

Dealing Fairly with Alleged Bible Contradictions [Part I]

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.



Through the centuries, people have attempted to justify their rejection of the inspiration of the Bible for a number of different reasons. Some have assumed that the Bible is uninspired ever since their parents taught them as children that it was merely a product of ancient man. Others have never read the Bible nor studied any of the proofs for its divine origin. Their chosen road of disbelief may stem more from indifference than anything else. Some have rejected the Bible because most of the professed adherents that they know act ungodly, divisively, or hypocritically. Others simply have no desire to live according to the will of God, and do not want to be told by Jesus, His apostles, or the prophets what to do. These individuals refuse to believe because if they did, they might feel compelled to give up their pleasurable, immoral activities.

Perhaps the most frequently cited reason in the 21st century why individuals reject the Bible's claim of inspiration is because of presumed contradictions in Scripture. It is alleged that the Bible writers made numerous mistakes in their writings, often contradicting either what another biblical penmen wrote or some known historical, geographical, or scientific fact. A plethora of books and Web sites dedicated to trumpeting "Bible contradictions" have been published in recent years. For example, in his book *The Encyclopedia of Biblical Errancy*, Dennis McKinsey stated:

Every analyst of the Bible should realize that the Book is a veritable miasma of contradictions, inconsistencies, inaccuracies, poor science, bad math, inaccurate geography, immoralities, degenerate heroes, false prophecies, boring repetitions, childish superstitions, silly miracles, and dry-as-dust discourse. But contradictions remain the most obvious, the most potent, the most easily proven, and the most common problem to plague the Book (1995, p. 71).

Mike Davis, author of *The Atheist's Introduction to the New Testament*, claimed in the first three pages of his book:

When I started to study the New Testament seriously...I found it to be filled with more contradictions and inconsistencies than I ever imagined or remembered from my days in Baptist Sunday School.... [Y]ou can use the Bible to prove that the Bible itself is untrustworthy. If you are familiar with these biblical flaws, you can easily prevail in any debate with the typical Christian fundamentalist....

The basic writings of the Christian religion are so full of absurdity, contradiction and discord that the only way to maintain the truth of Christian doctrine is to ignore the Bible itself. Fortunately for most Christian churches, this is not a problem, because most Christians do not read the Bible seriously, and are woefully unaware of its contents, except for what their preachers tell them on Sunday mornings (2008, pp. 1-3).

In the introduction to his popular Web site, *The Skeptic's Annotated Bible*, Steve Wells contends that “contradictions and false prophecies show that the Bible is not inerrant.... It is time for us all to stop believing in, or pretending to believe in, a book that is so unworthy of belief” (2013). Dan Barker, co-president of the Freedom from Religion Foundation and one of America’s most popular atheists, wrote in his book *godless*: “People who are free of theological bias notice that the bible contains hundreds of discrepancies.... [N]o honest person can pretend it is a perfect book.... [C]ontradictions underscore the fact that, on balance, the bible is not a reliable source of truth” (2008, pp. 222,242).

For example, allegedly Jesus was mistaken when He stated 2,000 years ago that “this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (Matthew 24:34). [According to Mike Davis, “Jesus tells his listeners that the judgment day will come before the generation he’s speaking to passes away.... It’s been 2000 years now since that generation passed away.... Jesus was wrong” (p. 1).] Supposedly, since Matthew wrote that “the robbers” (plural) reviled Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:44), while Luke wrote that “one of the criminals” blasphemed Jesus (Luke 23:39, emp. added), either Matthew or Luke was mistaken (see Wells). And, since Jesus claimed that Zechariah was the “son of Berechiah” (Matthew 23:35), while the chronicler referred to “Zechariah the son of Jehoiada” (2 Chronicles 24:20), Jesus must have made another mistake (see McKinsey, 2000, p. 30).

On and on they go. One presumed contradiction after another is listed. Page after page of “Bible discrepancies” is published on-line or in print. Just five years after Dennis McKinsey released his 550-page *Encyclopedia of Biblical Errancy* (1995), he penned an **850-page** reference guide titled *Biblical Errancy*—a volume that purports to address “virtually every significant topic of Scripture containing errors, contradictions, and fallacies, delineating the problems within each” (2000, p. 13).

To unbelievers, Bible “errors” are one of the main reasons, if not the chief reason, why they have rejected the Bible as God’s Word. A few years ago, a gentleman wrote Apologetics Press mentioning why he became an unbeliever: “The turning point for me,” he said, “was when I realized that the Bible was not inerrant.” Another gentleman contacted us some time ago, identified himself as a non-Christian, and indicated that “these Bible discrepancies are one of the biggest factors of my still not being a Christian.” In reaction to a 2010 article that atheist John Loftus wrote on why he rejects the Bible, one responder said, “The chief reason I do not [t]

believe the Bible is god's 'Word' is because of biblical errancy. I believe that there are numerous contradictions, errors, and failed prophecies in the Bible" (quoted in Loftus, 2010).

Although some Christians have incorrectly argued that inerrancy is not inherent in the inspiration of the Scriptures and that debating the matter is harmful to the cause of Christ (cf. Cukrowski, et al., 2002, p. 44), the fact is (as the skeptic knows all too well), if the Bible writers made mistakes—if they contradicted each others' accounts—then the Bible originated in the mind of men, not God (cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21). One of the first things that any honest truth-seeker would want to know, if someone came to him claiming to be in possession of revelation from God, is if the "revelation" was factually accurate. The fallibility of the message would be the first indication that it was man-made and not Heaven-sent (see Lyons and Miller, 2004 for more information). On the other hand, factual accuracy would be the first thing to expect from any document claiming to be God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16).

The skeptic has logically argued that, if the "inspired" apostles and prophets made mistakes in their writings, then they were not guided "by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Where skeptics have gravely erred, however, is concluding that the Bible writers made mistakes. In truth, the "contradictions" that the Bible writers supposedly made are actually mere presumptions or misinterpretations on the part of the reader. Anyone truly attempting to understand the Bible or any work of antiquity must consider some basic principles of interpretation that allow for a reasonable treatment of the work under consideration. In order to be as fair with the Bible writers as we would want others to be with us, the following rules of interpretation must be implemented. Without such principles in place, a fair and just understanding of the Scriptures is hopeless.

PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

#1—Bible Writers are Innocent Until Proven Guilty

Imagine how chaotic life would be if we presumed that everything anyone ever said or did was dishonest. If we assumed that everything our parents told us was a lie, we might have drunk Drano® or overdosed on prescription medicine, which they said would kill us. If we supposed that everything we learned about history was a lie, we would never be able to build upon the advancements of past generations. If we lived every day under the assumption that everyone with whom we communicate is lying to us about everything, life would be virtually unlivable.

Generally speaking, people understand the importance of the principle of being "innocent until proven guilty." A teacher cannot justifiably assume that a student who makes a perfect score on a test without studying for it, cheated. It might be that he had received all of the information elsewhere at another time. It could be that he learned everything well enough in class that he did not have to study at home. Or, it may be that he simply "got lucky" and guessed correctly on the questions he did not know. A teacher could not justifiably punish such a student without evidence that the student cheated. A policeman is not justified in assuming that because a murder was committed by a man wearing green tennis shoes, then the first person the policeman finds wearing green tennis shoes is the murderer.

In our daily lives, we generally consider a person to be **truthful** until we have actual **evidence** that he or she has lied. If a secretary informs a caller that her boss is on vacation, yet the caller receives a detailed e-mail from that boss only an hour later about a work-related matter, is the caller justified in concluding that the secretary is a liar? Not at all. (How many people work while on vacation?) The boss could actually even be in the building for some reason, but still actually be taking “vacation days.” (How many of us have stopped by the work place for an extended amount of time while “on vacation”?) Suppose someone asks you where you are going, and you respond by saying, “I’m going home.” However, on the way home you stop to get milk and eggs at the grocery store. If the same person who asked you that question sees you at the grocery store, would he be right to conclude that you lied because on your way home you stopped by the store? Certainly not! The fact is, most conscientious, reasonable people understand that we are “innocent until proven guilty,” and that false allegations are reprehensible.

We give people the benefit of the doubt and generally consider them to be truthful about a matter unless we have evidence to the contrary. When we read a historical document or book, the same rule should apply. The writing is considered to be truthful until it can be proven otherwise. Do we have proof that an author of antiquity was lying or mistaken about a matter? If not, we should be careful about falsely accusing the writer. William Arndt properly argued:

The *apriori* assumption must always be that the author has not contradicted himself. This rule is observed in dealing with secular authors. At what pains, for instance, have not editors been to bring about agreement between seemingly conflicting statements in the writings of Plato! The principle by which they were guided was that **no contradiction must be assumed unless all attempts at harmonizing fail**. That is in accordance with the dictates of fairness. Let but the same amount of good will be manifested in the treatment of the difficult passages in the Bible (1955, p. vii, emp. added).

A book is to be presumed internally consistent until it can be shown conclusively that it is contradictory. This approach has been accepted throughout literary history, and is still accepted today in most venues. (You cannot expect to have a coherent ancient history class using Herodotus, Thucydides, Josephus, etc. if you presume that they were all liars.) Respected 19th-century Harvard law professor, Simon Greenleaf, dealt with this principle in his book, *The Testimony of the Evangelists: The Gospels Examined by the Rules of Evidence*:

The rule of municipal law on this subject is familiar, and applies with equal force to all ancient writings, whether documentary or otherwise; and as it comes first in order, in the prosecution of these inquiries, it may, for the sake of mere convenience, be designated as our first rule: “Every document, apparently ancient, coming from the proper repository or custody, and bearing on its face no evident marks of forgery, **the law presumes to be genuine, and devolves on the opposing party the burden of proving it to be otherwise**” (1995, p. 16, emp. added).

Indeed, the logically accepted way to approach ancient writings is to assume innocence, not guilt. The Bible surely deserves this same treatment.

#2—Possibilities Will Suffice

If a cantankerous co-worker saw you getting \$20 out of the petty cash box at work one Thursday afternoon, would he be justified in immediately notifying everyone in the office that you are a thief? The **only** thing this accuser knows is that you took some cash from the money box at work. He has no idea if the boss gave you permission to get the money. He does not know if you were reimbursing yourself for a purchase you made for the company. He is unaware of any pre-arrangement you may have made with the general manager to use the money on the way into work the next morning to purchase doughnuts for everyone in the office. All that this irritable colleague knows is that (1) he doesn't like you and (2) here is "reason" you should be fired.

Most anyone who considers such a scenario quickly sees how immoral it would be to jump to such a conclusion. Why? Because there are many possibilities why you might honestly and legitimately be taking \$20 from the company's petty cash drawer. Without further information and adequate evidence, the legitimate possibility of your innocence must be presumed until actually proven guilty. If a person or a historical document (e.g., the Bible) must be considered "innocent until proven guilty," then, without further evidence, any **possible** answer should suffice.

Suppose that video footage of you taking the \$20 was made available 50 years after your death and no one was alive who could verify one way or another about your innocence or guilt. Yet, since the owner of the video has an axe to grind with your grandchildren, he posts the video on the Internet and labels your grandchildren as descendants of a thief. Again, no fair and just person would think that such an act was right. Why? Because even though no one on Earth knew about the circumstances surrounding the \$20, they knew that there were many legitimate **possible** reasons why you may have taken the money honestly.

Since the apostles and prophets and those to whom they originally wrote have now been dead for at least 1,900 years, when questions arise about what they wrote, it obviously is impossible to ask them what they meant. Although we might like to know why Matthew worded something one way and Luke another way, we may never know for sure. The pertinent question is: "Is it genuinely possible for both accounts to be true?"

For example, Matthew and Mark wrote that "the robbers" (plural) reviled Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32). Luke, on the other hand, mentioned that "**one** of the criminals" blasphemed Jesus (Luke 23:39, emp. added). Luke's account is obviously different than Matthew and Mark's, but is it necessarily contradictory? In other words, is it possible for all of these accounts to be true?

Consider two real possibilities for the differences concerning the thieves who were hanged alongside Jesus. First, it is quite possible that, initially, both thieves reviled Christ, but then one of them repented. After hearing Jesus' words on the cross, and seeing His forgiving attitude, the one thief may have been driven to acknowledge that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. How many times have we made a statement about someone or something, but then retracted the statement only a short while later after receiving more information?

