

From: "Saved by Windows Internet Explorer 8"  
 Subject: BIBLE CONTRADICTIONS ANSWERED -- Biblical Errors Mistakes Difficulties Discrepancies Countered  
 Date: Tue, 28 Dec 2010 19:24:54 +0200

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## Countering Bible Contradictions

Originally By: [Andrew Tong](#), Michael J. Bumbulis, MaryAnna White, Russ Smith, and others (1994-1995)

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### Introduction

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A word about the contributors. There were three of us:

- Me -- Michael J. Bumbulis
- MaryAnna White
- Russ Smith

I will list each claim of contradiction as found in the original list, and then offer the reply. The replies are referenced to the contributor. MaryAnna's replies are followed by "--MAW", and Russ Smith's replies are followed by "--RS". If no initials follow a reply, they are mine (Michael's). In addition, Phil Porvaznik will be --PP, and Apolonio Latar will be --AL.

What follows is a reply to a list of 143 purported Bible contradictions, along with a suggestion for more contradictions not found in this list. You will find below the index to the contradictions but first I want to discuss some possible objections as to how the contradictions are being resolved.

I feel the considerations in this document are important not only because they attempt to refute claims that the Bible is contradictory (a cause I have not been convinced is of utmost importance), but also because they are intrinsically an interpretation of the teachings of the Bible. In fact, many central components of Christianity are discussed with thought and insight. Although there are trivial contradictions ([67 and 68](#) for example) many of the contradictions explore, say, Biblical teachings about the nature or attributes of God, practical guidelines for Christian living, among other things.

In short, the attempts at resolutions of these contradictions cloak an effort to "mine" *truth* from the Bible, an effort to interpret Biblical verses correctly. My hope is that this article will not only help you to make conclusions about the Bible's inerrancy, but also encourage you to discover what you consider to be valid and invalid Biblical interpretations.

However, before we launch into the actual reply, there are several points worth mentioning.

First, it would be prudent to speak of the burden of proof. It's a general rule in philosophy that she who proposes must explain and defend. If someone says that "X exists," the burden is on her to provide a case for the existence of X. The burden is not on the one who denies that X exists. For how can one prove a negative?

In this case, it is the critic who proposes. He claims that the Bible is "full of contradictions," and often proposes a lengthy list such as the one we are about to respond to below. Now, as Christians, we cannot prove that something is NOT a contradiction (i.e., one cannot prove that X [contradictions] do not exist). Instead, all that is required of us is to come up with plausible or reasonable, even possible explanations so that what is purported to be a contradiction is not *necessarily* a contradiction. Whether or not our explanation is the "true one" is not all that relevant in such contexts.

This is important. What is really relevant is whether our explanations show that the point of contention is not necessarily a contradiction. If we succeed, then the critic's assertion that "X and Y are contradictory" is no longer an obvious truth, instead it becomes merely a belief that someone holds.

At this point the critic might cry "foul" and note that it is the Christian who proposes. She is the one who claims the Bible is inerrant, thus she should demonstrate this. But how? How does one demonstrate a document is without error? At this point, the Christian need only learn from the methodology of modern atheism. Many atheists do not argue that God does not exist, because they realize that one cannot demonstrate the nonexistence of something. Instead, they take a more agnostic position, and argue there is no proof for God's existence, thus they don't possess God-belief. In the same way, the believer in inerrancy cannot demonstrate the nonexistence of contradictions in the Bible.

After all, the Bible contains 31,173 verses (even more when the OT deuterocanonicals are included). If we were to compare only couplets, where any one verse is juxtaposed against any other, one could write 971,750,000 couplets. Thus, by considering only couplets, there are almost one billion potential Bible contradictions! Surely, it is not reasonable to demand that a believer in inerrancy plod through one billion potential contradictions to prove negatives in every case. Instead, the believer in inerrancy can argue there is no proof for the existence of contradictions in the Bible, thus they don't believe in Biblical errancy (thus they believe in inerrancy -- being without error).

For papal encyclicals on the official Catholic teaching of Biblical inerrancy and approach to interpretation see

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Leo XIII (Nov 18, 1893) [Providentissimus Deus](#) (The Most Provident God)

Benedict XV (Sept 15, 1920) [Spiritus Paraclitus](#) (The Paraclete Spirit)

Pius XII (Sept 30, 1943) [Divino Afflante Spiritu](#) (Under the Inspiration of the Divine Spirit) --PP

At this point, the critic's list comes in. It proposes to demonstrate that the Bible is full of contradictions, and the list of 143 purported contradictions was one such demonstration. And at this point, our response comes in.

I have noticed several things about the list we are about to respond to and the nature of the purported contradictions.

## The List

Such lists are quite common and have been around for decades. I have also encountered them on various BBSs throughout the years. My first impression is to scan such lists, noticing claims which are obviously bogus, and others which are quite challenging. Because the lists are so long I tend to rationalize that any list which would include obviously bogus "contradictions" is suspect and that the more challenging ones could probably be resolved with some effort.

The list has a psychological power in that it intimidates simply because of its length and multitude of claims. Your average reader simply does not have the time to respond to 143 claims of contradictions! Thus, such lists often go largely unanswered, leaving the critic to believe that no one can answer it. I think a critic would do better in making a much shorter list (10 or 20) which contains what he considers to be the best examples of Bible contradictions.

## The Contradictions

I have noticed that the supposed 143 contradictions can in essence be classified according to the erroneous assumptions or methodologies that they employ.

A popular mistake is to take things out of context. It is easy to "create contradictions" when there are none by violating the context of the passage(s) in question.

More significant, though less mentioned, is violating the context of belief. Christian understanding is a synthesis of many beliefs, and Biblical teachings are often interpreted through this background belief which has been synthesized. Such a synthesis may include other facts, not directly related to the contradiction in question, but nevertheless, relevant. When the critic proposes a contradiction, he ought to do so within the context of this background belief. By failing to do this, he merely imposes alien concepts into the text as if they belong. This error is common when the critic tries to cite contradictions related to doctrine or beliefs about the nature of God. For example, orthodox Christians believe in the Trinity. One could argue about this concept elsewhere, but trying to impose contradictions by ignoring Trinitarian belief violates the context provided by the Christian's background belief.

Or consider a mundane example. Say that Joe is recorded as saying that Sam is not his son. But elsewhere, he is recorded as saying that Sam is his son. An obvious contradiction, right? But what if one's background belief about Joe and Sam includes the belief that Sam is Joe's adopted son? By ignoring the context this belief provides, one perceives contradictions where there are none.

The critic sometimes assumes that the Biblical accounts are exhaustive in all details and intended to be precise. This is rarely the case. As such, the critic builds on a faulty assumption and perceives contradictions where none exist.

Also related to the context problem: Let's say that the only records of Joe speaking about Sam are the two cases where he affirms and denies that Sam is his son. Certainly Joe said many other things in his life, but they were not recorded -- including the fact that he adopted a boy and named him Sam.

Another real-life case concerns a newspaper report which lists the time of birth of twin babies. The first was born at 1:40 AM, and second was born at 1:10 AM. If this account did not have the added detail that the birth occurred during the night in which Daylight Savings ended, it would *appear* to be a real contradiction/error. You have to know the whole story, or at least have a plausible explanation.

Since the accounts in the Bible are rarely intended as exhaustive and precise descriptions, it would be prudent to see if differing accounts complement, rather than contradict one another.

The critic seems to assume that the Bible is written in one genre: a literal and descriptive account. While the Bible does indeed contain literal and descriptive accounts (which, of course, are not exhaustive in details), it also contains many other styles of composition: the Proverbs list "rules of thumb," the Psalms communicate through poetry, many teachings/prophecies are in the form of hyperbole and metaphor, parables contain deeper messages, etc. Since the Bible is actually many books of different genres by several different authors, the critic's assumption leads her astray if it is used to create contradictions.

Another point is related to the one above, namely, the alleged contradictions are often a function of a particular interpretation. This is clear when one reads how the author of the list presents the biblical teachings in contrast to the actual verses he/she cites. Thus, the "contradiction" exists only if the correct interpretation is applied by the author, and this is often not the case (or at least, it is often not clear if this is the case).

For example, in many situations, the critic uses particular incidents or rules of thumb and interprets these as absolute principles. Sometimes the critic equivocates. He/she uses the same sense of a word in two sets of verses, when sometimes it is the case that the word has two meanings. For example, peace could mean lack of war or it can mean an internal sense of tranquility.

The critic sometimes reads contradictions into the accounts. This is often a function of all of the points listed above, but it could be due to plain ignorance. In other cases, it is due to the fact that aspects of Hebrew idiom are not always captured in English translations.

The critic assumes that the believer in Biblical inerrancy also believes that copyists could make no mistake. I have found not many believers in inerrancy to hold to this position. It is their belief that the original documents were without error, and were copied as faithfully as humanly possible. Thus, copyist errors are of little concern (and are unlikely to result in significant changes).

Finally, the critic engages in black and white either/or thinking when a both/and approach seems to be called for. This can be tricky, so let me set up my case by using one of the supposed contradictions cited:

"Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself." [[Pr 26:4](#)]

"Answer of fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes." [[Pr 26:5](#)]

The first thing to note is that these seemingly contradictory teachings are right next to each other. Could the writer of Proverbs be so stupid as to not notice this? I hardly think so. In fact, I think it is very illuminating that these teachings are closely tied. They highlight the fact that Biblical admonitions need not fall under the "either/or" criteria, but can be more properly understood in terms of "both/and." In fact, I have often found these two teachings from Proverbs quite useful.

In debating various non-Christians, I often encounter foolish responses and name-calling. I can either choose not to respond or ignore the foolishness and get to the point of contention. At such times, I follow [Proverbs 26:4](#). In other instances, I mirror the foolishness of my antagonist in the hopes that he/she can perceive the folly of their approach when I employ it. At such times, I follow [Proverbs 26:5](#). The key is knowing when to use which approach, and in such instances, I try to allow the Spirit to guide me.

I encourage the reader to keep these points in mind as we go through the purported contradictions. I have also taken the luxury of periodically referring to and drawing from the following book:

**Haley, John W.** [Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible](#) (Baker Book House, reprinted 1977, originally 1874).

This book was in turn replying to the 144 "biblical contradictions" found in the following book (and many of these same ones are answered below) :

**Burr, William Henry.** [Self-Contradictions of the Bible](#) (Forgotten Books 2007, or Prometheus Books 1997, originally 1860).

So these contradictions have been around a while. Keep in mind that we are not biblical scholars, and our replies are not intended as the "final word" in these matters. Instead, they are offered as possible, even plausible, ways to resolve the apparent contradictions. If they succeed at doing merely this, the contradictions have not been established and the critic has not adequately shouldered his/her burden. Enjoy.

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 125. Worldly good and prosperity/worldly misery and destitution to be the lot of the godly  
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- END.

NOTE: Thanks for all the Emails I have received about this article over the years. Someday I may take the time to re-edit this list and re-consider all the answers given to these biblical "contradictions" and difficulties. For now I have to let the list stand as is. Hope it's been helpful. -- PhilVaz

See also the shorter article ["Defending the Gospels"](#) on this site.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 1-10

### 1. God is satisfied with his works

"God saw all that he made, and it was very good." [[Gen 1:31](#)]

### God is dissatisfied with his works.

"The Lord was grieved that he had made man on earth, and his heart was filled with pain." [[Gen 6:6](#)]

This is an obvious case of both/and, for something occurred after Gen 1:31 and before Gen 6:6, namely, the Fall. Evil entered creation as a result of man's volition. One can argue the theological implications elsewhere, as the only relevant point is that this is not an obvious contradiction. When God created, all was good. After man rebelled, God grieved.

### 2. God dwells in chosen temples

"the LORD appeared to him at night and said: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple of sacrifices.....I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there." [\[2 Chr 7:12,16\]](#)

### God dwells not in temples

"However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men." [\[Acts 7:48\]](#)

I fail to see the contradiction here. The claim that "my eyes and heart will always be there" appears to mean nothing more to me than the fact that the LORD would pay special attention to the temple and have a special affinity for it; the LORD would reveal Himself to His people through the temple. Stephen's speech in Acts merely highlights the transcendence of God. Put simply, if you put these together you arrive at the following truth - God is transcendent, yet He reveals Himself where He will.

### 3. God dwells in light

"who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light whom no one has seen or can see." [\[1 Tim 6:16\]](#)

### God dwells in darkness

"Then spake Solomon. The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness" [\[1 Kings 8:12\]](#)

"He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." [\[Ps 18:11\]](#)

"Clouds and darkness are round about him." [\[Ps 97:2\]](#) The first thing I would point out is these are likely to be metaphors and it would seem unwise to take such language too literally when describing God. But what could such seemingly contradictory metaphors convey? Note that in both cases there is the theme of the unsearchableness of God. That is, the light is unapproachable and the darkness is thick and covers a secret place. Thus, these verses could actually be teaching the *same* thing - simply that God is unapproachable.

One could also note that Paul's account is quite optimistic following from a consideration of Christ. Prior to the Incarnation, there was indeed a certain darkness associated with the hidden God. But the eyes of the blind have been opened!

Or it could be said that the verses in 1 Kings and Psalms need be nothing more than a description of God perceived through the memory of His interation with His people described in [Exodus19:9](#).

### 4. God is seen and heard [\[Ex 33:23 / Ex 33:11 / Gen 3:9,10 / Gen 32:30 / Is 6:1 / Ex 24:9-11\]](#)

### God is invisible and cannot be heard [\[John 1:18 / John 5:37 / Ex 33:20 / 1 Tim 6:16\]](#)

These "contradictions" are easily resolved if one accepts the Trinitarian view of God. Allow me to repost a reply which addressed a similar point, and in doing so, resolves this contradiction....

In a previous post, someone attempts to discredit the deity of Christ by appealing to [John 1:18](#):

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (KJV)

He notes:

"If no man has seen God, then logically Jesus was not God, since there is no secular record of an outbreak of sightlessness in Judea in Jesus' time".

How shall the Christian respond? Well, let's consider the statement that "No man hath seen God." Consider the following verses from the Old Testament (OT):

Sarai says "You are the God who sees me," for she said,  
"I have now seen the One who sees me" (Gen 16:13)

"So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." (Gen 32:30)

"Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel." (Ex 24: 9-10)

"they saw God" (Ex 24:11)

"We have seen God!" (Judges 13:22) Now while this person's logic seems to rule out that Jesus was God, it also means that the Bible contains a very significant contradiction. If no one has seen God, how is it that Sarai, Jacob, Moses et al, and Monoah and his wife are said to have seen God?

Actually, this is a problem only for those who deny the deity of Christ while claiming to follow the teachings of the Bible. Let's look again at John 1:18:

"No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only (or Only Begotten), who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

I think it is clear that John is speaking of the Father as the one who has not been seen. To paraphrase it, "No one has ever seen God, but the Son, who is at His side, has made Him known". This interpretation not only seems to follow naturally from this verse, but is also quite consistent with the Logos doctrine taught in John 1. Recall, it is the Logos who mediates between God and man, and who reveals God to man. Jesus would later say, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." Prior to the Incarnation of the Son, no one had seen the Father, for it is through the Son that the Father is revealed.

So for the Trinitarian, there is no Bible contradiction. No one ever saw God the Father, and what Sarai, Jacob, Moses, etc saw was God the Son. This can be seen from many perspectives, but let's simply consider one from Isaiah 6. Isaiah "saw the Lord" (v 1). Seraphs were praising the "Lord Almighty" (v 3). Isaiah is overwhelmed and responds, "Woe to me, I am ruined. For I am a man of unclean lips [this rules him out as the servant in [Isaiah 53](#)], and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty" (v 5). Later, we read:

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" (vs. 8).

Again, the plurality of God is implied. Isaiah asks God to send him, and then God gave him a message to preach.

Now it's time to jump to [John 12:37-41](#). John claims that the peoples failure to believe in Jesus was a fulfillment of these teachings Isaiah received from the Lord in Isaiah 6. Then note verse 41.

"Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him".

Here is a clear example where John equates Jesus with the Lord Almighty seen by Isaiah! This all fits together beautifully. Isaiah sees the Lord Almighty, yet he sees Jesus' glory. Jesus speaks as a plural being (who will go for US). It is the Son who is seen, not the Father.

Thus, [John 1:18](#) does not mean that Jesus was not God, it only means He is not the Father. This verse presents no problems for the Trinitarian, and in fact, when studied, serves as a great launching point for finding Christ in the OT. Prior to the Logos dwelling amongst us and revealing the Father to us, no one had seen the Father. But because of the Incarnation, we can now cry, "Abba, Father" ([Romans 8:15](#)) and "Our Father who art in heaven"! Those who see the Son can see the Father.

## 5. God is tired and rests

"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." [\[Ex 31:17\]](#)

### God is never tired and never rests

"The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary." [\[Is 40:28\]](#)

According to Haley, and many others, the term "rested and was refreshed" is simply a vivid Oriental way of saying that God ceased from the work of creation and took delight in surveying the work.

## 6. God is everywhere present, sees and knows all things [\[Prov 15:3 / Ps 139:7-10 / Job 34:22,21\]](#)

### God is not everywhere present, neither sees nor knows all things

"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden." [\[Gen 3:8\]](#)

"But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that men were building." [\[Gen 11:5\]](#)

"The the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sins so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." [\[Gen 18:20-21\]](#) I accept the teaching that God is everywhere present and sees and knows all things. So let's consider the instances in Genesis that are cited:

[Gen 3:8](#) - "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden."

