

Does the Bible Have Contradictions?

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A biblical response to Shabir Ally's list of 101 supposed "contradictions" in the Bible.

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Introduction

This document disproves Shabir Ally's list of 101 "contradictions" in the King James Bible. Ally's claim that the Bible contains over 100 contradictions is false. This claim arises from a misunderstanding of the text. Upon examining Shabir Ally's list of 100 "contradictions" in the Bible, it became apparent that Ally was grasping at straws in order to list as many so-called "contradictions" as possible. As a result, he read many passages that most people would never think of as contradictions, and twisted his interpretation of those passages in order to interpret them as contradictions.

A good example of this, which occurred many times in Shabir Ally's list, is when the Bible says two verses about an event, and those two verses are obviously meant to be put together to reveal a larger picture, but Shabir Ally instead insists that they contradict each other.

There are four gospel accounts, each written by a different writer (Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John). The gospel writers wrote the gospels in order to record the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Shabir Ally insists that the four gospels contradict each other many times because some of them speak of certain events which the other gospels make no mention of. However, this is only logical. None of the gospel writers intended to write down *everything* that Jesus said and did. But by reading all four gospels, we can see four different perspectives (yet each one is God-inspired and therefore perfect) on the importance of Christ's ministry. All four gospel writers record the most important events such as the last supper, the crucifixion of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus. But other more minor events are not recorded by all four of the gospel writers. Even with events that they all recorded, it is common that one gospel writer wrote specific details that the others did not write about. This does not mean that the other gospel writers didn't witness or believe in those details. They simply emphasized different but equally important details. This multi-perspective record of Christ's earthly ministry allows us to combine the details recorded in the four gospels to see a larger picture of the story of Jesus represented from not just the writings of one man, but the perspectives of four different writers all inspired by God. Shabir Ally claims that the inclusion of specific details in one gospel that are not included in the other gospels causes contradictions in the gospel record. This is not true. Allow me to provide an example:

Luke wrote that just before Jesus died, he said, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.” John wrote that just before Jesus died, he said, “It is finished.” Do these verses contradict? No. They would only contradict if Luke said that “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit” were Christ’s last words, *and* if John said that “It is finished” was Christ’s last words. But neither gospel writer says which phrase is Christ’s last words.

The logical thing to do in a case like this is to put the two gospel accounts together in order to gain a better understanding of the passage. The whole reason we have four gospels is so that we can compare them, combining them to get a clearer picture of Christ’s ministry on earth. When the two accounts are put together, we see that Christ’s last words were either “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. It is finished,” or “It is finished. Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.” Yet instead of combining the accounts to get a better understanding of the passage, Shabir Ally chose to put the two accounts against each other, acting as if they contradict each other.

John writes at the end of his gospel that Jesus did many things which John did not record, for if he recorded every single thing Jesus ever did, the book would be impossibly long (John 21:15). None of the four gospels record *every* detail of Christ’s ministry. Rather, they each record different details of the same ministry. The absence of a detail in one account and the presence of that detail in another account does not warrant a contradiction. Rather, such an occurrence presents an opportunity to put the two accounts together, adding together the details from all four gospel records to gain a full understanding of Christ’s earthly ministry.

Differences in the minor details of the gospels only contradict when it is impossible for a detail in one gospel account to coincide with a detail from another account’s record of the same passage (for example, this would happen if one account said Christ’s last supper was in Jerusalem, and another said it was in Nazareth). But unfortunately for Shabir Ally, this never happens, and it makes his list of 101 “contradictions” in the Bible look less like an honest examination of the Bible, and more like a deliberate misinterpretation of Scripture.

Disproving the 101 Alleged “Contradictions”

1. **Does God incite David to conduct the census of his people (2 Samuel 4:1), or does Satan (1 Chronicles 21:1)?**

Both God and Satan incited David to conduct the census of his people.

2. **2 Samuel 24:9 gives the total population for Israel as 800,000, whereas 1 Chronicles 21:5 says it was 1,100,000.**

The report in 2 Samuel 24 uses the Hebrew word is *hayil*, which means “mighty men,” or those ready for battle. 1 Chronicles 21 does not use this word. The total population was 1,100,000 and of these people, 800,000 were ready for battle.

3. **2 Samuel 24:9 gives the round figure of 500,000 fighting men in Judah, which was 30,000 more than the corresponding item in 1 Chronicles 21:5.**

This is not a contradiction because 1 Chronicles 21:6 clearly states that Joab did not complete the numbering. Therefore, the different numbers indicate the exclusion of particular groups in the nation who never got numbered.

4. **2 Samuel 24:13 mentions that there will be seven years of famine whereas 1 Chronicles 21:12 mentions only three.**

Both passages are correct. God threatened to plague Israel with three years of famine as a result of David’s census of Israel. However, at the time when the prophet Gad spoke to David, Israel had already experienced three years of famine before the census. Therefore, when Gad said “three years’ famine” those three years of famine would be added onto the three years of famine that Israel had already just experienced, resulting in six years of famine total.

However, David’s census of Israel (the very act which God offered to punish Israel with three more years of famine because of) took about a year to complete. Assuming that the famine continued during the census, the total number of consecutive years in which Israel experienced famine would have seven years if God had poured out three more years of famine upon Israel as he threatened in 1 Chronicles 21:12. This total seven years of famine does not contradict 2 Samuel 24:13 but rather it matches up with it completely.

Breaking it all down into three parts, we see that there had first been three years of famine before the census, secondly the famine may have continued during the census, and thirdly God would plague Israel with three more years of famine as punishment for conducting the census. Add three plus one plus three and the total number of years of famine is seven years.

1 Chronicles 21:12 speaks only of God's punishment, and therefore it is correct when it speaks of three years of famine. 2 Samuel 24:13 speaks of the total number of years of famine (the three years of famine that God inflicted on Israel, and the other four years of famine that took place just beforehand) and therefore it is correct when it speaks of seven years of famine. Both passages are correct.

This method of recording lengths of time is supported by other passages of the Bible, such as the time when God calculated how many years Israel would wander in the wilderness after refusing to cross into the Promised Land. God included in that calculation the number of years they had already spent in the wilderness.

Similarly, in 2 Samuel 24:13 when the prophet Gad calculates the number of years of famine, he also includes the number of years that Israel had already been experiencing famine. In 1 Chronicles 21:12, however, he speaks only of the three years of famine that were about to occur. This is not a contradiction. Chances are, Gad spoke both calculations to David, telling him that there would be three more years of famine (as recorded in 1 Chronicles 21:12), which equals seven years of famine total (as recorded in 2 Samuel 24:13).

Remember that neither 2 Samuel nor 1 Chronicles record every word spoken by the prophet Gad or anyone else for that matter. If they did, the books would be virtually endless. Each book records only the most important information of Gad's conversation with David, and each book does so accurately. By combining the two books and putting them in historical context, we see a clearer perspective of what Gad spoke to David. To put it in modern English, Gad was telling David, "Do you really want a total of seven years of famine? You've already had four, and now you can have another three. Unless you want to consider these other two options...."

The claim that 2 Samuel 24:13 and 1 Chronicles 21:12 contradict each other has no solid ground to stand on. This claim falls apart as soon as one looks at the historical context of these passages. If there had not been three years of famine before David started the year-long census, then perhaps one could claim that one of these verses contains a copyist error. However, the context of these verses disproves this claim. When one puts these verses in their proper context, the very idea of these two verses contradicting each other becomes absurd. God wasn't going to count the previous years of famine and declare the debt already paid! He meant three *more* years and a *total* of seven years of famine!

5. Was Ahaziah 22 (2 Kings 8:26) or 42 (2 Chronicles 22:2) when he began to rule over Jerusalem?

The answer is yes. Ahaziah began to rule when he was twenty-two years old. He also began to rule when he was forty-two years old.

By means of analogy, when did President Obama begin to rule?

- a) After he was elected by popular vote?
- b) When he officially was inaugurated?
- c) After he started conducting actual policy?

And how many years did Obama [or insert the name of your favorite president here] rule the United States?

Depending on the perspective of the historian, some might count his “rule” as beginning as soon as the mainstream media declared him a “frontrunner” in the election. By predicting that he would win and giving him far more media attention than many of the other candidates, the mainstream media essentially secured his victory and made him a public figure and a household name.

Others would argue that it was the American people who elected Obama and made him President. This position leads to the question of when exactly Obama began his rule over America. Most would argue that his rule began when he took the Oath of Office. But others would argue that Obama’s rule began when he won the election. During Bush’s final “lame duck” months as President (the period of time between Obama’s election victory and the inauguration) was Bush really ruling the country, or was it really Obama (who – having already starting to implement his policies even before being sworn in – released weekly videos to the American people describing his progress) who the people considered to be in charge of the nation?

