

On Supposed Bible Contradictions

By Dan Jensen (2023)

(In order to fully benefit from this essay, I recommend reading through my “works for beginners” first. They can be found on my website.)

At first blush, this essay may seem rather superfluous in light of my essay on Bible difficulties. That essay can be found on my website. In this essay though, I wish to go a little (not a ton) deeper than I did with that essay. This essay is intended more for the mature Christian who has been walking with the Lord for a while and has put in the hard work of trying to come to know the Bible in a strong fashion. And it should be made clear that an alleged Bible contradiction is actually not the same thing as a Bible difficulty. Often the former category is subsumed under the latter category by many godly theologians, but I think it is more wise to keep them relatively separate. I explain more what I mean by a Bible difficulty in my essay on that subject. Now, much of what I say in that essay, especially concerning textual issues, applies to alleged Bible contradictions as well, but it is still important in my estimation to distinguish between these two issues.

I want to recommend 8 key resources regarding how to address alleged Bible contradictions in this essay, and then elaborate a little bit after that. These 8 are: my *Harmonizing the Gospels; Demolishing Supposed Bible Contradictions* (Volumes 1 and 2), edited by Ken Ham (and others on Vol. 2); *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* by Gleason Archer; *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties* by Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe; and finally, the websites “GotQuestions;” “CARM;” and “Apologetics Press.” The first 5 works can all be easily found over at Amazon. And the last 3 resources come right up with a simple Google search. I do not agree with everything in the last 7 resources, and the last 5 all deal with other issues besides alleged Bible contradictions.

With that said, all of them do address many alleged Bible contradictions, and in most cases, do an excellent job of this.

I implicitly referenced the books by Archer and Geisler in my essay on Bible difficulties when I pointed the reader to a section in my *A False Kind of Christianity* (these works largely subsume the category of alleged Bible contradiction under the category of Bible difficulty). But, in that essay, I was trying to prod the reader to begin to search for things deeper for himself or herself. Here, I want to just directly point you to them and to the other resources as well. I did not point readers to the other resources because that essay was intended for beginners and I was trying to not overwhelm them. Further, there is an issue with Apologetics Press.

The issue with Apologetics Press is that it is not an orthodox site. I understand how odd it may seem that I am pointing you to an unorthodox site. Again, this essay is for mature Christians who can handle this. That site is run by those who are part of the Churches of Christ movement. As my intended readers should know, this movement is very conservative and orthodox on almost every point of doctrine, with the notable exception of baptism. They take the extremely heretical position that baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation. This is an overt denial of faith alone. So, normally I would never recommend a heretical website. Having made that clear, because these extremely intelligent gentlemen are so conservative and orthodox overall, the website has a wealth of extremely helpful material, especially on this issue of alleged Bible contradictions. It is terribly unfortunate that they are so blind when it comes to the gospel.

The mature reader should understand the sovereignty of God and that God can use anyone. God used Balaam, Saul, and Judas, as just 3 key examples. And so we should not be surprised if God wishes to use such intelligent men who believe the vast majority of what the Bible says. But, you should be very, very careful when reading through this website, and even more careful regarding to whom you recommend it. With that said, again, it is an invaluable resource regarding evolution, alleged Bible contradictions, and many other matters as well. I admit that I did recommend one article from this site on

my apologetics essay, despite that essay being for beginners. That was a very tough choice because of the intended readers of that essay. The article in question though, is so good on one particular point, that I felt compelled to include it. I included a disclaimer footnote and my hope and prayer is that beginners will be careful in light of it.

On top of these 8 key resources, I also, if you have time, recommend my book response to Jonah Conner. It can be found on my website. He is an Atheist who alleges numerous contradictions in the biblical witness. He also references 4 of my above 8 key resources (the ones from Ham, Geisler, and Apologetics Press). He is very snarky towards all of them (he is extremely snarky towards anything from Ham and Answers in Genesis) despite how palpably weak his arguments are throughout his book. I feel very confident he would be rather snarky towards the other resources as well, especially mine.

What Jonah repeatedly fails to understand is that in the ancient world, people did not write history in the precise, technical, and chronological manner that historians began to write post-Enlightenment. He, and countless Atheists, skeptics, and liberal “theologians,” constantly fail to fully take this fact into account. This fact was especially the case regarding the genre of ancient biography. I am fully aware of how much some of my solutions in *Harmonizing the Gospels* sound like wild stretches to our modern ears. But, I am not advocating for anything that would have been out of the ordinary in the ancient world, not by a long way.

What is also so frustrating regarding Jonah is the fact that he so often talks about how the 4 Gospels should practically be identical. This is hogwash. Even modern biographies of the same individual are hardly practically identical. Each modern biography of the same person has its own vantage point, and each brings new details to the table. None of them ever recount the same events in the same manner, or close to the same manner. I read lots of biographies. And the person I have read the most biographies of is Martin Luther. I find Luther to be positively fascinating. And these biographies are all quite different at a number of points. Again, I am not saying that they

would ever do some of the things we see the Gospel authors doing, some things I allude to in my *Harmonizing the Gospels*. They are certainly not ancient biographies. With that said, even these biographies often fail to meet Jonah's absurd standards for historical accuracy. That is unbelievably telling my friends.

As far as why there are so many seeming contradictions in the Bible in the first place, something that is also in itself harped upon *ad nauseam* by the same groups spoken of above, especially by Progressive Christian leaders today, this should not be surprising at all. First of all, often the only reason there are so many alleged contradictions from the outset is because the skeptics erroneously see a discrepancy behind every corner. It is not our fault that most of them have such poor reading comprehension skills. We have to answer so many alleged contradictions precisely because they so ridiculously assert so many of them!

With that caveat in place, we must admit that there are still a fair amount of places where the Bible does at first glance appear to possibly contradict itself. Again though, this is exactly what we should expect. The Bible was not written by one author in a short period of time. It was written by dozens of authors over millennia. It also contains a number of different genres. Hence, apparent discrepancies are inevitable. That is not the issue. The question is: do we have any undeniable cases of contradiction in the biblical witness? I maintain that we do not. And I believe that the resources I have highlighted for you above more than demonstrate this. For any other alleged contradictions you would like me to address, please email me, and I will gladly do so. My email can be found on my website.