

136 Bible Contradictions....

...Answered

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Introduction

This booklet is a response to the pamphlet “136 Bible Contradictions” printed by Crusade publications of Redmond, Washington.

This writer begins with two presuppositions (1) God exists (2) God reveals. God has revealed Himself and His truth through His creation (general revelation) and through His writing, in the written Word of God, the Bible. Since God is true and the Bible is God’s Word, it is concluded it is concluded that the Bible is true in all it affirms. The divine inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible applies exclusively to the original manuscripts of the sixty-six individual books. The original human authors wrote in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) therefore it must be remembered that any English translation of the Bible is only as good as its accuracy in rendering the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old and New Testaments.

While interacting with the “contradictions” adduced by Crusade Publications, this writer quickly became aware that the individual(s) behind that pamphlet had little or no appreciation for the fact that it is the original manuscripts, not the translations of the original manuscripts that ultimately must be dealt with concerning the issue of whether or not there exist contradictions in the Bible. To make final, dogmatic judgements on the inerrancy of the Bible without systematic reference to the Hebrew and Greek originals is akin to performing major surgery without consulting a patient’s X-rays!

Also it is clear that the “contradictions” printed are not a problem in the Bible at all, but instead misinterpretation and/or misunderstandings of one or both verses in question. A valid contradiction would exist if, and only if, two or more verses correctly and contextually interpreted and fully understood had an undeniable inconsistency. Despite thousands of years of hostile attacks (with “136 Bible Contradictions” being just one of the more recent) against the reliability of the Bible, no such contradictions have been found! None of the “contradictions” cited by opponents stand up to detailed analysis by orthodox scholars (in fact the presentations of apparent contradictions does the church a favor by forcing her to look more closely and thus to understand more precisely the interpretation of various verses/passages of scripture.

Before beginning specific responses to the individual “contradictions” it is necessary to deal briefly with several factors which must be kept in mind when seeking to accurately understand the Bible. In revealing Himself and His truth in the Bible, God clearly adapts Himself to man’s finite understanding. However (and this a vital difference) He never accommodates Himself to invite error. The mechanism behind the writing of the Bible (termed “inspiration” by theologians) as understood by orthodox Christianity is that God the Holy Spirit superintended the human author (Moses, Daniel, Paul, etc.) such that they composed and recorded without error God’s exact message in the words of the original manuscripts of the books of the Bible. Thus the Bible is true in all it affirms, but its statements do not necessarily seek to reveal everything about every subject they deal with. This is important to know and to appreciate because when one comes to the Bible he or she must recognize that any particular book, paragraph or verse does not necessarily claim to be exhaustive, and that such particular reports are not necessarily false reports! To illustrate the point, imagine a four year old child who asks his father where babies come from. The father not wishing to exhaustively describe the biological and sexual details of human reproduction might choose to answer in one of two ways. (1) He might choose to adapt himself to the child’s limited intellect and maturity and thus tell his child babies come from “their mommy’s tummy”. Such an answer would be a partial truth, true in it affirms as far as it

goes (and as far as it is intended to go!). It would not be a falsehood. (2) The father might instead decided to accommodate himself to the child's ignorance and gullibility telling him that "the stork brings babies from the North Pole". Such a response (however well meant) would clearly be a falsehood/erroneous report. In the Bible, God often communicates like the father in response (1) above. In revealing truth He desires man to know, He adapts Himself to human limitations, using human language (including figures of speech and literary devices). However, He never accommodates Himself to human ignorance/gullibility (packaging "kernels of truth" in the form of myth or error).

A special word should be said about the four gospels, Matthew Mark, Luke and John. Each gospel is true in all it affirms, as far as it chooses to go. Each gospel gives eyewitness events to the life of Christ. However, this does not mean the Gospels should be expected to be verbatim clones of one another! If this were a necessary corollary of the divine inspiration/inerrancy of the gospels, we have one not four gospels! As any attorney will confirm when the testimony of different eyewitnesses to the same event is compared it is never verbatim (unless of course there had been collusion among the eyewitnesses, thus invalidating their testimony!).

Reliable/accurate eyewitness accounts of the same event vary (we will call this phenomena "divergent accounts") because in retelling the event the different eyewitnesses will vary in what details they summarize/generalize, as opposed to what details they give in specific terms. Based on their own perspective of what they considered important, they will tend to give detailed information, while minimizing or even omitting other facts that they feel trivial or not worth mentioning (even while in the act of observing the event itself they will have ignored certain "unimportant" details which they felt were not worth mentioning/remembering). Such a dynamic is apparent when comparing the gospels because none of the four gospels were intended to be formal, all-inclusive biographies of the life of Jesus Christ. Instead each is a theological document written with a specific purpose focusing on a particular theme, and written to a specific audience.

Matthew wrote to Jewish believers and presented Jesus as their Messiah/King who will rule over His future earthly Kingdom. Mark wrote to Roman believers and presented Jesus as the perfect servant of God. Luke wrote to Greek believers and presented Jesus as the ideal man. John, written well after the other three Gospels (90-95 A.D. - for a liberal scholar's irrefutable confirmation that all the New Testament books were in fact written in the first century by eyewitnesses of the events, read *Redating The New Testament* by Dr. J.A. T. Robinson) has two primary emphases. It is addressed to non-Christians so that they might believe on Jesus as their own persona savior (20:31). It is also addressed to believers to encourage them to enter into a life of intimate personal fellowship with the Savior (13:1-17,26 21:1-25). The Gospel of John presents Jesus as God who took on humanity, becoming the God-man. Understanding the specific audiences the gospels were addressed to and perceiving each Gospel's major purpose/theme helps to explain why each writer includes certain details (specific events, miracles, discourses, etc.) and omits others. One example will illustrate this fact. Only two Gospels, Matthew and Luke, include genealogies of Christ. Does this then mean that the other two, Mark and John, denied or did not know that Jesus had genealogies through his human parents? Obviously not! Mark and John chose to purposely not to include the genealogies of Christ through either human parent because to do so would not contribute to their overall theme/purpose for writing. Matthew, who stresses the Messiahship and Kingship of Jesus includes His legal genealogy through His human "father" Joseph. Its inclusion proves the validity of Jesus' claim to Kingship via his legal relationship to the royal line of King David.

Like, who presents Jesus as the ideal man, includes his actual physical genealogy through His human mother Mary. Its inclusion proves Jesus' unique and ideal "pedigree". On the other hand Mark, who presents Jesus as a servant, chose not to detail His background. A servant is evaluated by the quality of his service, not by his ancestry. John who presents Jesus as God does not focus on His human ancestry but instead begins his Gospel with the preexistence of Christ ("The Word") who is the Creator of the universe. Each gospel author was highly selective in what information he chose to include in his particular book, in accord with his overall theme and purpose.

If one does not keep such basic "ground rules" in mind, he or she will be unable to accurately relate the gospels one to another. This is especially true when comparing different gospel accounts of the same event (parallel accounts). Any differences between detail/emphasis between the two parallel accounts will always be supplementary/complimentary, NOT contradictory. Moreover by comparing and putting together the different gospel accounts of specific incidents, one derives a fuller, richer understanding of the event than could be gained by examining any one gospel witness alone (thus the wisdom of having not one but four gospels!). This comparing and harmonizing of different but equally accurate eyewitness accounts is the same process that an attorney goes through in reconstructing a detailed account of a specific event by means of putting together the various inputs of the eyewitnesses.

Along these same lines of reasoning, one must remember when relating the gospel accounts to one another: (1) partial reports are not necessarily false reports and (2) divergent accounts are not necessarily contradictory accounts. Some amplification might prove helpful at this point. (1) Partial reports are not necessarily false reports. A newspaper story the day after a national election might be headlined "Smith Elected President". The article might then go on to give information about Smith's victory (with no other mention about other races, such as the Senate, House, etc) Could someone then charge that the article was erroneous in view of the fact that Smith was not the only public servant elected on the day in question? No one would make such a claim. The newspaper story was true in all it affirmed. It was not intended and did not attempt to analyze any of the other campaigns of the day. The story would be erroneous only if it had directly stated that only the Presidency and no other offices had been voted on. A partial report is not only necessarily a false report! In the New Testament, Matthew mentions that one angel spoke to the women at the empty tomb, while Luke tells us that there were two angels present. Is such a situation a necessary contradiction? Certainly not! This is a simple case of a partial account focusing on the angel who actually spoke compared to a more detailed account detailing the exact number of angels present. John Menham, M.A. Cambridge University, has well said whenever you have "two", you always have "one". The situation would be a contradiction if and only if Matthew had specifically maintained that there was only one angel present. (2) Divergent accounts are not necessarily contradictory accounts. When two or more equally divergent details to their proper time sequence and the overall context in order to construct an accurate harmonization. Sometimes divergent accounts are caused because two different witnesses see or describe different portions of a sequential event. Imagine two eyewitnesses who give the following divergent testimony. Eyewitness A tells the police that he saw a woman standing on a street corner who was hit by a bus and injured but not killed. Eyewitness B claims he saw the same woman riding in a car which was hit by a truck such that she was thrown out and killed instantly. These are obviously divergent accounts but both are completely accurate. Putting the pieces of evidence together, the police harmonized the divergent accounts and reconstructed the whole story. The woman was hit by a bus while standing on a street corner and injured. A

passerby in a car volunteered to take her to the hospital, but in his haste he ran a red light and collided with a truck. The collision threw the woman out of the car and she died instantly. The divergent eyewitness accounts are both fully accurate! They were complimentary not contradictory. What was needed to harmonize them was a careful reconstruction of the event accepting both witnesses' account at face value and then properly relating them to each other. At other times, divergent accounts occur because of the different perspective of the eyewitnesses. For instance, two men might both watch a woman get into a cab. The first man might later testify that the woman got into a "white cab". The second, when relating the story, might state that the woman got into a "yellow cab". Surely such diverse accounts must be contradictory. Not necessarily! In this case both witnesses are absolutely accurate in what they affirm. The first witness, an artist, noticed the actual color of the cab. The second, a businessman, referred to the cab by its company name (this writer has seen many all-white cabs marked "yellow cab" for its corporate name). Divergent accounts are not necessarily contradictory. In the New Testament, one finds such a situation in the divergent information given about the events surrounding the death of Judas Iscariot. Matthew reports that Judas hung himself, but Luke in the book of Acts indicates that Judas fell and his body was badly mangled. These are divergent accounts, but there is no necessary contradiction between them. The obvious harmonization, taught by Christian commentators for two thousand years and consistent with the rugged geography of the Jerusalem area, is that Judas hung himself on a branch or some other protrusion overhanging one of the chasms just outside the city. Later either the branch or the rope broke, or came untied (or perhaps it was cut by a disgusted passerby...the Jews despised suicide) such that the body of Judas fell to the rocky surface below. Divergent accounts are not necessarily contradictory! Moreover the presence of divergent accounts in the Bible actually functions to confirm the honesty of the human authors. When studying and comparing the gospels it is obvious that the human authors did not secretly get together in order to smooth out any apparent difficulties between their accounts (i.e. there is no evidence of collusion among the writers of the gospels in order to devise "clever fables" see II Peter 1:16). The gospel writers simply recorded the facts from their own unique perspective and within the overall purpose/thrust of their individual books. This factor speaks volumes for the author's integrity, especially in view of the fact that these men would later be persecuted and killed for what they wrote in their gospels.

Biblical "contradictions" exist only in the eyes of certain beholders. Those who come to the Bible preconditioned to believe that it has errors will conclude that any specific difficulty such as a certain partial or divergent account is in fact an error or contradiction. Such an investigator comes to the Bible and automatically assumes that it is "guilty". This writer approaches the Bible from the opposite perspective. He assumes that the Bible is "innocent" of errors or contradictions when difficulties arise. After such passages are carefully studied and understood in context, any apparent problem will be fully resolved. Individuals who find "contradictions" in the Bible do so not because they know too much, but because they know too little and actually don't fully understand the passages they are attacking.

The person who comes to the Bible with a closed mind, unwilling to allow it even the presumption of "innocence" that he or she would probably grant the worst felon, will probably be little influenced by the presentation that follows. A closed mind is an illogical and unscientific mind which resists, ignores or ridicules any data that does not line up with its original prejudices. As Paul says in Romans "...professing themselves to be wise, they became fools". However, to anyone who is willing to openly approach and evaluate the message of the

Bible, this booklet and other more detailed works will show how apparently difficulties can be logically answered and explained. It is to such open, honest seekers of truth that this booklet is dedicated in the hope that these answers will encourage those broad minded individuals to go beyond examining the individual “trees” of the “forest” of the Bible...and to focus on the One who is The Answer to life’s most crucial problems. The Bible attacked for centuries still stands as God’s infallible witness to the salvation which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

PREFACE: The following format will be used in addressing the questions raised in “136 Bible Contradictions”. First, the force of each “contradiction” will be summarized. Second, a suggested solution will be stated. The responses given are not necessarily the only possible harmonizations, but in this writers opinion, the correct ones. If the reader desires more detailed information on specific issues/questions he or she is referred to the bibliography at the end of this booklet.

#1 Genesis 1:11-12, 26-27 which indicate that man was created after trees...is contrasted with Genesis 2:7-9 which states that man was created before trees.

Relative to any questions involving Genesis Chapters 1 or 2, the structure of the Hebrew text must be noted. The two chapters contain supplementary accounts of the creation of the present time/space universe. Genesis 1:1-2:3 is an overview of the seven days of creation. This is followed in 2:4-2:25 which flashes back to the six day (the climatic day)and gives a detailed narrative of that day.

Specifically in Genesis 1:11-12, 26-27 worldwide vegetation was created on day three, man on day six. In 2:7-9 God created the specific vegetation of the Garden of Eden, immediately after the creation of Adam on day six.

#2 Genesis 1:20-22, 26-27 which indicates that the man was created after birds is contrasted with Genesis 2:7, 19 which states man was created before birds.

This “contradiction” is based on a faulty translation of the Hebrew. In Genesis 1:20-22, 26-27 birds are created on day five, man on six. In Genesis 2:7, 19 man was created, and then in verse 19 the pluperfect aspect of the verbs encountered which is correctly translated “had formed”. That is in referring back to the origin of the animals, who are being brought to Adam, the author of Genesis reminds the reader, “...out of the ground the Lord God had formed (on day five) every beast/bird”.

#3 The fact that man was created after the animals in Genesis 1:20-22, 26-27 Gen. 1;20-22, 26-27 says man was created after birds is contrasted with genesis 2:7 , 19 which states that man was created before birds.

This contradiction is due to the faulty translation of the original Hebrew. In Genesis 1:20-22, 26-27 birds are created on day five, mankind on day six. In Gen. 2:7, 19 man is created, and then in verse 19 the pluperfect tense of the verb is encountered which correctly translated “had formed”. In other words, it was referring back to the formation of animals, which are being brought to Adam. The reader is reminded by the author (Moses) that “...out of the ground the Lord God had formed (on day 5) every beast/bird.

#4 The fact that man was created after animals in Gen. 1:20-27, 26-27 seems to contradict the statements of Gen. 2:7, 19.

See explanation for previous “contradiction”. The problem is solved by the proper translation of the pluperfect “had formed” in 2:19.

#5. Gen. 1:27 says man and women were created at the same time, vs. Gen. 2:7, 18:23, which states man was created before women.