This analogy is imperfect because in the United States we have elections exactly every four years, and like clockwork, formal inaugurations are held to swear in new leaders. This was not the case in ancient Israel, where kings were never “sworn in” but rather they began their rule as soon as a significant enough majority of the populace acknowledged them as king. There were no elections, so when the populace disagreed over who was king, determining who was in charge could become a very subjective matter.

It is important to understand that the Bible uses the phrase “begin to rule” in two different ways:

- a) When one is given a significant level of authority.
- b) When one is crowned with the ultimate level of kingship.

2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 do not contradict each other. They both tell of years in Ahaziah’s life when he came to rule in Jerusalem.

Source: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/15281186/How-Old-Was-Ahaziah-2-Kings-and-2-Chronicles>

6. Was Jehoiachin 18 years old (2 Kings 24:8) or 8 years old (2 Chronicles 36:9) when he became king of Jerusalem?

As my response to contradiction number five demonstrates, it is possible to “begin to rule” in more than one way, and at different ages. There are plenty of examples from history of child monarchs who technically began to rule at a very young age, but in reality their parents or guardians were still ruling (that is, actually conducting government policy) until the child became an adult and was capable of take on that responsibility. At that age, the child passes from “technically ruling” the nation to *actually* ruling the nation. It is not incorrect, however, to say that the child began to rule (that is, he attained a position of rulership) at a very young age, since this is technically true. Neither is it incorrect to say that he did not actually begin to rule (that is, he conducted the actual action of ruling) until he was old enough to take on that responsibility, since this is also, historically speaking, true. Both statements are equally true, and they do not contradict each other. See the footnote in the 1599 Geneva Bible translation notes below:

2Ch 36:9 - Jehoiachin [was] ^(e) eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD.

^(e) That is, he began his reign at eight years old, and reigned ten years when his father was alive, and after his father's death, which was in his eighteenth year, he reigned alone three months and ten days.

7. Did king Jehoiachin rule over Jerusalem for three months (2 Kings 24:8), or for three months and ten days (2 Chronicles 36:9)?

Three months and ten days. The writer of 2 Chronicles was precise when recording the length of Jehoiachin’s reign. The author of 2 Kings simply rounded off to three months when recording the length of Jehoiachin’s reign, because the extra ten days was not significant enough to record. If it was, it would have been recorded in both passages. Rounding is actually quite common in Old Testament records. When scribes recorded the lengths of the reigns of kings, they would sometimes round it off. For this reason, the lengths of reigns of kings recorded in the Old Testament are not meant to be taken literally, but were recorded as basic approximations.

8. Did the chief of the mighty men of David lift up his spear and kill 800 men (2 Samuel 23:8) or only 300 men (1 Chronicles 11:11)?

This question doesn’t specify which mighty men or which chief it is referring to.

Adino the Eznite, who is called the “chief among the captains” killed 800 men at one time with his spear. 2 Samuel 23:8 states, “These *be* the names of the mighty men whom

David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same *was* Adino the Eznite: *he lift up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.”

Jashobeam the Hachmonite, on the other hand, killed 300 men at one time with his spear. Jashobeam was also called “chief of the captains.” 1 Chronicles 11:11 states, “And this *is* the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain *by him* at one time.”

A contradiction only exists if these two men are actually the same person. There is no scriptural proof that this is the case, as titles such as “chief among the captains” are not necessarily exclusive to one person only. 1 Samuel 22:1-2 provides an important insight: “David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father’s house heard *it*, they went down thither to him. And every one *that was* in distress, and every one *that was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves to him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.” Here, David is described as becoming a “captain” over a group of men. A title such as “captain” is clearly not exclusive to just one person, as there were probably many captains, each in charge of their own group of men. Likewise, it is possible that Adino and Jashobeam were both “chiefs” among the captains. Perhaps they each commanded a different group of captains. Thus, even though Adino and Jashobeam have the same title, it is unlikely that they are the same person. Therefore there is no contradiction.

Even if Adino the Eznite and Jashobeam the Hachmonite are the same person, the difference in recorded kill counts could easily be explained as the difference between “actual kills” and “confirmed kills.”

Records such as 1 Samuel 14:13 reveal just how chaotic these sorts of battles were: “And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.” In a case like this, who should take credit for the kill?

Keeping score on the number of kills made in a battle is not an exact science. Kills can be scored in a variety of different ways, and it is possible that the method of recording kills changed between the writing of 2 Samuel and the writing of 1 Chronicles.

But remember, this explanation assumes that Adino the Eznite and Jashobeam the Hachmonite are in fact the same person. There is absolutely no reason to think that these two people with very different names are in fact the same person. This means that there is therefore no contradiction between 2 Samuel 23:8 and 1 Chronicles 11:11. The two verses speak of two different people – one who killed 800 men and another who killed 300 men.

The only reason anyone would have for believing that Adino the Eznite and Jashobeam the Hachmonite are the same person is the fact that they both share the title of “chief of the captains.” But anyone who kills hundreds of men in one battle does so at great peril to his own safety. It is likely that between the writing of 2 Samuel and the writing of 1 Chronicles, Adino the Eznite died or otherwise left his position of “chief of the captains” and was succeeded by Jashobeam the Hachmonite, who became the new “chief of the captains.”

This is, in fact, an extremely likely possibility. In 1 Chronicles 10:3, archers wound King Saul during a battle. In 2 Chronicles 35:23, archers wound Josiah. These verses prove that archers were able to strike down both kings and captains. It is likely, therefore, that the “chief of the captains” could just have easily been struck down on the battlefield – by archers or otherwise. He would then be succeeded by a new “chief of the captains.”

Further biblical support for this theory is found in 2 Samuel 23, which lists thirty-two men – including Benaiah, their captain – who are listed as being members of an elite group of fighters known as “the thirty.” Why are thirty-two men listed as “the thirty?” The reason is because two of the men were dead at the time 2 Chronicles 23 was written. Joab’s brother Asahel died in 2 Samuel 3:30, and Uriah the Hittite died before Solomon was born (2 Samuel 11:17). Thus, there were only thirty living men included in “the thirty.” The other two men had previously been part of “the thirty” but after these two men died, their positions as members of “the thirty” had been filled by two other men.

It is extremely likely, therefore, that if the “chief of the captains” died, his position would also need to be filled. Although the Bible never mentions Adino’s death, this is not necessarily evidence against it. The books of Samuel and Chronicles were not intended to serve as lists of everyone who died. If they were, our Bibles would be significantly thicker than they are now. One might assume that because the title “chief of the captains” sounds prestigious, his death would be worth mentioning. But the fact that Adino the Eznite is mentioned in only one verse proves that the author of 2 Samuel did not consider Adino worthy of much mention other than recording his brief moment of fame and glory in which he killed 800 men in one battle.

In conclusion:

- 2 Samuel 23:8 states that Adino the Eznite killed 800 people.
- 1 Chronicles 11:11 states that Jashobeam the Hachmonite killed 300 people.
- Adino is a completely different name than Jashobeam.
- Furthermore, Adino is called a “Tachmonite” which Jashobeam, on the other hand, is called a “Hachmonite.”
- There is no contradiction between 2 Samuel 23:8 and 1 Chronicles 11:11 because these verses are talking about two different people with completely different names and lineages.

The only way that a contradiction could exist between 2 Samuel 23:8 and 1 Chronicles 11:11 is if Adino the Eznite and Jashobeam the Hachmonite (two people with completely different names and lineage) are actually the same person. In other words, in order to claim that the text is contradictory, we must first assume that the text contains errors in the recording of names and lineages. An argument that must assume an error in order to prove an error is an example of a logical fallacy called circular reasoning.

9. Did David bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem after defeating the Philistines (2 Samuel 5 and 6), or before (1 Chronicles chapters 13 and 14)?

It is important to examine the context of 1 Chronicles 13-14, as summarized below:

- **1 Chronicles 11** – King Saul is dead. Israel unites under David.
- **1 Chronicles 12** – Information about David’s army.
- **1 Chronicles 13** – David orders that the Ark of the Covenant be brought to Jerusalem. The Ark is moved partway to Jerusalem, but along the way it is stopped and left at the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months.
- **1 Chronicles 14** – David goes to battle against the Philistines, defeating them from Gibeon to Gazer.
- **1 Chronicles 15** – Returning to Jerusalem, David prepares a place for the Ark to be placed upon its arrival to the city. Once this place is prepared, the Ark leaves the house of Obed-Edom and is moved into the city of Jerusalem, causing a huge celebration in the streets.
- **1 Chronicles 16** – The Ark of the Covenant is now in Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 13 and 1 Chronicles 15 both tell of the Ark’s journey to Jerusalem. 1 Chronicles 13 tells of the Ark’s journey to the house of Obed-Edom. 1 Chronicles 15 tells of the rest of the journey from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem. The story of how the Ark of the Covenant was moved back to Jerusalem is interrupted in the middle by 1 Chronicles 14, which tells of the defeat of the Philistines from Gibeon to Gazer. The most likely explanation for this interruption in the story of the Ark’s return to Jerusalem is that the events of the book of 1 Chronicles are told in chronological order, and the fighting against the Philistines in 1 Chronicles 14 took place within the three-month period during which the Ark of the Covenant was resting at the house of Obed-Edom.