A second possible explanation for the differences involves the understanding of a figure of speech known as synecdoche. Merriam-Webster defines this term as “a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (as *fifty sail* for *fifty ships*), the whole for a part (as *society* for *high society*)...or the name of the material for the thing made (as *boards* for *stage*)” (2013, italics. in orig.). Just as Bible writers frequently used figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, sarcasm, and metonymy, they also used synecdoche. As seen in the definition of synecdoche, this figure of speech can be used in a variety of ways (Dungan, 1888, pp. 300-309):

- A whole can be put for the part.
- A part may be put for the whole.
- Time might be put for part of a time.
- The singular can be put for the plural.
- The plural can be put for the singular.

It is feasible that Matthew and Mark were using the plural in place of the singular in their accounts of the thieves reviling Christ on the cross. Lest you think that such might be an isolated case, notice two other places in Scripture where the same form of synecdoche is used.

- Genesis 8:4 indicates that Noah’s ark rested “on the **mountains** of Ararat.” Question: Did the ark rest on one of the mountains of Ararat, or did it rest on all of them at the same time? Although the ark was a huge vessel, it obviously did not rest on the many mountains of Ararat; rather, it rested on one.
- In Genesis 21:7 Sarah asked, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse **children**? For I have borne him a son in his old age.” Anyone who knows much about the Bible recalls that Sarah had but **one** child. In certain contexts, however, one might use a synecdoche and speak of one child (as did Sarah) by using the word children. Often, when I call for the attention of my children, I refer to them as “boys and **girls**.” I have two sons, but I actually only have one daughter. However, summoning my children with the expression “boys and **girl**” simply does not flow as well as “boys and **girls**.” Thus, I frequently use the plural (“girls”) for the singular (“girl”). But in the way that I use the expression, **the emphasis is not on the singularity or plurality of the nouns, but on the particular categories** (“boys” and “girls”).

It could very well be that Matthew and Mark focused on the **categories** of people from whom the taunts came rather than the actual number of the people in those categories. Matthew mentions how “those who passed by” (27:39), the soldiers (27:27), the scribes, elders, and chief priests (27:41), and “even the robbers” (27:44) all taunted Jesus. Thus Christ’s mockers came from various **classes of people**—including thieves (even though only one may have taunted Jesus).

Again, the conscientious Bible student does not have to pin down the exact answer to an alleged contradiction; he only needs to show one or more legitimate **possibilities** of harmonization in order to remove the initial sting of any “contradiction.” Regarding the thieves who died with Jesus, the skeptic cannot deny that both of the previous explanations are plausible answers to the question of why Matthew and Mark wrote of “thieves” reviling Christ, instead of a “thief.”

Which of these possible explanations is correct? In the absence of more information, a definite answer is likely impossible. However, both answers possess merit. Either one is sufficient to answer the charge of error. Over a century ago, the reputable Bible scholar and gospel preacher J.W. McGarvey commented on this point as follows:

We are not bound to show the truth of the given hypothesis; but only that it may be true. If it is at all possible, then it is possible that no contradiction exists; if it is probable, then it is probable that no contradiction exists.... It follows, also, that when there is an appearance of contradiction between two writers, **common justice requires that before we pronounce one or both of them false we should exhaust our ingenuity in searching for some probable supposition on the ground of which they may both be true.** The better the general reputation of the writers, the more imperative is this obligation, lest we condemn as false those who are entitled to respectful consideration (1886, 2:32, emp. added).

One Bible antagonist cited a rather easy-to-explain alleged discrepancy and then proceeded to compare the Bible to a “cheating husband” who “has been caught in a contradiction, exposed as a liar, and therefore can’t be trusted to tell the truth” (Smith, 1995; cf. Lyons, 2004). In truth, however, the burden of proof was on the Bible critic to verify his allegations and he did not. One must remember how equally deplorable it is to draw up charges of marital unfaithfulness when there is no proof of such. In reality, the Bible should be likened to a faithful husband who has been wrongfully accused of infidelity by prejudiced, overbearing skeptics whose case is based upon unproven assumptions. The Bible is innocent until **proven** guilty. And no guilt has ever been proven. On the contrary, legitimate **possible** explanations exist for the difficult passages of Scripture.

#3—Context is Critical

Effective communication is impossible without the participants taking into consideration the context in which statements are made. What does a mother mean when, while witnessing her son score his 30th point in a basketball game, she yells to her fireman husband, “Our son is on fire!”? She obviously doesn’t want her courageous husband to run onto the court with a fire extinguisher to “put out” their son. Later that evening, however, when the son is grilling steaks in the backyard, the mother screams those same words to her husband after seeing the propane tank explode in her son’s face. What does she mean now? Likely the husband will have no problem quickly understanding the message, given the context in which it was made.

In our daily lives both Christians and skeptics generally understand the importance of interpreting one another’s statements within the explicitly stated or implied contexts. When it comes to properly and fairly interpreting the Scriptures, however, Bible critics (and sadly even some believers) often either ignore or dismiss the actual context(s) in which the verses in question are found. Consider, for example, the very first paragraph of Mike Davis’s book *The Atheist’s Introduction to the New Testament: How the Bible Undermines the Basic Teachings of Christianity*:

For me, Matthew 24:34 was the smoking gun. It proved to me that Christianity could not possibly be true. End of story. Case closed. It’s the verse where Jesus tells his

listeners that the judgment day will come before the generation he's speaking to passes away—meaning that some of them would still be alive when the sun went dark, the stars fell from the sky, and Jesus came riding down from the heaven on clouds of glory. It's been nearly 2000 years now since that generation passed away, and the sun is still shining, the stars still twinkle in the sky, and clouds arrive with no passengers from heaven, glorious or otherwise. For me, this sealed the issue. Jesus was wrong. Therefore, he could not have been divine, but just a guy, preaching what he believed in, and no more deserving of our belief than any other guy (2008, p. 1).

Is Davis correct? Did Jesus err when he predicted “this generation [His generation—EL] will by no means pass away till all these things take place”? According to Davis, since “Jesus tells his listeners that the judgment day will come before the generation he's speaking to passes away,” and since that generation passed away 1,900 years ago, “the Bible itself is untrustworthy” and Jesus “could not have been divine” (pp. 1-2).