Let's also add the next verse to strengthen the critics case: "But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

How could one hide from God? Why does God need to ask this question?

First, what Adam and Eve could have hid from is merely the visible and special manifestation of the Lord. As for God's seeming ignorance, anyone with children can recognize the utility of such questions. If a child is known to have broken a lamp, it is better to question the child than to simply accuse her. The former approach enables the child to take an active role in her wrong-doing, and allows for her to apologize. Note that God asked several questions:

"Where are you?...Who told you that you were naked?...Have you eaten of the fruit of the tree?"

Note the response. Instead of begging for mercy and confessing their sins, both the man and woman justified themselves and sought to put the blame on another. So typically human! By asking these questions, God enabled the man and woman to either freely repent or to firmly establish their

sinfulness. Thus, while the critic thinks these are questions demonstrating ignorance, such an interpretation can be easily dismissed in light of the above considerations. What of the others?

"But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that men were building." [[Gen 11:5](#)]

"The the LORD said, 'The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sins so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.'" [[Gen 18:20-21](#)] These look like common human notions of someone coming down to check out what is going on. And perhaps, that's how the writer of these accounts understood God. But perhaps there is also another layer to the account. Obviously, it teaches God's transcendence. But it also demonstrates God's interest. He is not an aloof sky-god. And he doesn't watch from afar. He gets right down into human history.

But there is more. Maimonides once noted that just as the word 'ascend', when applied to the mind, implies noble and elevated objects, the word 'descend' implies turning one's mind to things of lowly and unworthy character. Thus, God is not "coming down" in a physical sense, but in a "mental" sense, where he turns his attention to the sinful activity of men and invokes judgment. Of course, it is hard to describe God in human language, but I think the above account is not unreasonable.

Since these supposed contradictions depend on a particular interpretation which is (or at the very least may be) in error, no contradiction has been established.

## 7. God knows the hearts of men [[Acts 1:24](#) / [Ps 139:2,3](#)]

### God tries men to find out what is in their heart

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God." [[Gen 22:12](#)]

"Remember how the LORD your God lead you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and test you in order to know what was in your hearts." [[Deut 8:2](#)]

"The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul." [[Deut 13:3](#)] We'll assume that God knows the hearts of men, so let us determine if the above three verses are necessarily contradictions.

Could it be that these three instances simply serve to reveal and verify to man that which is already known by God? Anyone who has ever had a college chemistry course can probably relate to the following. A chemistry professor comes into class, and says, "I will now add acetic acid to this compound to see what happens." The professor already knows what will happen! After the experiment, he might even add, "I now know that such and such results will occur after adding the acid." Here he is simply putting himself in the place of the class, and speaking for them.

What the three verses could be showing is that once again, God is not some aloof sky-god who merely dictates. Instead, he *relates*. By asking questions, by claiming to have found something, he relates and allows man to play an active, not passive, role in the relationship. For example, Abraham now knew that God knew his heart. And he also knew God's knowledge was true in light of the 'test' that he just went through.

In this supposed contradiction, along with the one immediately prior, the critic perceives ignorance on the part of God because of a belief that an omniscient God ought to dictate. Why can't an omniscient God refrain from dictating, and simply relate in a way which intimately involves humanity?

## 8. God is all powerful [[Jer 32:27](#) / [Matt 19:26](#)]

### God is not all powerful

"The LORD was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had iron chariots." [[Judg 1:19](#)]

This is obviously not a contradiction. John Baskette notes that the critic is "reading the verse as saying that the LORD ... he ... could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley." He adds: "This is an egregiously bad misreading of the text. The 'he' is Judah! not the LORD. That should be obvious to even the most obtuse objector."

## 9. 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](#)]

Once again, these purported contradictions all presuppose some platonic-type sky god. Christianity has always believed that God is a God who *relates* and who is *personal*. And whenever there is a personal relationship, there is a dynamic. And dynamics can involve both immutability and change. Whenever you have a personal dynamic, when one person changes, the other responds in a way which reflects this change. But all is not relative. If God's essence is immutable, then He is the standard by which such change is understood.

For example, imagine you are in a field standing next to a tree. As you walk around the tree, you may end up north of the tree (and the tree is south of you). If you continue walking, such a relative relationship changes, so that you might find yourself south of the tree (and the tree is north of you). In the same way, our behavior towards God is like walking around the tree. Depending upon what we do, God is in a different relationship with us.

Let's consider a better analogy. A man and a wife are in a happy marriage. The man commits adultery, and the wife becomes unhappy. Has the wife changed in a significant manner? Not really. Her change is a function of what her husband did, and reflects the immutability of her belief that infidelity is wrong.

In the purported contradictions, we have a set of Scriptures which speak of God's essence - it is unchangeable. The other set deal with God's relationships with men (they *don't* abstractly speak of God's essence). Thus, as the above analogies show, there need be no contradiction.

### 10. God is just and impartial

"To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him." [[Ps 92:15](#)]

"Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" [[Gen 18:25](#)]

"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He." [[Deut 32:4](#)]

"Yet you say, "The way of the LORD is not right." Here now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?" [[Ezek 18:25](#)]

"For there is no partiality with God." [[Rom 2:11](#)]

### God is unjust and partial

"So he said, Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers." [[Gen 9:25](#)]

"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers in the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me." [[Ex 20:5](#)]

"for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." [[Rom 9:11-13](#)]

"For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have in abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken from him." [[Mt 13:12](#)] The first set is as follows:

"To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him." [[Ps 92:15](#)] = Basic Teaching (BT) -- God is righteous

"Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" [[Gen 18:25](#)] = (BT) -- God does not condemn the righteous with the wicked.

"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He." [[Deut 32:4](#)] = (BT) -- God is righteous

"Yet you say, "The way of the LORD is not right." Here now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?" [[Ezek 18:25](#)] = (BT) -- God's ways are right, the ways of Israel, when the prophet spoke, were not.

"For there is no partiality with God." [[Rom 2:11](#)] = (BT) -- God is impartial. However, it seems clear from the context that we are talking about God being impartial when it comes salvation being offered to both Jew and Gentile. Thus, the verses cited below could only be contradictory if they teach that Christ's atonement was only for the Jews or Gentiles. Since they don't, we need only consider if God is unrighteous in any of them.

The second set is as follows:

"So he said, Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers." [[Gen 9:25](#)] Here, one must read a contradiction into the teachings as it is unclear whether Noah's curse would make God "unrighteous."

"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers in the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me." [[Ex 20:5](#)] The following verse notes that loving-kindness extends to thousands of generations of those who love God. This leads me to believe this verse is hyperbolic and thus difficult to make into a contradiction. For example, is God *really* unrighteous for bestowing blessings for a thousand generations, yet visiting iniquity for *ONLY* three or four generations? The thrust seems to run in the other direction. Whether or not one views this as "unrighteous" is a function of their ethics, and thus the "contradiction" is read into the scripture. (BTW, I would note, however, that sinful behavior is often transmitted in families. For example, the son of an alcoholic is often an alcoholic himself.)



MaryAnna responds to another related "contradiction" which is also relevant here:

Are children punished for the sins of the parents?

[Exo. 20:5](#) tells us that God is to be feared, as He has the ability to visit the sins of the fathers on the children.

[Ezek. 18:20](#) tells us this will not happen if the children repent and turn away from the ways of their fathers. Not a contradiction.

"for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." [\[Rom 9:11-13\]](#) Again, I view that "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" as a hyperbole which indicates that God simply favored Esau. This is not a clear case of unrighteousness.

"For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have in abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken from him." [\[Mt 13:12\]](#) I view this as a proverbial way of saying that he who improves upon the gifts that he receives will receive more, but he who does not improve upon them (i.e., neglects or takes them for granted) shall have them removed. I find this the very opposite of unrighteousness.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 11-20

### 11. God is the author of evil

"Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?" [\[Lam 3:38\]](#)

"Now therefore say to the people of Judah that those living in Jerusalem, "This is what the LORD says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan for against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and actions." [\[Jer 18:11\]](#)

"I form light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I the LORD, do all these things." [\[Is 45:7\]](#)

"I also gave them over to statues that were not good and laws they could not live by." [\[Ez 20:25\]](#)

"When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it?" [\[Amos 3:6\]](#)

**God is not the author of evil** [\[1 Cor 14:33 / Deut 32:4 / James 1:13\]](#)

Now, in [Deut 32:4](#), we read that God is just. None of the above verses teach that God is unjust. Paul is speaking about God in the context of Church gatherings - that in such gatherings, God is a God of peace, not confusion. None of the above verses speak of such Church gatherings. James teaches that God does not tempt anyone with evil. None of the above verses teach that God tempts with evil. (I think [Ez 20:25](#) is best understood in light of [Romans 1](#)). Thus, no obvious contradictions in this set.

**12. God gives freely to those who ask** [\[James 1:5 / Luke 11:10\]](#)

**God withholds his blessings and prevents men from receiving them** [\[John 12:40 / Josh 11:20 / Is 63:17\]](#)

[Joshua 11:20](#) says nothing about some asking, and God refusing to give. [Is 63:17](#) says nothing about someone asking, and God refusing to give. [John 12:40](#) says nothing about someone asking, and God refusing to give. In these three verses, it is mentioned that God "hardened the hearts" of someone. If someone never asked, and will never truly ask, it is not a contradiction to harden one's heart, yet give to those who **DO** ask.

**13. 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** [\[Prov 1:28\]](#)

"Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me." [\[Pr 1:28\]](#)

Here, the context has been ignored. First of all, it is wisdom which is speaking. Those who laugh, scoff, and refuse wisdom are not going to magically find it when calamity strikes. If one wishes to identify wisdom with God, the same principle holds - those who scoff, reject, and laugh at God are not going to find God when calamity strikes. After all, if they look, they look through the filters of selfishness (i.e., "save my butt"). Instead of calling on God or looking for God, they should be repenting. But those who live a life of scorning God are not those who repent when disaster strikes. Thus, no contradiction.

**14. God is warlike** [\[Ex 15:3 / Is 51:15\]](#)

**God is peaceful** [\[Rom 15:33 / 1 Cor 14:33\]](#)

"The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name." [\[Ex 15:3\]](#)

(Is 51:15 has nothing to do with war)

"The God of peace be with you all. Amen" [[Rom 15:33](#)]

"For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace." [[1 Cor 14:33](#)]

It seems clear that God reveals Himself as a God of Battles in much of the OT. So what of these NT teachings? This "contradiction" is premised on equivocation, where the NT references to peace are interpreted to be the antonym of war, when this is obviously not the case. In Romans, Paul seems to be speaking of peace in a subjective, existential sense -- a relationship with God brings a sense of peace. In Corinthians, Paul is speaking about the activity of Church congregations -- they should be orderly and peaceful, not full of confusion and contention. No obvious contradiction here.

**15. God is cruel, unmerciful, destructive, and ferocious** [[Jer 13:14](#) / [Deut 7:16](#) / [1 Sam 15:2,3](#) / [1 Sam 6:19](#)]

**God is kind, merciful, and good** [[James 5:11](#) / [Lam 3:33](#) / [1 Chron 16:34](#) / [Ezek 18:32](#) / [Ps 145:9](#) / [1 Tim 2:4](#) / [1 John 4:16](#) / [Ps 25:8](#)]

The first set of scriptures say nothing about God being cruel (this is a subjective call). They deal simply and bluntly with God's judgment. Thus, we have a both/and situation here. Yes, God is merciful and full of compassion. Yet, those who reject his mercy and compassion will find that His judgment in unrelenting and ferocious -- that is His nature.

**16. God's anger is fierce and endures long** [[Num 32:13](#) / [Num 25:4](#) / [Jer 17:4](#)]

**God's anger is slow and endures but for a minute** [[Ps 103:8](#) / [Ps 30:5](#)]

The verse in Numbers and Jeremiah do not teach some general truth that "God's anger is fierce and endures long." This is the critic's personal interpretation. In Jeremiah, in RESPONSE to Judah's great sin, God's anger is kindled (which itself, implies that it is slow to occur) and will "burn forever." I view this as a hyperbole (like "walking a thousand miles"). Put simply, God's anger against Judah would endure long. In Num 32, God's anger burned against Israel because of their sin and he made them wander in the desert 40 years. In Num 25, we read that God had Moses slay those who sought to contaminate the Jews with pagan ideals in order that his fierce anger may turn away from Israel. Since there is no contradiction between a fierce anger, and an anger slow to rise, this is an irrelevant verse.

So let's focus on duration. Above, we saw that God's anger lasted long (in human terms) in SPECIFIC cases as the RESULT of sinful behavior. What of the Psalms? First, let's keep in mind that we have now entered the territory of another genre - poetry. As such, it's going to be hard to make an unequivocal contradiction. Anyway, in [Ps 103](#), we simply note that God is slow to anger. Nothing in Jer or Num contradicts this. In [Ps 30:5](#), it appears as if David is speaking from his personal experience with God in saying that God's anger lasts only a moment. And what is a 'moment' in poetical terms anyway? And could this teaching be yet one more proverbial way of saying that God is far more gracious than angry? That is, when all is said and done, what is revealed is a God who is slow to anger, quick to forgive, yet who can indeed demonstrate a fierce anger when provoked by great or ubiquitous sin. I see no obvious contradiction here.

**17. 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](#) / [Is 1:13,11,12](#)]

The first set of Scriptures explains where God institutes sacrifices, etc., among Israel. Nothing in the second set contradicts this. In [Jer 7:22](#), we read, "I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices," The author of this supposed contradiction conveniently left out the next verse: " but I gave them this command: "Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people." This is obviously not a disapproval of burnt offerings, but a disapproval on emphasizing such offerings to the exclusion of obedience in all areas. [Jer 6:20](#) speaks of the incense in Sheba, hardly contradicting the first set. The verse in Psalms is lifted out of context, as the LORD clearly says, "I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices." ([Ps 50:8](#)). The verses in Isaiah are also lifted out of context. God rebukes the people for the sacrifices because they represent religious hypocrisy. [Is 1:15-17](#) clearly demonstrate this.

**18. God accepts human sacrifices** [[2 Sam 21:8,9,14](#) / [Gen 22:2](#) / [Judg 11:30-32,34,38,39](#)]

**God forbids human sacrifice** [[Deut 12:30,31](#)]

The account in Gen 22:2 has been the subject of a great wealth of religious speculation, but the fact remains that Isaac was not sacrificed. The account in 2 Sam is misnamed as a "human sacrifice." It looks far more like an execution carried out by the Gibeonites because Saul had previously persecuted them. The verses in Judges do not obviously indicate that Jephthah offered his daughter as a "human sacrifice" and if He did, there is no indication that God "accepted it." No contradictions here.

**19. God tempts men** [[Gen 22:1](#) / [2 Sam 24:1](#) / [Jer 20:7](#) / [Matt 6:13](#)]

**God tempts no man** [[James 1:13](#)]

Gen 22 refers to testing; 2 Sam says nothing about God tempting; In Jer 20, the prophet Jeremiah is simply complaining. Just because in a moment of desperation, he accuses God of deceiving him, does not mean that God *DID* deceive him. Mt 6:13 is part of the Lord's prayer, "lead us not into temptation." The prayer simply inquires of God that helps us keep our distance from temptation (hardly an example of God tempting men!). The only possible hope of a contradiction in this set is to equate testing with temptation. But is testing identical to tempting? For example, let's say God wants

to test someone's honesty and puts them in a room with a lost wallet. Is this tempting? I think not. To truly tempt, God would have to whisper, "Pick it up, keep it, no one will know, etc." No clear contradictions here.

## 20. God cannot lie [[Heb 6:18](#)]

**God lies by proxy; he sends forth lying spirits to deceive** [[2 Thes 2:11](#) / [1 Kings 22:23](#) / [Ezek 14:9](#)]

In this case, we need not even consider the scriptures. As "sending forth lying spirits" is not the same as actually lying yourself.

But, MaryAnna White notes:

[1 Kings 22:21-22](#) Lying spirit -- Here, of course, God does not lie directly nor approve of nor sanction man's lying. One could argue that all that happens on earth is permitted by God -- He could stop it if He saw fit. He even permitted Satan to cause Job to suffer -- a much more interesting case. But that does not mean that He is the source of all such things. They just afford Him opportunities, as here, to accomplish what He is after. As they are useful to Him, He permits them to continue for a season. Like Judas. Eventually, those instruments no longer useful, all such spirits and men will be judged by being cast into the eternal lake of fire. That is neither approval nor sanction, but merely proof of God's sovereignty. --MAW

The basic point is that by allowing the spirit to lie, God is not Himself lying. After all, God allows us all to lie, but He is not a liar for allowing us to lie.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 21-30

### 21. Because of man's wickedness God destroys him [[Gen 6:5,7](#)]

**Because of man's wickedness God will not destroy him** [[Gen 8:21](#)]

This is only a contradiction because the critic interprets it as so. Does Genesis 8:21 say that God will not destroy man because he is wicked? Not really. For God says that he will never again curse the ground, even though man's heart is evil (NIV). Furthermore, cursing the ground does not necessarily mean the same thing as destroying man, now does it?

### 22. God's attributes are revealed in his works [[Rom 1:20](#)]

**God's attributes cannot be discovered** [[Job 11:7](#) / [Is 40:28](#)]

Romans 1:20 simply notes that Creation points to the Creator - a divine being of great power. Job 11:7 points out that we can never fully grasp the divine, it does NOT say that God cannot be inferred from nature. Is 40:28 notes that we can never hope to fully scrutinize the understanding of God. None of this is contradictory.