When 1 Chronicles 13-15 are read in context, the answer to the question of whether David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem before or after defeating the Philistines is clear. The Ark of the Covenant *began* to be moved to Jerusalem before the battles with the Philistines. It actually *arrived* in Jerusalem after the Philistines were defeated.

Turning to the book of 2 Samuel, we see the same events being described, although with less detail:

- **2 Samuel 4** – King Saul is dead. Israel unites under David.
- **2 Samuel 5** - David goes to battle against the Philistines, defeating them from Gibeon to Gazer.
- **2 Samuel 6** – David orders that the Ark of the Covenant be brought to Jerusalem. The Ark is moved partway to Jerusalem, but along the way it is stopped and left at the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months. Then the Ark leaves the house of Obed-Edom and is moved into the city of Jerusalem, causing a huge celebration in the streets.

While the book of 1 Chronicles tells these same events chronologically, the book of 2 Samuel instead divides the narrative by topic. 2 Samuel 5 focuses solely on the war against the Philistines. The next chapter focuses solely on the moving of the Ark, including the same three-month delay at the house of Obed-Edom that we saw in 1 Chronicles 13. We know from the chronological account found in 1 Chronicles that it was during this three month period when the Ark was at the house of Obed-Edom that the battle against the Philistines found in 2 Samuel 5 took place.

There is no contradiction between 1 Chronicles and 2 Samuel. Both accounts tell the same story. The only difference is that 1 Chronicles tells describes the events chronologically in the exact order that they took place. This is a very logical way to record the story, but it chops the story of the Ark's return to Jerusalem in half because the fighting against the Philistines took place halfway through this story while the Ark was at the house of Obed-Edom. To solve this problem, 2 Samuel spends a chapter getting the record of the battle against the Philistines out of the way first, and then it tells the story of the Ark's return to Jerusalem in a single, uninterrupted narrative. The result is a record that is topical in nature rather than chronological. First it focuses on one topic (the war against the Philistines) and then it focuses on another topic (the moving of the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem). 1 Chronicles and 2 Samuel take different approaches to recording the same story, but both approaches are correct (indeed, even in the modern day we see both of these approaches used by different writers of history textbooks), and the story is the same in both accounts.

10. Was Noah supposed to bring 2 pairs of all living creatures (Genesis 6:19-20), or was he to bring 7 pairs of 'clean' animals (Genesis 7:2; see also Genesis 7:8,9)?

Both. He was supposed to bring seven pairs of each clean animal, and two pairs of every animal.

11. Did David capture 1,700 of King Zobah's horsemen (2 Samuel 8:4), or was it 7,000 (1 Chronicles 18:4)?

2 Samuel 8:4 says that David took 700 horsemen, while 1 Chronicles 18:4 says that David took 7000 horsemen. These verses are not in contradiction. The King James version correctly describes 1000 chariots in both 2 Samuel 8:4 and 1 Chronicles 18:4. Both verses also state that David reserved 100 chariots. Combining the information from these two verses we see that David took 700 horsemen for the chariots he kept, but he took a total of 7000 horsemen away from the enemy king. The two different numbers for the number of chariots provide us with a consistent 7:1 horseman-to-chariot ratio. This is reasonable, as seven horsemen could easily share the same chariot.

12. Did Solomon have 40,000 stalls for his horses (1 Kings 4:26), or 4,000 stalls (2 Chronicles 9:25)?

Firstly, it should be noted that this “contradiction” does not appear in the New International Version, which states that Solomon had “four thousand stalls” in both verses. Unfortunately, the NIV translation mistakenly states that Solomon had twelve thousand *horses*, when in fact the original Hebrew text (and all other English translations of it) state that Solomon had twelve thousand *horsemen*. This error results in three horses per chariot (an unusually odd number) and three horses per stall (which seems a little crowded). Opening a lexicon, we see that the King James Version gives an accurate rendering of the Hebrew text (correctly translating the Hebrew *parash* as “horsemen”), and for this reason we know that this translation can be trusted in accurately explaining this “contradiction”.

With that said, let's examine these two verses. 1 Kings 4:26 states, “Solomon had forty thousand stalls **of horses** for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen” while 2 Chronicles 9:25 states “Solomon had four thousand stalls **for horses and chariots**, and twelve thousand horsemen”.

1 Kings 4:26 counts only the horses that were intended to be used “for his chariots”. On the other hand, 2 Chronicles 9:25 counts both the horses “and chariots” together.

1 Kings 4:26 states that Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses, meaning that he had forty-thousand stalls with horses in them. 2 Chronicles 9:25 counts both horses and chariots together. If each chariot stall contains within it ten horse stalls (perhaps one stall for each horse that pulls the chariot) then there is no contradiction.

Solomon had 40,000 stalls for his horses. Solomon had 4,000 chariots (three riders per chariot, since we know from both 1 Kings 4:26 and 2 Chronicles 9:25 that he had twelve thousand horsemen) and every chariot had its own stall. Chariots are pulled by multiple

horses – in this case, ten horses. Each chariot stall had within it ten individual horse stalls – one for each horse that pulled that specific chariot.

13. According to the author, did Baasha, the king of Israel die in the 26th year of king Asa's reign (1 Kings 15:33), or was he still alive in the 36th year (2 Chronicles 16:1)?

The 36th year of Asa should be calculated from the withdrawal of the ten tribes from Judah and Benjamin which divided the country into Judah and Israel. That means that the 36th year of division is the same as the 16th year of Asa, when Baasha was still alive. Ten years after the 16th year of Asa, Baasha died.

14. Did Solomon appoint 3,600 overseers (2 Chronicles 2:2) for the work of building the temple, or was it only 3,300 (1 Kings 5:16)?

Solomon appointed 3,300 as overseers, and an additional 300 to be reserves that would take the place of any of the 3,300 that became sick. The scribe who recorded the number of overseers in 1 Kings 5:16 recorded only the overseers on duty, not the extra 300 in reserve. The scribe who recorded the number of overseers in 2 Chronicles 2:2 recorded all 3,600, including the 300 reserves.

15. Did Solomon build a facility containing 2,000 baths (1 Kings 7:26), or over 3,000 baths (2 Chronicles 4:5)?

Two thousand baths is equal to about 44 kiloliters. Three thousand is equal to about 66 kiloliters. To understand this “contradiction” we must look at the original Hebrew words translated as “held,” in these two verses. 1 Kings 7:26 uses a Hebrew word that indicates that the facility was usually filled with 2,000 baths. 2 Chronicles 4:5 uses a Hebrew word that indicates that the facility would hold 3,000 baths when completely filled.

16. – 21. These seven questions all deal with the same census, so I'll combine them into one question and answer: Are the numbers of Israelites freed from Babylonian captivity correct in Nehemiah, or in Ezra?

Both Nehemiah and Ezra contain records of the thirty-three families of Israelites returning from Babylon, listing the number of members in each family. Of these thirty-three families units listed in Nehemiah and Ezra, nineteen of the families are identical, while the rest have discrepancies.

At first glance, it looks like there's fourteen contradictions right here. But there are really no contradictions. This is very easy to explain. Ezra 2:1-2 explains that the list of people in Ezra was recorded while the people were still in Babylon. And Nehemiah 7:4-6 tells us that the list of people in Nehemiah was recorded after the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt. The amount of time that elapsed between the recording of the list of families in

Ezra and the recording of the list of families in Nehemiah is between five and ten years. During that time, the number of people in fourteen of the families changed, because during those five to ten years, people could have died, or had children.

22. Both Ezra 2:64 and Nehemiah 7:66 agree that the totals for the whole assembly was 42,360, yet when the totals are added, Ezra lists 29,818 and Nehemiah lists 31,089. Why?

Ezra 2:64 states, “The whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred *and* threescore” while Nehemiah 7:66 states, “the whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore”. These two verses are indeed in complete agreement as to the total number of the congregation. The only apparent disagreement is between the sum of the subtotals of the families that Ezra and Nehemiah list.

The simplest explanation is that Ezra and Nehemiah did not list *all* of the families of Israel in their subtotals. Thus, their subtotals of 29,818 and 31,089 represent the sum of the members of the families that they listed. On the other hand, the number 42,360 is the total population of the entire congregation – including both listed and unlisted families. We can calculate, therefore, that there were 12,542 people whose families Ezra did not list in his census, and 11,271 people whose families Nehemiah did not list in his census. Why did Ezra and Nehemiah omit some of the families of Israel? A better question would be, why not? There was no reason to include every last family... their books are already long enough as is.