In actuality, what Davis confesses ultimately “proved” to him that the Bible and Jesus are unreliable is nothing more than a misinterpretation of Scripture—a failure to consider the context in which Jesus spoke. Jesus was **not** mistaken in His comments in Matthew 24:34—Jesus' generation did not pass away prior to witnessing the things Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:4-34. But, Jesus did **not** foretell in those verses what Davis **assumes** He foretold. Davis and many others believe that, prior to verse 34, Jesus was describing events that would take place shortly before Judgment Day at the end of time. The fact of the matter is, however, Jesus was prophesying about the coming destruction upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and not the final Judgment.

When the disciples went to show Jesus the temple buildings (Matthew 24:1), Jesus said, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (24:2). Later, when Jesus was on the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Him two questions, beginning with “when will these things be?” (24:3). In verses 4-34, Jesus responded to this first question, revealing several signs that would indicate Rome's destruction of Jerusalem, including the temple, was near. [NOTE: “The fall of the Hebrew system is set forth in the sort of apocalyptic nomenclature that is characteristic of Old Testament literature, e.g., when the prophets pictorially portray the overthrow of Jehovah's enemies (cf. Isaiah 13:10-11; 34:2ff; Ezekiel 32:7-8)” (Jackson, n.d.); cf. Matthew 24:29-31; see also Miller, 2003.] Then, in verses 35-51 (and all of chapter 25), Jesus answered the disciples' last question: “what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3). To summarize, in Matthew 24:4-34 Jesus foretold the coming destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, while in 24:35-25:46 He commented on His future return and final Judgment of the world.

How sad it is that so many atheists and skeptics believe they have disproven the Bible and Christianity, when, in reality, they have merely ignored the context of the passage and twisted the biblical text to mean something God never intended (cf. 2 Peter 3:16). The fact that Mike Davis highlights Matthew 24:34 as the verse that once and for all proved to him the Bible is unreliable should tell us something about the extreme weakness of the skeptic's case against Christianity. In truth, when inspired biblical statements are interpreted fairly—within the context in which those statements are found—a host of contradictions will disappear like the

morning fog, and sincere truth seekers will see the Bible for what it is: the inerrant Word of God.

[to be continued]

REFERENCES

- Arndt, William (1955), *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia).
- Barker, Dan (2008), *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher Became One of America's Leading Atheists* (Berkeley, CA: Ulysses).
- Cukrowski, Kenneth L., Mark W. Hamilton, and James W. Thompson (2002), *God's Holy Fire* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press).
- Davis, Mike (2008), *The Atheist's Introduction to the New Testament: How the Bible Undermines the Basic Teachings of Christianity* (Denver, CO: Outskirts Press).
- Dungan, D.R. (1888), *Hermeneutics* (Delight, AR: Gospel Light), reprint.
- Greenleaf, Simon (1995), *The Testimony of the Evangelists* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Classics).
- Jackson, Wayne (no date), "A Study of Matthew 24," <http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/19-a-study-of-matthew-24>.
- Loftus, John (2010), "Why I Don't Believe the Bible is God's Word," *Debunking Christianity*, November 11, http://debunkingchristianity.blogspot.com/2006/07/why-i-dont-believe-bible-is-gods-word_12.html.
- Lyons, Eric (2004), "To Galilee or Jerusalem?" Apologetics Press, <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=6&article=730>.
- Lyons, Eric and Dave Miller (2004), "Biblical Inerrancy," *Reason & Revelation*, June, 24[6]:57-64.
- McGarvey, J.W. (1886), *Evidences of Christianity* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard).
- McKinsey, C. Dennis (1995), *The Encyclopedia of Biblical Errancy* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus).
- McKinsey, C. Dennis (2000), *Biblical Errancy* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus).
- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (2013), <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>.
- Miller, Dave (2003), "There Will Be No Signs!" <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1838>.
- Smith, Mark A. (1995), "Gospel Wars: Galilee-vs-Jerusalem," <http://www.jcnot4me.com/Items/contradictions/GALILEE-vs-JERUSALEM.htm>.

Dealing Fairly with Alleged Bible Contradictions [Part II]

by [Eric Lyons, M.Min.](#)



[Editor's

Note: [Part I](#) of this two-part series appeared in the [October](#) issue. Part II follows below and continues, without introductory comments, where the first article ended.]

#4—Understanding the Real Nature of a Contradiction

It might surprise some to learn that, although skeptics are widely known for their frequent use of the term “contradiction” in their insistence that the Bible writers made mistakes, Christian apologists are more than happy to discuss “contradictions,” and specifically, what a contradiction actually is. As with any meaningful discussion, we cannot have rational dialogue about “contradictions” unless the term first is defined and understood.

The Law of Contradiction is one of the most fundamental principles of logic. In fact, the great fourth century B.C. Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote in his renowned philosophical work, *Metaphysics*, that this principle is “the most certain principle of all” (4:3). It is a principle “which every one must have who understands anything that is...and that which every one must know who knows anything” (4:3). What is the Law of Contradiction? It is, as Aristotle noted, “that the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect” (4:3). In other words, if the same thing is said to be and not be (1) for the same person, place, or thing, (2) at the same time, and (3) in the same sense (or respect), then a genuine contradiction exists. For example, it is impossible for the same glass of water to be completely empty and completely full at the same time and in the same sense. However, if one of the three aforementioned variables is untrue or is unknown, a person cannot logically contend that a contradiction exists. Can we be sure that we are talking about the same glass of

water at the same time and in the same sense? If so, then there is a contradiction. If not, then no contradiction exists. If the variables are unknown, then it cannot be proven that a contradiction exists, and principle #1 (discussed in Part I of this article) applies: The Bible writers are innocent until proven guilty.

Consider the Law of Contradiction in light of two different statements: (1) “Ricky Smith is rich,” and (2) “Ricky Smith is poor.” Do these statements contradict each other? Many would be tempted immediately to say, “Of course.” However, without knowing for certain that the statements are made **about the same person**, we cannot reasonably claim that they contradict each other. It could be that the first statement is made about a rich Ricky Smith in Oklahoma, while the second statement is about a different, poor Ricky Smith who lives in New York. When comparing two statements, we must make sure that the same person, place, or thing is under consideration.