### 23. 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](#)]

This, of course, would lead us to a discussion of the Trinity, something that is beyond the scope of this article. Trinitarian theology is a classic example of "both/and" thinking. Besides, what of Deut 6:4?

Deut. 6:4 reads, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."

Now it is important to note that the Hebrew word used for 'one' is NOT yahid, which denotes absolute singularity elsewhere in the OT. Instead, Moses chose the Hebrew word ehad, which signifies unity and oneness in plurality. This word is used in [Gen 2:24](#) where Adam and Eve are instructed to become "one flesh". It's also found in [Numbers 13:23](#), where the Hebrew spies returned with a "single cluster" of grapes. So Deut 6:4 actually supports the concept of the Trinity, by noting that God is "oneness in plurality" (composite unity). The same word which describes the oneness of a marriage relationship is also used to describe God's essence!

### 24. Robbery commanded [[Ex 3:21,22](#) / [Ex 12:35,36](#)]

**Robbery forbidden** [[Lev 19:13](#) / [Ex 20:15](#)]

It's not at all obvious that you can refer to the instances in Ex 3, 12 as "robbery." When African-Americans demand recompensation for their history of slavery, are they demanding to rob white people? Thus, these are not obvious examples of God commanding robbery. Besides, in Ex. 3 and 12, the Israelites asked the Egyptians for goods.

### 25. Lying approved and sanctioned [[Josh 2:4-6](#) / [James 2:25](#) / [Ex 1:18-20](#) / [1 Kings 22:21,22](#)]

**Lying forbidden** [[Ex 20:16](#) / [Prov 12:22](#) / [Rev 21:8](#)]

Rev speaks of all liars being cast into the lake of fire. Since the first set of scriptures do not say otherwise, we can dismiss this one. Proverbs speaks of lying as an abomination. Since the first set of scriptures do not say lying is not an abomination, we can dismiss this one. The verse in Ex is one of the Ten Commandments.

It's not obvious to me that lying is approved of in the above situations. Concerning Rahab (Josh 2:4-6), James says, "the harlot was justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way" (James 2:25). Her act of saving the lives of these men is what is approved of. The same goes for Ex 1, where the midwives refuse to kill the male infants which were birthed. As for 1 King 22:21-22, once again it is unclear if lying is truly approved of. According to one Bible scholar:

"The whole declaration of Micaiah...is a figurative and poetical description of a vision that he had seen. Putting aside its rhetorical drapery, the gist of the whole passage is that God for judicial purposes suffered Ahab to be fatally deceived."

Another scholar says:

"Because Ahab had abandoned the Lord his God and hardened his own heart, God allowed his ruin by the very instrument Ahab had sought to prostitute for his own purposes, namely, prophecy. God used the false declarations of the false prophets that Ahab was so enamored with as his instruments of judgment."

Since it is unclear that God truly approves of lying in this case, the contradiction is not established.

## 26. Hatred to the Edomite sanctioned [[2 Kings 14:7,3](#)]

### Hatred to the Edomite forbidden [[Deut 23:7](#)]

The account in Deut indeed forbids hatred against the Edomite. Does the account in 2 Kings sanction it? Not at all. It merely mentions that Amaziah slew many Edomites. And while hatred can be part of warfare, it need not be. And since the account in 2 Kings doesn't even mention hatred of the Edomites, this is obviously a concocted contradiction.

## 27. Killing commanded [[Ex 32:27](#)]

### Killing forbidden [[Ex 20:13](#)]

Ex 20:13 reads, "You shall not murder." Not all killing is murder.

## 28. The blood-shedder must die [[Gen 9:5,6](#)]

### The blood-shedder must not die [[Gen 4:15](#)]

Gen 4:15 makes no such generalization. It is specific to Cain. This is an example where the critic takes an incident and transforms it into an absolute principle. Besides, the covenant in Gen 9 was made with Noah, who existed much later than did Cain.

## 29. The making of images forbidden [[Ex 20:4](#)]

### The making of images commanded [[Ex 25:18,20](#)]

Ex 20:4 states that one should not make idols and bow down and worship them. The cherubims in Ex 25 are not idols, nor were they worshipped.

## 30. Slavery and oppression ordained [[Gen 9:25](#) / [Lev 25:45,46](#) / [Joel 3:8](#)]

### Slavery and oppression forbidden [[Is 58:6](#) / [Ex 22:21](#) / [Ex 21:16](#) / [Matt 23:10](#)]

Slavery and oppression (two different things in the Bible)

[Gen. 9:25](#) Canaan is punished, sentenced to be a bondsman. (slave) This is a punishment by God upon Ham through the mouth of his father Noah for his rebellious insubordination and disregard for God's authority on earth at that time - his father. He could have been killed for this, but instead he was merely told that some of his descendants would be slaves. This is not a condoning of oppression, but a prophecy that such a judgment would indeed be carried out. (Ones who died for rebellion include Korah and Absalom; Miriam was judged with a case of leprosy for a few days.) This verse says nothing to those who would be the slave owners as to whether their action is condoned or not.

[Lev. 25:45](#) It's ok to buy a stranger for a bondsman/woman if someone sells him/her to you, as long as it's not a fellow Israelite.

[Joel 3:8](#) God punishes Tyre (?) by selling the people to the Israelites as slaves and then selling them to the Sabeans.

Still no mention of condoning oppression.

[Isa. 58:6](#) mentions a particular fast to Jehovah as a breaking of every yoke. Surely that cannot refer to (include) the yoke on the oxen, so there is some limitation to which yokes are broken. Some yokes are forbidden - i.e. yoking a fellow Israelite- and are undoubtedly included. The case of a foreign slave could be argued either way and hence this verse is not a clear contradiction of any of the above.

[Exod. 22:21](#) Not permitted to vex or oppress strangers. Does not say, not permitted to buy them.

[Exod. 21:16](#) Not permitted to steal and sell people. Does not say, not permitted to buy and sell them.

[Matt. 23:10](#) is irrelevant. It says, "Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ." (RV). Footnote: "Or, guides, teachers, directors." This section is talking about how we address fellow believers. It earlier says to call no one "father." Obviously it is talking here about differentiating among believers by bestowing titles of honor. These titles should be reserved for God alone, not bestowed on men. But our physical father is still our father, our school teachers are still our teachers, and our masters, if we are slaves, are still our masters and are to be called such if they so demand. The President is still the President, etc. We are admonished in the Bible to show honor to those in authority over us in our families, in the government, etc. --MAW

[Gen 9:25](#) has Noah stating that Canaan will be the servant of Japheth. This does not necessarily read as the ordination of "slavery and oppression" by God. The verses in Lev refer to a mild form of servitude. Joel simply threatens captivity as a punishment for sin. None of these verses unequivocally ordain "slavery and oppression."

On the other hand, the verses in Isaiah and Exodus do forbid truly oppressive behavior. The verse in Mt. is irrelevant to this subject.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 31-40

**31. Improvidence enjoyed** [[Matt 6:28,31,34](#) / [Luke 6:30,35](#) / [Luke 12:3](#)]

**Improvidence condemned** [[1 Tim 5:8](#) / [Prov 13:22](#)]

I believe that this is a case of both/and, as neither extreme is good. These teachings serve to balance each other.

MaryAnna observes:

"Improvidence enjoyed"

[Matt. 6:28, 31, 34](#) -- these verses tell us not to be anxious. They don't tell us not to work for our living.

[Luke 6:31-35](#) tell us to give to those that ask, and to lend without expecting any return. This again is not telling us not to provide for our own needs. If we didn't have it in the first place we wouldn't be able to give or lend it. And it doesn't say that the borrowers or askers are approved by God. The reward mentioned here goes to the givers, not to the takers. This is made obvious by verse 29, which says to turn the cheek to those who smite it. Clearly the Bible is not meaning that we are supposed to go around slapping people in the face.

[Luke 12:3](#) says "Therefore what you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in the private rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops." What this has to do with improvidence, I have no idea, unless it is meant as an example of condoning of eavesdropping and gossip. That would be a really strange inter- pretation of this verse, looking at the context.

"Improvidence condemned"

[1 Tim. 5:8](#) says we must provide for our own. (Doesn't say we need to be full of anxiety, just do it.)

[Proverbs 13:22](#) - a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children.... Yup. --MAW

**32. Anger approved**

"In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." [[Eph 4:26](#)]

**Anger disapproved** [[Eccl 7:9](#) / [Prov 22:24](#) / [James 1:20](#)]

I do not view Paul's admonitions as being approving of anger. In fact, the advice about not allowing the day to end while you are angry is anything but an approval of anger. Phil Porvaznik adds: the context of Eph 4:31 says explicitly to "let all....anger...be put away from you..." Also there is a difference between the KJV and NIV in Matthew 5:22.

The KJV reads "whosoever is angry with his brother *without a cause* shall be in danger of the judgment." (Matt 5:22)

The NIV (NU-text) is missing the phrase "without a cause." So when the NIV says Christ was "angry" (Mark 3:5) some (e.g. KJV only folks) say Christ would be sinning.

Let's see if this makes sense. Please read the rest of Matthew 5:22 in the KJV -- "whosoever shall say, Thou FOOL, shall be in danger of hell fire." Notice the phrase "without a cause" is missing here. IOW, it doesn't say "whosoever shall say, Thou fool, without a cause...." it simply reads "thou

FOOL." Next we look at what Christ said to the Pharisees -- "Ye FOOLS...." (Matt 23:17,19 KJV). Does this mean Christ is sinning and in danger of hell fire? Of course not.

The answer to the "anger" passage is simple. There are different types of anger -- righteous and unrighteous -- just as there are different senses to the use of "FOOL" (atheists are called "fools" for denying God by the Psalmist 14:1). The apostle Paul quotes the Psalmist who says "**be ye angry, and sin not**" (Eph 4:26 KJV). There is "anger" that is not necessarily sinful.

Jesus, who is said to be "without sin" throughout the Bible (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 1:19; 1 John 3:5) was "angry" in the sense of "righteous anger" -- He was "grieved" (Gr sunlupeo) because of the hardness of the hearts of those who criticised His healing on the Sabbath day (see the context Mark 3:1-6). Jesus also was "angry" at the death of Lazarus -- he "groaned in the spirit" (John 11:33,38) and saw death as the "last enemy" (1 Cor 15:26). Since I'm a Catholic, I'll quote from our universal Catechism of the Catholic Church --

2302. Anger is a desire for revenge. "To desire vengeance in order to do evil to someone who should be punished is illicit," but it is praiseworthy to impose restitution "to correct vices and maintain justice" [quoting St. Thomas Aquinas]. If anger reaches the point of a deliberate desire to kill or seriously wound a neighbor, it is gravely against charity; it is a mortal sin. The Lord says, "Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment" [Matt 5:22].

It is this kind of "anger" that is forbidden. As Paul writes -- "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph 4:31-32 KJV). --PP

### 33. Good works to be seen of men [[Matt 5:16](#)]

#### Good works not to be seen of men [[Matt 6:1](#)]

Here is a case where context matters. In Mt 5, Jesus is speaking in the context of being the salt of the earth. It is by allowing Christ to work through us that people will be drawn to Him. That is, one does good works to glorify God. In Mt 6, Jesus is talking about doing good works in a self-righteous sense, where one draws attention to self. Consider a very practical example -- a Christian who serves by feeding the poor ought to do so humbly and quietly. They will eventually be noticed, if only by those they serve. The same Christian shouldn't be bragging about his work among acquaintances, where a "holier-than-thou" sense is evident. The former approach draws people to God, the latter repels them.

### 34. Judging of others forbidden [[Matt 7:1,2](#)]

#### Judging of others approved [[1 Cor 6:2-4](#) / [1 Cor 5:12](#)]

This is a commonly employed 'contradiction' which also ignores context. Mt 7 is not dealing with judging in of itself, rather, it speaks of hypocrisy -- judging others by standards that one does not live by.

### 35. Christ taught nonresistance [[Matt 5:39](#) / [Matt 26:52](#)]

#### Christ taught and practiced physical resistance [[Luke 22:36](#) / [John 2:15](#)]

Since using a scourge to drive out the animals and overturn the tables is not as case of "physical resistance," the verse in John is irrelevant. In Luke, it appears as if Jesus is teaching the disciples that in their changed circumstances, self-defense and self-provision might be necessary. The very fact that two swords was "enough" indicates a restrained theme to this teaching. Mt 5 is where Jesus teaches that one ought to "turn the other cheek." This is a hyperbole used to teach a moral lesson - do not set yourself against those who have injured you (does anyone really think that Jesus would have us expose our chests and invite the mugger the shoot us?). In Mt 26, someone with Jesus struck out at the legal authorities. Here the context is different from that of Lk 22. I read this as saying that those who raise the sword against the legal authorities can expect to die by the sword (and of course, this in of itself is not necessarily a moral principle). Then again, in light of vs 53,54, one cannot establish that this teaching goes beyond the immediate circumstances. That is, if the disciples had fought, they would have been killed, and Jesus had better things in mind. That's why he told them He could summon supernatural aid if need be.

### 36. Christ warned his followers not to fear being killed [[Luke 12:4](#)]

#### Christ himself avoided the Jews for fear of being killed [[John 7:1](#)]

Luke 12 is a generalized teaching which states that one ought to fear God more so than men (read vs. 5). John 7:1 says nothing about Jesus being afraid that the Jews would kill him. It simply mentions that He avoided them since they wanted to kill Him. It wasn't His time to die yet.

### 37. Public prayer sanctioned [[1 Kings 8:22,54](#) / [9:3](#)]

#### Public prayer disapproved [[Matt 5:5,6](#)]

Mt 6 (not 5) does not as much focus on public prayer as it does on hypocritical prayer -- "And when you pray, you are not to pray as hypocrites." Jesus condemns the prayers designed to gather favor in the eyes of men. Nothing contradictory here.

**38. Importunity in prayer commended** [[Luke 18:5,7](#)]**Importunity in prayer condemned** [[Matt 6:7,8](#)]

The vain repetitions ("as the heathen do") Jesus speaks of in Mt hardly seem to me to be the fervant supplications that Luke relays. Put simply, there's a difference between fervant, real prayer and repetitive chanting or mouthing words over and over in order to twist God's arm (so to speak).

**39. The wearing of long hair by men sanctioned** [[Judg 13:5](#) / [Num 6:5](#)]**The wearing of long hair by men condemned** [[1 Cor 11:14](#)]

Judg 13:5 the Nazarite is not permitted to cut his hair. Num 6:5 teaches the same thing. 1 Cor 11:14 teaches that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him.

Yes, true. The Nazarites kept long hair even though it was a dishonor to them. 1 Cor 11:10 tells us that long hair is a sign of submission. So the Nazarites submitted to God even though it meant suffering some shame, for the duration of their vow. They also stayed away from dead things and any product of the grape, I think. --MAW

One could also note that national customs furnish an explanation here. 1 Cor was addressed to a Greek audience, where long hair on men often indicated effeminacy and indulgences in unnatural vices.

**40. Circumcision instituted** [[Gen 17:10](#)]**Circumcision condemned** [[Gal 5:2](#)]

Gen 17:10 God institutes circumcision to set His people apart. This is in the Old Testament where God would use a special people through which His Messiah could be brought forth.

Gal 5:2 Spoken to ones who already believe in Christ but were not circumcised - if they go to be circumcised, they are going back to the law. This means they are denying the effectiveness of Christ's death... so they lose out on the benefits of being a believer.

This is not the only such verse. Paul says elsewhere that we should beware those of the circumcision, also calling them the concision and even dogs. This is referring to the Judaizers who were trying to get the believers to be circumcised as a condition of their salvation.. among other things. They were trying to bring the believers under the law, even though these believers had been previously Gentiles and not Jews.

Paul tells us - it is not that all who have been circumcised are condemned, but rather that circumcision is no longer necessary in the New Testament because it has been replaced by the cross of Christ. --MAW

Indeed, here is another case (like #1) where the critic ignores the intervening events between the Scriptures cited. He/she may as well argue that the existence of a OLD and NEW covenant is a contradiction. And that exercise would be futile.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 41-50

**41. The Sabbath instituted** [[Ex 20:8](#)]**The Sabbath repudiated** [[Is 1:13](#) / [Rom 14:5](#) / [Col 2:16](#)]

The Sabbath is a topic a lot of Christians disagree on (e.g. Seventh-day Adventists).

Exod 20:8 teaches that the Sabbath was instituted. But it was also practiced by God Himself even as early as day seven.

Isaiah 1:13 God says the wicked people are displeasing to God, and He no longer delights in anything they do, including keeping the Sabbath and making offerings to Him. No surprise there.

Romans 14:5 and Col. 2:16 are *New* Testament verses.

Romans 14:5 neither supports the Sabbath nor repudiates it, though. It just says some keep and some don't and both are to be accepted as genuine believers. No problem there. (See verse 10).

Colossians 2:16 is the same story. "Let no one judge you with regards to the Sabbath" sounds like a far cry from "You are forbidden to keep the Sabbath" or "The Sabbath is bunk."