There is therefore no contradiction because both Ezra and Nehemiah report the population of the congregation as a whole as well as the accurate subtotal of the families *that they counted*.

Another equally possible explanation deals with the difference between an “official estimate” and the “literal data”. 42,360 is clearly the “official” agreed-upon number of the congregation. However, when Ezra and Nehemiah add their totals, they are adding data from a census conducted by humans with very little technology. Since many members of the congregation were traveling from place to place, it would be almost impossible for a human census to count everyone with perfect accuracy. This does not mean, however, that the data is “wrong”.

At the time I am writing this, the “official” population of the United States is three hundred million people. This does not mean, however, that there are *exactly* three hundred million people within the borders of the United States at this time. Because flights, ships, and cars are constantly traveling in and out of the United States, the *exact* number of people “in” the United States at any given time varies from second to second. Does this mean that it is wrong to say that the United States has a population of three

hundred million people? Of course not! Such a statement is understood to be an “official” population figure that is understood to represent the population in general and not the exact, literal data of the number of individuals “in” the United States at any given second.

On a smaller scale, try asking a high school teacher what her or his class size is. The teacher will probably say something like, “I have a class of thirty students” but if you actually look around the room and count the students, it is unlikely that there will be exactly thirty students in the room at that given time. Students are often late, absent, or in the bathroom, and therefore the *actual* number of students who are *literally* “in” the class changes almost constantly. This does not mean, however, that the teacher’s statement “I have a class of thirty students” is incorrect. The teacher reported the “official” class size that he or she received from the attendance office. The *literal* class size, on the other hand, can only be acquired by physically counting the students in the room. That number is constantly varying. If I counted the students one minute, and then came back fifteen minutes later and counted the students again, chances are the number would be different the second time.

If the population of a high school classroom varies so much, just imagine how much more the population of the entire Israelite congregation would vary! Ezra and Nehemiah both received an “official” estimate of 42,360. To determine the *literal* population, they both conducted a census (a counting of the congregation) and added the totals. Chances are, the discrepancy between their totals is simply because they conducted their counting at slightly different times. Between the time that Ezra counted the people and the time that Nehemiah counted the people, several hundred Israelites could have left to go on a journey for any number of reasons, or they could have returned from a journey. This does not mean that Ezra’s number is incorrect, since it was correct *at the time* that he conducted his counting.

There is therefore no contradiction because both Ezra and Nehemiah accurately report the official estimate as well as the correct census data that they collected *at the time* of their respective counting.

23. Did 200 singers (Ezra 2:65) or 245 singers (Nehemiah 7:67) accompany the assembly?

Ezra 2:65 states “Beside their servants and their maids, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: **and *there were among them*** two hundred singing men and women.”

Nehemiah 7:67 states, “Beside their manservants and their maidservants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: **and *they had*** two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women.”

There were 245 singers total, but only 200 of them were “among” the 7337 servants and maids. There is no contradiction because Nehemiah accurately reports that there were 245 singers total, whereas Ezra accurately reports that of the 7337 servants, 200 of those servants were singers. That leaves forty-five singers who were not also servants. The accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah do not contradict.

24. Was King Abijah's mother's name Michaiah, daughter of Uriel of Gibeah (2 Chronicles 13:2) or Maachah, daughter of Absalom (2 Chronicles 11:20 & 2 Samuel 13:27)?

Maachah and Michaiah are the same name, because Maachah in Hebrew is short for Michaiah. Michaiah was the daughter of Uriel and Gibeah and the granddaughter of Absalom. The Hebrew word bat which was translated “daughter” in these verses can mean “daughter” or “granddaughter.” Absalom is short for Abishalom.

25. Joshua and the Israelites did (Joshua 10:23,40) or did not (Joshua 15:63) capture Jerusalem?

They didn’t capture Jerusalem in either chapter. Joshua 10:23 simply states that they captured some kings. It never says that they captured Jerusalem. Verse Joshua 10:40 states that Joshua killed all the kings, but it never says that he captured Jerusalem. Joshua 10:20 states that survivors fled to their fortified cities. This means that Joshua had not captured the fortified cities, which would include Jerusalem. Joshua 15:63 then states that Joshua did not capture Jerusalem, which does not contradict but rather confirms chapter ten.

26. Was Jacob (Matthew 1:16) or Heli (Luke 3:23) the father of Joseph and husband of Mary?

Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph and Luke gives that of Mary, making Jacob the father of Joseph and Heli the father of Mary. In Mary’s genealogy, Mary is referred through her husband Joseph, because it was Hebrew tradition to list only males in genealogical records.

27. Did Jesus descend from Solomon (Matthew 1:6) or from Nathan (Luke 3:31), both of whom are sons of David?

Jesus was a descendant of both Solomon and Nathan, because Joseph descended from David through Solomon, and Mary descended from David through Nathan.

28. Was Jechoniah (Matthew 1:12) or Neri (Luke 3:27) the father of Shealtiel?

Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph and Luke gives that of Mary. In Mary's genealogy, Mary is referred through her husband Joseph, because it was Hebrew tradition to list only males in genealogical records. Both Mary and Joseph had an ancestor named Shealtiel. However, these are two different people named Shealtiel, a common Hebrew name. Because these are two different people, they had different fathers. One had a father named Neri. The other had a father named Jechoniah.

29. Which son of Zerubbabel was an ancestor of Jesus Christ, Abiud (Matthew 1:13) or Rhesa (Luke 3:27), and what about Zerubbabel in (1 Chronicles 3:19-20)?

Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph and Luke gives that of Mary. In Mary's genealogy, Mary is referred through her husband Joseph, because it was Hebrew tradition to list only males in genealogical records. Both Mary and Joseph had an ancestor named Zerubbabel. These were two different people named Zerubbabel, so they had different sons. The son of Zerubbabel on Mary's side was a direct ancestor of Jesus. The son of Zerubbabel was an ancestor of Jesus through Mary's marriage to Joseph. As for 1 Chronicles 3:19-20, as far as I can tell, the Zerubbabel listed there is just a third Zerubbabel.

30. Was Joram (Matthew 1:8) or Amaziah (2 Chronicles 26:1) the father of Uzziah?

In Hebrew, the word "son" can refer to any descendants in general, not just literal sons. For example, the Hebrew people are called the "sons of Jacob" in Malachi 3:6 despite the fact that Jacob was their ancestor but not their literal father. Similarly, the Jewish Pharisees tell Jesus that Abraham is their "father" (John 8:39) even though Abraham is their ancestor but not their literal father. In another example of this phenomenon, Matthew 1:1 calls Jesus Christ "the son of David" and David "the son of Abraham" despite the fact that David was only an ancestor of Jesus and not his literal father (God is Christ's literal Father), and Abraham was only an ancestor of David, and not his literal father.

Calling an ancestor "father" and a distant descendant "son" may seem strange in English, but the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, and in Hebrew it is grammatically correct for the word "son" (*ben* in Hebrew) to apply to any descendant, not just literal sons. The Jewish writers of the New Testament applied this same Hebrew concept to the Greek language when they penned the gospels.

Therefore, there is no contradiction because Amaziah was Uzziah's literal father, while Joram (short for Jehoram) was a more distant ancestor of Uzziah, called "father" only in figurative Jewish language.

To be precise, we see from 1 Chronicles 3:10-12 that Joram was the father of Ahaziah, the father of Joash, the father of Amaziah, the father of Uzziah ("Uzziah" is *Azariah* in Hebrew and *Ozias* in the Greek of Matthew 1:8), and Uzziah himself was the father of Jotham (*Joatham* in the Greek), which is further verified not only by Matthew 1:8 but also 2 Chronicles 26:23. We therefore conclude that we find no contradiction between the accounts of Matthew 1:8 and 2 Chronicles 26:1.

31. Was Josiah (Matthew 1:11) or Jehoiakim (1 Chronicles 3:16) the father of Jechoniah?

In Hebrew, the word "son" can refer to any descendants in general, not just literal sons. For example, the Hebrew people are called the "sons of Jacob" in Malachi 3:6 despite the fact that Jacob was their ancestor but not their literal father. Similarly, the Jewish Pharisees tell Jesus that Abraham is their "father" (John 8:39) even though Abraham is their ancestor but not their literal father. In another example of this phenomenon, Matthew 1:1 calls Jesus Christ "the son of David" and David "the son of Abraham" despite the fact that David was only an ancestor of Jesus and not his literal father (God is Christ's literal Father), and Abraham was only an ancestor of David, and not his literal father.

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Therefore, there is no contradiction because Jehoiakim was Jeconiah's literal father while Josiah was his grandfather, called "father" only in figurative Jewish language.

32. Were there fourteen (Matthew 1:17) or thirteen (Matthew 1:12-16) generations from the Babylonian exile until Christ?

Matthew 1:17 clearly states that there were fourteen generations. The thirteen generations in Matthew 1:12-16 are simply because in that list the first person in the genealogy was not counted as a generation.