But what if we are talking about the same Ricky Smith? Would the statements “Ricky Smith is rich” and “Ricky Smith is poor” then be contradictory? Not necessarily. It may be that two different periods of time are under discussion. Ricky Smith could have been extremely poor as a child and could have continued to struggle in poverty into his early 20s. However, after working his way up in a large company over a period of 20 years, Ricky Smith could have become very wealthy by the time he was 40. Thus, if the two statements about Ricky refer to **two different times in his life**, they certainly are not contradictory.

What’s more, it is very possible that the same Ricky Smith could be rich and poor, even at the same time, if the terms “rich” and “poor” are used in **different senses**. Ricky Smith could be a billionaire, but if he is not a Christian, he is spiritually poor. On the other hand, Ricky Smith could be materially poor, yet be “in Christ” with “every spiritual blessing” (Ephesians 1:3) and thus be spiritually rich. (“Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith”—James 2:5?) Unless the terms are used in the same sense, then Ricky Smith could certainly be “rich” and “poor” at the same time.

When the term “contradiction” is clearly defined and understood, then both Bible students and skeptics will quickly see that so-called “contradictions” are merely legitimate differences that do not demand a contradiction. Different people, places, and things may be discussed. Different times may be under consideration. Or, words and statements may be used in different senses. Consider these three principles in light of various alleged problems in Scripture.

#5—Is the Same Person, Place, or Thing Being Considered?

Acts 12:2 vs. Acts 15:13

According to Acts 12:1-2, “Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.” Only three chapters later, however, Luke recorded that James was alive and well at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:13ff.)—an event that took place well after the death of James. How could both Acts 12 and Acts 15 be correct? How could James be dead and alive at the same time? The simple (and hopefully obvious) explanation is that Acts 12:2 and Acts 15:13 are referring to two different men—both of whom were named James. The James who lost his life at the hands of King Herod

was the apostle, the brother of John (Acts 12:2), the son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21). The James of Acts 15 was the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:19; Matthew 13:55; Acts 12:17). The name James appears 42 times in the New Testament, referring to four different men—the two mentioned above as well as James the son of Alphaeus (Luke 6:15) and James the father of Judas (Luke 6:16). As with any person in Scripture, careful attention must be given to whom a particular writing refers.

Matthew 23:35 vs. 2 Chronicles 24:20

The example of James in the book of Acts is rather elementary. At other times in Scripture, the reference to a particular person may be less certain, and more likely to be criticized. For example, in Matthew 23:35, Jesus referred to the Jews murdering “Zechariah, the son of Berechiah...between the temple and the altar.” Skeptics have argued that this Zechariah “is actually the son of Jehoiada as is shown by 2 Chron. 24:20.... The name Barachias or Barachiah is not in the Old Testament” (McKinsey, 2000, p. 30; cf. Morgan, 2003). The fact is, however, it cannot be proven that Jesus was referring to “Zechariah the son of Jehoiada” (2 Chronicles 24:20) in his reprimand of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:35. A reasonable case can be made that Jesus was referring to one of at least three different people.

First, it may be that Jesus was referring to Zechariah the minor prophet, who preached during the days of Ezra (Ezra 5:1), some 400 years after Zechariah, son of Jehoiada. In fact, contrary to Dennis McKinsey's comment that “the name Barachias or Barachiah is not in the Old Testament” (p. 30), Zechariah, the minor prophet, actually is called “the son of **Berechiah** (spelled Barachias in the Septuagint—EL), the son of Iddo” (Zechariah 1:1; cf. Ezra 5:1; 6:14). Although the Old Testament writers did not record his death, Jesus, the Son of God, would have known how he died, and it also could have been known through Jewish tradition. [NOTE: One must keep in mind that the Old Testament is not the only source for New Testament data concerning what took place from Creation until the coming of Christ. The New Testament writers were inspired by God (cf. 2 Peter 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:37; John 16:13). How did Paul know that “**Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses**” (2 Timothy 3:8, emp. added) when the names of Pharaoh's magicians are not given in the Old Testament? How did Jude know that Michael the archangel and the devil “disputed about the body of Moses” (Jude 9) when no Old Testament writer mentioned such an event? Paul and Jude either knew of these facts from tradition and recorded them by inspiration, or God miraculously revealed this information to them. Similarly, in Matthew 23:35 Jesus could have simply been referring to the death of one of the last Old Testament prophets, which was not recorded in the Old Testament, but known by God and perhaps Jewish tradition.]

Second, though many **assume** that Jesus was referring to a martyr named Zechariah from Old Testament times, a closer look at Jesus' comments may reveal otherwise. He rebuked the Pharisees, saying:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, “If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.” Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents,

brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them **you will kill and crucify**, and some of them **you will scourge** in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, **whom you murdered** between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation (Matthew 23:29-36, emp. added).

Notice that Jesus spoke to His first century enemies, saying, “**you murdered**” Zechariah, son of Berechiah (Matthew 23:35, emp. added). A straightforward reading of this passage, without assuming that Zechariah was one of the more than two dozen persons who wore the name Zechariah in the Old Testament, may mean that **the Pharisees themselves** had murdered a righteous man named Zechariah around A.D. 30. Perhaps, as Burton Coffman concluded,

Christ here referred to some secret murder perpetrated, not by the ancestors of those men, but **by them...** Christ tried with that one last lightning stroke of truth to get through to them, but even that failed. That no such murder was recorded in either the Old Testament or the New Testament, and that there was no general knowledge of it in the days of Christ, and that no traditions were developed with reference to it—these things present no difficulty at all, but point squarely at the Pharisees and show their effectiveness in covering up their evil deeds and hiding them from popular view.... It is further evidence of their depravity that none of them ever confessed it, even after he who knew their thoughts revealed it publicly! Their guilty secret went to the grave with them, except for this ray of light from the lips of Christ who made it known on the occasion of their being sentenced to hell for their wickedness (1974, p. 375, emp. in orig.).