This matter would really do better dealt with on the larger scale of "Should New Testament believers be required to keep the entire Old Testament law?" Then one could bring in Eph. 2:15 and so on to show that on the one hand the moral aspects of the law are uplifted in the New Testament (Matt. 5-7), yet on the other hand the rituals are abolished (Sabbath, circumcision, feasts) and the offerings are replaced by Christ as the one unique Sacrifice. The middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles has been torn down by Christ on the cross and there is no longer any difference (among Christians). See discussion with James in Acts regarding this matter. --MAW

The teaching in Isaiah does not repudiate the Sabbath. If we read further, the LORD says:

"Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right!" [Is 1:15-17] Obviously, God is condemning the religious hypocrisy in this instance.

Nevertheless, even if we take the above claims as truth, namely, that God instituted the Sabbath in Exodus, and repealed it through Paul (and we need not debate if this is the true interpretation), as it stands, this is not contradictory. It is not contradictory to institute X and then repeal it much later.

#### **42. The Sabbath instituted because God rested on the seventh day** [[Ex 20:11](#)]

##### **The Sabbath instituted because God brought the Israelites out of Egypt** [[Deut 5:15](#)]

In this case, I see no reason why both explanations cannot be true. As such, the Sabbath could have been rooted in the order of things *and* in the historical intervention of the Creator.

Why was the Sabbath instituted?

Exod 22:11 tells us the Israelites should rest because God rested on the seventh day.

Deut 5:15 tells the Israelites that God commanded them to keep the Sabbath because of their deliverance from Egypt.

The wording is different between the two statements. Deut. tells us the reason for the commandment to keep the Sabbath. Exo does not, but merely tells us a good reason why they should keep it. Anyway, it is not uncommon to do something for more than one reason. Especially good reasons. --MAW

#### **43. 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](#)]

First of all, Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, not subject of the Sabbath. As for his disciples, they were charged with breaking the Sabbath because they picked some heads of grain and ate them. Jesus corrected the Jewish leaders on their legalism (read the entire discussion in Mt 12). Jesus did not condone working on the Sabbath, he just pointed out the folly of taking this law to the extreme where people could not eat or help others on the Sabbath.

No work could be done on Sabbath but Jesus worked on Sabbath and justified His disciples in doing the same. Yup. In the Old Testament no work could be done on the Sabbath, although it was ok to pull an ox out of the ditch.

The Lord Jesus in the New Testament is the Lord of the Sabbath and perfectly free to break it and even abolish it, since He is the one who set it up in the first place. Also, He is the reality of the shadows. The Old Testament Sabbath was a rest for God's people, but in the New Testament our real Sabbath is the One who said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Also, Hebrews tells us that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. This is not talking about an outward ritual of sitting around all day once a week reading the Torah, but about resting in Christ as our real inward peace and rest and sanctuary in this age and in full in the age to come.

Like I said earlier, this can be a pretty controversial issue, but at least grant me that it's a possible explanation which removes the validity of 43 as a contradiction in the Bible. Others may explain it differently. --MAW

#### **44. Baptism commanded** [[Matt 28:19](#)]

##### **Baptism not commanded** [[1 Cor 1:17,14](#)]

This is not a contradiction. Paul simply responded to the favoritism which sprang up along the lines of who baptized whom. Furthermore, Paul notes that his particular calling was not as a baptizer, but as a preacher.

#### **45. Every kind of animal allowed for food** [[Gen 9:3](#) / [1 Cor 10:25](#) / [Rom 14:14](#)]

##### **Certain kinds of animals prohibited for food** [[Deut 14:7,8](#)]

The NT references stem from the New Covenant. The Genesis reference indicates that God sanctioned non-vegetarian diets. The Deut references are particular to the Jews and the Old Covenant that was made with them.

#### **46. Taking of oaths sanctioned** [[Num 30:2](#) / [Gen 21:23-24,31](#) / [Gen 31:53](#) / [Heb 6:13](#)]

##### **Taking of oaths forbidden** [[Matt 5:34](#)]

Jesus is trying to get beyond human conventions and the frivolous oaths which were common and was calling for simple and pure honesty. Hebrews refers specifically to God and indicates His commitment/covenant.



Does the Bible sanction or forbid oaths? In the Old Testament they are not commanded, but permitted. Num. 30 explains when they can be annulled.

God Himself made an oath as recorded in Heb. 13:4. In Matt. 5:34 we New Testament believers are told not to swear by anything but to just say yes and no. The explanation given is that we are powerless to change our hair color. (Natural color.) But surely God is not similarly powerless, so if He wants to swear something, He is perfectly able to carry it out and nothing can come up to stop Him. No contradiction there.

So OT permits swearing (doesn't command it) and sets limits on it. The uplifted NT law abolishes it altogether on the grounds that we are powerless to guarantee the outcome. But God is not powerless, so He can swear as He likes. --MAW

#### 47. Marriage approved [[Gen 2:18](#) / [Gen 1:28](#) / [Matt 19:5](#) / [Heb 13:4](#)]

##### Marriage disapproved [[1 Cor 7:1](#) / [1 Cor 7:7,8](#)]

Paul is not disapproving marriage! He is simply saying that it is good to be unmarried. Saying it is good to not marry is not saying it is bad to marry. Being unmarried is good in the sense that particular blessings can stem from it (in fact, Paul even describes celibacy as a "gift"). However, another set of blessings can stem from being married.

Does God approve of marriage? Let's just look at the verses cited as saying that God *dis*approves of marriage, since obviously He approves.

##### [1 Cor. 7:1, 8, 26](#)

Verse 26 tells us why Paul says this. It is because of the present necessity. Well, these three verses do not tell us that God disapproves of marriage, but only that there is nothing wrong with staying single. "Good for them." A man who is content to refrain from touching any woman must really be full of the enjoyment of God, as Paul was. This is surely a good thing, although most people are not like that. As verse 7 says, each has his own gift from God, and for most people it is not the gift of staying single forever, although [Matt. 19:10-12](#) tells us (not cited) that there is a blessing for those that are able to keep it. Other verses not quoted tell us that the married person cares for how to please his/her mate, whereas the single one is free to concentrate on pleasing the Lord.

Anyway, none of these verses say that God disapproves of marriage. To teach others not to marry is to spread the doctrines of demons. ([1 Tim. 4:1-5](#))

"What God has joined together." If God disapproved of marriage, He would disapprove of almost all humans that ever were. He Himself intends to be married.

In [1 Tim. 5:14](#) Paul speaks of this matter again and makes it clear that his position is neither disapproval nor forbidding of marriage.

[Genesis 2:18](#) It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a help suitable for him. --MAW

#### 48. Freedom of divorce permitted [[Deut 24:1](#) / [Deut 21:10,11,14](#)]

##### Divorce restricted [[Matt 5:32](#)]

Yes, Jesus issues a new commandment and even explains the permission 1500 years earlier. He now issues a higher calling.

#### 49. Adultery forbidden [[Ex 20:14](#) / [Heb 13:4](#)]

##### Adultery allowed [[Num 31:18](#) / [Hos 1:2](#); [2:1-3](#)]

One has to read adultery INTO Num 31:18 -- it is not obvious that this verse is talking about adultery. As for Hosea, OT scholar Walter Kaiser believes that when God told Hosea to marry Gomer, she was not yet a harlot. (Besides, the exception doesn't prove the rule). Does the Bible permit adultery? No.

[Numbers 31:18](#) doesn't say that the "yourselves" were already married. Obviously it doesn't refer to the females among the Israelites, and so it can just as easily also exclude all the married and under-age males.

[Hosea 1:2](#) God commands Hosea to marry a prostitute. The very idea of using this as a justification of adultery is absurd. The point here is to expose the nation of Israel at that time for her unfaithful and treacherous treatment of her Husband, God. Israel was a prostitute in the eyes of God, because she was going after idols, yet He still would marry her and even take her back after she ran after idols again. This is an example of an incredible level of forgiveness, not of a condoning of the evil that she had done.

[Hosea 2:1-3](#) God commands Hosea to go back and reclaim his unfaithful wife back from the man she was messing around with. (See above.) The point is that this is an extremely difficult thing for a man to do, to take back his wife even from the house of her lover and to have to pay a price to get her back. Yet this is what God did for the children of Israel and also did for us. What an incredible heart He has for us, even though we were spiritually harlots in His eyes; He still loved us enough to pay the price to redeem us. --MAW

#### 50. 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](#) / [Gen 17:16](#)]

Gen 17:16 says nothing about Sarah being Abrams sister. Gen 20:11 ignores [Gen 12:11-13](#). Abraham had people believing that Sarah was his sister out of fear -- it was a lie.

Is it ok to marry or cohabit with one's sister? Well, in the early generations man didn't have a choice. Cain for example married someone, and the only gals around were his siblings. Abraham also lived long before Moses, who wrote Deuteronomy and Leviticus. After Moses, nope, not a good idea to marry your sister. --MAW

**Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 51-60****51. A man may marry his brother's widow** [[Deut 25:5](#)]**A man may not marry his brother's widow** [[Lev 20:21](#)]

This is a clear case of reading a contradiction INTO the Bible -- Lev 20:21 says nothing obvious about *marrying* widows.

**52. Hatred to kindred enjoined**

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters -- yes, even his own life -- he cannot be my disciple" [[Luke 14:26](#)]

**Hatred to kindred condemned** [[Eph 6:2](#) / [Eph 5:25,29](#)]

I have seen this verse used numerous times from atheists in an attempt to show that Jesus was not a nice guy. But let's see if this verse really supports that position. Many atheists interpret this verse literally. To them, it is clear that Jesus was instructing us to hate our families. But is it?

It is a fairly basic rule in hermeneutics that a particular teaching should be interpreted in the light of general teaching, that is, in light of its context. So, does this hate-message fit into the overall context of Jesus' teaching? Not really.

Elsewhere, Jesus responds to an inquiry about attaining eternal life. He replied, "honor your mother and father". [[Matt. 19:19](#)]. In fact, on another occasion Jesus censured those theologians who argued that people who had vowed to give God a sum of money which they later discovered could have been used to help their parents in need were not free to divert the money from religious purposes to which it had been vowed. In His characteristic condemnation of human traditions, Jesus observed: "Thus you nullify the Word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites!" [[Matt. 15:6-7](#)]

Now, how can you hate your parents, yet also honor them? These seem to be exclusive sentiments.

On the cross, Jesus tells John to take His mother as his own. Was he telling John to hate her? Then why did John take Mary into his home?

An interesting thing happens if you put together some of these teachings. If we are to hate our family, why must we love our enemies? And by hating our families, they become our enemies, but then we are supposed to love them!

No, I find this literalistic interpretation of [Luke 14:26](#) to be plagued with problems and taken out of context.

So what sense are we to make of this teaching? Perhaps Jesus is simply employing hyperbole to emphasize an important point. Let's return to the immediate context of this verse. In [Luke 14:27](#), He notes that a disciple must be willing to carry his cross. In verses [28-29](#), he teaches from the example of building a tower and that one should count the costs before beginning. In verses [31-32](#), he uses an example of a king going to war to illustrate the same point. Then in verse [33](#), he explains that we must be willing to give up everything to be His disciple. In verses he alludes to salt that loses its saltiness, which is thrown out. And finally, he sums it all up by saying "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" [[vs. 35](#)].

Now throughout this whole preaching, Jesus uses symbolic parables and hyperbole to drive His points home. And what is the point? I think it is rather clear, that commitment to Jesus is primary and always comes first. Thus, if you are willing to put others before Christ and unwilling to follow through with your commitment, you may as well never commit in the first place.

It is well known that in Jewish idiom, hate could also mean 'love less'. In fact, I think the same message taught in [Luke 14:26](#) is taught in [Matthew 10:37](#).

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me".

In this case Jesus is speaking to his disciples, while in Luke He was addressing the crowds. But the same theme is present in both and His teaching to the disciples clearly explains the hyperbole in Luke.

I should also go back to that idiom. In the OT, the love-hate antithesis was used to distinguish between the intensity of one's love, and not meant as a polarization of concepts. Perhaps the clearest example is in [Gen 29:30-31](#):

"So Jacob went to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban another seven years. When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb".

Thus, Leah's being hated or not loved really meant that she was loved less. In fact, in the poetry of the ancient Near East numerous terms were paired together. In such instances the meaning of these terms is far more dependent upon their idiomatic usage rather than their literal meaning in isolation.

Given that Jesus often teaches using symbolic parables and hyperbole, given the context of Luke's passage, along with the context of other teachings of Jesus which certainly contradict a literal reading of Luke's verse, and the use of the love-hate comparison in Hebrew idiom, all added to Matthews account of the same theme, a consistent picture comes out that Jesus was teaching that we should love our families less than He. His use of hyperbole is an effective way of getting attention and emphasizing his point at the same time. Commitment to Jesus comes first. By the way, this is another subtle implicit expression of Jesus as God, as elsewhere, he reminds us that we are to love "the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" [[Matt 22:37](#)].

Anyway, if Bob was to tell Sue that he loved her so much that "he'd walk a thousand miles without food and water just to be with her", must Bob fulfill the literal sense of his statement for Sue to understand the depth of his love? If we insisted that hyperbole be taken literally, a very effective and deep method of communicating would be lost!

**53. Intoxicating beverages recommended** [[Prov 31:6,7](#) / [1 Tim 5:23](#) / [Ps 104:15](#)]

**Intoxicating beverages discountenanced** [[Prov 20:1](#) / [Prov 23:31,32](#)]

Is it ok to drink alcoholic beverages? Yup, but not in excess. And it's not required.

(All things are lawful for me but I will not be brought under the power of any. All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. [1 Cor 6:12](#) and [10:23](#)).

[Prov 20:1](#) says abusers of wine are not wise.

[Prov 23:30](#) tells us that verses [31-32](#) are in the context of excessive drinking.

The Lord was accused of being a drinker; it can be inferred that He did not entirely abstain from wine - just from drunkenness. However, anyone who is weak in this matter would do well not to touch the stuff. (IMHO)

A great verse not quoted is [Eph 4:18](#) (Compare with [Acts 2:13-18](#)). The point of wine in the Bible is a picture of our enjoyment of the Spirit. Well, atheists can't be expected to understand that. Anyway, we should be crazy before God and sober before man. --MAW

**54. It is our duty to obey our rulers, who are God's ministers and punish evil doers only** [[Rom 13:1-3,6](#)]

**It is not our duty to obey rulers, who sometimes punish the good and receive unto themselves damnation therefore** [[Ex 1:17,20](#) / [Dan 3:16,18](#) / [Dan 6:9,7,10](#) / [Acts 4:26,27](#) / [Mark 12:38,39,40](#) / [Luke 23:11,24,33,35](#)]

Should we obey our rulers? Are they God's ministers? Do they punish only evildoers? Do they sometimes punish the good as well? Will they receive damnation for their injustices?

This question has to be answered in parts.

(1) Should we obey our rulers?

[Romans 13:1-3, 6](#) says we should be subject to, and not resist, the authorities over us. Note: it doesn't say obey. We should obey if at all possible, unless such obedience is contrary to God, as in the extreme cases below.

[Exod 1:17, 20](#) tells us that the midwives did not follow the pharaoh's command to kill the male babies of the Israelites and that God approved.

[Dan 3:16 18](#) tell us that Daniel's three friends disobeyed the king's command to bow to the image. It also tells us that they were willing to submit to the consequences and that their attitude was not one of defiance but of respectful disobedience. Same as the midwives.

[Dan 6:7, 9, 10](#) tells us Daniel was the same. He was submissive to the king and honored him, but was unable to obey this one particular command because it conflicted with His faithful worship of God. He also submitted to the penalty. All three are special cases where the authorities require something contrary to God. All three are not obedient but are still subject and do not resist.

[Acts 4:26-27](#) does not deal with this question.

[Mark 12:38-40](#) "Beware the scribes" is not a command not to respect them or do as they say. In another verse the Lord makes this more clear, telling us to do as they say but not as they do. The Lord had good reason to warn His disciples to beware the scribes, as they were part of the group that was plotting to kill Him. Anyway, that is not the point here.

[Luke 23:11, 24, 33, 35](#) Here the Lord submitted to the cruel treatment of the earthly government. He was a good example for us all.

(2) Are they God's ministers?

Romans tells us that they are. No verse tells us that they are not, although they do sometimes abuse their office after they have received it from God. That makes them not much different from King Saul or the sons of Eli. David and Samuel (respectively) were still subject to them and respected them as established by God.

(3) Do they punish only evildoers?

[Romans 13:3](#) "For the rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Do you want to have no fear of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from him."

This is a general principle, explaining that if we rob a bank or kill someone or dodge our taxes (the example in the context), we *will* have something to fear from the authorities, whereas if we don't we won't. If they oppress us unjustly, that is a matter not being dealt with in this verse.

(4) Do they get punished by God for their injustices?

Yes. God is not a regarnder of persons. Every individual, regardless of status, will eventually face the judgment seat. --MAW

**55. Women's rights denied** [[Gen 3:16](#) / [1 Tim 2:12](#) / [1 Cor 14:34](#) / [1 Pet 3:6](#)]

**Women's rights affirmed** [[Judg 4:4,14,15](#) / [Judg 5:7](#) / [Acts 2:18](#) / [Acts 21:9](#)]

Does the Bible affirm or deny women's rights? (Hot topic.)

[Gen 3:16](#) the curse on the woman (man got one too). The husband rules over the wife.

[1 Tim 2:12](#) Woman not permitted to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness.

[1 Cor 14:34](#) Silent. Not permitted to speak in the assemblies but to be subject. Next verse explains: it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church.

[1 Pet 3:6](#) As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, so women should be subject to their own husbands.