33. Who was the father of Shelah; Cainan (Luke 3:35-36) or Arphaxad (Genesis 11:12)?

According to Genesis 11:12, “Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah”. In biblical language, the word “begat” is used to describe physical lineage. For example, Matthew’s record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ traces Christ’s ancestry back many generations to prove that Jesus is a physical descendant of David, who is a physical descendant of Abraham.

1 Chronicles 1:4-18 provides more information about the lineage of Shelah, who is also known as Sala. The sentence “Arphaxad begat Shelah” proves through the use of the word “begat” that Arphaxad was the biological father of Shelah. Cainan (also known as Canaan) was a direct descendant of Ham, who was one of the other sons of Noah (1 Chronicles 1:8).

Turning to the book of Luke, we see that, unlike Matthew, Luke did not use the word “begat” in his record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Luke’s account states, “Sala, which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad.” While “begat” always indicates physical lineage, is important to recognize that in the Bible, the phrase “the son of” does not always mean a literal, biological “son”.

For example, Luke 3:23 states that Jesus was the son of Joseph, but Luke previously stated that Jesus was born of a virgin. This is not a contradiction, because in Jewish idiom, the word “son” is understood to have more possible meanings than it is usually limited to in the English language. For example, Luke 3:23 also states that Joseph was the son of Heli, but we know from Matthew 1:16 that Joseph was a biological descendant of Jacob, and was only “the son of Heli” due to his marriage to Mary. The fact that the English language contains phrases like “son-in-law” and “biological father” proves that even today we continue to recognize other types of father-son relationships besides the relationship between a literal father and his biological son. For example, one can become a father through marriage or adoption.

Luke does not explain why Cainan is listed in his genealogy, but Luke’s use of the phrase “the son of” instead of “begat” proves that Luke’s genealogy is not necessarily as literal (or as “biological”) as Matthew’s. Perhaps Cainan (“the son of Ham”) raised Shelah (also known as Sala), thus being more of a father to him than his biological father Arphaxad (“the son of Shem”). If this theory is correct, then it could be said that Shelah was the “adopted” son of Cainan, and the “biological” son of Arphaxad. Of course, the gospel writers had no use for such modern terminology. In the Jewish idiom from which they wrote, the word “begat” was used when describing biological descent, while the phrase “the son of” could be used to describe any form of sonship, whether “biological” or “adopted”.

In conclusion, Luke 33:35-36 does not contradict Genesis 11:12 once we recognize the important difference between the literal “begat” and the much less literal “the son of”. Arphaxad and Cainan are both “fathers” of Shelah, but in different ways. While Genesis and 1 Chronicles both report the physical lineage of Shelah to Arphaxad, Luke records a less literal, but perhaps more realistic account of Shelah’s lineage. Family troubles and extenuating circumstances are very common today, and they were likely to have also been common in Shelah’s day. I know individuals who desire to have no connection whatsoever with their biological fathers, so a neat and orderly “X begat Y, then Y begat Z” genealogy sometimes fails to describe the real human experience that exists behind the ancestry. This is why Luke’s genealogy uses different, less literal terminology to provide us with additional information by describing who was considered to be “the son of” (not necessarily a biological son) each man listed in the genealogical record.

Shelah’s place in the genealogical records is depicted in the color-coded passages of Scripture cited below:

Luke 3:34-38

- (34) Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, which was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor,
- (35) Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of **Heber**, which was *the son* of **Sala**,
- (36) Which was *the son* of **Cainan**, which was *the son* of **Arphaxad**, which was *the son* of **Sem**, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech,
- (37) Which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan,
- (38) Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of **Adam, which was the son of God.**

1 Chronicles 1:4

- (4) Noah, **Shem**, Ham, and Japheth.

1 Chronicles 1:8

- (8) The sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, Put, and **Canaan**.

1 Chronicles 1:17

- (17) The sons of **Shem**; Elam, and Asshur, and **Arphaxad**, and Lud, and Aram, and Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Meshech.

1 Chronicles 1:18

- (18) And **Arphaxad** begat **Shelah**, and **Shelah** begat **Eber**.

Genesis 11:10-26

- (10) These *are* the generations of **Shem**: **Shem** *was* an hundred years old, and begat **Arphaxad** two years after the flood:
- (11) And **Shem** lived after he begat **Arphaxad** five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.
- (12) And **Arphaxad** lived five and thirty years, and begat **Salah**:

- (13) And **Arphaxad** lived after he begat **Salah** four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.
- (14) And **Salah** lived thirty years, and begat **Eber**:
- (15) And **Salah** lived after he begat **Eber** four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

34. John the Baptist was (Matthew 11:14; 17:10-13) or was not Elijah to come (John 1:19-21)?

In the book of Matthew, Jesus says that John the Baptist was the Elijah to come. In the book of John, John the Baptist, not Jesus, says he was not. John the Baptist was the Elijah to come, but he didn't know it at the time.

35. Jesus would (Luke 1:32) or would not (Matthew 1:11; 1 Chronicles 3:16 & Jeremiah 36:30) inherit David's throne?

Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph and Luke gives the genealogy of Mary. In Mary's genealogy, Mary is referred to through her husband Joseph, because it was Hebrew tradition to list only males in genealogical records. Jeremiah 36:30 makes it clear that none of Joseph's physical descendants would sit on David's throne, since Joseph was a descendant of Jeconiah. However, Jesus was not a physical descendant of Joseph. Joseph was technically just Jesus's mother's fiancé. Joseph was not the father of Jesus. Christ's real father was God, who *gave* Jesus the throne of David his ancestor (Luke 1:32).

36. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on one colt (Mark 11:7; Luke 19:35; John 12:14-15), or a colt and an ass (Matthew 21:7)?

Mark, Luke, and John all agree that Jesus rode on one colt. And it should be obvious that Jesus rode on one colt, since Jesus could not have ridden on two animals at once. However, Matthew 21:7 states that, "They brought the ass and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them." There are several possibilities here, all of which can easily disprove this apparent contradiction:

- Jesus could have ridden the ass part of the time, and the colt the other part of the time.
- The "them" in this Matthew 21:7 could be referring to the cloaks, not the ass and the colt. In other words, instead of the verse meaning "They brought the ass and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them," the verse would mean, "They brought the ass and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on the cloaks," which would mean that Jesus could have been sitting on either the ass or the colt,

for they had put cloaks on both the ass and the colt. Of course, we know from Mark, Luke, and John, that Jesus was riding on the colt.

- If we look at the context of this passage, we see that just a few verses earlier in Matthew 21:5, Matthew quotes Zechariah 9:9, an Old Testament prophecy which states, “See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Then in Matthew 21:7, Matthew could have written “donkey and the colt,” to quote part of the prophecy again, which would emphasize the fulfillment of that prophecy.

37. Simon Peter finds out that Jesus was the Christ by a revelation from heaven (Matthew 16:17), or by his brother Andrew (John 1:41)?

The revelation was from heaven, through his brother Andrew.

38. Jesus first met Simon Peter and Andrew by the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18-22), or on the banks of the river Jordan (John 1:42-43)?

Both, actually. John 1:42-43 happened first, where Jesus met Peter and Andrew by the Jordan River. Then in John 2:12 it says, “After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.” So after meeting Jesus at the Jordan River, they went down to Capernaum. At this point in his ministry, Jesus had not yet begun to do a lot of public teaching and healing. Since they were fisherman, Andrew and Peter went fishing, by the Sea of Galilee. Then Matthew picks up the story, explaining how Jesus met up with Peter and Andrew again at the Sea of Galilee, and told them to follow him.

39. When Jesus met Jairus, his daughter 'had just died' (Matthew 9:18), or was 'at the point of death' (Mark 5:23)?

There's no contradiction here because “at the point of death,” means the same thing as “had just died.” When someone reaches the point of death, they die. So when Jairus's daughter reached the point of death as it says in Mark 5:23, she had died, just as it says in Matthew 9:18.

40. Jesus allowed (Mark 6:8), or did not allow (Matthew 10:10; Luke 9:3) his disciples to keep a staff on their journey?

Jesus allowed his disciples to take their staffs with them, but they were not allowed to buy new staffs on the journey. Mark 6:8 states, “These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts.” The Greek word translated as “take” here literally means “to take.” Jesus is telling them that they can take their staffs, but they can't take bread, bags, or money. Matthew 10:10 states, “take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is

worth his keep.” However, the Greek word translated as “take” here is not the same word translated as “take” in Mark 6:8. Here in Matthew 10:10, and in Luke 9:3, the Greek word translated as “take” is a Greek word which literally means “to buy or acquire.” So what Jesus is telling them in Matthew 10:10 is that they should not buy or acquire any bags, tunics, sandals, money or staffs for the journey, but as Mark 6:8 says, they could still bring the staffs which they had with them. Jesus just didn’t want them to go out and get a new staff.