Genesis is part of the first creation account on 1:1-2:3, and therefore part of the general summary of the events of the events of each day of the Creation Week. Genesis 1:27 simply says man and woman were created on the 6th day. Gen. 2:7, 18-23 is part of the second account of 2:4-2:25 and thus part of a specific day account of day 6. Man and women were both created on day six, but Adam was created before eve on that day.

#6. Genesis 1:28, the commandment to be fruitful and multiply vs. the purification rites of Leviticus which were to follow childbirth.

The so-called “contradiction” is implicated the childbirth was a sinful thing needing purification, and yet God had commanded humankind to do this in Genesis 1:28. This reasoning is off base. Clearly God commissioned humankind to fill the earth Gen 1:28. The purification ritual was meant to be an object lesson to show that humankind was born into sin because of Adam and Eve’s original sin with no spiritual life/relationship to God. The lesson is not that childbirth is sinful, but that Children are born into sin.

#7. Gen. 1:31 in which God says everything was good, vs. Gen 6:6, in which god regrets he has made man.

The context of these two verses has to be realized. The first verse takes place right after creation. The next verses takes place thousands of years later when humankind has filled the earth with violence and wickedness.

#8. Gen: 2:17 which says Adam would die the day he ate of the tree of knowledge vs. Gen. 5:5 which says he died at age 960.

There are two explanations for why this is not a contradiction. A thousand years to God is like a day to him (2 Peter 3:8). Another reason, Adam did indeed die spiritually when he sinned against God (Romans 5:12-21 and 1 cor. 15:20-22).

#9. Gen. 4:26 says men began to call upon the name of the Lord (YHVH) vs. Exod. 6:3 where God tells Moses that up to that point in time He had not been known as the Lord (YHVH).

Gen. 4:26 is a general statement that indicates the point when men began corporate (i.e. group) worship and prayer. The verse in Ex. is an editorial comment by the human author Moses. “To call upon the name of the Lord” is a technical expression used to refer to calling upon God in

prayer. The same expression is used exactly in Ps. 116;117. YHVH is a personal name of God, first revealed to Moses in Exodus. It stresses the fact the transcendent God that created the universe (Elohim) is also a personal God (YHVH). Moses writing circa 1500 B.C. uses the personal name of God describing the early prayer meetings of humankind to indicate the approachability of God. Moses is not trying to say they literally used the name YHVH, but simply showing they were worshipping the same God as Israel. In Exodus 3:14-15 (referred to in Ex. 6:3) Moses did indeed receive a special revelation of God in which He Reveals his special covenant name and its significance.

#10. Gen. 6:2 refers to the “sons of God to refer to angels vs. 1 John 4:9 that says God had only one Son.

The phrase “sons of God” is used several times in the Old Testament to describe angels in Gen 6:2 and elsewhere. Christians are also referred to as God’s children. When used this way, sons of God is meant to be used as a technical term. An American likewise, could be called a “son of George Washington”, without literally being descended from Washington. THE Son of God in the absolute ontological sense is the Jesus Christ. The Greek word used to describe Christ’s Sonship to God is “monogenes” meaning “unique”. No other being has such a relationship to God in this sense.

#11. Gen. 7:21 which says all living things on land (including the Nephilim) were destroyed by the flood vs. Numbers 13:33 which mentions the existence of the Nephilim, thousands of years later.

The word Nephilim (literally, “he fell”) means “giant”. The Nephilim of Genesis 6:2 refer to a race of giants that resulted from intermarriage between women and fallen angels. They were destroyed in the flood. Nephilim in Numbers 13:33 were a later group of Giants who arose after the flood years. Nephilim can refer to anyone of above average height, and the Nephilim in Numbers were apparently just tall people with no demonic lineage.

#12. Gen. 6;19 calls for two of every kind of animal to be brought on board the ark vs. Gen 7:25 which sates seven of some kinds of clean animals to be brought aboard.

The first verse is a broad description of the commandment while the second is a more specific detail of the commandment describing the number of certain animals needed above one pair for sacrifice.

#13. Exodus 6:19 which says God is a “man of war” vs. 2 Cor. 13:11 which says He is the God of “love and peace”.

These verse affirm two aspects of the complex personality of God. Douglas MacArthur was a brilliant organizer and statesman who rebuilt Japan after World War II, and won the hearts of the Japanese so much so they offered him the Presidency. But the same Gen. MacArthur had previously fought fiercely with Japan conquered it. The same might be said of Woodrow Wilson, who always pursued peace, but sent thousand of American soldiers to fight in World War I.

#14. Ex. 15:3 “you will not kill” vs. Ex. 32:37 which orders Jews to execute those who worshiped the Golden calf.

The Hebrew word rendered as “kill” would be better translated as “murder”. The Israelites of Exodus, just as we do today, make a distinction between unjustified killing (murder, manslaughter) with justified killing such as in acts of war or self defense.

Ex. 21:23-25 is very specific guidelines for capital punishment for individuals found guilty of capital crimes. The code actually limited the severity of the punishment to equal the offense.

#15 Exodus 31:15-17 which makes working on the Sabbath a capital offense is contrasted to Mark 2:27-28 which states the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Exodus 31:15-17 is a general statute give to Israel under Moses. In Mark 2:27-28 Jesus is not reacting against Exodus 31 or any of the other legitimate Old Testament Sabbath regulations. Instead He is commenting against the man-made Pharisaic traditions which had been erroneously and oppressively added to the divinely inspired Old Testament regulations. These man-made regulations focused on the letter and missed the spirit of the original God-given instructions. God had designed the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship for the good of man and his refreshment both physically and spiritually. This is what the Lord Jesus is teaching in Mark 2.

#16 Exodus 32:14 which states that God “repented” of His threat to wipe out the children of Israel in the aftermath of the golden calf incident is contrasted with Numbers 23:19 which states that God “...is not a man...that He should repent”.

God’s repenting (Hebrew “changing His mind”) in Exodus 32:14 and elsewhere is an example of a recognized figure of speech (anthromorphism) which communicates the changes status between the rebellious nation and God. To illustrate imagine a man riding a bicycle south against a strong wind who then turns around and rides north with the wind. From a relative perspective the wind which was against him has “changed” and is now with him. But in the absolute sense of the wind did not actually change at all...the man did! In Exodus 32:14, God did not change in the absolute sense, only in the relative sense(as communicated by anthropomorphism). It is not God who changes in Exodus 22, but Israel as represented by Moses. In response to the intercession of Moses, God extended mercy not wrath to the nation. Numbers 23:19 is an absolute ontological statement that God does not change in regard to His essential being or essence. God is immutable.

#17 Contrasts Exodus 33:20 and John 1:18 which states that no one has seen God, with Exodus 24:9 and 33:11 which indicates that certain men have seen God.

One can “see” something or someone in different ways. No human can actually see atom being split and its subatomic particles actually dividing. Yet observers of atomic explosions have “seen” the atom being split. No mortal human can or has seen the essence of God, His unveiled glory. Yet Moses and a selected number of others have “seen” God in unique ways when God chose to manifest Himself to them in various visible forms.

#18 Contrast Exodus 34:6, an affirmation of God's faithfulness, with numbers 14:30 where God tells the Exodus generation that none of them will come to the promised land, and with 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 which states that God will send a delusion making some believe what is false so that they will be condemned and not believe the truth.

God is faithful to His promises and to His own character. The promise that the Exodus generation would occupy the land was a conditional promise contingent on their obedience to God. Their insubordination at Kadesh-barnea resulted in God's discipline. However the next generation under Joshua did take the land as they walked under God's obedience.

To understand 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 one must first read and understand 2 Thessalonians 2:10. This passage discusses "them that perish (during the Tribulation), because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved". God honors the freedom that He has given man and allows a strong delusion to come and to confirm them in their freely made decision, only after they have totally rejected and repudiated God and His truth.

#19 Contrast Exodus 34:6-7, God not clearing "the guilty" and "visiting the iniquity of the fathers out onto the 3rd and 4th generations", with Hebrews 9:27 which states that man dies once and then faces judgement, and Jeremiah 31:34 where God promises to forgive iniquity.

Exodus 34:6-7 describes God's righteous wrath against those who reject Him and transgress His commands, those who refuse His grace and a relationship with Him for rebellion against Him. The phrase "by no means" (clear the guilty) does not mean that a guilty party can never by any mechanism be reconciled to God, but that God will certainly not leave the guilty (who stay in that condition only because they refuse God's salvation. See John 3:17) unpunished. This is an expression of the certainty of God's judgement on those who stand guilty before Him. No one will "get off" on a legal technicality or will be able to plea bargain before God. The concept of God visiting out the iniquity of the Fathers upon their children, grandchildren and so on (Exodus 34:7 and 20:5) does not mean that God punishes a grandchild because of his grandparent's sin. This expression is a warning of the cumulative effect and influence of one generation's sins upon the immediately succeeding generations. The reader is referred to Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:1-32 for the Biblical position on individual responsibility and individual guilt. An illustration from today's headlines: Future generations of Americans will be affected by the great debt our nation is presently incurring, even though they are not responsible or guilty of that overspending. In the same way God warns Israel of the moral effects of one generation's sin upon succeeding generations.

Hebrews 9:27 clearly teaches the Biblical truth of individual responsibility before God. Each human being (including you!) Has but one human life followed by a personal reckoning with the Holy God.

Jeremiah 31:34 in context states a general principle central to all Biblical theology; God desires to forgive all sinners and has provided to save all who will freely receive His gracious salvation (see John 3:16-18).

#20 Contrasts Leviticus 1:1 and following in which God gives many details concerning ritual and sacrifice, with Jeremiah 7:21-22 which states that the Lord did not speak to Moses' generation about burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Context! Context! Context! No self-respecting Jew, and certainly not the prophet Jeremiah would argue that God did in fact give instructions in Leviticus about offerings and sacrifices. In Jeremiah 7 the Jews were at an all time low morally, militarily and religiously but were

continuing to “go through the motions” of offering the formally required rituals and sacrifices, with no heart-faith or love for God. In context then, God is stating that He was not describing such a mindless and meaningless mechanical observance of the rituals in Leviticus. Instead, He was teaching how those whose hearts loved His were to respond in outward worship. An obedient/loving heart is a prerequisite to offering up the sacrifices He had described in Leviticus. Proverbs 15:8 states that “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord”.

#21 Leviticus 3:17 and its regulation eating fat and blood are contrasted with Colossians 2:20-22. Colossians 2:20-22 has nothing to do with Leviticus 3:17. Leviticus 3:17 is one small part of the overall Old Testament food regulations given to the nation of Israel. In Colossians 2:20-22 the apostle Paul, 1500 years later, is warning Christians against the bondage of submitting to man-made legalistic rules as presented in various false works-based salvation and/or sanctification schemes.

#22 Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:39 “the golden rule...do unto others as you would have them do unto you” is contrasted with 1 Corinthians 10:24 which states that one would not seek his own good, but others.

Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:39 are general statements governing ones interpersonal relationships. In context, stringent personal standards in certain gray areas of behavior not directly discussed in Scripture. This verse instructs Christians to seek the good of others and thus refrain from giving offense, rather than exclusively pursuing their own personal preferences. Properly understood, 1 Corinthians 10:24 is in fact an application of the general principle described in the “golden rule”.

#23 Contrasts Numbers 11:33 were God causes illness with Job 2:27 where Satan inflicts illness.

This is not an either/or situation. God can and does at times directly cause physical illness (1 Corinthians 11:29-32). Yet, He at times allows Satan to inflict physical disease (2 Corinthians 12:7). The same means can be used for different purposes. At Pearl Harbor the Japanese used bullets against the United States, and the United States used bullets against the Japanese. However the same means did not equate purpose or moral culpability.

#24 Contrasts Numbers 15:25 which states that animal sacrifices produce forgiveness of sins with Hebrews 10:11 which states that animal sacrifices of the Old Testament could never take away sins.

The Old Testament sacrifices were object lessons teaching the need for sacrifice as propitiation for God’s righteous wrath against sin. These rituals were ceremonial only. Actual salvation and forgiveness of sins was always based on anticipation upon the work of the future Messiah who would be the fulfilment of the prophetic thrust of the animal sacrifices. Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-11 makes this very clear. The death of Messiah Jesus on the cross, bearing the sins of the world, was the fulfilment of the entire Old Testament sacrificial system (see Ephesians 5:2). Hebrews 7:27 refers to the Old Testament animal sacrifices in the same way that Old Testament itself does, but then the author of Hebrews moves on later in the book to point out the insufficiency of these sacrifices to produce more than ceremonial cleansing for sins. In Hebrews 9:13-14 the relationship between ceremonial and actual forgiveness are explained. “...if the

blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh (eternal/ceremonial cleansing) how much more will the blood of Christ who ...offered Himself without blemish to God cleanse your conscience (true/inner cleansing).” The whole point of the book of Hebrews is that only ceremonial and superficial when divorced from the Messiah.

#25 Contrasts Numbers 30:2 which enjoins the taking of oaths with Matthew 5:34-37 which prohibits the taking of oaths.

Numbers 30:2 teaches that if one makes a real formal promise to do something, he or she is to follow through. In Matthew 5:34-37, Jesus is reacting against the Pharisees and their practice of entering into complicated, misleading oaths, which like modern “fine print.” in contracts were designed to be manipulated for personal advantage later in violation of the expressed promise. Both passages teach the same truth. One should keep his promises. The Bible consistently teaches that men are to say what they mean, and mean what they say.

#26 Contrasts Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37 which commands love for God, and 1 John 4:18 which states there is no fear in love, with Deuteronomy 6:13 and 1 Peter 2:17 which commands a fear for God.

1 John 4:18 is discussing a Christians love for God eliminating any fear of God’s displeasure when He evaluates His life. The command to fear God is an injunction for the Christian to show a reverential respect and awe for God (not an abject fear. See Romans 8:1). Such respect is consistent with and inseparable from a proper love for God.

#27 Deuteronomy 30:11 which states that God’s commandments are “not too difficult for you” is contrasted to Romans 3:20-23 which indicates that man cannot keep the law.

Deuteronomy 30:11 is focusing on certain specific commands in immediate context. It is saying that these commands were not so complicated so as to be beyond comprehension and basic obedience. Romans 3:20-23 is written in a different context. It is written from the absolute perspective that no one can perfectly keep the law of God. The Bible is clear throughout that no human (except the God-Man Jesus Christ) is perfectly sinless.

#28 Judges 1:19 which states that God was with Judah but that He (sic) could not drive out the inhabitants of the land because they had iron chariots is contrasted with Genesis 17:1 and 35:11 which indicate that God is almighty.

Judges 1:19 does not say that God could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain, but that Judah could not drive them out. Just because God chooses not to do something for His people at a particular point does not mean that He is unable to do so.

#29 Judges 14:19 which indicates that the Spirit of the Lord caused (sic) Samson to murder thirty Philistines is contrasted to Galatians 5:22-23 which states that the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, patience, etc.

Judges 14:19 does not state that the Spirit of the Lord caused Sampson to kill the Philistines. It simply indicates that prior to the act, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. This explains how one man could successfully overcome thirty men singlehandedly. It does not indicate that the Spirit made him do it. It has always been possible for people to misuse abilities/powers that are given to them by God. For example, the Liar misuses the gift of freedom of speech.