Third, considering the fact that God’s spokesmen occasionally spoke of things yet to come as if they had already occurred (commonly known as “prophetic perfect”; cf. Isaiah 53; 21:1-10), it may be (however unlikely) that Jesus was speaking about the death of a future Zechariah. According to Josephus, about 35 years following Jesus’ death, two zealots slew Zacharias the son of Baruch in the middle of the temple simply for being rich, hating wickedness, and loving liberty (1987, 4:5:4).

Whatever the answer to the question, “To which Zechariah was Jesus referring?,” one thing is beyond any doubt: skeptics do not have a shred of evidence that Matthew 23:35 is an uninspired, errant passage. It truly may be that Jesus was referring to an entirely different Zechariah than the one mentioned in 2 Chronicles 24:20. And, as the Law of Contradiction demonstrates, unless it can be proven that the same person is under consideration in two separate statements, it is unfair and unreasonable to assert that a contradiction exists.

#6—Is the Same Period of Time Under Consideration?

Genesis 1:31 vs. Genesis 6:6

At evilbible.com, a Web site that purports to “spread the vicious truth about the Bible” (“Biblical...,” 2013), the very first alleged “obvious contradiction” listed involves Genesis 1:31

and Genesis 6:6. Since Genesis 1:31 says, “God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good,” and Genesis 6:6 reveals that “the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart,” the Bible is said to be contradictory and untrustworthy. Allegedly, the Lord could not be both satisfied and dissatisfied with His Creation. The fact is, however, God could logically be both pleased and displeased with His Creation, **if the statements were referring to two different periods of time**. Most any Bible student knows that, though only four complete chapters separate Genesis 1:31 and 6:6, they are separated—chronologically speaking—by more than a millennium. “In the beginning” God was pleased with His Creation. Several hundred years later, after “the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5), God was **then** “sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart” (6:6). It is quite telling that such a simple explanation has apparently eluded the minds of many skeptics.

Matthew 27:5 vs. Acts 1:18

Through the years, the description of Judas Iscariot’s death has been one of the most popular alleged Bible contradictions cited by critics of biblical inerrancy. It seems as if every skeptical book or Web site that questions the integrity of the Bible lists Judas’ death as one of the most obvious inconsistencies in Scripture. Whereas Matthew recorded that Judas “went and hanged himself” after betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (27:5), Luke recorded that “falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out” (Acts 1:18). Because Matthew only mentioned Judas being hanged, while Luke mentioned Judas falling headlong and bursting open at his midsection, a “real” contradiction supposedly is evident.

The differences in these two accounts are easily (and rationally) explained when we consider that Matthew and Luke were referring to **two different times**. Matthew recorded the **initial** hanging of Judas, while Luke recorded what took place some time **later** (probably several days later). Soon after Judas took his life, his body would have begun the decomposing process. If a dead body is left to itself (with no attempt to preserve it, e.g., embalming), bacteria soon begin to break down various bodily tissues. As a result, gases are released within the body, which in turn cause it to swell. A few years ago, a news outlet reported how a large sperm whale had beached itself on the shores of Taiwan and died. While on its way to being transported through a Taiwanese city to a particular research center, the swollen, unpunctured mammal literally exploded and soaked pedestrians and motorists in blood and entrails. According to one Taiwanese scientist, “Because of the natural decomposing process, a lot of gases accumulated, and when the pressure build-up was too great, the whale’s belly exploded” (“Whale Explodes...,” 2004). In light of such decomposition, it certainly is not difficult to imagine that Judas’ decaying body, which may have been swelling for a number of days, could have fallen a short distance (from wherever it was hanging), and easily burst open once striking the ground. As Wayne Jackson concluded about Judas in his excellent commentary on Acts: “The language necessitates no conflict. Either he hanged himself from a very high place—with perhaps the rope breaking; or else, no one removed his body for a while, it eventually fell under its own weight, and the decomposing corpse burst open” (2005, p. 13). Again, the reason that Matthew 27:5 and Acts 1:18 are not contradictory regarding Judas’ death is because they are not referring to the exact same time—at least the skeptic cannot prove that they are

referring to the same time—and thus the charge of contradiction is unfounded and irresponsible.

#7—Are the Compared Words and Phrases Used in the Same Sense?

Matthew 27:5-7 vs. Acts 1:18

The description of Judas' death is not the only problem that skeptics have with Acts 1:18. Since Matthew 27:5-7 indicates that the **chief priests** used the betrayal money that Judas threw on the temple floor to purchase the potter's field, critics contend that a contradiction exists because Acts 1:18 reveals that **Judas** purchased the field with the blood money. Obviously, Judas could not have purchased the field because he gave the 30 pieces of silver back to the priests before hanging himself. Thus, to say that Judas bought the potter's field is allegedly contrary to the facts.

If one believes it is wrong to say that a father bought a car for his son, when in actuality the son purchased the car with the \$3,000 his father gave him, then Acts 1:18 and Matthew 27:5-7 may be considered contradictory. If one believes that it is deceitful to say an employer purchased a meal for his staff, when, in fact, it was one of the employees who handed the money to the waiter, then the events recorded in Acts 1:18 could be considered fictitious. But fair and reasonable people would not reach such conclusions as these, because most people recognize the truth of the well-known principle: "he who acts through another is deemed in law to do it himself" ("Agency," 2010), which is based on the Latin maxim, "*Qui facit per alium, facit per se.*"

In Acts 1:18, the reader is not forced to conclude that Judas **personally** bought the potter's field. Rather, as is seen throughout Scripture, Luke was simply indicating that Judas furnished the **means** of purchasing the field. (Remember, the burden of proof is upon the one alleging the contradiction that Luke could not have been using the term "purchase" in this sense, and such real proof has never been produced.) The Bible writers frequently represented a man as doing a thing when, in fact, he merely supplied the means for doing it. For example, Moses wrote how Joseph spoke of his brothers as selling him **into Egypt** (Genesis 45:4-5; cf. Acts 7:9), when actually they sold him to **the Ishmaelites**—who then sold him into Egypt. John mentioned that "the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John the Baptizer (**though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples**)" (John 4:1-3, emp. added). When the Bible says, "Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him" (John 19:1), most people understand that he would have simply **ordered** Jesus to be scourged, not that he actually did the scourging himself.

Whether one says that Judas "purchased a field with the wages of iniquity" (Acts 1:18), or that the chief priests "bought with them the potter's field" (Matthew 27:7), he has stated the same truth, only in different ways.