41. Herod did (Matthew 14:2; Mark 6:16) or did not (Luke 9:9) think that Jesus was John the Baptist?

This is not a contradiction, since Herod never says in Luke 9:9 that he did not think that Jesus was John the Baptist. Rather, in Luke 9:9, Herod asks, “I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?” Matthew and Mark recorded the answer, which stated that Herod did think that Jesus was John the Baptist.

42. John the Baptist did (Matthew 3:13-14) or did not (John 1:32-33) recognize Jesus before his baptism?

There’s no contradiction here either, because in John 1:32-33, it never says that John didn’t recognize Jesus. Rather, it says that the Holy Spirit revealed to John that it was Jesus. Therefore, John did recognize Jesus, as is confirmed in Matthew 3:13-14, because the Holy Spirit had revealed it to him.

43. John the Baptist did (John 1:32-33) or did not (Matthew 11:2) recognize Jesus after his baptism?

John 1 and Matthew 3 make it clear that John the Baptist did recognize Jesus before and after the baptism. Matthew 11:2 takes place long after the baptism, when John is in prison, and he sends his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” In Matthew 11:2, John still recognized Jesus, but he was now doubting whether or not Jesus was the messiah, or “the one who was to come.”

44. When Jesus bears witness to himself, is his testimony not true (John 5:31) or is his testimony true (John 8:14)?

In John 5:31, Jesus says: "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid."

In John 8:14, Jesus says: “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid”

At first glance, this appears to be a contradiction, but not when the historical context is taken into consideration. In John Chapter 5 Jesus is speaking about how he cannot claim himself to be the messiah unless he is fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies. That is, without fulfilling the prophecies spoken in the Old Testament. But as Jesus did fulfill the

Old Testament prophecies, and he was called the messiah by John the Baptist. Because he was fulfilling the prophecies, and others besides himself were claiming that he was the messiah, then Jesus was indeed the messiah. When talking about the Old Testament, Jesus even said, "These are the Scriptures that testify about me."

In John Chapter 8, Jesus claims to be the messiah by quoting Old Testament prophecies he had fulfilled. John 8:13 says: "Then some Pharisees challenged him, 'Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.'" Jesus had said earlier in John Chapter 5 that if he testified about himself, his testimony wouldn't be valid unless he was fulfilling the prophecies and being proclaimed as the messiah by others. But in John 8:13, the Pharisees aren't talking about this. They're actually talking about Deuteronomy 19:15 which says "One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If a malicious witness takes the stand,"

However, it's important to remember that Deuteronomy is not talking about people making a claim about themselves, but rather, those accused of a crime. The Pharisees were taking a law that applied only to those accused of a crime, and they were trying to apply that law to the claims Jesus made about himself.

So when Jesus says in reply to them "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid" he is correct, because Deuteronomy 19:15 didn't apply to him making claims about himself, it applied to those accused of a crime. Jesus also says that he knew exactly who he was, but they did not. He wasn't lying.

Jesus goes on to say, "I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father who sent me" which agrees completely with John 5, where Jesus said that testimonies he makes about himself aren't valid unless he's fulfilling the prophecies and has others that are witnesses, testifying that Jesus is the messiah. When Jesus says in John 5:32 that there is another that testifies in his favor, he is not only talking about John the Baptist, but the Father who sent him. That makes at least two witnesses, which is why Jesus was right to say that his testimony was valid when the Pharisees tried using Deuteronomy 19:15, which states that, "A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

45. When Jesus entered Jerusalem he cleansed (Matthew 21:12) or did not cleanse (Mark 11:1-17) the temple that same day, but the next day?

When reading the book of Matthew, it's important to remember that Matthew liked to arrange things in topical order, rather than chronological order. Matthew related the cleansing of the temple with the triumphal entry, even though the cleansing occurred the next day. Keep in mind that verse 12 never actually says that when Jesus entered the temple it was immediately after his entry into Jerusalem. In fact, we know from verse 17 that he didn't go to the temple immediately after entering Jerusalem, but he went to Bethany, where he spent the night. This agrees completely with the record in Mark 11.

46. Matthew 21:19 says that the tree which Jesus cursed withered at once, whereas Mark 11:20 maintains that it withered overnight.

When reading the book of Matthew, it's important to remember that Matthew liked to arrange things in topical order, rather than chronological order. So if you want to know what order certain events happened in, read Mark instead of Matthew. Mark Chapter 11 says that Jesus did not cleanse the temple until after he had visited Bethany and cursed the fig tree. Instead of going in chronological order, Matthew used his usual topical approach and included the Monday afternoon action with the Sunday afternoon initial observation. On the other hand, Mark recorded everything in chronological order. These differences are not contradictory, they just show how Matthew and Mark arranged the records in a different order.

47. In Matthew 26:48-50 Judas came up and kissed Jesus, whereas in John 18:3-12 Judas could not get close enough to Jesus to kiss him.

This is not a contradiction because nowhere in John 18:3-12 does it ever state that Judas could not get close enough to kiss Jesus.

48. Did Peter deny Christ three times before the cock crowed (John 13:38), or three times before the cock crowed twice (Mark 14:30, 72)?

All four gospels mention the cock crowing. However, only the gospel of Mark gives us a specific number of times that the cock crowed. It is important to understand what the phrase "cock crow" means when used in Scripture:

Mark 13:35

(35) Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, **or at the cockcrowing**, or in the morning:

In this verse, the night watch is divided into four different parts. In order they are: "even", "midnight", "the cockcrowing", and "the morning".

We know, therefore, that "the cockcrowing" occurs sometime between midnight and morning. We also know that cocks have a tendency to crow at random times, including after morning. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that "the cockcrowing" refers to the literal crowing of a cock, since this crowing could occur at any time, and does not necessarily occur between midnight and morning. Add to this the fact that cocks have a tendency to crow multiple times, and dividing a night watch by cock crows seems silly and incredibly unreliable. A far more likely explanation of "the cockcrowing" is that this phrase was used by the first century Jews to describe a time of day, not a literal cock crowing. According to Mark 13:35, "the cockcrowing" is the time between "midnight" and "morning", which in Jewish culture begins at sunrise.

Matthew, Luke, and John use the concept of “the cockcrowing” to refer to a general time of day. On the other hand, Mark’s more detailed account gives us a specific number of cock crows. Thus, Mark’s account is referring not to a time of day, but to the actual crowing of a cock twice.

It is possible that all four gospels record the same warning that Jesus gave to Peter, but they do so with different levels of detail. What is more likely, however, is that Jesus gave Peter two warnings - first warning him that Peter would deny Christ before the period of time between midnight and sunrise (Matthew, Luke, and John recorded this general warning) while Jesus warned Peter a second time that Peter would deny Christ before he heard a cock crow twice (Mark recorded this second, more detailed warning).

In conclusion, Mark 14:68 describes a literal cock crowing “cock crowing”, not “the cockcrow”, which is understood in first century Jewish culture to be a time of day. Therefore, the second “cockcrow” of Mark 14:72 is the same crow that signified the “cockcrow” time period as recorded by Matthew 26:74, Luke 22:60, and John 18:27.

The concept of “the cockcrow” being a time of day may seem strange, but in a time before wristwatches, people had to rely on their natural environment for timekeeping. Although a system of “hours” did exist, it was probably easier for the common man to divide time into just a few different parts, each marked by naturally occurring phenomenon such as the movement of the sun and the crowing of cocks before sunrise (although “the cockcrow” was a general time of day when cocks usually crowed, and was not necessarily dependent on their actual crowing in order for this time period to begin).

49. Jesus did (John 19:17) or did not (Matthew 27:31-32) bear his own cross?

Both, actually. Jesus began carrying his cross from the palace. The destination was Golgotha. Mark 15:21 tells us that the man forced to carry Jesus’s cross was “passing by on his way in from the country.” In other words, he was outside. So Jesus carried his own cross from the palace until they met Simon (the guy who carried Jesus’s cross) at some point along the journey. Simon then carried Jesus cross for another portion of the journey to Golgotha.

50. Did Jesus die before (Matthew 27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38), or after (Luke 23:45-46) the curtain of the temple was torn?

Let’s take a look at these verses:

“With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”

--Mark 15:37-38

“for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.”

--Luke 23:45-46

Note that neither Mark nor Luke say when the temple was torn in two. As I stated in contradiction numbers 45 and 46 above, the gospels were not always written in chronological order. We can't just assume that because it says the curtain was torn in two before it says that Jesus died, that it means that Jesus died after the temple curtain was torn in two. Both Mark and Luke are simply saying that the temple curtain was torn in two. Neither Mark nor Luke ever say “After Jesus died the temple curtain was torn in two,” or “before Jesus died the temple curtain was torn in two.”