#30 1 Samuel 31:4-6 which indicates that Saul died by falling on his sword is contrasted to (1) 2 Samuel 1:8-19 where an Amalekite reports to David that he killed Saul, (2) 2 Samuel 21:12 which indicates that Saul was slain by the Philistines, (3) 1 Chronicles 10:14 which states that Saul was slain by the Lord.

1 Samuel 31:4-6 gives the specific historical details of the wounded Saul fleeing from the Philistine army and committing suicide so as to avoid being taken captive. 2 Samuel 1:8-9 accurately records a lie told by the Amalekite hoping to curry favor with King David. 2 Samuel 21:12 puts cause for the effect, i.e., the advancing Philistine army as the cause of Saul's suicide. They had wounded him, were about to capture him, and he committed suicide. 1 Chronicles 10:14 indicates that Saul's death ultimately was caused by the provincial will of God.

#31 2 Samuel 24:1 "the anger of the lord burned against Israel and it incited David against them to say "Go and number Judah." is contrasted to Chronicles 21:1 "then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel."

These accounts are supplementary, describing two different aspects of the same thing, God being the ultimate cause and Satan being the specific immediate, active cause moving David to take the census. God allowed Satan to influence David toward the decision to take the census. David then did so willfully despite an advisor warning against it in 1 Chronicles 21:3. The census per se was not inherently sinful, but David's demonstrated trust and reliance on the numbers of human soldiers rather than trust in the Lord was sinful.

#32 1 Kings 8:12 which states that God dwells in thick darkness (KJV) is contrasted to 1 Timothy 6:16 which indicates that God dwells in unapproachable light.

This "contradiction" is based on a misleading rendering of the Hebrew text of 1 Kings 8:12. It is more accurately translated "thick" cloud (of glory) not "dark" cloud of God is dense but bright, thick but luminous.

#33 2 Kings 16:5 which states that Ahaz was not conquered by the kings of Israel is contrasted to 2 Chronicles 28:5-6 which states that Ahaz was conquered by the kings.

2 Kings 16:5 states that the kings did not overcome (Hebrew: "destroy, exterminate") Ahaz. 2 Chronicles states that the kings did defeat (i.e. score a military victory over) Ahaz. In other words, the kings did score a distinct military victory over Ahaz and Judah, but they did not kill him or cause the nation to capitulate. To illustrate, one could say the Japanese defeated the United States at Pearl Harbor, but did not overcome them.

#34 The quote of Psalm 22:1 "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is contrasted with Psalm 46:1 that God is the believer's refuge, strength, and help in times of struggle.

Psalm 22:1 is a predictive Messianic prophesy written by David circa 1000 B.C. It was fulfilled literally by the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ while on the cross in 33 A.D. Verses 22:16-18 accurately describe in detail Christ's crucifixion long before crucifixion was even known in Palestine. Psalm 22:1 deals specifically with the period when God the Father separated Himself from God the Son, who was bearing the sins of the world in atonement (see also #87).

Psalm 46:1 is a general promise of God's providential support of believers when the encounter temporal problems in this life.

#35 Contrasts Psalm 78:69 which states that God has founded the earth forever with 2 Peter 3:10 which indicates that God will destroy the earth sometime in the future.

The issue here revolves around the precise meaning of the Hebrew word *olam* which is translated “forever”. In Psalm 78:69. Brown, Driver and Briggs in their authoritative Hebrew lexicon define it as meaning “(of) long duration, antiquity, futurity”. The word does not necessarily mean forever. The Bible is in fact quite clear that while the earth is much more permanent than the individual men, it too will eventually wear out (see Psalm 102:25-27). Only God himself is eternal. The universe is his creation and locked in time and space. It will be ultimately destroyed, at which time God will usher in the eternal state (see 2 Peter 3:10-13, revelation 21:1-22:5).

#36 Proverbs 4:5, 7 and James 1:5 which encourages believers to obtain wisdom is contrasted to 1 Corinthians 11:19-25, 3:18-20 which warns that wisdom is of little or no value.

Two different kinds of wisdom are being discussed. In Proverbs 4:5, 7 and James 1:5 one reads of God’s wisdom or divine viewpoint. In Corinthians, Paul is discussing the wisdom of this world or human viewpoint. Man is to seek God’s perspective on life and to avoid thinking which is based on ignorance or rejection of God.

#37 Contrasts Proverbs 12:2 which states that a good man will obtain favor from the Lord with 2 Timothy 3:12 and Hebrews 12:6 which states that the Godly man will be persecuted.

Proverbs 12:2 has to do with God blessing a wise and righteous believer and includes the “spiritual” blessings of peace of mind and inner joy, regardless of circumstances. 2 Timothy deals not with what God does to/for believers but with what the ungodly in the world might do. It is discussing sinful men’s reaction to the wise and righteous believer. 1 Peter 3:14 interfaces the two different concepts, “even if you should suffer (from sinful men) for the sake of righteousness you are blessed”

#38 Contrasts Proverbs 12:22 which states that God hates lies with Kings 22:23 where the Lord “put” a deceiving spirit in the mouths of certain prophets.

There is a difference between direct and indirect causation. In 1 Kings 22:23 God allowed (indirect causation, Hebrew verb means “to permit, to allow”) a lying spirit to control the prophets of Ahab. While God allows creatures the freedom to sin (or in this case to allow certain demonic spirits to empower and direct the activities of the false prophets). He is never responsible for sin. He never coerces man to do evil.

#39 Isaiah 44:24 which states that God alone created the universe is contrasted to John 1:1-5 which states that Jesus Christ is the creator.

The Bible reveals that in the unity of the Godhead there exists three co-equal persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God in the form of the Trinity alone preexisted the present time space universe, and created it without the force of another agent. The plurality of persons within the Godhead is clearly indicated by the first person plural person pronouns “us” and “our” in Genesis 1:26. The specific person of the Godhead who actually created all things is the Lord Jesus Christ.

#40 Contrasts Jeremiah 3:12 in which God says He will not be angry forever with Jeremiah 17:4 which states that He will be angry forever.

This “contradiction: ignores the chronological progression of the book of Jeremiah. In chronological context, 3:12 is a call unto Judah to repent. It was given during the reign of good King Josiah (640 B.C.) God states that He is willing to forgive the nation at that time if she would repent and return to Him. Jeremiah 17:4 is a statement made years later during the reign of King Jehoiakim (609 B.C.). At that point God announces His verdict upon the unrepentant nation which had refused His previous offers forgiveness.

#41 Ezekiel 20:25-26 which states that God “gave” the Jews statutes that were not good (sic) “that they might know that I am the Lord” is contrasted with romans 7:12 and Timothy 1:8 which indicates the law of God is holy and good.

The objector here must read the entirety of Ezekiel 20:18-26 because in these verses an obvious contrast is made between the false/godless statutes that Israel had followed into Egypt (20:18) and the true/righteous statutes that God had given at Sinai (20:19-21). Specifically 20:25 indicates that God allowed/permitted the Jews to submit themselves (Hebrew word natan = “to repent”) to the evil statutes He had warned against in 20:18. This is confirmed by a parallel reference in Psalm 81:11-12. It is also the way that the NIV has translated the Hebrew text. In response then to their willful disobedience. God disciplined His people. He pronounced them unclean and made them desolate, that they might be reminded that He was the One to whom they had to ultimately answer.

42 & 43 The genealogies of Jesus in Luke 3 and Matthew 1 are contrasted and it is pointed out that (1) in Matthew 1:16 the genealogy is traced through David/Solomon while in Luke 3:31 the genealogy is traced thorough David/Nathan, (2) in Matthew1:16 Jacob is the father of Joseph but in Luke Heli is the father (sic) of Joseph.

(See introduction for an explanation of the relationship between the individual gospel’s themes and the inclusion or omission of genealogies). The genealogy in Matthew’s gospel (1:1-17) is Jesus’ legal genealogy through his “father” Joseph. The genealogy in Luke’s gospel (3:23-38) is his actual physical lineage through His mother Mary. Joseph was a Davidic descendant (the legal royal family) through Solomon. Mary was a Davidic descendant but through a different Davidic descendant but through a different son, Nathan. According to the chauvinistic custom of the day, contemporary women’s names were omitted from genealogies and their husbands names in their place. Thus Joseph’s name was put in the place of Mary’s when Luke recorded Jesus’ physical ancestry. Heli is then Joseph’s father-in-law/Mary’s father. The reader should notice that the word “son” does not appear in the original Greek text of Luke 3:23. While the text does connect Joseph and Heli it does not specifically affirm that Joseph is his actual physical son. The word “son” in italics in the English translations indicates that it does not appear in the Greek manuscripts.

#44 Matthew 1:18-21 “the Annunciation” (sic) which took place after mary was pregnant is contrasted with “the Annunciation” of Luke 1:26-31 which takes place before Mary was pregnant.

In Luke 1;26-31 the angel Gabriel announces to mary that she will bear the virgin-born Messiah. In an obviously separate event at a later time, an angel (not specifically noted as

Gabriel) appears to Joseph in a dream and makes a similar announcement to him. These are two separate events, noway to be taken as the same.

#45 Contrasts Matthew 1:18-21 in which the angel appears to Joseph with Luke 1:28 where the angel Gabriel appears to Mary.

See #44. These are two separate events, involving two different people, and two separate angelic announcements.

#46 Contrasts Matthew 1:23 which states that the child will be called Emmanuel with Matthew 1:25 which indicates that the child will be called Jesus.

This “contradiction” ignores the meaning of the words “Emmanuel” and Jesus”. The Lord’s given name “Jesus” is from the Hebrew “Joshua” and means “God-Saves” or “God-Savior”. Thus the command of 1:21 (not mentioned in the “contradiction!”), “...you shall call his name Jesus (God-Savior) for it is He who will save His people from their sins”. The word “Emmanuel” means literally “God with us”. When one refers to “Jesus”, he is in fact affirming that in Him God (was) with us”! All who correctly acknowledge Jesus as the God-Man are in effect calling Him Emmanuel. This is obviously how Matthew intended these verses to be understand. Notice the structure 1:21 is a command before the birth, “...call Him Jesus”. Matthew 1:23 is a quote from Isaiah’s prophecy that the Messiah would be virgin-born/God-man...”Immanuel”.

#47 Contrasts Matthew 2:1 which indicates that Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great who died in 4 B.C., with Luke 2:2 which indicates that He was born during the census of Quirnius (6 A.D.).

Dr. Harold Hoehner (Ph.D. Cambridge university, Th.D. Dallas Theological Seminary) points out that an accurate translation of Luke 2:2 indicates that the census associated with the birth of Jesus took place not “while” but “before” (Grrek word = prote) Quirnius was a governor of Syria. Jesus was clearly born before the death of Herod the Great, most probably during the period of 6-5 B.C. For a detailed scholarly discussion of this question see *Chronological Aspects of The Life of Christ* by Harold Hoehner.

#48 Matthew 2:13-18 which states that Joseph and Mary and the Baby Jesus fled to Egypt immediately after the visit of the magi, is contrasted to Luke 2:22-24 which indicates that they remained in the area of Bethlehem/Jerusalem until after the time of purification forty days after the birth.

This “contradiction” is based not on the affirmations of the Biblical texts, but on erroneous pictures on many Christmas cards (and sorry to say some Sunday School literature as well). The idea that the magi visited the manger is not taught in the Bible. Actually only the shepherds visited the newborn babe on “Christmas night”. The magi did not come until months or even years later. Notice the fact that the magi did not come to a stable but found Jesus in a house (Matthew 2:11. Also the Greek words for baby/child in Luke & Matthew indicate that the shepherds saw a newborn infant, while the magi worshiped an older baby). The time gap between the actual birth and the magi’s visit explains why Herod later orders the murder of all male children two years and under (not just newborns).

#49 Contrasts the statement of God the Father concerning Jesus after his baptism as recorded in Matthew 3:17 and Mark 1:11 (the words are not verbatim).

In all the “quotes” in the Gospels, the reader must realize that despite the quotation marks include in the English translations, the Gospel writer’s were not necessarily attempting to give a word for word quote on every occasion where they preface at the statement “Jesus said” or in this case “God the Father said”. Usually the Gospel writer’s simply record either (1) a summation of what was generally affirmed (2) a partial report of specifically uttered words. For more information on this phenomenon see “The Blind Men At Jericho” by Professor Zane C. Hodges, pp. 323-3327 in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October-December 1965.

#50 Contrasts the sermon of Matthew 5:1-7:29 which was given on a mountain with the same (sic) sermon recorded in Luke 6:17-49 which was given on a level place.

These are clearly two separate occasions. While the content of the different sermons are very similar, the time, place and audience are different. This is a case where Jesus delivered the same basic message to two separate audiences. To think that Jesus taught the principles of the “Sermon on the Mount” but to only one audience is quite wrong. Even today it is not uncommon for speakers to repeat the same basic presentation to different audiences. For example, a presidential candidate might give his “stump speech” one morning in New York, and then deliver it again that same evening in Los Angeles.

#51 Contrasts Matthew 5:16 which indicates that good works should be seen, with Matthew 6:14 which commands believers to do good works “secretly”.

Matthew 5:16 discusses the importance of allowing to God to control ones life such that His direction will be manifested in every area (and thus will of necessity be visible to others, confirming the reality of God’s power operating in the individual’s life). Matthew 6:1-4 warns against doing good works for the wrong reason. These verses condemn performing good works solely motivated by the hope that they might be seen by others.

#52 Contrasts Matthew 5:22 which states that one who calls another “fool” is guilty enough to be condemned to hell, with Matthew 23:17 where Jesus call the Pharisees fools.

In Matthew 5:22, Jesus warns that if someone, motivated by sinful hate and malice, calls another fool then he is in fact committing a very serious sin. In Matthew 23:17, Jesus accurately and honestly declares His divine evaluation of the hypocritical, self righteous Pharisees.

#53 Contrasts Matthew 5:22 which indicates that anger is a sin with Ephesians 4:26 which states that anger is not always a sin.

Matthew 5:22 is dealing with selfish, inappropriate hatred or malice. Ephesians 4:26 deals with appropriate righteous indignation, that which is a proper response toward moral evil. Notice also that Ephesians 4:26 specifically states that one is to limit the duration of his righteous indignation lest it become the root of sinful bitterness.

#54 Matthew 5:39 which commands believers not to resist evil and Matthew 5:44 which enjoins love for ones enemies are contrasted with (1) 2 John 10 which states that false teachers should not be received, (2) Luke 19:27 which discusses ones enemies being slain, (3) Deuteronomy 7:9-10 where God destroys His enemies.

In context, Matthew 5:39 is talking about interpersonal relationships. Jesus is teaching that in one's day to day relationships, one should not respond in kind to various slights or insults. Matthew 5:44 has to do with love for those who misunderstand, malign, and mistreat the Christian on a personal level. The word for "love" is the Greek word agape. It does not describe emotional feelings, but rather an act of unselfish love that seeks the highest good of the other person. In the context of 5:44, the one who loves is able to pray for the person who mistreats him. 2 John 10 warns against following false teachers, who would lead Christians away doctrinally and/or morally, to teach or preach in the church. It is not unloving to protect the church from false or immoral doctrines. Luke 19:27 is a parabolic, hypothetical situation. In Deuteronomy 7:9-10, God's justice is manifested in destroying those who hate Him and have refused His grace and love. When men reject the light that man has given them they eventually face His justice.