Matthew 23:35 vs. 2 Chronicles 24:20

While considering the different respects in which inspired penmen used words and phrases, it is appropriate to revisit Matthew 23:35 and 2 Chronicles 24:20. Suppose that when Jesus

mentioned “Zechariah, the son of Berechiah” (Matthew 23:35) that He was referring to the Zechariah (called “the son of Jehoiada”) of 2 Chronicles 24:20. Such a reference still would not necessarily be a contradiction for at least two reasons. First, it could very well be that Berechiah and Jehoiada were the same person, but wore different names. In ancient times, people frequently had more than one name. Moses’ father-in-law was known both as Reuel and Jethro (Exodus 2:18; 3:1). Gideon acquired the name Jerubbaal after destroying an altar of Baal (Judges 6:32; 7:1; 8:29,35). In 2 Kings 15, King Jotham’s father is called both Azariah (vs. 7) and Uzziah (vs. 32). The names are different, but they refer to the same person (cf. 2 Chronicles 26:1-23; Isaiah 1:1). The apostle Peter is sometimes called Peter, Simon, Simon Peter, and Cephas (Matthew 14:28; 16:16; 17:25; John 1:42; 1 Corinthians 1:12). People have worn multiple names for centuries. In modern times, most people could think of several individuals who are called by various names. (Although most of the time my oldest son answers to his middle name, “Bo,” sometimes we call him by his first name “Elijah.” At other times, we may summon him by his full name “Elijah Bo Lyons.”) Is it not possible that Jehoiada also was known as Berechiah? Certainly! One wonders why Bible critics are so certain that Jesus made a mistake when even they themselves are accustomed to calling others by a variety of names.

It may also be that Jehoiada was Zechariah’s grandfather and Berechiah was his father. The term “son” is used in several senses in Scripture. Aside from using it to signify a son by actual birth, Bible writers used it to mean (1) son-in-law (1 Samuel 24:16; cf. 18:27), (2) grandson (Genesis 29:5), (3) descendant (Matthew 1:1), (4) son by creation, as in the case of Adam (Luke 3:38), (5) son by education (i.e., disciple—1 Samuel 3:6), etc. After reading Genesis 29:5, one might think that Laban was the son of Nahor, but Genesis 24 explains that he actually was Nahor’s grandson (24:24,29; cf. 22:20-24). Mephibosheth is called the “son of Saul” in 2 Samuel 19:24, when actually he was “the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul” (2 Samuel 9:6; 4:4). Mephibosheth was technically Saul’s grandson, though Scripture refers to him once simply as the “son of Saul.” These are only two examples where the Bible conveys to the reader that the term “son” was used to mean grandson. One can only wonder how many times the term “son” is used this way throughout Scripture, and yet, unlike the examples of Laban and Mephibosheth, were **not** explained to be grandchildren. Indeed, Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, may be just one such example. Concerning this possibility, commentator R.C.H. Lenski noted:

This is possible when we remember the great age of Jehoiada, 130 years, and when we recall his great deeds, making it highly creditable to be called his son. So in Chronicles Zachariah would be named after his illustrious grandfather but in Matthew after his father, the name of the father having been preserved by Jewish tradition or in genealogical records. The Jews also frequently called a man a son of a mighty grandsire, especially while the latter was still living (1961, p. 920).

The fact is, there are several legitimately possible explanations for why Jesus referred to Zechariah as “the son of Berechiah,” and any one of these possibilities justifiably dispels the vacuous charge of contradiction. Simply because we may not know for certain the identity of the Zechariah Jesus mentioned, does not mean we have the right to label Jesus and the Bible writers as uninspired. In truth, the only apparent contradiction regarding this matter lies, not in the Bible, but in Bible critic Dennis McKinsey’s own accusation. On page 30 of his book *Biblical Errancy*, McKinsey insisted that the Zechariah of Matthew 23:35 “is actually the son of Jehoiada.” However, later in the book, he wrote (immediately following a quotation of

Matthew 23:35): “The Zecharias mentioned was killed in Jerusalem in 69 C.E.; so that Matthew makes Jesus refer to an event that occurred forty years after his death. This is the same Zecharias Barouchus who, according to Josephus, was slain in the temple a short time before the destruction of Jerusalem” (p. 195). Indeed, it is the skeptic, not Jesus, Matthew, or any other inspired writer, who is proven to be contradictory.

#8—Additional Material is Not Necessarily Contradictory

One of the most commonly neglected rules of interpretation that Bible critics overlook when attacking Scripture is that extra information is not necessarily contradictory information. When one Bible writer offers more details than another on a particular subject, it is inappropriate to assume that one of the writers is mistaken. When a journalist in the 21st century writes about a man on the side of the road who has just escaped death following a particular catastrophe, while another journalist writes how this same man **and** his wife (standing next to him) are suffering survivors of the devastating disaster, it does not mean that the first journalist was denying the wife’s existence. For his own reasons, unknown to his readers, he chose to focus on only one of the survivors.

Suppose you heard a collegiate athlete say that he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his **left knee** while playing basketball in high school in 2012. But then, later, you hear him say that he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his **right knee** while playing basketball in high school in 2012. Are these statements contradictory? Should you assume the man is lying? Not at all. Why? Because it may very well be that the gentleman injured his left knee **and** his right knee in the same year. (Many people have.) The addition or exclusion of information does not mean two different testimonies are contradictory; they may very well be **supplementary**. Countless times throughout Scripture, and especially within the gospel accounts, extra information is given that critics cannot justifiably prove to be contradictory.

John 19:38-40

Consider how Matthew, Mark, and Luke all wrote about how a man named **Joseph** took the body of Jesus following His crucifixion, “wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock” (Luke 23:53; cf. Matthew 27:59-60; Mark 15:46). The apostle John, however, noted that Joseph actually had help in burying Jesus. He wrote: “Joseph of Arimathea...took the body of Jesus. And **Nicodemus**, who at first came to Jesus by night, **also came**, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then **they** took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury” (19:38-40, emp. added). Are the accounts of Jesus’ burial contradictory? Skeptics could never prove that such is the case. This incident simply is an example of extra information being given by one of the Bible writers. Had Matthew, Mark, and Luke stated that Joseph was the **only** person involved in Jesus’ burial, then skeptics may have a valid point to argue. But as it stands, John simply supplemented the others’ accounts, adding **additional facts** to the story.