[Judg 4:4, 14-15](#) Deborah, a female, judged Israel. But note: The Bible purposely mentions her husband's name. She does not choose to lead the people of Israel to battle but is told to do so. She goes obediently when told, but tells Barak that he will be shamed in that a woman will kill his enemy Sisera. (It is a shame for a woman to defeat the enemy.) It is also a shame to Barak that he cannot go to battle without a woman. As a prophetess, she speaks, but she purposely keeps herself in her proper position as a female by maintaining the safeguards of her husband's headship and obedience to the authority of Barak. It is also a shame to Israel that there were no men who could judge them and so God was forced to use a female. (This does happen sometimes.)

[Judg 5:7](#) Confirms the fact that there was no male to rule Israel properly and so God was forced to raise up Deborah.

[Acts 2:18](#) Both men and women prophesy. Females prophesying is different from females teaching and exerting authority over men. Females can of course prophesy with their heads covered, signifying submission and acceptance of God's ordination. Just as Deborah did.

[Acts 21:9](#) A man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. Same as above. See also [1 Cor 14:24, 26, 31](#); [11:5](#).

[1 Cor 11:3](#) shows us that the point here is to keep the proper order (v. 40) in the churches: God is the Head of Christ. He, Christ, was fully in submission to the Father in all things, even unto death. Likewise, men should be headed up by Christ and women by men, especially their own husbands. While on that topic:

[Eph 5:25-31](#) "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she should be holy and without blemish. In the same way the husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his own wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church, because we are members of His Body. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh."

[1 Peter 3:7](#) says that the wives are weaker and are to be treasured as vessels unto honor by their husbands.

[1 Cor 12:22-24](#) But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant comeliness, but our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked.

[2 Cor 12:9-10](#) And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me. Therefore I am well pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses, on behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

The brothers saw the vision on the mount of transfiguration, were appointed as disciples and later as apostles, and in the churches took on the responsibilities of being elders, deacons, teachers, and so on. But it was a group of sisters who supplied the funds for Jesus and His disciples to live

for those three and a half years. It was a sister who willingly and without a second thought offered herself to be used by God to bring forth the Messiah, it was a sister who anointed the Lord Jesus with the costly nard which may have been her entire life savings and wiped His feet with her tears, sisters who first learned of His resurrection, and a sister who lingered at the tomb and was first to see Him in resurrection. The Lord does not discriminate against us sisters; rather, He is full of compassion for us in our weakness. Let us love and seek Him with our whole heart. --MAW

#### 56. Obedience to masters enjoined [[Col 3:22,23](#) / [1 Pet 2:18](#)]

##### Obedience due to God only [[Matt 4:10](#) / [1 Cor 7:23](#) / [Matt 23:10](#)]

Should masters be obeyed? [Matthew 4:10](#) is referring to the service of worship, as the context makes clear. We are to worship only God. It is quoted from [Deut. 6:13-14](#) which is also in the context of being forbidden to worship idols.

[1 Cor 7:20-24](#) tells slaves to remain as slaves even if the opportunity arises to be liberated. Then verse 22 says that a slave is the Lord's freedman and a freeman is the Lord's slave. This is telling us that outwardly we may be a slave or free but in the Lord we are His slave and we are also free in Him. So although we are slaves to men outwardly, the one we hold in our heart as our true Master is the Lord. This is not a sanction of being rebellious to our masters but a reference to our heart. The context makes it clear that it is not saying that slaves should seek to be free or to rebel against their masters.

[Matt 23:10](#). This verse was previously dealt with in question #30. It is not referring to whether or not we have earthly masters, but whether or not we address some believers as if they were superior with titles of honor like Father and Teacher (Uh, and Reverend and Pastor and Deacon). All believers are brothers. Context: [verses 6-11](#). Yes, there are apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc. But we just don't need to address them honorifically. And mustn't. --MAW

#### 57. There is an unpardonable sin

"But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness forever, but is guilty of an everlasting sin." [[Mark 3:29](#)]

##### There is not unpardonable sin

"And from all the things from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, in this One everyone who believes is justified." [[Acts 13:39](#)]

Note that the critic is relying on a particular interpretation of Acts 13, as it doesn't clearly say there is no unpardonable sin. It merely says that those who believe are justified. Now, Jesus' teaching may be descriptive in essence - those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit are those who never believe. That is, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit may be a symptom of a heart which is in such rebellion that it never yields to the call of the Holy Spirit.

It is also possible that blaspheming the Spirit may simply be rejecting His call. Or at the very least, those who blaspheme the Spirit are ones who rebel against Him. Recall that the Spirit is sent to bring us into the Truth and convict us of sin. Those who would blaspheme the Spirit obviously rebel against Him, thus reject salvation. Thus, how *could* they be saved?

#### 58. Man was created after the other animals [[Gen 1:25,26,27](#)]

##### Man was created before the other animals [[Gen 2:18,19](#)]

The first chapter of Genesis is a synopsis of creation. The second is more detailed and focuses on the creation of man (and was unlikely intended to be a separate creation account). The NIV translates [Gen 2:19](#) as follows:

"Now that LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man..."

Simply put, the Garden could have initially been without animal life, and God simply brought the animals he had already created to Adam.

#### 59. Seed time and harvest were never to cease [[Gen 8:22](#)]

##### Seed time and harvest did cease for seven years [[Gen 41:54,56](#) / [Gen 45:6](#)]

Did seed time and harvest ever cease?

Gen 8:22 "shall never cease."

Gen 41:54-56, 45:6 There was a famine over the whole earth for seven years. The seasons didn't cease, just the fruitful yield thereof.

Seed time and harvest are another way of saying Spring and Fall, especially in the context of Genesis 8 which is speaking of the seasons. They were forced to cease during the flood, which was marked by heavy rainfall and not much variety. This was not what happened in Egypt and the other countries during the famine in [Genesis 41-45](#). --MAW

#### 60. God hardened Pharaoh's heart [[Ex 4:21](#) / [Ex 9:12](#)]

**Pharaoh hardened his own heart** [\[Ex 8:15\]](#)

Who hardened Pharaoh's heart? Exod 4:21 and 9:12 God did. Exod 8:15 Pharaoh did.

MaryAnna notes that they both did. I agree, as much has been written on this topic. But I would note that people often react very differently to God's actions. For example, let's imagine that God invoked some calamity on people as a judgment for their sin. Some people would respond and repent. Many would simply harden their heart and blame God. Thus, by bringing about this calamity, some might be saved, but God could be said that have indirectly hardened the hearts of others. Of course, sometimes you don't need calamity. I'm sure many Christian's can testify of varying evangelistic experiences. After months of witnessing, some become saved. But sometimes, those who come awful close to being saved back away and become more rebellious than ever, their hearts being more hardened that ever after being touched by the convicting hand of the Holy Spirit.

**Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 61-70****61. All the cattle and horses in Egypt died** [\[Ex 9:3,6\]](#)**All the horses of Egypt did not die** [\[Ex 14:9\]](#)

The account in Ex 9:3 refers to the livestock *in the field*. If not all the Egyptian horses were in the fields, they wouldn't all die, now would they?

**62. Moses feared Pharaoh** [\[Ex 2:14,15, 23; 4:19\]](#)**Moses did not fear Pharaoh** [\[Heb 11:27\]](#)

Hebrews says "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger."

The accounts in Ex 2 and 4 describe events long before Moses led his people out of Egypt (besides, Ex 4 says nothing about Moses fearing Pharaoh). This is obviously another contradiction which is read *INTO* the Bible.

**63. There died of the plague twenty-four thousand** [\[Num 25:9\]](#)**There died of the plague but twenty-three thousand** [\[1 Cor 10:8\]](#)

According to Paul, 23,000 fell "in one day." The account in Numbers simply states that 24,000 died of the plague. It is not contradictory that 23,000 should die in a day, and another 1000 die before or after.

**64. John the Baptist was Elias**

"And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah, who is to come." [\[Matt 11:14\]](#)

**John the Baptist was not Elias** [\[John 1:21\]](#)

First, it should be pointed out some use this to show that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elijah, or at least the idea of reincarnation was held by some (also John 9:1 ff) --PP. For a refutation see [The Reincarnation Sensation](#)

Note, in Matt. 11:14, not "He is" but "If you are willing to receive it, he is." This indicates not a literal identity but a fulfillment of prophecy. This is referring to the prophecy in [Mal. 4:5-6](#) "Behold, I will send unto you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of Jehovah. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

This prophecy has two fulfillments. First, before the Lord's first coming, John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord and make straight His paths. [Luke 1:17](#). "And it is he who will go before Him *in the spirit and power of Elijah* to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the prudence of the righteous, to prepare for the Lord a people made ready."

The second fulfillment of this prophecy is before the second coming of the Lord. This has yet to happen, and at that time it will be Elijah, not one in the spirit and power of Elijah, who will actually come. This is confirmed by the Lord's word in:

[Matt 17:10-13](#) "And the disciples asked Him, saying, Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? And He answered and said, Elijah indeed is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah has already come; and they did not recognize him, but did with him the things they wished. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer by them. Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them concerning John the Baptist."

Again the Lord is careful to point out that the literal Elijah has yet to come, but then to say "but I say to you." This indicates that although Elijah is coming, it can also be said that he has come -- referring to John the Baptist.

Elijah's coming is also mentioned in [Rev 11:3-4](#). He will be one of the two witnesses.

John 1:21 John B. said that he was not Elijah. That's right. He wasn't the actual person of Elijah. That would happen much much later....

So in a sense he was Elijah, and yet he wasn't. Not a contradiction. --MAW

**65. The father of Joseph, Mary's husband was Jacob** [[Matt 1:16](#)]**The father of Mary's husband was Heli** [[Luke 3:23](#)]

It is distinctly possible that Luke's account traces Jesus' lineage through Mary, and not Joseph. Some of the circumstantial evidence to support this is as follows:

- (1) Luke's birth narrative is through the eyes of Mary, while Matthew's is through the eyes of Joseph. Thus, Luke could have received his material through Mary (or someone close), thus it is quite possible that he received her genealogy.
- (2) [Luke 3:23](#) reads, "Jesus...being supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, etc." Luke certainly draws attention to the fact that Jesus was not truly Joseph's son, so why would he then go to all the trouble in listing Joseph's genealogy?
- (3) After considering the Greek of [Luke 3:23](#), Robert Gromacki believes it should be translated as follows:

"being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli, of Matthat, etc."

Gromacki states: "Since women did not appear in direct genealogical listings, Joseph stood in Mary's place, but Luke was careful to note that there was no physical connection between Joseph and either Jesus or Heli."

(4) Luke's genealogy also lists Adam as "the son of God." This would indicate that one would have no grounds for insisting that the term "son" meant only the direct, biological offspring. Thus, one could think of Jesus as the "son of Heli."

(5) The writings of Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 100 AD) indicate that the early church thought that Mary was a Davidic descent. For example, he writes:

"Under the Divine dispensation, Jesus Christ our God was conceived by Mary of the seed of David and of the spirit of God; He was born, and He submitted to baptism, so that by His Passion He might sanctify water." -- Ignatius to the Ephesians

"Christ was of David's line. He was the son of Mary; He was verily and indeed born.." -- Ignatius to the Trallians

Since Ignatius believed in the virgin birth, it clearly follows that he would believe that she was "of the seed of David." Other apocryphal gospels and Justin Martyr (ca. 150 AD) also believed Mary to have been a descendent of David.

Objections to these claims are basically of two types:

A. The Jews did not typically trace genealogies through women.

Reply: This is true, but a virgin birth is not a typical birth. Thus standard practices would not be expected to hold.

B. There is no explicit mention that the genealogy is Mary's.

Reply: This is true again, but the reason for this is probably due to point A. The genealogy would lose all appeal if it was explicitly cited as Mary's. However, it does seem to be implied. Thus, one could discern this truth after they had converted and studied the text. This would account for the early church's belief about Mary's Davidic descent.

Whatever one makes of such reasoning, it is certainly possible that the above explanation might be true, thus a contradiction has not been proved.

**66. The father of Salah was Arphaxad** [[Gen 11:12](#)]**The father of Salah was Cainan** [[Luke 3:35,36](#)]

To me, this *looks* like a legitimate contradiction, although I suppose it is *possible* that this is the same person known by different names. After all, it is not uncommon for Biblical personages to have more than one name.

**67. There were fourteen generations from Abraham to David** [[Matt 1:17](#)]**There were but thirteen generations from Abraham to David** [[Matt 1:2-6](#)]**68. There were fourteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ** [[Matt 1:17](#)]**There were but thirteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ** [[Matt 1:12-16](#)]

I list these together and allow MaryAnna to reply....

I looked this up in my study Bible (Recovery Version) and found the following explanation:

(Matt. 1:17) "This genealogy is divided into three ages: (1) from Abraham until David, fourteen generations, the age before the establishing of the kingdom; (2) from David until the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations, the age of the kingdom; (3) from the deportation to Babylon until the

Christ, again fourteen generations, the age after the fall of the kingdom. According to history, there were actually forty-five generations. By deducting from these generations the three cursed generations [[Matt 1:8](#); [1 Chron 3:11-12](#); [2 Kings 15:1, 13](#); [2 Chron. 21:5-6](#); [22:1-4](#); [Exod 20:5](#)] and the one improper generation [[Matt 1:11](#); [1 Chron 3:15-16](#); [2 Kings 23:34-35](#)], and then adding one by making David two generations (one, the age before the establishing of the kingdom, and the other, the age of the kingdom), the generations total forty-two, being divided into three ages of fourteen generations each." --MAW

It's simply a matter of how you count. In other words, you can count it as fourteen generations first by extending from Abraham to David; secondly, by extending from David to the deportation; and thirdly, by extending from Jehonias to Christ, inclusive in each case.

#### **69. The infant Christ was taken into Egypt** [[Matt 2:14,15,19,21,23](#)]

##### **The infant Christ was not taken into Egypt** [[Luke 2:22, 39](#)]

Luke does not say that the infant was not taken into Egypt as neither account is exhaustive (those who look for contradictions often overlook the fact that Biblical accounts are rarely exhaustive in their scope). We can easily harmonize the accounts as follows:

Journey of Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem; birth of the child; presentation in the Temple; return to Bethlehem; visit of the Magi; flight into Egypt; return to settle in Nazareth.

#### **70. Christ was tempted in the wilderness** [[Mark 1:12,13](#)]

##### **Christ was not tempted in the wilderness** [[John 2:1,2](#)]

Mark 1:12, 13 Jesus was tempted in the wilderness immediately after His baptism.

John 2:1, 2 The third day after John testifies for Jesus for the first time in the book of John, (not the first ever) Jesus is in Cana of Galilee turning water into wine. There is no mention of how much earlier Jesus was baptized. He was tempted in the wilderness before 1:29. Then He went back to see John, at which time John proclaims that Jesus is the Lamb of God, based on previously having seen the Spirit descend on Him in the form of a dove. (verses 32 to 34). --MAW

## **Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 71-80**

#### **71. Christ preached his first sermon on the mount** [[Matt 5:1,2](#)]

##### **Christ preached his first sermon on the plain** [[Luke 6:17,20](#)]

Neither account says anything about this being his "first sermon." As MaryAnna notes<sup>0</sup>Probably two different sermons with similar content. Matt. doesn't say the sermon on the mount was His first sermon. Matt. doesn't seem too concerned about the sequence of events. [Matt 4:23](#) seems to indicate that before this the Lord already had done a lot of speaking. The one in [Luke 6:17](#) was to the crowds, whereas the one in [Matt 5](#) was addressed to the disciples privately. --MAW

Indeed. It is not at all uncommon for a preacher to preach similar sermons at different times and with different audiences, now is it?

#### **72. John was in prison when Jesus went into Galilee** [[Mark 1:14](#)]

##### **John was not in prison when Jesus went into Galilee** [[John 1:43](#) / [John 3:22-24](#)]

The account in Mark does not indicate that this was the first time Jesus went into Galilee. It is quite possible that Jesus did earlier visit Galilee to baptize and mingle, and Mark alludes to a subsequent visit (after John's imprisonment) when He began to preach the nearness of the kingdom.

#### **73. Christ's disciples were commanded to go forth with a staff and sandals** [[Mark 6:8,9](#)]

##### **Christ's disciples were commanded to go forth with neither staves nor sandals** [[Matt 10:9,10](#)]

I view these as complementary accounts which get us closer to the full instructions of Jesus. In Mark, He tells his disciples to take nothing for their journey except a staff and sandals to wear. In Matthew, He instructs them not to acquire many things (including more sandals and staffs). In short, he is instructing them to take little, and not to accept the gifts of men in return for the healing and message that they bring with them.

#### **74. A woman of Canaan besought Jesus** [[Matt 15:22](#)]

##### **It was a Greek woman who besought Him** [[Mark 7:26](#)]

The nationality of the woman who besought Jesus.

Matt. 15:22 She was a Canaanite woman.



Mark 7:26 She was a Greek, Syro-phoenician by race. The Phoenicians were descendants of the Canaanites. So she was Greek in some way other than race. It could have been by religion, marriage, or something else. Anyway, these verses don't contradict each other. The point is she was not an Israelite. --MAW

Also, "Greek" may have simply meant "Gentile". According to Haley, she lived in a part of Canaan called "Syro-Phoenicia."

#### 75. Two blind men besought Jesus [[Matt 20:30](#)]

##### Only one blind man besought Him [[Luke 18:35,38](#)]

How many blind men were there?