#55 Matthew 6:13 which asks God not to lead one into temptation is contrasted with James 1:2-3 which indicates that one should rejoice when he faces temptation.

Matthew 6:13 has to do with solicitation to do evil, i.e. temptation to sin. James 1:2-3 describes not solicitors to evil but rather trials, pressures and problems in life (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament by Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, p. 646, documents the fact that the word "peirasmos" can have two different meanings in given contexts). The Christian is to resist temptations to sin. He is to face and overcome problems by entrusting himself and his circumstances to God. As a Christian overcomes trials in faith, he can rejoice in them knowing that God has a good purpose in allowing them. Specifically, in James 1:2-3 we are told that the believer can rejoice in the midst of trials and problems knowing that they are spiritual "barbells" that are designed to strengthen faith as it works against resistance.

#56 Matthew 7:7-8 which invites believers "to seek and to find" is contrasted with Luke 13:24 which states that "many will seek but few will find".

Matthew 7:7-9 is a promise to Christians related to perseverance in prayer, Luke 13:24 discusses unbelievers who seek to earn salvation in various ways other than THE WAY (faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal savior, John 1:12, Acts 4:12, 16:30-31). The contexts and the subject matter of these two statements are totally different.

#57 Matthew 7:21 which indicates that not everyone who calls Jesus "Lord, Lord" will actually enter Heaven is contrasted to Acts 2:21 which states that everyone who God calls to Himself will be saved.

Everyone who is in faith "calls upon the name of the Lord" has in fact been first called by God and will certainly be saved. However the "calling" in Acts 2:21 is not just lip service or verbal pretense but is a reflection of real faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal savior. The people discussed in Matthew 7:21 are individuals who have outwardly claimed to be Christians but who have never really trusted in Christ. They professed to know Christ but in fact were false teachers. Thus their claims are but empty and worthless words.

#58 Matthew 8:12 which indicates that Hell is dark is contrasted with Matthew 13:42 where Hell is said to be "like a furnace" (and therefore to the objector a place of light).

Many figures of speech are used to describe the various characteristics of Hell. They are true in what they affirm, but the interpreter must be careful not to read more into any specific figure

than is actually affirmed. This is always true when dealing with figures of speech. For example when a poet states that his love is “like a rose” he means that she is beautiful. One should not push an intended figure beyond its intended meaning and include that she has thorns. The two verses above are affirming two things about Hell: (1) Hell is dark (2) Hell is hot. The figure of a furnace is being used to express the fact that Hell is a place of great heat. While Hell is like a furnace that is hot, it is not bright with natural fire, but is a dark place of confinement (eternal quarantine) for those who have not received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

#59 Jesus is said to heal “many” in Matthew 8:16 and this is contrasted to the parallel passage in Mark 1:32-34 which states that in the same instance Jesus healed “all”.

The terms “many” and “all” are in fact equivalent terms in this case. “All” is used as a percentage indicator meaning %100 of those who came to Jesus for healing. “Many” is used as a quantitative term meaning that the total amount of people who actually came to Jesus for healing. “Many” is used as a quantitative term meaning that the total amount of people who actually came to Jesus to be healed was a relatively large number. A “good many”, that is, a relatively large number of folks, came to Jesus and all of them were healed. Contrast this with today’s “faith healers” who never “bat 1,000”! (See *Healing; A Doctor in Search of a Miracle* by Dr. William Nolen M.D.)

#60 Matthew 8:28-33 notes two demoniacs who confront Jesus, while Mark 5:7-16 mentions only one.

Partial accounts are not necessarily false reports. (See the introduction which discusses how the Gospels relate; see also Zane Hodges article “The Blind Men at Jericho” *Bibliotheca Sacra* October, December 1965, pp. 323-327, for helpful comments). If Mark had directly stated or had in some way expressly affirmed that there was only one demoniac then and only then would there be a contradiction. That the fact that Mark chose to focus on the more prominent of the two men does not imply that he is denying the presence of the other man who Matthew does choose to mention.

#61 Contrasts Matthew 9:18 which indicates that Jairus’ daughter was already dead when Jesus raised her, to Luke 8:42 which simply states that she was dying (sic).

Although this “contradiction” is clumsily worded there are divergent details in this two gospel accounts that do call for close examination. As always, one notes that the two accounts are complementary, not contradictory. Luke’s account (8:40-56) gives more details about this event than does Matthew (9:18-26). This writer suggests the following reconstruction:

(1) Jairus comes to Jesus asking Him to come to his house and to heal his dying daughter, Luke 8:40-42. (2) As they proceed to Jairus’ home, a woman with a chronic hemorrhage contacts Jesus and is healed, Luke 8:43-48, Matthew 9:20-22. (3) While Jesus debriefs the woman, someone comes from Jairus’ house and informs him that his daughter had just died, Luke 8:49. (4) Jairus, showing incredible faith, pleads with Jesus to come anyway and to raise her up from the dead (Matthew 9:19). (5) Jesus calms Jairus and assures him that his daughter will be made well (Luke 8:50). (6) Jesus proceeds to the house and raises the dead girl to life (Luke 8:51-56, Matthew 9:23-26). In this reconstruction Matthew uses the aorist tense with a past perfect aspect “had come” so that 8:20-22 is a flashback detailing Jesus’ healing of the woman’s “impossible” problem. This then is the backdrop and context for the incredible request of Jairus for Jesus to come and minister to his now dead daughter.

#62 Contrasts Matthew 10:5 in which Jesus tells the twelve apostles not to go to the cities of the Samaritans, with Matthew 22:39 where Jesus teaches that one should love his neighbor as himself.

Matthew 10:5 in context records a specific instruction given to the twelve just before they are sent on their first short term preaching tour, the specific objective of which was to present Jesus as Messiah to Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This tour occurs early in his ministry shortly after the twelve apostles were called. Several years later, after the nation had rejected Him, in Matthew 22:39, Jesus summarizes the key principle of the Torah for general application.

#63 Matthew 10:9-10 in which Jesus tells the twelve not to take (sic sandals or a staff is contrasted to Mark 6:8-9 which indicates that Jesus told them to take a staff and to wear sandals.

In Mark 6:7-13 Jesus tells the apostles to travel light as they leave on their first preaching tour (which was probably not more than six to eight weeks in duration.) They were to take with them only the bare essentials-sandals and a staff. They were not to take any “extras” such as money, a money bag, or extra clothing. In Matthew 10:9-10 Jesus tells the twelve not to take from those they would preach to, (i.e. not to acquire along the way) gold, silver, copper, a bag, extra tunics, sandals, or even an extra staff! They were not to take any “extras”, nor to accept such things from those they ministered to during this specific short intense preaching tour. Note that this limitation was later revised as Jesus anticipated their long-term ministry after His departure (Luke 22:35-38).

#64 Contrasts Matthew 10:34 in which Jesus indicates that He did not come to bring peace but conflict, with Isaiah 9:6 which indicates that the Messiah would be the prince of peace.

The contrast here is between Jesus’ first advent and His yet future second advent. In Matthew 10:34 Jesus makes a blunt statement of fact concerning sinful men’s reactions against Him and His followers. Isaiah 9:6 foretells Jesus ultimate role to be fulfilled at the second advent when He will establish His kingdom of peace on earth.

#65 Matthew 11:17 in which Jesus states that John the Baptizer is a prophet and more, (see 11:11) is contrasted with John 1:21 where John denies (sic) that he is a Prophet.

John the Baptizer does not deny that he is a prophet in John 1:21. He clearly states that he is prophet in John 1:23) but he does deny that he is THE prophet (predicted in Deuteronomy 18:15).

#66 Matthew 11:29 in which Jesus claims to be gentle and humble is contrasted with John 2:13-17 where he angrily cleanses the temple.

Matthew 11:29 teaches the basic truth that Jesus is characterized by gentleness (consideration for the needs and best interests of others) and by humility (possession of an accurate attitude in assessing self and others under God). However, Jesus is also righteous and holy. His righteous indignation as manifested toward the moneychangers in the temple (who were “ripping off” the common folks in the name of religiosity) was the only proper response of His holiness and righteousness toward such blatant injustice and wickedness.

#67 Matthew 12:30 in which He states that “He who is not with Me is against Me” is contrasted with Mark 9:40 where he states “he who is not against us is for us”.

These are general proverbial statements, intended to be accurate in the specific context in which they were uttered. To illustrate the force of this genre., two modern “proverbs” come to mind. (1) “Absence makes the heart grow fonder”, (2) “Out of sight, out of mind”. These two statements are proverbial in nature and true in specific contexts. In Matthew 12:30 Jesus is responding to Jewish leaders who have just repudiated him, claiming that he is demon possessed. Anyone who is not “with Him”, to the extent that they believe that He is a Satanic agent, is certainly not “for Him” and is in fact “against Him”! In Mark 9:40 one finds a totally different context. Here, Jesus refers to a believer who is having a successful ministry in His name, but who is not part of the apostolic band, and thus geographically separate from him. Jesus cautions His apostles not to hinder him, because “he (who accepts Him and ministers successfully in His name) who is not against Me is for Me” (on the same side). For more details on the interpretation and application of proverbial statements see Knowing Scripture, by R.C. Sproul.

#68 Matthew 12:39 in which Jesus states that no sign (sic) will be given to his generation is contrasted to John 20:30 which says that Jesus did many signs.

Actually, in Matthew 12:39 Jesus states that no sign except the sign of Johan (i.e. the resurrection) would be given the nation Israel from that point on. The word “sign” in Matthew’s gospel is used as a technical term for public miracle done by Jesus to demonstrate His Messiahship to Israel. Jesus had done many signs for Israel up to the point of Matthew 12:24. It was then that the leaders of Judaism who were observing Jesus officially explained away His miracles/signs as demoniacally produced. After performing many public signs for the expressed purpose of leading the nation to accept him as Messiah, only to have the intelligentsia explain them away as satanic, Jesus announces that the focus of His ministry will change and He will do no more such signs except for the resurrection. The miracles done after that point were not designed to be signs to the nation, but were acts of compassion done in response to extreme personal distress and/or faith. In the gospel of John, the term “sign” is used in a very general sense to designate any miracle (public or private) that demonstrated the Deity of Jesus. John’s gospel is designed to highlight seven such “signs” in order to present Jesus to the reader as the God-Man savior (John 20:31).

#69 Matthew 13:34, Mark 4:34 and Luke 8:4 which state that Jesus spoke often in parables is contrasted with the gospel of John which seldom mentions Jesus teaching in parables.

The verses from Matthew, Mark, and Luke cited above are parallel passages commenting on one specific instance in which Jesus spoke in parables. (Immediately after the Jewish leaders first publicly charged that He did His miracles in the power of Satan). Clearly this does not contradict John’s gospel which records few parables (10:1-6). The gospels are selective in what they record based on their overall theme. The fact that Matthew and Luke record genealogies while Mark and John do not is not a contradiction, and does not imply that Mark or John denied that Jesus had genealogies through His human parents. In this case John’s omission of much of the parabolic teaching of Jesus in his gospel does not imply a denial of same.

#70 Matthew 17:1-2 which indicates that the transfiguration took place six days after Peter's confession Christ is contrasted with Luke 9:28-29 which states it occurred "some eight days" after Peter's confession

Matthew and Luke in this instance utilize two different ways of describing the same time period. The both specify the identical time interval. Matthew speaks exclusively while Luke speaks inclusively.

#71 Mark 10:35-37 in which James and John ask Jesus about having a place of special authority in His kingdom is contrasted to Matthew 20:20-21 which indicates that their mother asked Jesus about this.

Both accounts are true in what they affirm. By putting both accounts together one can reconstruct the details of the event in its totality. Matthew notes that the mother and the sons both came to Jesus (20:20). Jesus let "ladies go first" and asked the mother to tell Him what she wanted (20:21). Mark points out that immediately after this the sons also asked the same question (10:36). Both the mother and the sons asked Jesus to place them (the sons) in a special place of authority. Although Matthew does not explicitly record the son's request it is obvious that he is aware of it (he was an eye-witness remember)! In Matthew 20:22, second person plural verb forms in the Greek text are used as follow: "You (second person plural) do not know what you (second person plural) are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup?... (you second person plural obviously addressed to the sons)... they (the sons, not 'she' the mother) said to Him, 'We are able'

Also, after this discussion, Matthew points out that the other ten apostles were angry with James and John, not their mother (20:14)

#72 Matthew 20:23- which states that Jesus told James and John that authority in their kingdom was not his to give is contrasted to Matthew 28:18 where Jesus said that all authority had been given to Him

These are two different chronological contents. Matthew 20:23 is clearly set in a pre-resurrection context, while Matthew 28:18 is a post resurrection declaration. Moreover Matthew 20:23, Jesus refers to a specific delegated ministry within the Godhead which is the prerogative of God the Father which is similar to the actual acts of creation which were delegated to God the Son or the actual act of regenerating a sinner who trusts Christ which is the delegated ministry of God the Holy Spirit. God the Father is the actual person of the Godhead who will bestow millennial rewards and high positions to certain faithful believers. In Matthew 28:18 the risen Jesus, anticipating His ascension and session, refers to His post resurrection status having reacquired the independent usage of his divine prerogatives. Phillipians 2:5-11 discusses Christ's voluntarily giving up His eternal position and status in Heaven and coming to Earth as the God-man in the incarnation and then the reacquisition of same after the resurrection.

#73 Matthew 21:7 which indicates that Jesus (sic) amounts two animals is contrasted to Mark 11:7, Luke 19:35 and John 12:14 which mentions only one animal.

The partial report of Mark, Luke, and John, where only one animal is mentioned, the unbroken colt which Jesus actually rode, does not conflict with the full account of Matthew that there were

actually two animals present, the colt and his mother. Christian scholars through the years have speculated that the colt only, not both animals simultaneously. Matthew points out that the two animals had garments placed them, to function as saddles, and then Jesus got on “them” (the garments on the colt). Initially, to facilitate the trip, one of the disciples may have ridden the mother donkey in front of the colt, but obviously dismounted very soon after, and then led the mother before the colt during the actual triumphal entry. Mark, Luke, and John mention only the animal Jesus actually rode during the public procession, while Matthew adds the additional supplementary detail about the mother being present.\

#74 Matthew 21:12-13 which describes Jesus cleansing the temple during the last week of His public ministry is contrasted to John 2:13-16 where Jesus cleanses the temple at the very beginning of His ministry.

These are two separate, distinct events. A devastating point is made by comparing the two. The religious leaders of the day were so corrupt that the ministry of even the messiah did not affect them. The system was corrupt at the beginning of the ministry of Christ and he reacted against it in righteous indignation (John 2:13-17). Three and one half years later the system was just as rotten (Matthew 21:12-13). The religious leaders rejected Jesus and the system was unaffected by his ministry. There were two cleansings of the temple one at the beginning and one at the end of Jesus’ ministry. Two similar events at either end of the career of a public figure is not unusual. For example, a President might request an increase in military spending both in his first and in his last year in office.

#75, 77-80 These “contradictions” all have to do with Peter’s denials of Christ. This writer will first state his harmonization of the four gospel accounts and then will interact with each specific “contradiction” .

