (Gen 1:26; Gen 3:22; Gen 18:1-3; 1 John 5:7)

9. Killing commanded (Ex 32:27)
Killing forbidden (Ex 20:13)

10. The making of images forbidden (Ex 20:4)
The making of images commanded (Ex 25:18,20)

11. Anger approved (Eph 4:26)
Anger disapproved (Eccl 7:9; Prov 22:24; James 1:20)

12. Good works to be seen of men (Matt 5:16)
Good works not to be seen of men (Matt 6:1)

13. Judging of others forbidden (Matt 7:1,2)
Judging of others approved (1 Cor 6:2-4; 1 Cor 5:12)

14. No work to be done on the Sabbath under penalty of death (Ex 31:15; Num 15:32,36)
Jesus Christ broke the Sabbath and justified his disciples in the same (John 5:16; Matt 12:1-3,5)

15. Baptism commanded (Matt 28:19)
Baptism not commanded (1 Cor 1:17,14)

16. Marriage or cohabitation with a sister denounced (Deut 27:22; Lev 20:17)
Abraham married his sister and God blessed the union (Gen 20:11,12; 17:16)

17. God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex 4:21; 9:12)
Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex 8:15)

18. All the cattle and horses in Egypt died (Ex 9:3,6; 14:9)
All the horses of Egypt did not die (Ex 14:9)

19. John the Baptist was Elias (Matt 11:14)
John the Baptist was not Elias (John 1:21)

20. Abraham had two sons (Gal 4:22)
Abraham had but one son (Heb 11:17)

21. Keturah was Abraham's wife (Gen 25:1)
Keturah was Abraham's concubine (1 Chron 1:32)

22. Abraham begat a son when he was a hundred years old, by the interposition of Providence (Gen 21:2; Rom 4:19; Heb 11:12)
Abraham begat six children more after he was a hundred years old without any interposition of providence (Gen 25:1,2)

23. Christ's witness of himself is true (John 8:18,14)
Christ's witness of himself is not true (John 5:31)
24. Poverty a blessing (Luke 6:20,24; Jams 2:5)
Riches a blessing (Prov 10:15; Job 22:23,24; Job 42:12)
Neither poverty nor riches a blessing (Prov 30:8,9)
25. A fool should be answered according to his folly (Prov 26:5)
A fool should not be answered according to his folly (Prov 26:4)

Dealing With Your Bible Difficulties

We all have had difficulties with certain Bible passages. Below is an example of one with the author has wrestled with and has studied to find a explanation.

After read it, a space is provide in this lesson for you to list your Bible difficulties that you would like the class to help work on together to find an explanation.

Example: “You Are Gods”

Bruce R. McConkie, an “apostle” for the Latter Day Saints, wrote, “But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus Gods” (Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971], 6-33).

How can there be many gods in light of clear passages in the Word of God which claim there is one God? Paul wrote, “*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,*” (1 Tim. 2:5). And in the Old Testament it says, “*I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God...Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one*” (Is. 44:6,8).

However, in the Gospel of John Jesus Himself not only claims to be equal with God but quotes from the Law which calls mere men “gods.” “*Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’?’*” (Jn. 10:34). How can this alleged contradiction in the Bible be reconciled?

It is of primary importance to realize that whatever Jesus is teaching here must be understood in light of the context of both John 10 and Psalm 82. The tenth chapter of John is set in the last year of Jesus’ life. This particular event is situated during the feast of Dedication (present-day Hanukkah). Unbelieving Jews demanded a clear declaration that He was the Christ. “*Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, ‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you’*” (Jn. 10:22-24).

For over three years Jesus has openly performed His miraculous works. The Jews were eyewitnesses to these. His Works and His Words had provided ample proof of His claims. Jesus went on to clearly identify Himself. “*My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one*” (Jn. 10:29,30). To claim the same power as the Father was to claim oneness with the Father. “*I and The Father are one*” is equivalent to saying “*I am the Son of God*” (see 10:30,36).