Matt. 20:30 mentions two. Luke 18:35, 38 only mentions one. A certain one. Luke probably was acquainted with him and so mentions him specifically. He may have continued to follow the Lord and even been among the 120 later, whereas the other may not have. At any rate Luke doesn't say that the blind man was alone, just that he was there and received his sight. -- MAW I should point out that critic's don't like the type of replies that MaryAnna suggests, although I think her explanation is quite plausible. So allow to me reply to their complaints at this point. In another context, one critic decried a similar type of approach as described it as follows

Critic: "There was more there than...." This is used when one verse says "there was a" and another says "there was b", so they decide there was "a" AND "b" -- which is said nowhere.

My reply: Simply because it is "said nowhere" doesn't mean it is not the case. That follows only if you assume exhaustively detailed and verbatim reports. In fact, we can induce that it was probably the case by putting the pieces together. This is a perfectly valid approach. Anyone who lives in this world ought to know that. If I go for a ride with my buddies Bob and Steve, and come home to tell my wife I was out with Bob (perhaps because I talked to him more, ie, he was on my mind) and later mention that Steve said something about getting a new job, have I contradicted myself? The contradiction exists ONLY if I said that ONLY Bob and I went for a drive. And it would certainly be reasonable for my wife to conclude that I must have went for a ride with both Bob and Steve.

In attempting to pooh-pooh this type of explanation which is commonly experienced, the critic is fallaciously engaged in black and white thinking. It's like saying, "Hey, either you went for a ride with Bob or Steve, which is it?". But why in the world can't it be both?

Critic: This makes them happy, since it doesn't say there WASN'T "a + b".

My reply: I don't know about happy, but this sounds like the crying of a spoiled child. If you are out to demonstrate a CONTRADICTION, this is exactly the type of thing you have to uncover. Just because the critic fails to shoulder HIS/HER burden is no reason for me to take their point seriously.

#### 76. Christ was crucified at the third hour [[Mark 15:25](#)]

##### Christ was not crucified until the sixth hour [[John 19:14,15](#)]

At what hour was Jesus crucified?

Mark 15:25 says it was in the third hour, 9:00 a.m. John 19:14-15 says that in the sixth hour (different clock). He was still not crucified yet but was being judged before Pilate. This was at about 6 a.m.

So three hours later He had carried the cross up to Golgotha (with some help) and was crucified.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts use Hebrew time for their reckoning. John uses Roman time. Another example of this is in [John 18:28](#) -- early morning refers to the fourth Roman watch, which was 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. --MAW

#### 77. The two thieves reviled Christ [[Matt 27:44](#) / [Mark 15:32](#)]

##### Only one of the thieves reviled Christ [[Luke 23:39,40](#)]

Did both or only one of the thieves revile Jesus?

Matt. 27:44 and Mark 15:32 say they both did.

Luke 23:39-40 says that the one rebuked the other for his blasphemy.

Probably at first they both did and then one of them repented, and, while the other was still reviling, rebuked him and asked the Lord to remember him. So he was saved. Luke doesn't say that the rebuking one had not at first been also reviling. It merely records a segment of the conversation. -- MAW

(Once again, we see another "contradiction" which presumes exhaustive accounts --MB)

**78. Satan entered into Judas while at supper** [[John 13:27](#)]**Satan entered into him before the supper** [[Luke 22:3,4,7](#)]

When did Satan enter Judas? John 13:27 Right after eating the morsel offered to him by Jesus. Luke 22:3,4,7 Satan also entered Judas before that. It could be he kept entering Judas. Just like the evil spirit that kept coming upon King Saul. --MAW

(Indeed, are we to believe that once Satan enters someone, he remains there for the rest of the natural life of a person??? --MB)

**79. Judas committed suicide by hanging** [[Matt 27:5](#)]**Judas did not hang himself, but died another way** [[Acts 1:18](#)]

Matt 27:5 states that Judas "threw the pieces of silver....and he went away and hanged himself."

Acts 1:18 states, "and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out."

It's rather easy to reconcile these:

1. First, Judas tried to kill himself by hanging himself. And this is not always a successful way. Maybe he tried, and failed (as have many others who have tried to commit suicide by hanging). Then after some time, he threw himself off a cliff and fell upon some jagged rocks. Keep in mind that it is not uncommon for people who commit suicide to have tried it before.
2. Judas could have tied a rope to a tree branch that extended over a cliff (after all, you have to get some space between your feet and the ground to hang yourself). In this situation, the rope/branch could have broke before or after death, and Judas plummeted to the ground and landed on some jagged rocks.

Certainly, these explanations are plausible, thus a contradiction has not been established. More from Frank Decenso below.

One of my favorites. My explanation for atheists and critics...

MAT 27:5-8 Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

First of all, notice that the text does not say that Judas died as a result of hanging. All it says is that he "went and hanged himself." Luke however, in Acts, tells us that "and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out." This is a pretty clear indication (along with the other details given in Acts - Peter's speech, the need to pick a new apostle, etc.) that at least after Judas' fall, he was dead. So the whole concept that Matthew and Luke both recount Judas' death is highly probable, but not clear cut. Therefore, if I were to take a radical exegetical approach here, I could invalidate your alleged contradiction that there are two different accounts of how Judas died.

Notice verse 5."Then he...went and hanged himself." Matthew does not say Judas died, does it? Should we assume he died as a result of the hanging?

What does Acts say? ACT 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.

ACT 1:20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms: 'Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it'; and, 'Let another take his office.'

Here we may have a graphic explanation of Judas' death. Of course, maybe someone can find some medical source somewhere that discusses the possibility of one having their entrails gush out after being burst open in the middle, and still survive. :)

So, my line of reasoning to dispel the contradiction myth re: the "two" accounts of Judas' death is this. Matthew doesn't necessarily explain how Judas died; he does say Judas "hanged himself", but he didn't specifically say Judas died in the hanging incident. However, Acts seems to show us his graphic demise. Therefore, there is no contradiction between Matthew and Acts re: Judas' death.

We do know from Matthew that he did hang himself and Acts probably records his death. It is possible and plausible that he fell from the hanging and hit some rocks, thereby bursting open. However, Matthew did not say Judas died as a result of the hanging, did he? Most scholars believe he probably did, but...

One atheist I debated along these lines said... the Greek word "apagchw" (ie: hang oneself) is translated as a successful hanging. I replied, No you can't only conclude this, although...this was a highly probable outcome. But Matthew does not state death as being a result. The Greek word is APAGCHO. Matthew 27:5 is it's only occurrence in the New Testament. In the LXX (the Greek translation of the OT used at the time of Jesus), it's only used in 2 Samuel 17:23 : "Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father's tomb." Notice that not only is it stated that Ahithophel "hanged himself" [Gr. LXX, APAGCHO], but it explicitly adds, "and died". Here we have no doubt of the result. In Matthew, we are not explicitly told Judas died. Also, there is nothing in the Greek to suggest success or failure. It simply means "hang oneself". --Frank

**80. The potter's field was purchased by Judas** [[Acts 1:18](#)]**The potter's field was purchased by the Chief Priests** [[Matt 27:6,7](#)]

Perhaps here, the following maxim holds -- "He who does a thing by another, does it himself." That is, yes it was the chief priests who actually bought the field, but Judas had furnished the occasion for its purchase. Thus, the verse in Acts could be employing a figure of speech where we attribute to the man himself any act which he has directly or indirectly procured to be done. After all, we attribute the "Clinton health care plan" to Bill Clinton, when in reality, it is a plan devised by others associated with Bill Clinton.

**Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 81-90****81. There was but one woman who came to the sepulchre**

"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance." [[John 20:1](#)]

**There were two women who came to the sepulchre**

"After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the other tomb." [[Matt 28:1](#)]

This is a case where a contradiction is read into the account. John does not report that ONLY Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. Failing to mention someone does not necessarily mean that no one else was present. In fact, had the critics read further, they would have seen that Mary was not alone:

"So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they put him!" [[Jn 20:2](#)]

If Mary was alone, then who is WE? Clearly more than one person went with Mary. John just doesn't mention them.

**82. There were three women who came to the sepulchre** [[Mark 16:1](#)]**There were more than three women who came to the sepulchre** [[Luke 24:10](#)]

Again, the same reasoning applies. See my previous story about going for a ride in the car. :)

**83. It was at sunrise when they came to the sepulchre**

"Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb." [[Mark 16:2](#)]

**It was some time before sunrise when they came**

"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb." [[John 20:1](#)]

I see no contradiction. Mary could have left a little earlier than the others. Or they could have left while it was still dark and the sun began to rise while they were on their way. I've worked my share of nightshifts to know that one can leave the job while it is still dark, and get home after the sun has risen!

**84. There were two angels seen by the women at the sepulchre, and they were standing up** [[Luke 24:4](#)]**There was but one angel seen, and he was sitting down** [[Matt 28:2,5](#)]

It is quite possible that much of the confusion about these trivial facts stems from the fact that many women went to the tomb that morning ([Luke 24:10](#)). It's possible, at the very least, that a group of women came to the tomb, and saw that the stone had been rolled away. Some women went inside, but the more timid remained outside. Those inside saw the vision of the two angels, while those outside saw the angel on the stone.

Also, in response to the manner in which this supposed contradiction is presented, I would point out that a.) Matthew does not say there was "but one angel," he simply focuses on the angel who moved the stone; b.) the Greek word in Luke rendered "stood near" also means, "to come near, to appear to." In [Luke 2:9](#) and [Acts 12:7](#) it is translated as "came upon." Thus, Luke may simply have said that angels suddenly appeared to them without reference to posture. Strictly speaking, one would be hard pressed to establish a contradiction in terms of numbers or posture even without my possible explanation.

**85. There were two angels seen within the sepulchre** [[John 20:11,12](#)]**There was but one angel seen within the sepulchre** [[Mark 16:5](#)]

These are not the same incidents. John's account is particular to Mary after she followed Peter and John back to the tomb, which was later than the account cited in Mark.

Now, I myself once stumbled upon a "better" contradiction. When Mary runs back, she is scared and thinks that the body has been stolen. Then she returns to the tomb and weeps. Now isn't this odd given that she supposedly heard the angels say that "He is risen"? Why so much despair after that miraculous experience? It doesn't seem to add up. Of course it is possible that she had not fully comprehended what occurred, as one has to be careful in expecting people to respond coherently. But I think the answer is more clear if we consider John's account.

John notes that she went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. "So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they put him". ([John 20:1-2](#)). Then Peter and John ran to the tomb only to find the empty burial wrappings. Mary must then have followed them, but when she got there, they had gone, so she stood there crying, worried that the body of Jesus had been stolen. Then two angels appeared to her, and then the risen Jesus did. In short, the reason she was in despair is probably because she didn't go into the tomb with the other women. As they approached the tomb, they saw it open, and probably began to worry amongst themselves that grave robbers came and stole the body before they could anoint it. At this realization, Mary probably left the group and bolted back to tell the others.

**86. Christ was to be three days and three nights in the grave** [[Matt 12:40](#)]

**Christ was but two days and two nights in the grave** [[Mark 15:25,42,44,45,46](#); [16:9](#)]

According to Haley, Orientals reckon any part of a day as a whole day. Thus, one whole and two parts of a day, along with two nights, would be popularly styled as "three days and three nights." Such usage is seen elsewhere in Scripture.

For more detail see [Day of Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord](#)

**87. Holy Spirit bestowed at Pentecost** [[Acts 1:8,5](#)]

**Holy Spirit bestowed before Pentecost** [[John 20:22](#)]

Two aspects of the Spirit. In John 20:22 He was breathed *into* the disciples. In Acts 1:5,8 He was poured out *upon* them.

That's like in [1 Cor 12:13](#), which says that we were baptized in one Spirit and also given to drink one Spirit. One is inward and the other is upon us outwardly. --MAW

I agree. It's certainly possible that in John, the disciples became indwelt with the Holy Spirit, and in Acts they became empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**88. The disciples were commanded immediately after the resurrection to go into Galilee** [[Matt 28:10](#)]

**The disciples were commanded immediately after the resurrection to go tarry at Jerusalem** [[Luke 24:49](#)]

According to Haley: "The command tarry ye in Jerusalem," etc., means simply, "Make Jerusalem your head-quarters. Do not leave it to begin your work, until ye be endued," etc. This injunction would not preclude a brief excursion to Galilee. Besides, the command may not have been given until after the visit to Galilee."

Indeed, keep in mind that Jesus appeared to the disciples several times over a period of many days. The Gospel's simple give us "snapshots" of some of these events and certainly Matthew's account is a brief synopsis.

**89. Jesus first appeared to the eleven disciples in a room at Jerusalem** [[Luke 24:33,36,37](#) / [John 20:19](#)]

**Jesus first appeared to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee** [[Matt 28:16,17](#)]

Matthew's account does not say that this was Jesus' first appearance. It is certainly possible that Matthew simply passes over the earlier appearances and focuses on the call to go into Galilee. In fact, notice how Matthew's account is not exhaustive. In 28:16, he mentions that Jesus had indicated what mountain in Galilee the disciples were to go to, yet he does not mention this when he quotes Jesus in verse 10.

**90. Christ ascended from Mount Olive** [[Acts 1:9,12](#)]

**Christ ascended from Bethany** [[Luke 24:50,51](#)]

You know one is grasping when they cite the same author writing about the same thing as a contradiction. :) Bethany is on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet. Anyone coming back from there and returning to Jerusalem would have to pass over the mountain, and thus return from Mount Olivet. You would think that someone who proposes a geographical contradiction would look at a map.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 91-100

**91. Paul's attendants heard the miraculous voice, and stood speechless** [[Acts 9:7](#)]

**Paul's attendants heard not the voice and were prostrate** [[Acts 26:14](#)]

Acts 26:14 And when they had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me...

Acts 9:7 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.

While we are at it, let's add the other account...

Acts 22:9 My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

Obviously, according to the NIV translation, there is no contradiction, as you can hear a sound, but not the recognize it as the voice of one speaking. So is this translation justified? Sure. The original Greek makes a distinction between hearing a sound as a noise and hearing a voice as a thought-conveying message. Haley notes "The Greek "akouo", like our word "hear", has two distinct meanings, to perceive sound, and to understand". This distinction makes sense also in light of the context. Recall the differing levels of perception. While the men heard an unintelligible sound and saw a light, Paul heard the voice and saw the person speaking. In fact, this type of distinction occurs in another place:

"Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again". The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him" [[John 12:28-29](#)]. Here is a clear-cut example where a voice speaks, but is heard by some as an unintelligible sound.

As for the stance of Paul's companions, Haley notes "the word rendered 'stood' also means to be fixed, to be rooted to the spot. Hence, the sense may be, not that they stood erect, but that they were rendered motionless, or fixed to the spot, by overpowering fear". It is also entirely plausible that when they first saw the great light, they "hit the dirt", then they could have got up off the ground and stood there motionless.

The problem with the skeptic's approach is that it assumes these accounts are exhaustive, step by step, accounts where each detail is conveyed. They are not. It's not as if the author of Acts is saying "this is how it happened" three separate times. The author does this once, and the other two times he relays Paul speaking about it in two different contexts. Now given that the author wasn't on the road to Damascus, and given that Paul was speaking from memory, and given that none of these are meant to be some exhaustive, detailed, point by point description, it is indeed wise to fit them all together. Furthermore, the account in Acts 26 relays a speech that Paul gave to King Agrippa which was only a synopsis. Acts 26 simply relays the manner in which Paul chose to convey his points.

## 92. Abraham departed to go into Canaan [[Gen 12:5](#)]

**Abraham went not knowing where** [[Heb 11:8](#)]

In [Gen 12:1](#) God simply says to leave "your country...to the land I will show you." The teaching in Hebrews could simply mean that Abraham did not know where he was going in the sense of not knowing where this promised land was. Thus, he set out for Canaan. And it was once he was in Canaan that God showed him that this was the promised land ([Gen 12:7](#)).

Look at it this way. God appears to Bob and tells him to leave his home because He has a mission for Bob. So Bob packs up, and not knowing where/what the mission is, and stops at an old friends house for a few days. Then God appears to Bob and instructs him of a mission which involves his friend. Thus, in one sense Bob sets out to partake of a mission with his friend, but in another sense, he sets out to his friends house not knowing what/where the mission is.

## 93. Abraham had two sons [[Gal 4:22](#)]

**Abraham had but one son** [[Heb 11:17](#)]

Abram had one genuine son of his wife Sarah who could be the fulfillment of God's promise regarding his seed. He had another son by the maidservant Hagar and several others later by a second wife, but in his heart Isaac was his only son. This is also why he cut off all the others from inheritance. Notice the wording of Heb. 11:17 indicates that even though he had other sons, yet to him it was as if he were offering up his only begotten to whom the promise was made. --MAW

Besides, does anyone really believe that the writer of Hebrews was unaware of some well-known teachings about Abraham or had not read Genesis? Also, the writer of Hebrews is obviously screening out stuff to focus on topics related to faith. Hagar's son was not the product of faith, and thus not worthy of mention in this context.

## 94. Keturah was Abraham's wife [[Gen 25:1](#)]

**Keturah was Abraham's concubine** [[1 Chron 1:32](#)]

MaryAnna suggests that Keturah could have been Abraham's concubine who at some point became his wife. The point behind both verses is not about Keturah, but about her children. The author of Genesis may have been less exact and referred to these children as those of Abraham's wife (if Bob had a child with Jill before being married, then got married to Jill, we would refer to the child as being of Bob's wife), while the author of 1 Chron (who is busy being exact in documenting genealogies) may have been more exact and noted that such children were born while Keturah was still the concubine of Abraham.