Harmonization of the four gospel accounts of the events surrounding Peter’s denial of Christ:: (1) After Peter claims boldly that he will die for Jesus, Christ predicts that in fact Peter will deny Him three time before the cock crows, Matthew 26:34-35, Mark 14:29-30, Luke 22:33-34, John 13:37-38 (2) After the arrest of Jesus, Peter first denies Crist after a slave girl suggests that he had been with Jesus. Matthew 26:69-70, Mark 14:66-68, Luke 22:54-57, John 18:15-17 (3) The second denial comes in a different setting and in two phases. First a servant girl (specifically noted to be a different one than before) cries out to bystanders that Peter was one of the men with Jesus. Peter claims that she is wrong, and immediately a man in the crowd confirms the girls accusation. Peter promptly repeats his negation. Matthew 26:71-72, Mark 14:69-70, Luke 22:58, John 18:18, 25 (4) About an hour after this Peter denies Christ for the third time in a third setting when bystanders, led by the specific man mentioned in Luke 22:59 and John 18:26 citing Peter’s Galilean accent, accuse him as being an associate of Jesus. Peter denies the charge, this time while swearing, Matthew 26:73-74, Mark 14:70-71, Luke 22:59-60, John 18:26-27 (5) Immediately after this third denial a rooster began crowing and Peter was jarred by the memory of Jesus’ prediction. Matthew 26:74-75, Mark 14:72, Luke 22:60-62, John 18:27.

#75 Contrasts Matthew 26:34 which indicates that Peter would deny Jesus three times before the cock crowed, with Mark 14:66-72 (sic) which states that the cock crowed after his first and second denials.

The objector sarcastically notes that “this problem (sic) has been translated out in some Bible versions.” He thus concedes the issue. In fact the evidence of the Greek manuscripts of the New

Testament does not indicate that the rooster crowed at any point except after the third denial. Any translation which renders the text of Mark 14:66-72 otherwise is not accurately rendering what Mark actually wrote.

#77 Matthew 26:69-70 which indicates that Peter's first denial was made to a servant girl and "them all" is contrasted with Mark 14:66-68 which indicates that Peter denied to the girl (sic) only.

Mark 14:66-68 does not state that Peter made his denial only to and before the servant girl. It simply affirms that the denial was addressed to his accuser- - the servant girl. The totality of the conversation was clearly made within earshot of a group of bystanders.

#78 Matthew 26:73-74 which indicates that Peter made his second denial to a second servant girl is contrasted to Luke 22:58 which states that he denied the second time to a man, is contrasted to John 18:25 which states (sic) that he denied the second time to a group.

Matthew 26:73-74 and Luke 22:58 give details of the second accusation and denial. The second denial was a two phase "rapid fire" denial. First the servant girl accuses Peter of association with Jesus and He denies it. Immediately (as a follow-up confirming and strengthening the girl's contention) a male bystander voices the same charge which is denied by Peter. John 18:25 in summary fashion telescopes this two phase second accusation/denial and simply refers to the girl and the mans as "they".

#79 Matthew 26:73-74 which states that Peter made his third denial to a group of bystanders is contrasted to Luke 22:59-60 which indicates that he denies to a man, is contrasted to John 18:26-27 which states that he denied to one of the servants.

Matthew gives a more full account than do either Luke or John. The obvious reconstruction of the three separate witnesses is that a man namely one of the servants of the high priest accuses Peter of having been in the garden of Gethsemane with Jesus. At this point others within earshot may have joined in and attacked Peter, or perhaps this one man was the mouthpiece for the thoughts of the hostile group. Peter made his third denial to his most prominent accuser (the man) and before or in front of a group. Luke and John focus upon the man, while Matthew's focus is on the group

#80 Matthew 26:74-75 which states that the rooster crowed (sic) once is contrasted with Mark 14:72 which indicates that the rooster crowed "thrice".

It appears someone has his "contradictions" confused! In fact, Mark 14:72 indicates that the rooster crowed twice, not thrice. When Matthew 26:74-75 states that after Peter's third denial "a cock crowed he is making a general statement indicating that the rooster "sounded off". This does not specifically indicate whether he emitted one solitary utterance or a series or repeated ones. The statement simply affirms the fact that a rooster sounded immediately after Peter's third denial. Mark 14:72 is a specific report of the number of distinct "crows". Taking both gospels at face value one concludes that there was one "performance" comprised of two distinct rooster crows.

#76 (Placed here in order to deal with all the Peter/denial related “contradictions” #75, 77-80, sequentially.) Luke 22: 36 in which Jesus tells the disciples to obtain swords is contrasted to Matthew 26:52 in which Jesus tells the disciples to put away their swords.

In Luke 22:36 Jesus gives the disciples a general injunction as he anticipates their situation on the earth after He returns to heaven. The swords discussed here are those needed for legitimate self-defense purposes, as from criminals and wild animals. Matthew 26:52 is the specific occasion of Jesus’ arrest by the Jewish and Roman leaders. When Peter pulls out a sword, authorized by Jesus in Luke 22:36-38, and takes a swing at one of the men in the arresting party, Jesus commands him to put the sword back into its sheath. Jesus did not resist His arrest and did not condone Peter’s misguided attempt to ward off the authorities who had come for Jesus.

#81 Matthew 27:3-7 which indicates that the chief priests bought the field of blood is contrasted to Acts 1:18 which states that (sic) Judas had bought it.

Judas, sorry he had betrayed the innocent Jesus, returned the money to the Chief Priests, Matthew 27:3-5. They, in turn bought the field of blood with this, “Judas ‘ blood money”, in Judas’ name. Acts 1:18 is a legal statement indicating that Judas had acquired a field financed by his bribe money. “Legally via the actions of the Chief Priests, and posthumously!) The irony of the situation is obvious and shows the ignominy of Judas’ sin and its consequences.

#82 Matthew 27:3-5 which indicates that Judas hung himself is contrasted with Acts 1:18 which states that he fell and his body was badly mangled.

These divergent accounts are complementary not contradictory, (see introduction). Judas did indeed hang himself and then either the limb broke, or the rope broke (or was cut-the Jews despised suicide) such that his body fell down into the ravine it had been dangling over.

#83 Matthew 27:14 which indicates that Jesus answered no questions before Pilate is compared with John 18:33-37 in which Jesus and Pilate dialogue.

John 18:33-37 (and Matthew 27:11) records the initial discussion between Jesus and Pilate, while Matthew 27:14 deals with a later portion of the sequential even (i.e. the same hearing) during which time Jesus did not honor the absurd and insulting accusations made against Him by the Jewish high priest and elders, which were followed up by Pilate himself. The two passages in question deal with two different chronological portions of the same hearing.

#84 Matthew 27:32 which states that Simon of Cyrene carried the cross of Jesus is contrasted with John 19:17 which indicates that Jesus carried His own cross.

Again as in #83 the two gospel accounts are recording two different chronological portions of the same sequential even. Jesus left the hearing before Pilate carrying His cross. However as He neared the city limits of Jerusalem He was physically unable to continue at a fast enough pace to suit the Roman centurion in charge of the crucifixion procession. Therefore, a bystander, Simon of Cyrene, was pressed into service. It must be pointed out that Jesus’ inability carry the cross the full distance was the result of the brutal beating He suffered just before the procession began, Matthew 27:26-30. Reader, this Jesus suffered for You. His death on the cross paid the penalty for YOUR sin and His salvation is offered to all who will receive Him as personal Savior. See John 1:12, 3:16-18, Acts 16:30-31.

#85 The slightly divergent accounts of the inscriptions over the cross are contrasted (Matthew 27:37, Mark 15:26, Luke 22:38, John 19:19).

This is a classic and well recognized case of the different gospel writers intentionally recording partial but accurate accounts of specific details and facts. The obvious reconstruction of the inscription in its entirety would be: “This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews”. As always any divergent information is not contradictory but complementary. Note: Dr. Gleason Archer suggests a more complicated harmonization based on the three different languages that the inscription was written in: Greek, Latin, and Aramaic, in his book Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties.

#86 Matthew 27:44 in which both of the men crucified with Jesus taunt Him is contrasted to Luke 23:40-42 in which one of the men rebukes the other for taunting Christ.

Again, as in #83 and #84 above, the two different gospel accounts focus on two different chronological aspects of the same sequential event. During the early stages of the crucifixion both of the hardened criminals on either side of Jesus literally “followed the crowd”, (see Matthew 27:38-43). And taunted the Holy One. Later, however, after having the opportunity to observe Jesus while on the cross, one of the men became convinced that He was the Messiah. Thus he then rebuked the other criminal and sought salvation from Jesus, which was instantly and freely given (Luke 23:43)! Oh, the greatness of grace! See Ephesians 2:8-9.

#87 Matthew 27:46 which quotes Jesus as asking God the Father why He had forsaken Him is contrasted with John 10:30 where Jesus states that He and the Father are one.

The Greek grammar of John 10:30 indicates that Jesus’ statement communicates His essential equality with God the Father, His Deity. This is not a statement of personal equality, that Jesus and God the Father are the same Person. On the cross the God-Man-Savior in the atonement was our substitute for sin. He was judged for the sins of the world in order to satisfy the just and righteous requirements of the Father. See Isaiah 53:4-6, Matthew 20:28, Mark 8:31, II Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 10:10-14, I Peter 1:18-20, 2:22-25, I John 2:2. Jesus uttered the words “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”, as a rhetorical question. It indicated His status as the “scapegoat” sacrifice for sin. It also fulfilled the prophecy made by David one thousand years before in Psalm 22:1.

#88 contrasts the “last words” (sic) of Jesus on the cross as recorded by Matthew 27:46, Luke 23:46 and John 19:30 and implies a contradiction.

This “contradiction” is all in the objector’s head. The gospels do not claim that the last words they chose to record Jesus speaking on the cross were necessarily His absolute last utterances before He died physically. As always the individual gospels are selective, accurately recording the specific details they chose to include. (One wonders if the objector assumes that the last words the evening news might show a speech maker speaking during a thirty second report on television to be necessarily the last words of his speech! Such a thing is not necessarily intended or implied, on the network news or in the gospel accounts). The words of Matthew 27:46 are obviously uttered soon after the sins of the world were actually placed on Christ (see#87). John 19:30 “It is finished” is a declaration of victory made after Jesus had succeeded in completing the atonement. (Note: “It is finished” is one Greek word, the verb, “telestai”. It was a legal term used for the successful fulfillment/payment of a legal penalty). After uttering this victory cry, the Lord lowered his head and committed His spirit to the Father, Luke 23:46)

#89 contrasts Matthew 27:55 which states that the women followers of Christ stood at a distance from the cross with John 19:26 which indicates that they were at the foot of the cross.

Again this is a case of the two gospels focusing on two different chronological portions of the same lengthy sequential event. Early on, when the crowd was at its antagonistic worst the women stood off from the cross. Later, after the crowd calmed down and began to thin, the women moved closer to Jesus and actually talked to Him.

#90-96 These “contradictions” all have to do with the resurrection and related events. The writer will first state his harmonization of the four gospel accounts and then will address the specific questions raised in #90-96.

Harmonization of the four gospel accounts: (1) The women leave their homes to go to the tomb while it was still dark. John 20:1a (Greek verb ‘erchonai’ in the aorist tense should be translated “left”, as in “they left early to go to the tomb while it was still dark”. (2) While en route and unknown to them, an earthquake occurred at the tomb and an angel rolled away the stone from the tomb, causing the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb to panic and flee. Matthew 28:2-4, Mark 16:1-4. (3) The women arrive at the tomb just as the first rays of sunlight begin to shine. They find the stone rolled away from the tomb and the guards gone. They then enter the tomb, Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:4-5a, Luke 24:1-3, John 20:1b. (4) Inside the tomb two angels appear to the women. They announce the fact of the resurrection and command them to go and report it to the apostles. Matthew 28:5-7, Mark 16:5b-7, Luke 24:4-8. (5) The women leave the tomb with command to go immediately to the apostles. However, while on their way, they begin to have second thoughts (after all what would your friends think if you told them that you had just spoken to an angel who told you that a dead person was now alive!?) And they go into seclusion. Mary, however, breaks away from the group and gives a hesitant and distorted report to Peter and John. Matthew 28:8, Mark 16:8, John 20:2. (6) Peter and John run to the tomb to investigate. They enter it and then leave to contemplate what they had seen. Mary following slowly arrives at the tomb just as or perhaps just after they are leaving. She remains at the empty tomb alone. John 20:3-10. (7) Two angels and then the risen Lord Jesus Himself appears to Mary by the tomb. He commands her to go and tell His apostles that He is risen and has appeared to her. Mark 16:9, John 20:11-17. (8) Mary then does go to the apostles who are now together in a group additional witnesses to help persuade the unbelieving apostles Mary goes to the women she had left. (See point #5). She convinces them to come with her to confirm with her to confirm her story before the apostles. While enroute Jesus appears to them and tells them to go the apostles and report His resurrection. They then go to “the twelve” but they still refuse to believe! Matthew 28:9-10, Luke 24:9-11. (9) Meanwhile, as the apostles refuse to accept the implications of the empty tomb, the Jewish leaders anticipate them and plot a conspiracy to explain away any reports of a resurrection. Matthew 28:11-15. (10) After the apostles temporarily separate, Jesus appears to Peter, apparently very briefly. Luke 24:34, Corinthians 15:5. (11) Jesus appears to two disciples who are not apostles, who are traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Luke 24:13-35. After He leaves them they go back to Jerusalem and report to the apostles. Thomas is absent. Mark 16:14-18, Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19-25, I Corinthians 15:5. (The “twelve” is a technical term for the assembled apostles). (12) A week later Jesus appears to the apostles with Thomas present. John 20:26-29. (13) Forty days after the resurrection the Lord ascends to heaven bodily and visible before the apostles. Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:3, 6-12. Note 1: As one reads the accounts of the actions and reactions of the women and the apostles relative to

the initial indications of the resurrection, one must remember the emotional shock and surprise that it was to them. It is clear that the people involved were not simplistic fools ready and eager to cling to any circumstantial evidence that might be construed to indicate that Christ was risen. Instead, they were extremely skeptical about the first indications of the resurrection. It is only after the risen Christ actually appears to them they are willing to accept the fact of the resurrection. The appearances of the risen Christ then transformed the fearful, uncertain individuals into the dynamic leaders of the first century church, who were persecuted and martyred for the truth they proclaimed. Note 2: This basic harmonization of the four gospel accounts is explained and defended by Professor Zane C. Hodges in his article "The Women and the Empty Tomb" in the October/December 1966 issue of *Bibliotheca Sacra* pages 301-309. Note 3: during the forty day period between the resurrection and the ascension Jesus made several appearances that are not specifically fixed chronologically. Matthew 28:16-20, John 21:1-3, I Corinthians 15:6-7.

#90 Contrasts the gospel accounts concerning the specific women who first visited the empty tomb. Matthew 28:1 mentions Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Mark 16:1 mentions Mary Magdalene, Mary and Salome, while Luke 23:33-24:1-10 mentions the two Marys, Joanna and the "others" from Galilee.

Matthew and Mark both give partial accounts focusing on specific women within the larger set of all the women. Their information is consistent with Luke's comprehensive listing of all the women. See introduction for more insight on parallel and partial accounts in the gospels.

#91 Matthew 28:2 which indicates (sic) that the stone was in place when the women arrived at the tomb and was later rolled away by an angel is contrasted with Luke 24:2 which states that the stone was already rolled away when the women arrived.

