

THE BIBLE: FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS OR AMAZING UNITY?

I. **A foolproof way to deal with contradictions.**

- A. Many people, when confronted with an alleged contradiction, don't know how to deal with it.
1. Some simply believe that there are contradictions and live with it.
 2. Others have their faith shaken by such claims.
- B. However, we need to be able to deal with these claims in a way that shows the Bible to be the inerrant word of God.
1. This is the claim the Bible makes for itself.
 2. 2 Timothy 3:15-16.
- C. When an alleged contradiction is brought up to us, we need to ask three questions.
1. Is the same thing or person under consideration?
 2. Is the same time period in view?
 3. Is the language that seems self-contradictory employed in the same sense?
- D. For instance, someone may say "Ben is old" and another person may say "Ben is young."
1. Can both of these statements be true?
 - a. The answer is maybe.
 - b. Let's notice how this can be the case using our three questions.
 2. In terms of question 1, there might be two different people named Ben under consideration, one who is 10 and one who is 90..
 3. In terms of question 2, a child views someone my age as old, while someone much older than me views someone my age as being young.
 4. In terms of question 3, it may be that Ben is young at heart but old in age.
- E. These are pointed out as illustrations to show a matter can be cleared up if every possible means of harmony are used.

II. **Alleged contradictions.**

- A. Man has alleged contradictions are found in the Bible concerning names, dates, places, historical events and science.
- B. One such alleged discrepancy is found in John 7:1-10, where people charge that Jesus lied to His half-brothers.
1. They wanted Jesus to go to the feast and perform miracles to show who He was because they did not believe in Him as of yet.
 2. Jesus told them His time had not yet come.
- C. There are translations that supply the word "yet" in verse 8.

1. Most commentators believe this word is not in the text.
 2. This would clear it up, but it is not needed to do so.
- D. The whole issue is not about if Jesus would go to the feast, but the manner in which He would go.
1. Would He go triumphantly into Jerusalem performing miracles and being hailed as a king?
 2. Or, would He go to the feast secretly, not yet wanting the entry into Jerusalem He would later receive right before His capture and death?
- E. The answer, of course, is that Jesus would go to the feast but He would and did not go in a way to draw attention to Himself.
- F. Going to Judea was simply used in two different senses by Jesus and His half-brothers.
- G. Another alleged contradiction can be seen in a charge made by an atheist about the ark.
1. He charged that the ark with all of its animals, food and passengers must have weighed tons, which it does.
 2. He then went on to say that there is no way the priests could have carried the ark across the Jordan in Joshua 6.
 3. We know the answer is that there were two different arks being discussed.
- H. Some have asserted that God contradicted Himself when, at creation, He stated that everything He made was good (Genesis 1:31) and then He lamented the fact He had made man (Genesis 6:6).
1. The antagonist says that God was both satisfied yet dissatisfied with creation, thus contradicting Himself.
 2. This is a matter of time reference.
 3. Many hundreds of years had passed between Genesis 1 and 6 and they neglect to mention the fact sin had entered in to the world.
- I. Some have said that Mark and John contradict one another because Mark says Jesus was crucified at the third hour (Mark 15:25) and John says it was at the sixth hour (John 19:14).
1. The answer is that Mark wrote using Jewish time while John wrote using the time based on Roman civil days.
 2. The contradiction disappears when study is applied.
- J. Many other contradictions could be noticed, but these suffice to show us how to deal with them when they are mentioned.

III. The amazing unity of the Bible.

- A. The Bible writers wrote by inspiration over a 1,600 year time period.
1. Moses wrote in about 1,450 B.C.
 2. John, who wrote Revelation, did so at the close of the first century A.D.

- B. Forty men, approximately, were inspired to write down their message from God.
1. These men came from varying and contrasting backgrounds and educational opportunities.
 2. Moses was educated in the house of Pharaoh, while Amos was a shepherd.
 3. Isaiah stood in the court of kings while Ezekiel was in captivity.
 4. Paul was educated at the feet of Gamaliel while Peter was a fisherman.
- C. Despite the diversity, there is a perfect fit with all of their works.
1. Each points somehow to the Christ that was either coming or already had come, depending in which time period the writer lived.
 2. There is no way that this could be done today using people from the same background.
 3. The only thing that accounts for this is the inspiration of God, which allowed the Bible to have the unity it does.
- D. There is unity in the accounts of the Bible.
1. The flood is written about in Genesis 6, and everywhere it is mentioned in the rest of the Bible, there is no contradiction
 2. The account of Jonah is mentioned in his work and later, when referred to by Jesus there is unity.
 3. The same is true for the account of Elijah praying that it not rain and then James reference to it - no discrepancy.
- E. The moral unity of the Bible is astounding.
1. The sins of man in the Old Testament are still sins in the New Testament.
 2. It is never right to lie, whether then or now (Proverbs 6:16-19; Acts 5:1-11).
 3. Adultery, leaving God and many other type sins could be shown to fit this statement.
- F. There is amazing harmony and unity in God's word.
1. Think of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament.
 2. Each is fulfilled by Jesus in the New Testament.
 3. There is unity of purpose, plan and pattern in the Bible.

Some of this material came from christiancourier.com and apologeticspress.org