## 95. 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](#)]

The problem was not with Abraham's infertility but with Sarah's inability to conceive. This was remedied only once by divine intervention. Abraham had one son before and several after, not with Sarah, all without divine intervention.--MAW

I'd also add that there is no certain reason for believing the births described in Gen 25:1,2 came after the birth of Isaac. Abraham could have had these children with Keturah much earlier. Verses 1,2 could simply be saying that Keturah has reunited with Abraham after Sarah's death, and they became married. Then it lists the children that they had had earlier on (perhaps while living in Ur).

#### 96. Jacob bought a sepulchre from Hamor [[Josh 24:32](#)]

**Abraham bought it of Hamor** [[Acts 7:16](#)]

One possible explanation is that Abraham bought the *field* whereas Jacob went back and specifically bought the *tomb*. Compare with [Gen 33:19](#) and [Gen 23:10-20](#). Josh 24:32 and Acts 7:16 were based on those verses. --MAW

#### 97. God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed forever [[Gen 13:14,15,17](#); [17:8](#)]

**Abraham and his seed never received the promised land** [[Acts 7:5](#) / [Heb 11:9,13](#)]

Here is a partial answer. God *gave* the land to Abraham and his seed. We do see that the land was eventually possessed by the children of Israel (Abraham's grandson). Yet, in Acts, God did not give Abraham (personally) an inheritance on the land. True. But Abraham died in faith, even though he had not obtained the title deed to the property to pass on to his children. But eventually his descendents *did* get the land.

To answer this even further (not for the benefit of any skeptics but just because I can't resist pointing out that this point is much deeper than just who occupies the land) -- we have to look at [Galatians 3:14](#) which tells us what the real blessing of Abraham is. Then the seed of Abraham is identified in [verse 16](#). Then compare with [Hebrews 11:39-40](#) and [12:1-2](#). This is what Hebrews means when it says they did not receive the promises, according to the context.

Yes, of course the land was the literal land and the seed was the literal descendents of Abraham and yes they did get their inheritance and now they are also on it again (part of it). At the same time, Galatians and Hebrews are also true. --MAW

#### 98. Goliath was slain by Elhanan [[2 Sam 21:19](#)] note: was changed in translation to be correct -- original manuscript was incorrect.

**The brother of Goliath was slain by Elhanan** [[1 Chron 20:5](#)]

As conceded, the verse in 2 Sam was probably due to a copyist's mistake.

#### 99. Ahaziah began to reign in the twelfth year of Joram [[2 Kings 8:25](#)]

**Ahaziah began to reign in the eleventh year of Joram** [[2 Kings 9:29](#)]

Note that Ahaziah is the son of Joram. It's possible that on account of Joram's sickness [[2 Chron 21:18,19](#)] that Ahaziah became associated with him in the eleventh year of Joram's rule, but then began to rule alone by the twelfth year.

#### 100. Michal had no child [[2 Sam 6:23](#)]

**Michal had five children** [[2 Sam 21:8](#)]

In this case, I'll quote John Baskette's reply previously posted.

What does 2 Sam. 21:8-9 say?

"But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell [all] seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first [days], in the beginning of barley harvest."

This would appear to be a real contradiction except for the phrase "whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai."

The phrasing tells you that these sons are not Michal's in the normal sense of the term because she did not "bear" these children. I.E. these sons are adopted children.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 101-110

#### 101. David was tempted by the Lord to number Israel [[2 Sam 24:1](#)]

**David was tempted by Satan to number the people** [[1 Chron 21:1](#)]

There are three possible responses here:

- (1) Biblical writers often dismissed secondary causes and attributed all things that happened to God, since He is over all things. Thus, God is did not tempt David, He allowed Satan to influence him.
- (2) Arthur Hervey believes 2 Sam 24:1 is better translated as, "For one moved David against them." In this case, the numbering of the people was the cause of God's anger, not the result. After all, without this interpretation, it is not clear why God was angry with Israel.
- (3) The verse in 1 Chron translated as "satan" could also be translated as "adversary." Strictly speaking, in this situation, God was Israel's adversary.

**102. The number of fighting men of Isreal was 800,000; and of Judah 500,000** [[2 Sam 24:9](#)]

**The number of fighting men of Isreal was 1,100,000; and of Judah 470,000** [[1 Chron 21:5](#)]

The account in 1 Chron twice speaks of "all the people" and "all Israel." The account in 2 Sam does not. Thus, it is possible that the account in 1 Chron is more inclusive, while 2 Sam only deals with the standing army.

**103. David sinned in numbering the people** [[2 Sam 24:10](#)]

**David never sinned, except in the matter of Uriah** [[1 Kings 15:5](#)]

In 1 Kings, it is important to note that David is being compared to Abijah. Thus, comparatively speaking, David did not fail to keep God's commands (yet, a comparative approach could not hide the sins associated with Uriah). Also note, that 1 Kings did not say that David "never sinned." It said that he did what was right in the eyes of God and had not failed to keep any of God's commands. If God commanded David to number the people, there is no contradiction, now is there? Or, one could say that given David's repentant heart, from God's perspective, he did not sin (see [Psalm 51:2](#)).

**104. One of the penalties of David's sin was seven years of famine** [[2 Sam 24:13](#)]

**It was not seven years, but three years of famine** [[1 Chron 21:11,12](#)]

This could definitely be a copyist's error.

**105. David took seven hundred horsemen** [[2 Sam 8:4](#)]

**David took seven thousand horsemen** [[1 Chron 18:4](#)]

This could be another copyist's error.

**106. David bought a threshing floor for fifty shekels of silver** [[2 Sam 24:24](#)]

**David bought the threshing floor for six hundred shekels of gold** [[1 Chron 21:25](#)]

"So David paid Araunah six hundred shekels for the site." -- 1 Chron

"So David bought the threshing floor and oxen for 50 shekels." -- 2 Sam

It could be that David paid 50 shekels for the oxen, and the amount paid for the threshing floor is not indicated in 2 Sam. This is not implausible given that the account in 1 Chron speaks of the oxen, wood, and wheat, yet only mentions David paying for "the site."

**107. David's throne was to endure forever** [[Ps 89:35-37](#)]

**David's throne was cast down** [[Ps 89:44](#)]

The throne of the seed of David (referring to Christ) will indeed endure forever. Psalms 89:44 is poetry saying that David's throne was cast down.. indeed it never was, although it was threatened for a time by David's son Absalom. Poetry cannot always be taken literally; also, the promise in 2 Sam. 7 regarding the eternal throne is not referring to David. --MAW

This is a poem, and as such, it is dangerous to take it too literally. The writer of the psalm is lamenting what he perceives as a time when God has abandoned His people (after spending most of the psalm recounting all of God's promises and great works). Did God truly abandon His people? No. But from this writer's perspective, he appeared to. Thus, this psalm captures and communicates the angst that is humanity's lot.

I think it silly to use a poem to establish a contradiction. For example, in [Ps 139:13](#), David says he is knit in his mother's womb. Two verses later, he says he's woven together in the depths of the earth. Is David so stupid that he contradicts himself in a span of two sentences? Or is the critic so "stupid" that he/she insists on precise and very literal meanings of words used in poetry?

**108. Christ is equal with God** [[John 10:30](#) / [Phil 2:5](#)]

**Christ is not equal with God** [[John 14:28](#) / [Matt 24:36](#)]

A few of the "contradictions" are based on a lack of understanding of the Trinity. This is one of them. In His person, Christ is equal with God essentially. Economically, for the accomplishment of His plan, Christ took on humanity, forsaking His equality with God temporarily in order to set a good pattern of submission and to pass through death for the redemption of man and the destruction of the devil and to bring His life to all men. Now He has been seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, with all things subjected under His feet. --MAW

I agree. These teachings involve a discussion of both the Trinity and the Incarnation (which is beyond the scope of this reply). Suffice it to say that it is quite possible that such doctrines could be true, thus these verses would be a case of both/and, rather than a contradiction.

**109. Jesus was all-powerful** [[Matt 28:18](#) / [John 3:35](#)]**Jesus was not all-powerful** [[Mark 6:5](#)]

Matt. 28:18 is after the resurrection, after all power was given to Him by the Father. John 3:35 says that the Father has given all into His hand.. could be referring to all the believers, as in other verses in John...

Mark 6:5 shows us that Jesus was limited by man's unbelief.

This is a recurring theme in the Bible, that although God is all-powerful, He chooses to limit Himself to man; that is, He chooses to wait for man's co-operation. This explains why the Bible calls His believers His fellow workers. God doesn't *need* man to work together with Him, yet this is His chosen means of operation. If this is how He chooses to work, this explains how He is all-powerful and yet "could not do many works of power there because of their unbelief." --MAW

**110. The law was superseded by the Christian dispensation** [[Luke 16:16](#) / [Eph 2:15](#) / [Rom 7:6](#)]**The law was not superseded by the Christian dispensation** [[Matt 5:17-19](#)]

Luke 16:16 tells us that the law and the prophets were until John. This is referring to the Old Testament, which indeed lasted until John.

Ephesians 2:15 tells us that Christ in His flesh on the cross abolished the law of the commandments in ordinances. This is not referring to the moral law, but the dietary regulations, the Sabbath, the feast days, and other practices which set the Jews apart from the Gentiles.

Rom. 7:6 says we have been delivered from the law. This is talking about the slavery to the law, i.e. trying to keep the law in our flesh rather than allowing the inner divine life to spontaneously be expressed in a daily walk that is much higher than that mandated by the law.

Matt. 5:17-19 shows us that Christ did not destroy the moral law, but rather fulfilled it. He fulfilled it three ways:

- (1) He kept the law Himself.
- (2) He fulfilled the requirement of the death penalty for us.
- (3) He uplifted the law by instituting the higher law

(meant to be kept not by human effort but by His life in the believers.) --MAW

To this I would also add Paul's teaching in Galatians. That is, the law is a tutor which brings us to Christ. When a person comes to Christ, the purpose of the law has been fulfilled.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 111-120

**111. Christ's mission was peace** [[Luke 2:13,14](#)]**Christ's mission was not peace** [[Matt 10:34](#)]

Luke 2:14 says, "peace among men with whom he is pleased."

Mt. 10:34 says, "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."

The first verse could very well mean that peace exists among those with whom God is pleased, i.e., the fellowship of believers. Yet such believers are like a light among the darkness, and men prefer the darkness. Thus, the fellowship of believers, while full of peace, incurs the wrath of the nonbelievers.

One only need consider that in some nations Christians peacefully gather, yet are persecuted, to see how easy this "contradiction" is resolved.

**112. Christ received not testimony from man** [[John 5:33,34](#)]**Christ did receive testimony from man** [[John 15:27](#)]



I see it as follows: In John 5:34, Jesus claims that the witness he receives comes not from men. If we read Luke 1:76, we see that John is to be a prophet, one who speaks for God. Thus, John's witness, as a prophet, is really God's witness. In other words, Jesus is not rejecting John's witness; he is clarifying it. (Also, this verse is particular to the witness for Jesus early in his ministry.) These verse do not necessarily teach that Jesus does not receive witness from men.

The verse in John 15 speaks of a different situation. This is after Jesus' crucifixion and the indwelling of the Spirit.

### **113. Christ's witness of himself is true** [[John 8:18,14](#)]

#### **Christ's witness of himself is not true** [[John 5:31](#)]

This is a bogus "contradiction." Jesus is not saying His witness of Himself is untrue. He is pointing out that if He *alone* bore witness of Himself, it would be untrue. Since Jesus did not bear witness of Himself alone, His witness of Himself is not untrue.

MaryAnna adds: Was Christ's witness of Himself true? John 8:18 and 14 is talking about the legal stipulation in the Old Testament that a person giving testimony for himself was not to believe unless he had at least one other witness. John 5:31 is talking about the verity of Christ as a witness. Of course, in the sense of verity, Christ's witness is indeed true. --MAW

### **114. Christ laid down his life for his friends** [[John 15:13](#) / [John 10:11](#)]

#### **Christ laid down his life for his enemies** [[Rom 5:10](#)]

Did Christ lay down His life for His friends or His enemies?

Both. The friends mentioned in John 15:13 and John 10:11 are His disciples. The enemies mentioned in Rom. 5:10 were all of us. He could easily die for both His enemies and His friends. This could be answered more completely, but even this simple answer shows that these two verses are not contradictory. --MAW

### **115. It was lawful for the Jews to put Christ to death** [[John 19:7](#)]

#### **It was not lawful for the Jews to put Christ to death** [[John 18:31](#)]

Was it lawful for the Jews to put Jesus to death?

By Jewish law, as stated in the Old Testament, yes. (John 19:7). But by the law of the occupying Romans at the time of Jesus' walk on earth, it was expressly forbidden for the Jews to put anyone to death on their own without going through the proper Roman legal channels and using the Roman means of execution (John 18:31). --MAW

### **116. Children are punished for the sins of the parents** [[Ex 20:5](#)]

#### **Children are not punished for the sins of the parents** [[Ezek 18:20](#)]

Are children punished for the sins of the parents?

Exod. 20:5 tells us that God is to be feared, as He has the ability to visit the sins of the fathers on the children.

Ezek. 18:20 tells us this will not happen if the children repent and turn away from the ways of their fathers. Not a contradiction. --MAW

### **117. Man is justified by faith alone** [[Rom 3:20](#) / [Gal 2:16](#) / [Gal 3:11,12](#) / [Rom 4:2](#)]

#### **Man is not justified by faith alone** [[James 2:21,24](#) / [Rom 2:13](#)]

Romans 3:20 man is justified by faith, and not works of law. Gal. 2:16 same. (cf. Gal. 3:11, 12; Rom. 3:28ff).

If we want to be justified, we have to receive the divine life (2 Peter 1:4; Romans 5:5; chapter 8). Otherwise, no matter how many good works we do, we can never be justified in the sight of God.

However, after we receive the divine life of God, this will issue in a kind of living which will manifest our justification (James 2:21, 24; Rom. 2:6-13)

James is making the point that faith without works is dead. Certainly it is a dead faith if it has no effect on our living. The living is the evidence that our faith is effective and that we have indeed been justified.

Romans is talking about the law and says that the doers of the law shall be justified. In the context he is making the point that no one can be justified by works without faith because it is impossible to keep the law. --MAW

I agree. It's not that works are necessary additions to faith. Instead, it's that a living faith gives rise to good works. Thus, we have another both/and situation. It's interesting that the Bible portrays our relationship to God as a marriage. A loving marriage is one in which both faith and acts converge toward the same end (Ephesian 5:22ff).

**118. It is impossible to fall from grace** [[John 10:28](#) / [Rom 8:38,39](#)]

**It is possible to fall from grace** [[Ezek 18:24](#) / [Heb 6:4-6](#) / [2 Pet 2:20,21](#)]

John 10:28 says the believers, assuming they remain believers, shall by no means perish forever.

Romans 8:38, 39 says nothing can separate us from the love of God.

So these two verses tell us we don't have to worry about our eternal destiny, assuming we persevere by God's grace.

Ezek. 18:24 is an Old Testament verse. Simply says a righteous man can turn to unrighteousness and become unfaithful, and the soul [person or life] who sins shall die (cf. Romans 6:23; Ezek 18:4).

Hebrews 6:4-6 -- tells us salvation is once for all and cannot be renewed. And if we fall away, we have only to repent and turn back to the Lord. Also, the Jewish sacrifices of the Old Testament are no longer valid and are actually an insult to the Lord who died for us. (Some Christians indeed interpret Hebrews 6 to say that if you are saved you can lose your salvation -- so there is dispute among Protestants on the interpretation).

2 Pet. 2:20-21 -- The last state is worse than the first. Some believers "fall away from grace" in this age and suffer for it. This doesn't mean that their eternal destiny changes. They will still be with the Lord for eternity, but they will suffer first and be more miserable than before they believed in the Lord. This suffering is only temporary. --MAW

MaryAnna's explanations might provoke disagreement among some Christians, but recall that in the context of this reply, it need only be possible that she is correct. If she is, the contradictions are easily resolved.

**119. No man is without sin** [[1 Kings 8:46](#) / [Prov 20:9](#) / [Eccl 7:20](#) / [Rom 3:10](#)]

**Christians are sinless** [[1 John 3: 9,6,8](#)]

Of course no man is without sin, in himself. 1 John 3:6-9 does not say that Christians are without sin. It says that everything that has been begotten of God does not practice sin. The word "practice sin" refers to a habitual life of sin. It does not mean that Christians never do anything sinful. A believer who truly has an inner knowing of the Lord will not have the practice of habitual sin in his living. --MAW

**120. There is to be a resurrection of the dead** [[1 Cor 15:52](#) / [Rev 20:12,13](#) / [Luke 20:37](#) / [1 Cor 15:16](#)]

**There is to be no resurrection of the dead** [[Job 7:9-10](#) / [Eccl 9:5](#) / [Is 26:14](#)]

In this life we have nothing to fear from the dead; they will not come back to resume their former lives as if they had not died. They will stay resting in their graves, silent and unable to do anything further to affect their eternal destiny. They have no power to rise again. 1 Cor. 15:52; Rev. 20:12-13; Luke 20:37; 1 Cor. 15:16

Of course, at the Lord's return there will be a resurrection of all the dead to judgment. Then some of them will pass on to eternal fire and others will receive a reward (John 5:28-29). This is not to resume their former lives. Hence this is not a contradiction. --MAW

Another way of saying it is as follows: The verses in Isaiah may be teaching that the dead do not normally rise. That is, they don't rise in of themselves, but they will be raised at a later date. Also, there is a definite comparative theme - where the dead are forgotten, God is never forgotten. The verses in Eccl and Job also have a temporal/worldly perspective. That is, while the living experience rewards, know things about each other, and are remembered by each other, this is not the case with the dead. One could also resolve these by claiming as a possibility that the dead "sleep" until they are raised.