This "contradiction" is based on an erroneous and misleading translation of the Greek text of Matthew 28:2. The verse should be translated "a severe earthquake had occurred", that is, after the women had left their homes but before they arrived at the tomb.

#92 Contrasts Matthew 28:2 which mentions an angel present in conjunction with the earthquake. Mark 16:5 which mentions a "young man" sitting inside the tomb, Luke 24:2 (sic, actually 23:4) which mentions "two men", and John 20:12 which mentions "two angels".

Matthew 28:2 deals with an event that happened before the women actually arrived at the tomb. It affirms the fact that an angel appeared to the soldiers guarding the tomb in conjunction with the earthquake. Mark 16:5 and Luke 24:4 describe the circumstances when the women entered the tomb. Mark focuses on one angel. He uses phenomenological language . . . The angel looked like a "young man". Luke gives a more complete account specifically noting that there were two angels actually present. See introduction and John Wenham's quote on this issue. John 20:12 describes a situation later in the morning when Mary was alone at the tomb after Peter and John had left. (See harmonization above).

#93 Contrasts Matthew 28:8 which states that the women left to tell the apostles and Mark 16:8 which indicates that they told no one about what they had seen and Luke 24:9 which states that they did tell the apostles, and John 20:9-11 which indicates that Peter and John left the tomb but Mary remained there alone.

These are different specific events that occurred on the day of the resurrection. See the harmonization which precedes #90 above. Matthew 28:8 states that the women left the tomb with the intent of reporting to the apostles. Mark seclusion. John 20:9-11 has to do with the situation after Mary left the secluded women, told Peter and John and then apostles alone, and then goes to the women and convinces them to go with her to the apostles. It is important when reading the gospels to recognize the difference between distinct events that are a portion of lengthy sequential episode.

#94 Matthew 28:8 (sic) which reports that the first (sic) appearance of the risen Jesus was near (sic) the tomb, is contrasted to Luke 14:13 which indicates that the first (sic) appearance was near Jerusalem is contrasted to John 20:14 which states that it was at the tomb.

The objector here wrongly assumes that the first recorded appearance a particular gospel chooses to record, is in fact an affirmation that the same is necessarily the first actual appearance. This assumption is clearly false. The first appearance a particular gospel records is simply the first appearance the writer chose to include in his book. This is the same basic erroneous assumption made in #88, namely that the last words a particular gospel chose to record (Jesus uttering on the cross) are necessarily an affirmation that those words were His absolute last words. Matthew 28:8 simply states that the women left the empty tomb with the intention of telling the apostles. One assumes that the objector meant to cite Matthew 28:9. It refers to an appearance of the risen Christ to the women as they were en route to see the apostles. This appearance is not stated to be “near the tomb” (See point 9 in the harmonization given before #90). Luke 24:13 has to do with a different event when Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. John 20:14 is in fact the first appearance of the risen Christ (point 7 in the harmonization) to Mary outside the tomb.

#95 Matthew 28:16 in which the disciples meet Jesus in Galilee is contrasted with Luke 24:13-43 and John 20:20-29 which indicate that they remained in the Jerusalem area.

The apostles did remain in Jerusalem for approximately one week and then journeyed north to Galilee. The appearances mentioned in Luke 24:13-43 and John 20:10-29 occurred in Jerusalem. Later, however, sometime during the forty day period between the resurrection and the ascension Jesus did in fact appear to His apostles in the Galilee area as indicated in Matthew 28:16-20 and on a separate occasion John 21:1-23

#96 This one “contradiction” actually involves three separate issues: (1) the divergent, partial accounts of the different gospels to the events following the resurrection are contrasted. (2) I Corinthians 15:5-8 which refers to certain postresurrection appearances is listed. In addition to the “contradiction” between these verses generally and the gospel passages which discuss certain other postresurrection events, it is also pointed out that I Corinthians 15:5 indicates that Christ appeared to the “twelve” and yet Judas is dead by that point. And in 15:7 Jesus is said to have appeared to a”all the apostles” and the objector asks the sarcastic question “more than twelve?”. Also, the statement of 15:6 indicating that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred is contrasted with Acts 1:15 which states that there was only about one hundred and twenty person present. (3) Cites Acts 1:3 which states that the risen Christ appeared numerous time during a forty day period between His resurrection and ascension.

Concerning question (1) see the detailed harmonization given before #90. It lists a specific chronological reconstruction of the specific events reported by the four gospels. The reader is also referred to the introduction which deals with divergent and partial reports in the gospels.

Concerning question (2) in I Corinthians 15 Paul, in 56 A.D. is discussing the general subject of resurrection as he writes to the Christians in Corinth. In 15:5-8 he reflects on some of the appearances of the risen Christ. He makes no effort to be comprehensive. The reference of 15:5 concerning the Lord appearing to the “twelve” uses that word as a fixed technical term for “the assembled apostles”. This kind of figure was common in that day. For example “the Sanhedrin” literally means “the Council of Seventy”. However, the actual number of members at any point in time or at any specific meeting was not necessarily seventy men. The reference in I Corinthians 15:5 refers to the appearance of Christ to the assembled apostles (minus the absent Thomas) On the evening of the resurrection (Mark 16:14-18, Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19-25). That Paul realized this appearance was to the group minus Thomas is obvious in his reference to Jesus’ one week later meeting (John 20:26-29) with “all the apostles”. That is, all the living apostles assembled with none absent. The appearance of Christ to more than five hundred, I Corinthians 15:6, refers to one specific appearance to this large group sometime during the forty day period specified in Acts 1:3. This appearance has nothing to do with the group of about one hundred believers gathered with the apostles to pray after the ascension.

(3) Acts 1:3 simply indicates that there was a forty day period between the resurrection and the ascension. It neither presents nor implies a contradiction to anything cited previously.

#97 Matthew 28:18 which indicates that all authority had been given to Jesus is contrasted to II Thessalonians 2:9 which states that the coming of the antichrist will be with “all power”.

These two passages are not parallel. John 1:29 and following discusses events which took place after Jesus returned to the vicinity of John the Baptizer after His baptism and temptation in the wilderness. A careful reading of John 1:29 and following makes it clear that the baptism is not described but instead its aftermath. When John sees Jesus in this passage, he immediately testifies that He is the Messiah. And he recalls seeing the Holy Spirit descending as a dove at the baptism.

#99 Mark 1:14 which indicates (sic) that Jesus began His ministry after the arrest of John the Baptizer is contrasted with John 3:23-24 which indicates that Jesus began His ministry before John was arrested.

John 1:29-4:42 gives detailed information about the events from shortly after the temptation of Jesus until He began “the Great Galilean Ministry”. These events are often referred to as the “Early Judean Ministry.” Mark and also Luke and Matthew do not discuss this aspect of Christ’s ministry, choosing instead to move immediately to the Great Galilean ministry. Mark briefly notes Jesus’ baptism and temptations (1:9-13) and the jumps forward in time to the beginning of the Great Galilean Ministry (compare Mark 1:14 and John 4:43). It is the Great Galilean Ministry (“Jesus came into Galilee preaching”) which began after the arrest of John the Baptizer, Mark 1:14.

#100 Mark 1:23-24 in which a demon cries out that Jesus is “the Holy One of God” is contrasted to I John 4:1-2 which states “that every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has Come in the flesh is from God”.

In mark 1:23-24 and in many other similar occasions, a demon in terror grudgingly acknowledges the identity of Jesus. In I John 4:1-2 the word ‘spirit’ is not used for individual spirits so much as for the spirit or thrust of various teachers and doctrinal systems that were publicly appealing to believers of the day. False teachers would deny that Jesus was the God-Man-Savior and would fail to obediently acknowledge Him as such. The idea of “confession” here refers not to outward lip service only, but conveys the idea of a submissive confession of faith. Demons in terror of the power of Christ who simply stated who He was and were not “confessing Him” in a spirit of submissive faith. Rather they were simply acknowledging, grudgingly and fearfully, the identity of the One with whom they were at war.

#101 Mark 4:11-12 which indicates that some of Jesus’ teachings were purposely hidden so that certain of His hearers would not understand and believe and John 12:40 which states that God blinded the minds of some so they would not believe, is contrasted with John 18:10 which indicates that Jesus always taught openly and I Timothy 2:4, and II Peter 3:9 which state that god desires all men to be saved.

This issue borders closely on the question of the relationship between the Sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. This writer maintains that the Bible affirms that both are true and active relative to individual salvation. However, for the purpose of this particular “contradiction” this writer will focus on one side of the coin, the responsibility of man as he answers the specific issues raised above. God does love all men (John 3:16-18) and has provided for the salvation of all men (I John 2:2). However, God’s love is persuasive never coercive, and He will never force anyone to come to Him. Mark 4:11-12 occurs after the religious leaders have formally and publicly explained away the miracles of Christ as demonic. (3:22-3). Jesus used parables extensively only after that willful and blasphemous rejection of His person and His power. This parabolic teaching was designed to prevent those who had rejected Him from receiving any additional light which might work against their already made decision to reject Him. John 12:40 is a comment on the same basic mechanism. God hardens only those who have already hardened themselves against Him via repeated willful rejection of revealed truth. It is possible for an individual to reject so much light that he in effect passes a point of “spiritual no return”. After that point God begins to directly confirm the person’s hardening via judicial blindness to any further truth. However, God’s direct hardening and blinding comes only after the individual has rejected so much truth so repeatedly that he has passed the point of no return. It is to such individuals that Mark 4:11-12 and John 12:40 refer. In John 18:10 Jesus simply is maintaining that he taught publicly and openly concerning the basic truths of His Person and His Mission. He never sought to conceal who He was to those who would willingly listen. The statements of I Timothy 2:4 and II Peter 3:9 express the general truth that god is not a respecter of persons. He desires everyone to receive Christ and to be saved. However He will not coerce anyone to do so.

#102 mark 6:16 which indicates that King Herod originated (sic) the idea that Jesus was John the Baptizer risen from the dead is contrasted with Luke 9:7 which indicates that others (the public) originated the idea.

Mark 6:16 does not state that Herod originated the idea that Jesus was John come back from the dead. Mark 6:14 makes it clear that it was a commonly held opinion among the people before Herod even was aware of the ministry of Jesus. (Note: the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version translate Mark 6:14 accurately based on the evidence of the extant Greek manuscripts of the New Testament).

#103 Mark 6:52 which indicates that the people (sic-actually the apostles) were so unimpressed by the feeding of the five thousand men that they did not understand the significance of it is contrasted to John 6:15 which states the people tried to make Jesus king immediately after the miracle.

Being impressed or unimpressed by something and fully understanding it and its implications are two different things. Mark 6:52 indicates that the apostles had not yet fully appropriated the implications of the miracle, that is Jesus' authority over natural law. In John 6:15 it is the crowd, not the apostles who in the aftermath of the miracle (free food!) seek to organize a selfishly motivated impromptu revolution. The objective of which was to replace free food on a full time basis (a supernatural welfare state!?!). The crowds were impressed but only in a superficial and selfish level. See John 6:26-27 where Jesus points this out.

#104 Mark 15:25 which indicates that Jesus was crucified on "the third hour" is contrasted with John 19:14 which states that Jesus was still before Pilate at the third hour.

Mark in his gospel uses the Jewish hour designation, sunrise at approximately 6:00 a.m. being the "first" hour of the "day" (daylight hours). Note: the Jewish "day" or twenty four hour period ran from sundown to sundown. John's gospel uses the Roman hour designation, midnight being the "first" hour, with the twenty four hour "day" running from midnight to midnight. (See *Pliny the Elder Natural History* 2:77). It is clear that John uses Roman time designation throughout his gospel. For example in John 20:19 when John describes Jesus' evening appearance to the assembled apostles the night of resurrection he clearly uses Roman not Jewish time reckoning. He states, "...therefore it was evening (darkness) on that day, the first day of the week". The Jews ended their (twenty four hour) "day" at sunset. But here John indicates according to Roman reckoning that the appearance of Jesus happened after sundown, the end of the Jewish day, on the first day of the week (Sunday according to Roman reckoning which did not end until midnight). The difference between Mark and John as noted above in this "contradiction" is similar to the difference one might encounter today when comparing a civilian referring to an event occurring at "two o'clock" and a military officer referring to the same event at "1400 hours". There is no contradiction here, only two different time systems being used by the two different gospels.

#105 Mark 16:19 and Luke 24:50 which indicates (sic) that Jesus ascended shortly after His resurrection is contrasted to Acts 1:3 which flatly states that Christ did not ascend until forty days after the resurrection.

In Mark 16 and Luke 24 one encounters a common literary device often used in the gospels which this writer will refer to as "compression". Compression describes the obvious fact that the gospel writers molded the various events they chose to record in their documents into one connected story in which the absence of unmentioned details and events is not allowed to mar the smoothness of the flow of the finished narrative. It is clear for instance, that Luke did not intend to teach that the ascension took place on the day of the resurrection because he himself in the of

Acts flatly states that there was a forty day period between those two events. (Note: The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are a two volume work both written by Luke). While it might be possible for a superficial reading of Mark 16 and/or Luke 24 to conclude that the two events took place on the same day, to do so is to read into the gospels that which they do not affirm. Just as there is a time gap between Mark 1:13 and 1:14 (see #99) so too between Mark 16:18 and 16:19; Luke 24:49 and 24:50 there is a time gap.

#106 Mark 16:14-19 which (sic) indicates that the ascension took place from a room is contrasted to Luke 24:50-51 which states that it took place outdoors.

Mark 16:14-19 does not indicate that the ascension took place from a room. This passage is a paragraph -structural unit within the gospel of Mark which gives details about a specific appearance of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to the apostles who were assembled indoors. Mark 16:19-20 is a separate unit describing a different event chronologically and geographically removed from the event of the previous paragraph. It is Mark 16:9-20 and not 16:14-18 which is parallel with other ascension passages (Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:3, 6-11).

#107 Luke 6:36 and James 5:11 which state God is merciful is contrasted to Joshua 11:20 which indicates that God hardened the Canaanites so that they would come against Israel and receive no mercy but be destroyed.

God is merciful. If He were not merciful and patient, people who write pamphlets about Bible “contradictions” who repeatedly refuse His grace and who actively and continually break His moral laws. The Canaanites had rejected the true God and worshiped gods of their own design. Their sadistic and morally repugnant religious practices have been confirmed by modern archeological discoveries. Their presence was like a moral cancer in the land which demanded radical removal. See #101 for additional comments on God’s involvement in hardening certain individuals.

#108 Luke 14:26 in which Jesus states that a true disciple of His must hate his parents, his wife and his children is contrasted to John 3:15 which states that anyone who hates his brother is akin to a murderer.

In His call to full, true discipleship Jesus uses the concept of “hate” in a figurative way common in that culture. It is obvious from passages like Exodus 20:12, Luke 2:51; 18:20 as well as I John 3:15 that the Lord was not calling His disciples to exercise contempt, or to despise their loved ones. The term “hate” was often used in a figurative and relative sense in Jewish thought not for sinful contempt but instead for the act of expressing relative priority. Jesus was teaching that one cannot be a full disciple unless he gives Christ the highest priority in his life over anything and anyone else. (Note: the Bible makes a clear distinction between the freely received gift of salvation and the costly and radical commitment involved in full discipleship. See The Gospel Under Siege by Professor Zane C. Hodges. Chapter four or this writer’s booklet, What Exactly must I do to be saved?). It is impossible to have two #1's* in one’s life. A true, full disciple must make Christ #1 over all others.