The Jews immediately saw such a claim as blasphemous. So they tried to stone Jesus (10:31). Jesus answered them, “*Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?*” (10:32). His works proceeded out of the Father and testified of His unity with the Father’s purposes and power. Jesus was making Himself out to be God. Equality (sameness) with God. “*The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God’*” (10:33).

Next, Jesus’ counter-argument may be appear shocking as He quotes Psalm 82:6 to expose the Jews’ inconsistency through an appeal to the authority of Scripture. “*Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’?’*” (10:34). His point is even God in the Law (the book of

Psalms was part of the Law of Moses) calls mere men “gods” and “sons of the Most High.”

In the midst of verse thirty-five Jesus inserts a parenthetical statement: “and the Scripture cannot be broken.” The Words of God stand and must be respected. Every word must stand. Jesus appealed to the authoritative force of Scripture. The Jews believed every word of the Law as from God and these must harmonize their beliefs. God’s Law cannot be set aside when inconvenient to their argument. They must look the use of “gods” in the Psalms and reconcile it with their attack on Jesus.

In Psalm 82 God is addressing human judges and administrators who have been chosen to serve as His representatives in teaching and enforcing His holy Law. God appointed judges among His people as “gods” *“I said, ‘You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High’”* (82:6). These mortals were called “gods” because they stand in God’s place when administering justice. It is as God described the role of Aaron to Moses. *“So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God”* (Ex. 4:16). In a figurative sense, to go before the judge was to go before God (cf. Ex. 21:6; 22:8,9, 28), for they were charged with rendering God’s judgments (Dt. 1:16,17). Yet, the Supreme Judge is warning these judges of men because they have exercised their office unjustly. *“How long will you judge unjustly, And show partiality to the wicked?”* (82:2). Because they failed to judge righteously, God would now judge them. *“God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods.... But you shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes”* (82:1,7). God the Judge judges His judges who are being unjust in the favor of the wicked and to the neglect of others. Although they should have represented His just judgments as God’s representatives, these gods will ironically die like mere mortal men. It was these gods (judges) who should be stoned to death, not Jesus.

Back in John 10, the Jews were not being consistent in their reasoning. Since God’s law called unrighteous men “gods,” their Law could give limited divine status to divinely appointed judges. So why not call Jesus the Son of God? Is He not at least this much. However He is much more than these mortal judges who represented the Divine. They could sin and be judged worthy of death, Jesus could not.

Note that God attaches the name or title “god” to certain men, not to all men, but only “to those to whom the word of God came.” Jesus said, *“If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’”* (10:35,36). Only Christ was sent from heaven to earth. Only He was sanctified (set apart) by God to do His work. Jesus often mentioned His status as the one sent down from God the Father (Jn. 4:34; 5:23,24; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 20:21). He declares to be the Son of God as the judges were called “sons of the Most High” in Psalm 82. However, Jesus is here arguing from the lesser to the greater. By no means, then, does our Lord imply here that we are sons of God just as He is.

Had the Jews believed His works, they would have readily received His words. *“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him”* (10:37,38). The “gods” of Psalm 82 did not do God’s works and were condemned, and yet the Son of God did the works of the Father and the Jews wanted to condemn Him.

The context shows that Jesus was talking to monotheistic Jews who believed whole heartedly in the one God. He was not supporting pagan polytheists who believe there are many gods. Jesus was clearly giving a defense for His own deity. He was not making an argument in favor of the deification of men. An excellent summation of Jesus’ argument goes like this: “If God even called human judges gods with a small g, based on their work of making life-and-death decisions among human beings, how much more can I call myself a Son of God, in view of my many miraculous works.” (Ron Rhodes, *Commonly Misunderstood Bible Verses*, 202).

Use this page to list several Bible Difficulties which trouble you and would like to discuss.