John 18:40

When Mark and Luke recorded how the Jews petitioned Pilate for the release of Barabbas, they both called him a murderer (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:18-19; Acts 3:14). Yet when John wrote about

Barabbas, he omitted all discussion about his homicidal past and simply indicated that “Barabbas was a robber” (John 18:40). Is it possible that Barabbas was both a murderer and a thief? Of course. How many prisons around the world today house individuals who have committed both murder and burglary?

John 20:1

Some of the most criticized portions of Scripture are those that record testimony of the resurrection of Christ. According to Dan Barker, “The resurrection of Jesus is one of the few stories that is told repeatedly in the bible... When we compare the accounts, we see that they don’t agree.... The story of the resurrection of Jesus...is hopelessly irreconcilable” (2008, pp. 281,116). How are the accounts of Jesus’ resurrection “hopelessly irreconcilable?” One reason for this false allegation is because Barker and other critics refuse to recognize the fact that additional information is not necessarily contradictory. Was it essential for the apostle John to mention every woman who came to the tomb of Jesus on the morning of His resurrection, or was he at liberty to mention as few as he wanted (John 20:1; cf. Matthew 28:1; Luke 24:1)? If Mary Magdalene was at the tomb on that Sunday morning, and John recorded that she was there, without ever denying that others (mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke) also were there, could his record of the events be truthful? Of course. Differences exist among the gospel writers’ accounts, but no one can prove that they are discrepant. Just as a person might say, “I went to the park with Bill, Bob, and Bubba,” he might also truthfully say, “I went to the park with Bill and Betty.” These statements are not contradictory. One merely supplements the other. A person may only mention Bill and Betty in one setting (e.g., at worship where the church knows the married couple), while at another setting (e.g., at the office where only the men are known), he may truthfully just mention the men.

The Bible writers may not have worded things exactly the way some may think they should have, but such personal (or cultural) preferences do not invalidate their writings. Throughout the gospel accounts, statements are supplemented. Extra evidence frequently is given. And, the truth is, such supplementation should be expected from inspired, **independent** writers who did not have to participate in collusion in order to convey accurately the Good News of Jesus Christ. When one recognizes that supplementation cannot inherently be equated with a contradiction, many of the so-called “Bible contradictions” are easily (and logically!) explained away.

CONCLUSION

Sometimes statements differ because they are contradictory. The fact is, nothing can both be and not be for the same person, place, or thing, at the same time, and in the same sense. Likewise, differences do not necessarily mean that various accounts are discrepant. In fact, it is irresponsible and unreasonable to interpret legitimately explained differences as contradictions.

People generally understand that differences can abound in various accounts without a person needing to resort to charges of discrepancies. However, when it comes to the Bible, many people leave behind reason and fair-mindedness. To them, different accounts **must** be “contradictory.” Different wordings by different writers **must** mean someone was “wrong.”

Though unproven and unprovable assertions in nearly every other area of life are quickly exposed as baseless allegations, when it comes to the Bible, differences are often thought to equal discrepancies.

In reality, the different but truthful wordings in Scripture are exactly what a person should expect to find in a book composed of 66 smaller books written by approximately 40 different writers, who wrote to different people, at different times, and in different places with different purposes. Furthermore, the differences in Scripture are parallel to the justifiable differences we expect from each other's accounts in modern times.

The fact is, if the apostles and prophets wrote independently of each other, differences should be expected. However, the differences are not demonstrated discrepancies. They are only "contradictions" in the minds of those who reject the Law of Contradiction and the other fundamental principles discussed in this article.

REFERENCES

"Agency" (2010), Cornell University Law School, <http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/agency>.

Aristotle (n.d.), *Metaphysics*, trans. W.D. Ross, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.4.iv.html>.

Barker, Dan (2008), *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher Became One of America's Leading Atheists* (Berkeley, CA: Ulysses).

"Biblical Contradictions" (2013), *EvilBible.com*, <http://www.evilibible.com/Biblical%20Contradictions.htm>.

Coffman, James Burton (1974), *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press).

Jackson, Wayne (2005), *The Acts of the Apostles* (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications).

Josephus, Flavius (1987), *The Wars of the Jews*, in *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whitson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).

Lenski, R.C.H. (1961), *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg).

McKinsey, C. Dennis (2000), *Biblical Errancy* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus).

Morgan, Donald (2003), "Bible Inconsistencies: Bible Contradictions?" http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/donald_morgan/inconsistencies.html.

"Whale Explodes in Taiwanese City" (2004), *BBC News*, January 29, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3437455.stm>.

Copyright © 2013 Apologetics Press, Inc. All rights reserved.

*Please keep in mind that *Discovery* articles are written for 3rd-6th graders.

This document may be copied, on the condition that it will not be republished in print unless otherwise stated below, and will not be used for any commercial purpose, as long as the following stipulations are observed: (1) Apologetics Press must be designated as the original publisher; (2) the specific Apologetics Press Web site URL must be noted; (3) any references, footnotes, or endnotes that accompany the article must be included with any written reproduction of the article; (4) textual alterations of any kind are strictly forbidden; (5) Some illustrations (e.g., photographs, charts, graphics, etc.) are not the intellectual property of Apologetics Press and as such cannot be reproduced from our site without consent from the person or organization that maintains those intellectual rights; (6) serialization of written material (e.g., running an article in several parts) is permitted, as long as the whole of the material is made available, without editing, in a reasonable length of time; (7) articles, excepting brief quotations, may not be offered for sale or included in items offered for sale; and (8) articles may be reproduced in electronic form for posting on Web sites pending they are not edited or altered from their original written content and that credit is given to Apologetics Press, including the web location from which the articles were taken. Further, documents may not be copied without source statements (title, author, journal title), and the address of the publisher and owner of rights, as listed below.

For catalog, samples, or further information, contact:

Apologetics Press
230 Landmark Drive
Montgomery, Alabama 36117
U.S.A.
Phone (334) 272-8558

<http://www.apologeticspress.org>