#109 John 1:1, 14 which states that Jesus was God incarnate is contrasted with Acts 2:22 which states that He was a man.

John 1:14 does teach that Jesus is God incarnate, that is, God in human flesh, the God-man. Acts 2:22 quotes Peter's statement which focuses on the humanity of Jesus but does not deny His deity. Both statements are true and complementary. The Lord Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe, the God-man. He is one person with two natures: 100% Deity and 100% humanity (see also Colossians 2:9). In Acts 2:22 Peter is focusing on one aspect of Jesus but in doing so he is not denying any other aspect. For example, one might say, "Ronald Reagan is President". In making this statement, the speaker is not denying that Ronald Reagan is a husband or a father. A specific reference to one aspect of a person's life/being does not deny the fact that other aspects may exist.

#110 In John 1:29-34, 41 early in the ministry of Jesus, John the Baptizer recognizes who He is but in Matthew 11:2-3 some time later in the ministry of Christ, John when imprisoned sends messengers to ask Jesus if He is the Messiah.

The "common" orthodox understanding of Matthew 11:2-3 is that John is experiencing momentary doubts about the Messiahship of Jesus due primarily to his imprisonment. This writer however, take the question of Matthew 11:3 as rhetorical and exhortatory. John is like a football coach upset with his players who are losing 28-0 at halftime. The coach in an effort to exhort his players might ask the rhetorical question, "Are you girl scouts or football players?" The coach has no doubt that the men before him are in fact football players. However, he asks the question in order to exhort them to do what would please him...play like efficient football players! John knew beyond any doubt who Jesus was because he baptized Him. He had seen the Spirit of God descend and the voice of God the Father confirm the person of Jesus. However, Jesus had not set up an earthly millennial kingdom, and John himself was confined in jail. In asking the question of Jesus, John was attempting to "build a fire" under Him. He was trying to exhort Jesus to get on with the establishment of an earthly kingdom and to get him out of jail!

#111 John 3:13 where Jesus states that no one has ascended into heaven except Himself is contrasted to II Kings 2:11 which clearly states that Elijah was caught up into heaven and II Corinthians 12:2-4 which mentions a man who was caught up into heaven.

It is true that Elijah was caught up into heaven. Enoch was as well (Genesis 5:22-24). Jesus was obviously aware of these two cases, as was Nicodemus the man to whom Jesus was speaking at the time. To see contradiction between these facts and the statement of Jesus in John 3:13 is to ignore what Jesus was communicating in context. The point that he was making is that He could accurately speak of Heaven (and how to get there) because He was the only one who had been to heaven and then come to earth to talk about it. In John 3:13 Jesus is in effect saying that no one had been in heaven and then come down to talk about it, except Himself the one who had descended from heaven and was then on earth. II Corinthians 12:2-4 discusses the apostle Paul's experience several decades after Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus when he was allowed a glimpse of heaven.

#112 The statement of John 5:22 indicating that the Father judges none but in fact has delegated all judgement of the Son is contrasted to I Peter 1:7 where the Father is said to judge men.

Clearly two different kinds of "judgement" are being discussed. In John 5:22 Jesus refers to the fact that all judgment, that is, all final condemnation of unbelievers to the lake of fire is His, not the Father's designated activity. Specifically the Lord had in view His future role as judge at

the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20:11-15. This will be an assembly of all of the lost of all time who will appear before the One they had rejected as Savior. All those present at this meeting will be condemned to the lake of fire by the Lord Jesus Christ. I Peter 1:17 in contrast discusses not an act of condemnation, but instead the Father's activity of evaluation believers lives on earth for the purpose of granting special rewards according to faithfulness. Note: Dr. F. Wilbur Gingrich clearly distinguishes between the various nuances of the Greek work "kino", translated in the above verses "judgement" in his volume Shorter Lexicon of the Greeek New Testament pages 121-122

#113 John 5:24 which states that believers in Christ will not face "judgement" is contrasted to Hebrews 9:27 which indicates that every man dies once and then faces "judgement" is contrasted to I Peter 1:17 which indicates that the Father will "judge" according to each man's works.

Again as in #112 above one finds different nuances of the same word used in different contexts. Close attention to the specific meaning of each statement in its given context solves any perceived "contradictions". John 5:24 is a promise consistent with the rest of the Bible namely that all true believers will never face condemnation before God (see also John 3:16; 6:39-40; 10:28-29; Romans 8:1). Hebrews 9:27 states the general truth that every human being has but one lifetime and then a reckoning with God. Believers justified in Christ face no condemnation but are instead welcomed into the presence of God. Unbelievers still in sin face eternal condemnation before God. I Peter 1:17 deal with the evaluation that every believer's life will undergo in heaven for the purpose of bestowing rewards consistent with the degree of faithfulness in the Christians' life (I Corinthians 3:11-15). For lexical substantiation of these various nuances of the Greek work "krino" judgement. (See A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament by Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich.

#114 John 5:31 in which Jesus states that if He bears witness of Himself, His testimony is not true is contrasted with John 8:14 when Jesus later states that even if He bears witness to Himself, His witness is true.

John 5:31 in context stresses the fact that Jesus' claims about Himself are objective (actually true in fact) not merely subjective (all in His head). He is stating the hypothetical idea that if only He and no one, including God the Father, and nothing else substantiated Him then and only then what He says about Himself would be false. (That is, only in His head - - totally subjective.) In the following context Jesus rejects this notion. He points out that His claims are substantiated by others - -God the Father and John the Baptizer (5:32-33). In John 8:14 Jesus is stressing that majority vote does not determine truth. Despite the rejection of His claims about Himself, that he is God and the Messiah, by the religious professionals of the day and by the vast majority of the population, His claims are still true. Both John 5:31 and 8:14 teach the same truth- Jesus' claims about Himself are objectively true. He is the God-Man-Savior! Have you received Him as your personal Savior? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved! Acts 16:30-31.

#115 John 10:28 which promises that Jesus' sheep (i.e. believers) will not perish or be taken away is contrasted to I Timothy 4:1 which states the "some" will fall away from the faith.

John 10:28 is an absolute promise of the eternal security of the believer in Christ. I Timothy 4:1 deals not with true believers at all but instead with "some" certain unspecified and unsaved

individuals who will fall away from Christian influence and Biblical truth and instead follow false religious systems.

#116 John 10:30 where Jesus states that He is “one” with the Father is contrasted to John 14:28 where Jesus states the Father is “greater” than He.

In John 10:30 Jesus affirms His essential equality with the Father. He is claiming to be Deity and thus equal in essence with God the Father. In John 14:28 Jesus refers to His specific position as the God-Man on earth in contrast to the Father’s position in heavenly glory. At the moment He made the statement Jesus was emphasizing the superior position of the Father in heavenly glory as opposed to His own lowly position on earth (only hours away from His arrest, trials, and crucifixion). From a strictly positional perspective, the Father was at that point in time “greater” having a greater position with high status. Notice Jesus does not say that the Father was better than He. They were equal in essence but unequal in position and status when the Lord uttered the words of John 14:28. In context Jesus is anticipating His return to heaven and its glory and preparing His disciples for His departure from earth. Thus He stressed the greatness of heavenly glory over His then position on earth.

#117 John 18:37 in which Jesus states that He came to earth from heaven in order to bear witness to the truth is contrasted to Romans 1:18-20 which indicates that the truth has always been evident.

Romans 1:18-20 is a general statement concerning the fact that the existence of God is evident from observing the existing universe and applying the law of cause and effect. John 18:37 is a specific statement referring to Jesus the God-Man-Savior bearing witness to specific detailed truths about God, Man and Salvation.

#118 John 20:17 in which Jesus tells Mary not to touch Him since He has not yet ascended to God the Father is contrasted to John 20:27 where a week later, but before the ascension, He tells Thomas to touch Him.

The Greek syntax of John 20:17 makes it clear that Jesus was not telling Mary “not to touch Him” but rather “to stop touching Him” that is, “stop holding Me”, “restraining Me”, or “clinging to Me”. She was to go and tell the apostles that Jesus was risen and He had important business to do Himself during the short interval between the resurrection and the ascension. John 20:17 is in no way a blanket rule forbidding Mary or anyone else from touching the risen Christ. In presence before him. The plain fact is that the apostles saw, heard, and touched the risen Jesus (II Peter 1:16, I John 1:1). They knew that their Lord was killed and yet resurrected to life. This fact explains the curious phenomenon that is the first century church. The formerly doubting, fearful apostles spread the good news about the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus Christ throughout the world in the first century. They fearlessly faced persecution and martyrdom for the risen Christ.

#119 John 20:22 in which the risen Christ confers the Holy Spirit upon His apostles on the evening of the resurrection, is contrasted to Acts 2:1-4 where they and others receive the Spirit fifty days later, is contrasted to Luke 1:15 which indicates that John the Baptizer was filled with the Holy Spirit while in the womb, is contrasted to Luke 1:41-42 which states that Elizabeth, John’s mother, was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Prior to the dispensational change that occurred in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost, 33 A.D. (The end of the Old Testament Age and the beginning of the Church Age) the Holy Spirit selectively indwelt and directly controlled (“filled”) only certain believers for certain specific periods of time. The Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity is omnipresent and thus able to indwell more than one person at the same time. Luke 1:15 and 1:41-42 fit into this “pre-Pentecost” category of Holy Spirit activity. John 20:22 is a unique situation in which the risen Jesus confers the Holy Spirit unto His apostles to empower and to direct them during the short interim period between His resurrection and the day of Pentecost when they would be permanently indwelt by the spirit. The advent of the Spirit on Pentecost in Acts 2 inaugurated the Church Age. Since that time the Holy Spirit permanently indwells all new believers from the moment of salvation (Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:13)

#120 John 21:25 which states that John was selective in what he included in his gospel because if he had attempted to include everything that Jesus did and taught “the world could not hold all the books that would have to be written” is contrasted to Acts 1:1 in which Luke comments that in his first volume (the Gospel of Luke) he had written about “all” that Jesus did and taught.

John 21:25 is clearly a hyperbolic statement intended as obvious exaggeration to make a point..like the statement, “Look at Bill, he must weigh a ton!” The point John was making is that he had been highly selective when choosing what specific words and deeds of Jesus to include in his gospel. (Note: this clear statement that the gospels did not intend nor purport to be comprehensive biographies of Jesus apparently did not register in the objector’s mind. He ignores this fact and often bases his “contradictions” on the false premise that the gospels claim to be fully exhaustive). In Acts 1:1 Luke uses the word “all” not in the sense “without exception” that is 100% of all the possible data, but in the sense “without distinction”, that is 100% of a particular event. Luke in his gospel recorded “all kinds of things” that Jesus did and taught. He was not exhaustive but was representative in what he chose to record of Jesus’ acts and words.

#121 This “contradiction” has to do with certain details of Saul’s (Paul’s) conversion on the road to Damascus: (A) in Acts 9:7 the men traveling with Saul are said to stand speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. (B) In Acts 22:9 the men with Saul are said to have seen the light but not hear the voice of the One who Spoke with Saul. © In Acts 26:14 Paul, recalling his conversion before King Agrippa, states that after all of the men had fallen to the ground then the voice spoke to him.

Before one notices anything else he must be aware of the contexts in which these three accounts of Saul’s conversion are given. First in Acts 9:1-9 Luke as the author of Acts records the basic facts of the conversion. Later Paul himself is recorded directly as relating the details first before the Sanhedrin in Acts 22:4-11 and then later before King Agrippa in Acts 26:11-18. The three accounts are completely supplementary. They are in no way contradictory. The obvious harmonization follows: (1) Saul receives permission from his superiors to lead a group from Damascus at midday a bright light shines around Saul and the other men. 9:3; 22:6; 26:13 (2) They all fell to the ground 9:4a; 22:7a; 26:14a (3) The Lord Jesus Christ appears to Saul and talks to him 9:4b-6; 22:7b-1; 26:14b-15 (4) At the command of the Lord, Saul stands up 9:7; 26:6a (and the other men likewise if they had not already by this time) and the Lord continues to speak to Saul 26:16b-18 (5) Saul temporarily blind by the vision of the Lord is led into the city of Damascus by other men 9:8-9; 22:11.

Issue #1 (A) The men standing speechless in 9:7 is contrasted to © all of the men falling to the ground 26:14. These are two different portions of the same sequential event. When the light first shone upon the group they all fell to the ground 9:4a; 22:7a; 26:14a. Later at the command of the Lord Saul returned to his feet. The other men apparently also stood up again at this point if not sooner. 9:7; 26:16a. This basic sequence is apparent from a simple reading of 9:4-7.

Issue #2 (A) The men heard the voice but saw no one 9:7 is contrasted to (B) The men saw the light but did not hear the voice talking to Saul 22:9. There are actually two issues involved here: (1) the men hearing but not hearing (2) the men seeing but not seeing. The Greek grammar of 9:7 in contrast to 22:9 solves the first problem. In 9:7 the verb 'akouo' (to hear) is used with the genitive case of the noun 'phone' (voice.) Such a construction means to hear a sound. That is to hear noise, an unintelligible roar. This construction means to hear with comprehension, to hear intelligibly. Notice however in 22:9 such hearing is negated. The reader is told that the men did not hear with comprehension. Putting all this data together it is clear that the men with Saul heard a noise or a roar, but they were not able to understand what was said by the Lord as He spoke to Saul. The second problem is easily solved. By taking both verses at face value it is clear that the men saw a bright light but they did not see the vision/person of the Lord as Saul saw Him. It is obvious that while all saw light, Saul saw more than did the other men. After the incident was over Saul was temporarily blinded but the men were not and thus were able to lead Saul into the city of Damascus.

#122 Acts 26:23 which states that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead is contrasted to (1) II Kings 4:32-36 where Elijah raises a dead child (2) Matthew 9:18-24 where Jesus raises a dead little girl (3) John 11:38-44 where Jesus raises Lazarus.

The individuals "raised" in (1)-(3) all were raised from death, in their original bodies. They were supernaturally resuscitated only to die again at a later time. Jesus however is the "first born" from the dead. He died and was raised with a new resurrection body. His original body had been transformed from perishable to imperishable (see I Corinthians 15:35-54). Jesus was the first person raised never to die again.

#123 Romans 2:12 which indicates that those who sinned without the law will perish without the law is contrasted with Romans 4:15 which states that where there is no law there is no transgression.

Romans 2:12 (read the entire verse) states that those who sinned without the law, that is Gentiles who are sinners but who technically are not under the mosaic Law which was given to Israel, will perish just like the Jews who did have the Law but broke it. This is only fair because although the Gentiles did not have the Law per se they did have "the law written on their hearts". They instinctively in their conscience knew the basics of moral right and wrong. All cultures and individuals realize for example that murder and theft are wrong. That is they believe it is wrong for anyone to steal from them or th attempt to kill them! Despite this basic moral awareness, everyone breaks his own moral standards, no one is the person they would like to be.