For more detail see [Examination of Conditional Immortality, Soul Sleep and Annihilationism](#)

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 121-130

**121. Reward and punishment to be bestowed in this world** [[Prov 11:31](#)]

**Reward and punishment to be bestowed in the next world** [[Rev 20:12](#) / [Matt 16:27](#) / [2 Cor 5:10](#)]

There's a simple explanation here. Rewards and punishments are bestowed both here and in the hereafter.

**122. Annihilation is the portion of all mankind** [[Job 3: 11,13-17,19-22](#) / [Eccl 9:5,10](#) / [Eccl 3:19,20](#)]

**Endless misery is the portion of some** [[Matt 25:46](#) / [Rev 20:10,15](#) / [Rev 14:11](#) / [Dan 12:2](#)]

Is mankind annihilated or eternally miserable? Job 3:11-22, Eccl. 9:5,10; 3:19-20 These verses refer to the rest before judgment. Ecclesiastes 3 tells us all is vanity because just as animals die men die too. Job 3 tells us he wishes he were dead so he wouldn't feel pain. Ecclesiastes 9 says do what you can in this life because you won't be able to do much when you are in the grave. None of this is talking about annihilation.

Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:10,15; 14:11; all these verses tell us that of course after a period of waiting in the grave there will be a judgment and some will go to the lake of fire for eternity. Daniel 12:2 ties the whole thing together. --MAW

For more detail see [Examination of Conditional Immortality, Soul Sleep and Annihilationism](#)

### **123. The Earth is to be destroyed** [[2 Pet 3:10](#) / [Heb 1:11](#) / [Rev 20:11](#)]

#### **The Earth is never to be destroyed** [[Ps 104:5](#) / [Eccl 1:4](#)]

Will the earth be destroyed? In a sense, yes. Everything on the earth will be destroyed. 2 Pet. 3:10; Heb. 1:11; Rev. 20:11 all confirm this. On the other hand, the earth with its foundations will remain to the age. Keep in mind also that Psalm 104:5 and Eccl. 1:4 are both poetry. Ecclesiastes in context is telling us of the temporal life of man more than making a statement about the permanence of the earth.

Not contradictory, since one is talking about the surface of the earth and the other is talking about its foundations. --MAW

### **124. No evil shall happen to the godly** [[Prov 12:21](#) / [1 Pet 3:13](#)]

#### **Evil does happen to the godly** [[Heb 12:6](#) / [Job 2:3,7](#)]

The teachings in Prov and 1 Pet could very well mean that no permanent or ultimate evil will befall the godly. Jesus' teaching about fearing those who can harm the soul rather than the body come to mind.

Also, one could view these teachings as general rules. Prov 26:4,5 taught us that a particular proverb might not always apply in every situation. As such, it is indeed true that the righteous are generally more immune to harm than the unrighteous. They are less likely to die while driving drunk, less likely to die of a fatal disease which is sexually transmitted, less likely to die of drug overdoses, less likely to be murdered in a crack house or beaten by a pimp, etc. And Peter points out that it's unlikely your will be harmed by being good to someone (verse 14 clearly implies verse 13 is a general rule).

### **125. Worldly good and prosperity are the lot of the godly** [[Prov 12:21](#) / [Ps 37:28,32,33,37](#) / [Ps 1:1,3](#) / [Gen 39:2](#) / [Job 42:12](#)]

#### **Worldly misery and destitution the lot of the godly** [[Heb 11:37,38](#) / [Rev 7:14](#) / [2 Tim 3:12](#) / [Luke 21:17](#)]

Here the critic is concocting contradictions. None of the latter four verses teach that "worldly misery and destitution is the lot of the godly." Let's look at them:

Heb 11 -- these verses speak only of the experiences of Israel's prophets, not of all the godly. They are not intended as a general principle.

Rev 7 -- this verse is specific to the events surrounding the great tribulation.

2 Tim -- here Paul teaches that those in Christ Jesus can expect persecution. Obviously, this cannot be compared to OT teachings since Jesus did not yet come.

Luke 21 - Jesus uses hyperbole to make the same point that Paul does.

Strictly speaking, these verses do not say what the critic purports, thus no contradiction.

Personally, however, I think the principle of Prov 26:4,5 applies. That is, worldly prosperity and good are the lot of some of the godly, while persecution is the lot of others. The former Christians are the "silent witness," as they enable the Church to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give shelter to the homeless, etc. The latter Christians are more like the prophets in that they serve as a social conscience, and thus get persecuted.

### **126. Worldly prosperity a reward of righteousness and a blessing** [[Mark 10:29,30](#) / [Ps 37:25](#) / [Ps 112:1,3](#) / [Job 22:23,24](#) / [Prov 15:6](#)]

#### **Worldly prosperity a curse and a bar to future reward** [[Luke 6:20,24](#) / [Matt 6:19,21](#) / [Luke 16:22](#) / [Matt 19:24](#) / [Luke 6:24](#)]

Job 22 does not teach that riches are a blessing! It is Eliphaz's teaching that Job ought to cast away his desire for riches to find God. Eliphaz was under the impression that Job wanted to reacquire prosperity, but this was probably not true

Psalm 37:5 could be a poetical expression praising God for feeding and caring for His people. It has nothing to do with prosperity (unless one thinks that one is prosperous if they don't have to beg for food).

Psalm 112 is a poetical expression and Prov 15 is a rule of thumb which do indeed seem to teach that wealth is a blessing bestowed upon the righteous.

Mark 10 says nothing about worldly prosperity. It is a hyperbole in line with the teaching that one must lose their life to gain it. That is, whatever you give up, you will regain more of, once in the fellowship of the Lord.

The verses in Luke 6 are hyperbolic teachings which convey a sense of righting wrongs and comforting. It would be irrational to take them too literally, as it would mean that all Americans (including Christians) would hunger in the age to come and that anyone of good humor would be crying in the age to come. Instead, it is quite possible (in light of all of Jesus' teachings) that Jesus is not condemning riches, full bellies, and laughter per se. He is instead providing balance. He offers comfort to those who are lacking, and warns those who are not (so that they don't trust in what they have rather than trusting in the Lord).

Whenever one cites a teaching of Jesus, they are obligated to consider it's meaning in the context of ALL of Jesus' teaching. And Jesus is not interested in outward expressions (eating, riches, an environment where good humor is possible) as much as he cares about the person's perceptions and reactions to their state of being.

Mat 6 seems to help us here. Jesus does not condemn riches, He condemns riches which are perceived as "treasures." There is a difference between one who is rich, yet willingly uses those riches to help others and serve the Kingdom, and one who is rich yet who hoards his money.

Matthew 19 further supports this distinction as the rich man was unwilling to part with his money. For him, his riches were his treasure. This verse is simply a hyperbole pointing out that it is more difficult for one who is rich to become a Christian (this is probably a function of the fact that riches enable one to be more autonomous).

The teachings in Luke 16 are a parable conveying the same teaching as in Luke 6. Here is a rich man who did not place his riches under the Lordship of Christ.

There are no true contradictions here. Put simply, one's riches must be under the Lordship of Christ. If they are, they are indeed a blessing. Not only to the person in question, but to the community she belongs to. If the riches are not under the Lordship of Christ, they are a curse, in that they tend to keep one from crying out to God.

Or one could cite Paul to clear up all these teachings, and note that it is not money which is the problem, it is the love of money which is the problem.

**127. The Christian yoke is easy** [[Matt 11:28,29,30](#)]

**The Christian yoke is not easy** [[John 16:33](#) / [2 Tim 3:12](#) / [Heb 12:6,8](#)]

It is not the Lord who causes difficulties for his children! The Lord does not make difficult serving him, but certainly (as stated later) the unbelieving world often causes us physical hardship. The last verse refers to chastening of God, which the Christian does not consider the uneasy yoke; God is the loving chastener, not the hating master. --RS

**128. The fruit of God's spirit is love and gentleness** [[Gal 5:22](#)]

**The fruit of God's spirit is vengeance and fury** [[Judges 15:14](#) / [1 Sam 18:10,11](#)]

These are different situations and times. God made great warriors do great deeds for Israel's sake in days of hardness; the coming of Jesus heralded a time where God's new chosen would be called towards a temperance that still came from God. --RS

I'd also note that while Gal does teach that the fruit of the Spirit includes love and gentleness in men, the OT teachings says nothing about the **FRUIT** of the Spirit. In Judges, the Spirit empowered Samson to carry out judgment. In 1 Sam, we are not even dealing with God's spirit. Instead, it's an evil spirit which God allowed to come upon Saul. (Don't these critics read the verses they use to purport contradictions?)

**129. Longevity enjoyed by the wicked** [[Job 21:7,8](#) / [Ps 17:14](#) / [Eccl 8:12](#) / [Is 65:20](#)]

**Longevity denied to the wicked** [[Eccl 8:13](#) / [Ps 55:23](#) / [Prov 10:27](#) / [Job 36:14](#) / [Eccl 7:17](#)]

In Job 21, Job is replying to the generalizations brought up by Zophar. However, he considers these as exceptions, as is evident from Job 21:17-18. Thus, Job 21 teaches there are exceptions to the general observation. Ps 17:14 says nothing about longevity. Eccl 8 is a hypothetical situation used to assert that things go better for God fearing men. Is 65 speaks of a future age and is not applicable in this setting of verses.

None of these verses teach, as a general rule, that the wicked enjoy longevity. For that matter, the latter set really don't teach that longevity is "denied" to the wicked. They simply note that the wicked often die young. No contradictions here.

**130. 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](#)]

Most of these are answered in reply to 125. In fact, Proverbs 30:8,9 nicely sums up my reply to 125, in that it shows both the blessings and curses associated with riches.

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 131-140

### 131. Wisdom a source of enjoyment [[Prov 3:13,17](#)]

#### Wisdom a source of vexation, grief and sorrow [[Eccl 1:17,18](#)]

My understanding of these apparent opposites is that both are true, and indeed, they can be. Wisdom brings the benefits of deeper understanding, but the burden of such an understanding can be terrible at times, too. --RS

Indeed, this could easily be a both/and situation. For example, wisdom causes me to rejoice in the plan of God. But it also causes me sorrow in knowing that not all will partake of that plan.

### 132. A good name is a blessing [[Eccl 7:1](#) / [Prov 22:1](#)]

#### A good name is a curse [[Luke 6:26](#)]

Naturally, it's obvious that Luke 6:26 says no such thing. It does, however, warn against the complacency of popularity and vanity. Wise words. --RS

When the world speaks well of Christians, it is probably because those Christians do not disturb the world, and in fact, may be because they have worldly values. In this case, such Christians would do well to heed Jesus' warning. Luke 6 says nothing about a "good name." Furthermore, since the OT verses do not deal with the added dimension of the Church being in the world, they simply cannot be compared.

### 133. Laughter commended [[Eccl 3:1,4](#) / [Eccl 8:15](#)]

#### Laughter condemned [[Luke 6:25](#) / [Eccl 7:3,4](#)]

Luke 6 is answered in 126. As for the rest, Eccl 3:4 resolves the whole thing - "there is....a time to weep and a time to laugh." Laughing at one's suffering is not a time to laugh, thus would be condemned. Laughing during a time of celebration would obviously not be condemned.

### 134. The rod of correction a remedy for foolishness [[Prov 22:15](#)]

#### There is no remedy for foolishness [[Prov 27:22](#)]

The former regards children who don't know better by their nature until instructed and diverted from foolishness. The latter refers to someone who has grown up into the permanent foolishness. Context is all. --RS

### 135. 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](#)]

The first thing to note is that these seemingly contradictory teachings are right next to each other. Could the writer of Proverbs be so stupid as to not notice this?! I hardly think so. In fact, I think it is very illuminating that these teachings are closely tied. They highlight the fact that Biblical admonitions need not fall under the "either/or" criteria, but can be more properly understood in term of "both/and."

In fact, I have often found these two teachings from Proverbs quite useful. In debating various non-Christians, I often encounter foolish responses and name-calling. I can either choose not to respond or ignore the foolishness and get to the point of contention. At such times, I follow Proverbs 26:4. In other instances, I mirror the foolishness of my antagonist in the hopes that he/she can perceive the folly of their approach when I employ it. At such times, I follow Proverbs 26:5. The key is knowing when to use which approach, and in such instances, I try to allow the Spirit to guide me.

### 136. Temptation to be desired [[James 1:2](#)]

#### Temptation not to be desired [[Matt 6:13](#)]

Twisted wording, mostly. Jesus tells us to pray that the Lord move us to resist temptation. James says that once you know to let the Lord help you resist temptation, rejoice that your faith is honed by the experiences of his divine aid. --RS

I'd also add that James 1:2 does not say that temptations are to be desired. It says that we should rejoice that in our trials because they help to mature our faith.

Consider this strained analogy. Anyone who works out at the gym knows that a good workout results in pain. But one does not seek out the pain. One does not ask for it. In fact, one could ask to be led away from pain, in general. Yet, when one works out physically or spiritually, pain/trials follow. Yet the pain/trials should not discourage you. In fact, they are a sign that you are growing.

### 137. Prophecy is sure [[2 Pet 1:19](#)]

**Prophecy is not sure** [[Jer 18:7-10](#)]

Apples and oranges. Peter wrote about prophecy that had *already been fulfilled*. Jeremiah's verse is about prophecy of things yet to be done. That is, it is a conditional prophecy designed to induce repentance. --RS

**138. Man's life was to be one hundred and twenty years** [[Gen 6:3](#) / [Ps 90:10](#)]**Man's life is but seventy years** [[Ps 90:10](#)]

In Gen 6:3, God prescribes a 120 year lifespan just prior to the Flood. Psalm 90:10 does not say the lifespan is 120. It's a poetical reference to us living 70 years, 80 if we are strong. (According to the NIV notes, Hebrew poetic convention called for 80 to follow 70 in parallel construction). Genesis 6 could be setting an upper limit, or given the context, it could be just one way of saying that man is mortal. Psalm 90 is an observation fitted into a poetical account of our fleeting existence.

**139. The fear of man was to be upon every beast** [[Gen 9:2](#)]**The fear of man is not upon the lion** [[Prov 30:30](#)]

Prov 30:30 -- "The lion which is mighty among beasts and does not retreat before any" could mean "any other beast."

**140. Miracles a proof of divine mission** [[Matt 11:2-5](#) / [John 3:2](#) / [Ex 14:31](#)]**Miracles not a proof of divine mission** [[Ex 7:10-12](#) / [Deut 13:1-3](#) / [Luke 11:19](#)]

This is a very confusing claim of contradictions. Taking the latter set of verses one by one: The first involves the Pharaoh's magicians doing a trick which Aaron, acting for the Lord, totally defeated. These verses say nothing about miracles not being a proof of divine mission, instead, the true miracle (from God) swallowed up the tricks of the magicians. The second is a commandment against abandoning God for other gods because of such tricks - something Jesus and Moses certainly never called for. The third verse is apparently taken out of context; in it, Jesus says that it makes no sense to claim he casts out demons in the devil's name. None of this can be construed as contradictory to the purpose of God's miracles. --RS

## Answers to Biblical Contradictions, 141-143

**141. Moses was a very meek man** [[Num 12:3](#)]**Moses was a very cruel man** [[Num 31:15,17](#)]

The latter of these is a judgment call, but at any rate, taking the point, it obviously involves assuming that to be noncontradictory, Moses, and everyone else, would have to be exactly the same from early to late in their lives and experiences. Such assumptions are unreasonable.

**142. Elijah went up to heaven** [[2 Kings 2:11](#)]**None but Christ ever ascended into heaven** [[John 3:13](#)]

Here one has to read John 3:13 in context.

"If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? And no one has ascended into heaven, but he who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man."

Haley notes: Jesus, setting forth his own superior authority, says, substantially, "No human being can speak from personal knowledge, as I do, who came from heaven. No man hath ascended up to heaven to bring back tidings." So we, speaking of the secrets of the future world, should very naturally say: "No man has been there to tell us about them." In saying this, we do not deny that any one has actually entered the eternal world, but merely that any one has gone thither, and returned to unfold its mystery.

Haley's interpretation of the whole point is entirely possible.

**143. All Scripture is inspired** [[2 Tim 3:16](#)]**Some Scripture is not inspired** [[1 Cor 7:6](#) / [1 Cor 7:12](#) / [2 Cor 11:17](#)]

This is a case of over-interpretation. Paul does not say that what he writes is not inspired by God; merely that the Lord has not commanded what Paul says. Paul was almost certainly inspired by God in each word he spoke (preached) following his conversion (cf. 1 Cor 2:4,7,13; 1 Thess 2:13). --RS

I'd also note that in 1 Cor 7:10, Paul could be citing an actual tradition from Jesus' earthly ministry, while in verse 12 he is not. Thus, he is not saying the teaching is not inspired from God, only that it didn't stem from the teachings of Jesus when He was on earth. 2 Cor could merely mean that Paul was not speaking as Jesus would when He was on earth. But this doesn't mean that the Spirit is not speaking through him.