So from Mark and Luke, we don't know when the temple curtain was torn in two. All we know was that it was torn in two. But Mathew comes to the rescue with the exact time that the temple curtain was torn in two:

“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.”

-- Matthew 27:50-51

Note how it says “At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two.” The temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom at the exact moment that Jesus died.

51. Did Jesus say everything openly (John 18:20) or did he speak secretly to his disciples (Mark 4:34, Matthew 13:10-11)?

It might seem like there's a contradiction here, because in John 18:20 Jesus says, “I said nothing in secret,” while in Mark 4:34 and Matthew 13:10-11, Jesus shares the meaning of parables with his disciples in secret. However, when we look at the context of John 18:20, we see that there is really no contradiction at all. A verse earlier in John 18:19, the high priest asks Jesus about his teachings. Jesus is right to say, “I said nothing in secret,” because he had done his teachings in public, often in temples. The parables Jesus shares with his disciples are not teachings, but rather illustrations of teachings.

52. Was Jesus on the cross (Mark 15:23) or in Pilate's court (John 19:14) at the sixth hour on the day of the crucifixion?

The times seem to contradict each other, but it is simply because Mark used a different time system than John. Mark used traditional Hebrew time, in which the hours began at sunrise and ended at sunset. At the time of the year that the crucifixion took place, the

sun would have risen around 6:00 AM and set around 9:00 PM, making 6:00 the first hour of the Hebrew time system, and 12:00 noon the sixth hour.

But John didn't use the Hebrew time system. Instead, he used Roman time, which is more like our modern time system, in which hours begin and end at midnight. On this system, the sixth hour would be 6:00 AM, the first hour of the Hebrew time system. At 6:00 AM, Jesus was in Pilate's court. He was then beaten continually until 12:00 noon, when he was on the cross.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all used the Hebrew time system. So why did John use the Roman time system? Matthew, Mark, and Luke were all written before John, and although Israel was occupied by the Romans at the time, the Hebrew time system was still the standard time system there. But the book of John was written much later, around 90 A.D., and John was living in Ephesus at the time. In 90 A.D., Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia, where the Roman time system was the standard time system.

53. The two thieves crucified with Jesus either did (Mark 15:32) or did not (Luke 23:43) mock Jesus?

Mark tells us that both thieves mocked Jesus. Luke tells us that one thief mocked Jesus, and the other defended Jesus. Mark and Luke don't contradict each other, but rather, we can combine these accounts to get a clearer picture of exactly what happened. That's the whole reason that we have four gospel records.

Both thieves mocked Jesus at first, however, after Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," one of the thieves had a change of heart and defended Jesus. Mark did not record that one thief defended Jesus, but he never said it didn't happen, and we know from Luke that it did.

54. Did Jesus ascend to Paradise the same day of the crucifixion (Luke 23:43), or two days later (John 20:17)?

Neither. I do not know why Shabir Ally claims that John 20:17 occurred "two days later." This claim makes no sense because John 20:17 takes place after the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus was dead for three days and three nights, so John 20:17 had to take place *at least* three days later.

In John 20:17, Jesus declares that he has "not yet ascended to the Father." This proves that Jesus did not ascend to Paradise on the day of his crucifixion. How then could he tell the thief on the cross next to him "Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise"?

The key to understanding how this verse coincides with John 20:17 lies in understanding the word “shalt”, and how it differs from the word “will”. While the word “will” establishes futurity, the word “shalt” (and its counterpart “shall”) establishes determination.

In other words, Jesus was establishing on that specific day his determination to be with the thief in Paradise. Thus, “Verily I say unto you, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise” does not mean the same thing as “today you will be with me in Paradise,” as many mistakenly believe.

The idea of using “shalt” to declare the date of one’s determination may seem strange to speakers of modern English, but this sort of language is supported by other passages of the Bible. For example, Saul promised Michal to David in marriage, saying, “this day thou shalt be my son in law in one of the twain.” However, Saul clearly did not mean that David would literally become his son-in-law on that specific day. Such an idea is absurd because Saul set a condition for David to fulfill before he would be allowed to marry Michal, and this condition took time. By stating, “this day thou shalt be my son in law” Saul was not saying that David would marry Michal on that very same day, but rather he was stating that on that day he became determined to see David become his son-in-law. Likewise, when Jesus said, “Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise” he was not stating that the thief on the cross next to him would literally be with Jesus in Paradise on that very same day, but rather Christ was stating that on that day he was determined to one day be with the thief in Paradise.

This interpretation of the word “shalt” (and its counterpart “shall”) is further supported by the third chapter of the book of Jonah, where God instructs Jonah to say to the people of Ninevah, “forty days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown.” When the people of Ninevah heard this, they repented and humbled themselves before God in sackcloth and ashes. Because they repented and humbled themselves, God changed His mind and decided not to destroy the people of Ninevah as He had previously intended.

If the word “shall” in Jonah 3:4 is interpreted as having the same meaning as the word “will”, then God is a liar, because He said that Ninevah would be overthrown in forty days, and yet forty days passed and Ninevah was not overthrown. But if we correctly understand the proper meaning of the word “shall” and how it differs from the word “will”, then the passage makes sense. By stating through Jonah “forty days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown” God established his *intention* to destroy Ninevah in forty days - an intention that changed when the people of Ninevah humbled themselves before God in sackcloth and ashes. Similarly, when Jesus used the word “shalt” to tell the thief on the cross “Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise” he was establishing on that day his *intention* to be with the thief in Paradise, and he was *not* stating that he would definitely be with the thief in Paradise on that day. If he had wanted to make that statement, he would have used the word “will” instead of the word “shalt”.

55. When Paul was on the road to Damascus he saw a light and heard a voice. Did those who were with him hear the voice (Acts 9:7), or did they not (Acts 22:9)?

The Greek word *akouo* is used in both verses. However, *akouo* can have two meanings. It can mean “to hear,” and it can mean, “to understand.” Paul’s companions heard the voice, but they did not understand it.

56. When Paul saw the light and fell to the ground, did his traveling companions fall (Acts 26:14) or did they not fall (Acts 9:7) to the ground?

The Greek word translated as “stood” in Acts 9:7 can also mean “to be still.” When Paul saw the light and fell to the ground, his traveling companions fell (Acts 26:14), and remained still (Acts 9:7).

57. Did the voice tell Paul what he was to do on the spot (Acts 26:16-18), or was he commanded to go to Damascus to be told what to do (Acts 9:7; 22:10)?

Acts 9 and 22 make it clear that Paul was told what to do in Damascus. However, in Acts 26 Luke (the author of Acts) doesn't worry about writing in chronological order, because at this point in the book the reader has already read Acts 9 and Acts 22, so they already know the story and its chronology.

58. Did 24,000 Israelites die in the plague in 'Shittim' (Numbers 25:1, 9), or was it only 23,000 Israelites who died (1 Corinthians 10:8)?

24,000 Israelites died in the plague in Shittim, just as Numbers 25 says. If we look at the context of 1 Corinthians 10:8, we see that it's not talking about the plague of Shittim, but rather it's talking about Exodus 32:28, where 3,000 men died. But wait a minute. How come 1 Corinthians 10:8 says that 23,000 died, when Exodus 32:28 says that only three thousand died? Here is another apparent contradiction, but just like the last fifty seven of them that I just listed, this one can be explained very easily. Exodus 32:28 tells us that three thousand men were killed in a huge swordfight. But if you keep reading, a few verses later in Exodus 32:35 it says that after the swordfight, more people died of a plague. The exact number of people that died in that plague is not listed in Exodus 32:35, but the writer of 1 Corinthians 10:8 knew from divine revelation that the number was twenty thousand. When you add the three thousand that died in the giant swordfight with the twenty thousand that died of the plague, a total of twenty three thousand died on that day, just as it says in 1 Corinthians 10:8:

Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

--1 Corinthians 10:8

59. Did 70 members of the house of Jacob come to Egypt (Genesis 46:27), or was it 75 members (Acts 7:14)?

There is no contradiction here as long as we examine these two verse carefully:

Acts 7:13-14

(13) And at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; **and Joseph's kindred** was made known unto Pharaoh.

(14) **Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred,** threescore and fifteen souls.

Genesis 46:26-27

(26) **All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt**, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls *were* threescore and six;

(27) And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, *were* two souls: **all the souls of the house of Jacob**, which came into Egypt, *were* threescore and ten.

Since the question is about “the house of Jacob” only, the correct answer is that seventy members *of the house of Jacob* came out of Egypt, as correctly stated in the Genesis account. Looking closely at the text, we see that the account in the book of Acts is not limited only to the house of Jacob. See here for more detail:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/17677678/Seventy-or-SeventyFive>

60. Did Judas buy a field (Acts 1:18) with his blood-money for betraying Jesus, or did he throw it into the temple (Matthew 27:5)?