Romans 4:15 DEALS WITH A DIFFERENT SITUATION IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT. It discusses Abraham's justification before God by faith alone apart from the Law. Abraham live five hundred years before the Law and was a sinner before the Law and was justified apart from the Law. Technically speaking Abraham was neither a breaker of a keeper of the Law. Yet he was a sinner justified by faith alone. (See Romans 5:12-15).

#124 Romans 2:15 which indicates that the Law is written on the hearts of all men, such that their conscience can determine right and wrong is contrasted to I John 2:27 which states that the Holy Spirit teaches us (believers) about all things whether a true or a lie.

Romans 2;15 states a general truth. All men basically can discern between right and wrong. Everyone agrees that murder, adultery, theft, lying, etc. are wrong. (Even if a man indulges in such sin he acknowledges that it is wrong because he would not want anyone to such things to him!) I John 2;27 is a specific statement relative to Christians only. The Holy Spirit who indwells believers works with the Word of God to lead the Christian away from error into detailed doctrinal and moral truth. This ministry of the Holy Spirit is in accord with the promise of Jesus in John 16:13.

#125 Romans 3:10 and 3:23 which indicate that no one is righteous and all have sinned is contrasted to I John 3:6, 3:9 which state that no one who abides in Christ sins and no one who is born of God commits sin. These verses are then contrasted to Genesis 7:1, Job 1:1, 1:8, 2:3 and Luke 1;6 which states that Noah, Job, and Zechariah and Elizabeth were “righteous”.

The Bible is clear that all humans are sinners and no one is absolutely perfect in his conduct before God. Romans 3:10 and 3:23 are direct statements of this fact. From an absolute perspective compared to God and His perfect righteous requirements no one is perfect. The believer in Christ however has been justified (declared legally righteous before God, given a righteous status and standing) by faith in Him as Savior, Romans 3:20-24. As the believer lives a life of fellowship with Christ, that is abides in Christ, he is able not to sin-I John 3:6. When a Christian sins he is not in fellowship with or abiding in Christ. I John 3:9 deals with the new spiritual nature which the believer receives at the moment of his salvation. It is this new begotten of God within the believer that is unable to commit sin. However no believer is continually under its control. At times every believer allows the old sin nature to control him and to lead him into personal sin (Romans 6;12, Galatians 5:16). When a believer does sin he does so not as a result of the activity of the new spiritual nature but as a result of his old sinful nature.

When the Bible refers to Noah, Job, Zechariah, or Elizabeth as “righteous” it is not saying that these individuals were absolutely sinless either before or after their salvation. Verses such as Genesis 7:1, Job 1:1, 1:8, 2:7 and Luke 1;6 use the term “righteous” in a relative sense. These people were righteous compared to the average individual. Such terminology is used only to refer to believers who have been declared righteous before God and who are living a wise/righteous life consistent with such a standing.

In an absolute experiential sense no one is totally sinless. However the sinner who receives Christ as savior is given a righteous standing before God. In a relative sense the believer who in the power of God, consistent with his standing before God, lives a life of righteousness may be referred to as “righteous”.

#126 Romans 3:23-26 and Ephesians 2:8-9 which teach that a man is justified by faith alone is contrasted to James 2:24 which states that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Two different kinds of justification are being discussed. Romans 3:23-26 and Ephesians 2;8-9 have to do with the believing sinner’s justification/salvation from the penalty of sin before God. James 2:24 has to do with the saved mans’ justification/salvation from the power of sin before

men. The Greek text of James 2:24 is more accurately translated, “a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” There are two different kinds of justification. (1) Justification by faith (alone)-that act whereby God declares the sinner who receives Christ as Savior to be legally righteous before Him. This justification before God unto eternal salvation from the penalty of sin. (2) Justification by works (faithfulness) - that action of the Christian whereby through a life of faithfulness he demonstrates the reality and vitality of his faith in Christ. This is justification/demonstration before men. It is salvation or deliverance from the power and the negated temporal consequences of sin in the believer’s life-See I Timothy 4:16, James 1:21, 5:19-20

#127 romans 13:17 and I Peter 2;13 which command believers to obey human government is contrasted to Acts 5:19 and 5:29 where the apostles led by Peter disobey the decree of the Sanhedrin.

The Bible teaches the Christian that he is to obey human government until unless it is a sin to obey human government. Romans 13:17 and I Peter 2:13-17 are statements of this general principle. However if and when human government commands a Christian to directly disobey God. This is why Peter (who wrote the general rule in I Peter 2:13-17) declares in Acts 5:29, “we must obey God rather than man.” When government and God conflict the Christian must obey God rather than Government. In all other cases God desires the Christian to obey the laws of the land. As the Lord Jesus said we are to render unto Caesar (human government) that which is Caesar’s and unto God which is God’s (Matthew 22:21).

#128 romans 15:33 which calls God a God of peace is contrasted to Exodus 15:7 which states that god is a warrior.

These are two statements focusing on two specific aspects of the complex personality of God. God is the source of peace and grace. Every man has within him a “God-shaped vacuum” that nothing but a relationship with God will fully satisfy. When one receives the Lord Jesus Christ he can realize peace with God and peace of mind. Exodus 15:7 is a specific case where God as a good heavenly Father protected his people from advancing Egyptian armies. When Moses reflects on this powerful act he refers to God as a “warrior”. God is both a god of Love, peace, patience and justice, wrath, and judgement.

#129 I Corinthians 7:8-9 in which Paul states that it is good for unmarried, widows or singles to remain single is contrasted to I Timothy 5;14 where Paul tells young widows to remarry.

I Corinthians 7:8 is a general statement of a basic principle. There are certain advantages in regard to serving the Lord for those who are unmarried. They can focus exclusively on the Lord and not have to divide their attention between the Lord and their spouse, see 7:32-35. However Paul concedes that it is permissible for the unmarried to marry if they feel they must, 7:8, 7:39. I Timothy 5:14 gives a specific command to the young widows in the church at Ephesus. Paul tells them that in view of certain temptations around them at that time they are better off being remarried. Note these individuals clearly fit into the concession. Paul makes in I Corinthians 7:9 and 7:39. (Compare with I Timothy 5:11-14).

#130 I Corinthians 8:4 which states that there is only one God is contrasted to II Corinthians 4:4 which tells Satan the “god” of this world.

I Corinthians 8:4 (as well as Deuteronomy 6:4 and a host of other passages) is an absolute ontological statement of fact. There is only one God. II Corinthians 4:4 uses the term “god” in the sense of “ruler”. Satan is the ruler of the present world system which is opposed to God. Satan has elevated himself to a position of “godship” in his realm of influence. Jesus used the same terminology for Satan in John 12:31 calling him the “ruler of this world”. Christians are in the Satanic world system but they are not of the world. Our citizenship is in heaven, Philippians 3:20.

#131 I Corinthians 10:33 in which Paul states that he seeks to please all men in all things is contrasted Galatians 1:10 where Paul states that if he were trying to please men he would not be a bondservant of God.

Context! Context! Context! In I Corinthians 10:33 Paul is discussing his philosophy of seeking to get along with other Christians who might have different convictions in certain “gray areas” not directly discussed in Scripture. In such a context Paul “bends over backwards” to get along with other believers that is “please” them. Paul was flexible in relating to and with other believers in such nonessential but often controversial areas of Christian practice. Galatians 1:10 is found in a completely different context. Here Paul is discussing the doctrinal question of the content and the mechanism of the gospel of salvation. On such a specific, essential doctrinal issue Paul is inflexible and dogmatic. In the book of Galatians Paul makes the point that he always proclaimed the one true God-given gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. He never watered down the truth of the gospel or changed it in order to please the whims of the unsaved men. Men inherently dislike the truth that they are sinners who cannot save themselves, and who can only be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Despite this inherent opposition Paul did not change his proclamation in order to please men, but as a bondservant of God he faithfully and accurately presented the true gospel of grace.

#132 I Thessalonians 2:2 which indicates that God gave Paul boldness to speak the gospel despite opposition is contrasted to I Thessalonians 2:18 where Paul indicates that Satan had hindered him.

These two verses speak to two different contexts and situations. In I Thessalonians 2:2 Paul is recalling his original ministry in Thessalonica. At that time God gave him boldness to speak and to minister despite satanically motivated opposition. In I Thessalonians 2:18 Paul, who is writing from Corinth to the Thessalonians, expresses his desire to return to Thessalonica. Although he had been wanting to return, Satan had hindered him. This is not a case of Satan being more powerful than God. Obviously God could have overcome the Satanic opposition that Paul referred to in 2:18. However in this case He allowed this for a purpose. Paul had work to do elsewhere that was more crucial. Although he wanted to return to Thessalonica God did not allow this until a later time when Paul did return in God’s providential timing several years later during his third missionary journey.

#133 Galatians 6:7 which states that a man will reap what he sows is contrasted to (1) Jeremiah 12:13 “they have sown wheat and have reaped thorns.” (2) Micah 6:15 “you will sow but will not reap.” (3) Matthew 25:26 “I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed.”

Galatians 6:7 is a general proverbial statement of a basic spiritual (and agricultural!) principle. Jeremiah 12:13, Micah 6:15 and Matthew 25:26 are specific exceptions to the general rule, thus

they are noteworthy and recorded in their specific contexts. Dr. R.C. Sproul has well said, “A common mistake in biblical interpretation is to give a proverbial saying the weight or force of a moral absolute. Proverbs are catchy little couplets designed to express practical truths. They reflect general principles of wisdom for godly living. They do not reflect moral laws that are to be applied absolutely to every conceivable life situation.” Knowing Scripture p.89.

#134 Titus 1:2 which states that God cannot lie is contrasted to II Thessalonians 2:11 where God sends a deluding influence so that some might believe a lie, and to I Kings 22:21-23 where God puts a lying spirit in the mouths of certain false prophets.

Titus 1:2 is an absolute statement of the veracity of God. God cannot lie. The Bible indicates that there are many things God cannot do such as anything which would contradict His own essence or character or anything that would be a logical contradiction. Therefore God cannot sin, He cannot make a rock so big that He can't lift it, and He cannot draw square circles. Both II Thessalonians 2:11 (see #18) and II Kings 22:21-23 (see #38) deal with God indirectly allowing certain things to happen. They speak of God's passive action of permitting certain events to come to pass. II Kings 22:21-23 is a situation in which God allows a spirit to deceive the prophets of King Ahab, (but does not originate or directly cause it). In II Thessalonians 2:11 the individuals who are deceived have already rejected the truth of the gospel (2:10). They have passed to a point of spiritual no return (see #101 and #107). Only after their rejection of the truth does God allow a delusion to come and to confirm them in their state of unbelief. God is a good God who does not sin and who does not directly prompt any of His creatures to sin (James 1:13). When creatures, demonic or human sin, God allows it but only within His overall Sovereign plan.

The sinner may be allowed that which he wants to do for his own evil purposes but God permits it that ultimately in the outworking of His plan good will result. This mechanism of the interworking of humans actions intended for evil and God is sovereign working in using even evil to ultimately result in good is illustrated clearly in the life of Joseph. Joseph was shamefully mistreated by his brother and sold into slavery in Egypt. Their actions were sinful and wrong and yet years later Joseph could say to his brothers in Genesis 45:5 “you sold me here...(but) God sent me here to preserve life.” God allowed the sinful act of selling Joseph into slavery for a good purpose. He did not directly participate in or cause the sinful act of Joseph's brothers. They did that themselves and stood responsible for it as sin before God. God allowed the evil for good reason but He did not directly commit or prompt the sin itself. In Genesis 50:20 Joseph sums up this mechanism when he tells his brothers, “You meant evil against me (when they sold him into slavery) but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”

#135 James 1:13 which states that God tempts (tests) no one to evil/sin is contrasted to (1) Genesis 22:1-2 where God tests Abraham (2) Deuteronomy 8:2 where God tests Moses (3) Judges 2:22 where God tests Israel.

James 1:13 is an absolute statement of the fact that God never sins nor does He directly prompt any of His creatures to sin. Notice that James 1:13 states very specifically that God does not tempt anyone “to evil” (sin). Genesis 22:1-2, Deuteronomy 8:2 and Judges 2:22 have nothing to do with solicitations to evil or prompting to sin. They are instead individual instances in which God tested believer's faith in order to demonstrate its reality and vitality. I Corinthians 10:13 promises that God limits the intensity and the duration of such tests, pressures, trials, such that He never puts more on a believer than he can stand.

#136 Revelation 3:12 which states that there is a temple in (sic) heaven is contrasted to Revelation 21:22 which states that there is a no temple in (sic) heaven.

Revelation 3:12 does not state that there is a temple in heaven. It is a figurative reference to believers having a place of prominence in the future eternal state. Just as today one might figuratively refer to an integral member of a church as “a pillar”, so too in Revelation 3:12 Jesus promises believers that in the eternal state they will be “pillars” in the “temple” that is the worshiping multitude in the eternal state. Bible study tip: if the “pillars” are figurative-as in Revelation 3:12 (believers=temple) then the “temple” is figurative as well! Revelation 21:1-22:5 discusses the eternal state which will be established after the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15 and after the present time/space universe has passed away (II Peter 3:10-13).

In the eternal state there will be no need for a temple because all those present will directly fellowship with God forever and ever! Selah!

Afterward

By this point the reader should recognize that the so called contradictions adduced by Crusade Publications are consistently the result of misunderstanding and /or misinterpretation of one or more of the verses in question. This writer suggests that those who are honestly interested in understanding the Bible to invest in a good modern translation such as the New American Standard Bible or the New International Version. The King James Version to which the objector always refers is over three hundred and fifty years old. The English language has changed greatly since 1611 when the King James Version was completed.

It must be mentioned that writer of “136 Biblical Contradictions” does not give his academic qualifications for exegeting the Bible in an accurate and scholarly fashion. It is obvious that the writer does not know the original languages of the Bible. This makes it impossible to honestly critique the Scripture in a dogmatic way. The writer of this response to “136 Biblical Contradictions” feels the reader has a right to know his academic qualifications. He has a B.S. in Biology from Lamar University, two years of postgraduate study at the University of Texas Medical Center in Houston, and the Th.M. degree (with honor) from Dallas Theological Seminary. His seminary training included three and one half academic years of New Testament Greek and two and one half academic years of Old Testament Hebrew. It is a shame that someone who clearly does not understand the Bible should feel so compelled to attack it. Is it wise to criticize that which one does not comprehend? The Bible itself anticipates and explains such attacks in I Corinthians 2:14 which states, “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

The Bible does teach detailed and complicated truths. However in the Bible the main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things. The “big idea” of the Bible is so simple that even a small child can understand it: (1) God created a perfect universe including man with whom was given the choice to serve God in obedience. (2) Man chose to disobey God and to rebel against Him. (3) The result of this rebellion has affected the entire universe. Man’s sin brought decay, death, and separation from God. (4) The Lord Jesus Christ came to earth and took on humanity to become the God-man. He died on the cross to pay the penalty fro

sin. His death satisfied the righteous and just standards of God. (5) He rose from the dead proving His victory over sin and death. (6) You can receive the free gift of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Anyone who recognizes that he is a sinner bound for hell and unable to save himself, who will entrust his personal salvation to the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man-Savior who died on the cross for his sins and who rose again, will at that moment receive the gift of salvation. Receive Christ the living Word of God and He will lead you through the written Word of God. See John 1:12, 3:16-18, 5:24, 20:31, Acts 16:30-31, Ephesians 2:8-9, Revelation 22:17.

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