The answer is yes. Judas tried to return the thirty pieces of silver to the priests, but they refused to take it (Matthew 27:3) so Judas brought back the entire amount of thirty pieces of silver (Matt 27:3) and tried to return it to the priests. When they refused to take it back, he threw the silver into the temple and left it there (Matthew 27:5). The priest s didn't know what to do with the money, but because it was “blood-money”, they didn't want to accept it as a normal temple offering and use it for temple use. So the priests used Judas's money to buy Judas the potter's field. In this way, they managed to give the money back to Judas, but in the form of a field they had exchanged the money for, and not the silver coins (they probably wanted to get rid of those unholy coins as soon as possible).

It had been previously, it was specifically written that these thirty pieces of silver would be cast to the potter *in the house of the LORD*.

Zechariah 11:12-13

(12) And I said unto them, If ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver.

(13) And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them to the potter **in the house of the LORD.**

This is exactly what happened, because the “the house of the LORD” refers to the temple, and by casting the pieces of silver into the house of the LORD, Judas indirectly casted the silver to the potter, since the priests of the house of the LORD took the money and gave it to the potter in exchange for the field.

There is no contradiction because Judas did throw the money into the temple (Matthew 27:5) and by doing so, he indirectly “purchased” (Acts 1:18) a field, because the priests used the money to buy a field for Judas. The Greek word translated as “purchased” in Acts 1:18 means “to obtain or possess” and therefore it can refer to more than just a literal “purchase”. By casting the silver into the temple, Judas ended up *obtaining* and *possessing* a field.

61. Did Judas die by hanging himself (Matthew 27:5) or by falling headlong and bursting open with all his bowels gushing out (Acts 1:18)?

Both! Acts 1:19 tells us that the place where Judas died was called Akeldama, or the “Field of Blood.” According to tradition, this field is located near a cliff by the Valley of Hinnom. With a rope around his neck, Judas tied himself to a the branch of a tree at the edge of the cliff. He then “fell headlong” off the cliff in order to hang himself. It is not clear whether the sudden yank on the rope or the rotting of his corpse caused his bowels to gush out, but either way, there is no contradiction between these two verses. The book of Acts provides us with more graphic details than the book of Matthew, but both accounts describe the same event.

62. Is the field called the 'field of blood' because the priest bought it with blood money (Matthew 27:8), or because of Judas's bloody death (Acts 1:19)?

There’s no contradiction here, because both passages agree that the field was called the “Field of Blood” because it was bought with blood money. Matthew 27:8 clearly states that it is called the “Field of Blood” because it was purchased with blood money. Then Luke affirms this in Acts 1:18-19:

With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.

When it says “Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood” it means that everyone in Jerusalem heard

about Judas buying the field with the reward he got for his wickedness, just as it says he did in the previous verse, and Matthew 27:8.

63. How can the ransom which Christ gives for all, which is good (Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:5-6), be the same as the ransom of the wicked (Proverbs 21:18)?

Mark 10:45 and 1 Timothy 2:5-6 make it clear that Jesus is a ransom for all. Proverbs 21:18 says, "The wicked become a ransom for the righteous, and the unfaithful for the upright." So was Jesus wicked? Not at all, because Proverbs is talking about a completely different type of ransom. Proverbs 21:18 is talking about the wicked being a ransom for the righteous. Christ, who was righteous, was not this type of ransom at all, but rather he was the righteous being a ransom for all, including the wicked. Proverbs 21:18 does not contradict Mark 10:45 or Timothy 2:5-6 because they are completely different types of ransoms.

64. Is all scripture profitable (2 Timothy 3:16) or not profitable (Hebrews 7:18)?

2 Timothy tells us that all scripture is profitable. But Hebrews lists a verse from the Old Testament and tells us that it is "weak and useless." This is not a contradiction, but rather it fulfills what God promised to do in the Old Testament prophecies!

I could probably write a whole book on this, but I'll try to keep this answer as concise as possible, although I encourage you to do further study for a more in-depth look at the two covenants which God established throughout history.

Just as it says in 2 Timothy 3:16, scripture is God-inspired, and is indeed useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training. That is a very general statement talking about all holy scripture which comes from God.

Hebrews Chapter 7 is talking about a specific commandment given to a certain group of people at a specific time. God established in the covenant he made with Moses, a system where the children of Israel would offer animal sacrifices in order for the people to make atonement for their sins. This was the Old Covenant. But that covenant no longer applies.

Let's take a look at Jeremiah 31:30-33:

*"The time is coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.*

*It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,*

*because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them,"
declares the LORD.*

*"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time," declares the LORD.*

*"I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.*

In this Old Testament prophecy, God told the people that a new covenant was coming. Unlike the Old Covenant, where the people had to make routine animal sacrifices to make atonement for their sins, it is prophesied here that the New Covenant will not be like the Old Covenant, but will be a final atonement for all the sins of mankind, once and for all, and God will finally forgive all of mankind, as it says in Jeremiah 31:34.

The Old Testament prophecies also talk about a messiah, or savior, who would start the New Covenant, a perfect man from the tribe of Judah who would be a priest unto God, and a sacrifice that would pay for all sin. And when this messiah pays the price for all of our sins, God will be satisfied to forgive us of our sins instead of punishing us for our sins. The coming of this messiah is prophesied throughout the Old Testament, especially in Isaiah Chapter 53.

Well, guess what? The messiah has already come, and his name is Jesus! And now that he has come, we are no longer to follow the Old Testament laws and animal sacrifices, for Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice, establishing the New Covenant, and setting us free from the laws of the Old Testament. Paul made this clear in the letters he wrote that are included in the New Testament, especially in the beginning of Romans Chapter 8.

No longer do we have to follow the Old Testament laws. But the Old Testament, and all holy scripture, is still profitable. The "former regulation" quoted from the Old Testament in Hebrews 7:17 was rendered useless by Jesus, meaning it no longer applies, for we are no longer under Old Testament law. But by no means does this mean that the Old Testament is not profitable. The Old Testament is the very key to understanding the New Testament.

Again, this is a very in-depth topic, and what I've written here only scratches the surface. There are a variety of books on how Jesus brought about the New Covenant, and I encourage you to continue your own study in this topic.

65. Was the exact wording on the cross, as (Matthew 27:37, Mark 15:26, Luke 23:38, and John 19:19) all seem to have different wordings?

John 19:20 says, "Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek." The different wordings are because Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John translated the text

from different languages. For instance, Matthew might have translated it from the Aramaic, and John from the Latin, and it could have been worded differently in each language.

But wait a minute. There's three languages, and four writers. That means two of them must have translated the wording on the cross from the same language, and therefore the wording would be the same in two of these accounts. Well, the wording actually is the same in two of these accounts. Let's take a look at these verses:

Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

-- Matthew 27:37

The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

--Mark 15:26

There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

-- Luke 23:38

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

-- John 19:19

Notice how Mark uses the same wording as each of the other three. He just does not include the entire sentence, but only the most important phrase, which is: "THE KING OF THE JEWS."

66. Did Herod want to kill John the Baptist (Matthew 14:5), or was it his wife Herodias (Mark 6:20)?

Herod wanted to kill John the Baptist. Mark 6:20 never says that Herod did not want to kill John the Baptist, it just says that Herod was afraid of John the Baptist.

67. Was the tenth disciple of Jesus in the list of twelve Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19) or Judas, son of James (Luke 6:12-16)?

Both, actually, because Thaddaeus was Judas, son of James.

68. Was the man Jesus saw sitting at the tax collector's office whom he called to be his disciple named Matthew (Matthew 9:9) or Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27)?

Both, because Matthew was also known as Levi.

69. Was Jesus crucified on the daytime after the Passover meal (Mark 14:12-17) or the daytime before the Passover meal (John 13:1, 30, 29; 18:28; 19:14)?

Jesus instructed his disciples to find a man carrying water, telling them that this man would already have a room prepared for them. In first century Jewish culture, it was unusual for a man to carry water, since this job was traditionally done by women. However, the Essenes were an unorthodox sect of Judaism who kept themselves separate from women, ate no meat, and celebrated the Passover on Tuesday nights, regardless of the year.

The man carrying water is a strong reference to the Essenes. In the orthodox Jewish culture of the first century, carrying water was a woman's job. However, because the Essenes kept themselves separate from women, an Essene man would have to carry his own water. The Essenes celebrated passover differently from the orthodox Jews. Essenes ate no meat - not even when celebrating Passover - and they celebrated Passover on Tuesday instead of the Wednesday when it was celebrated by the orthodox Jews that year.

Jesus was not an Essene, and he probably celebrated the orthodox Passover every year of his life on Earth, but during the year of his crucifixion, it seems he celebrated the Essene passover (which occurred the day before the orthodox passover) because he knew that he was going to be unable to eat the orthodox passover meal, because he would be being crucified that day.

The meatless Essene passover had no lamb, and thus it reminds us of Genesis 22:8, which states "God will provide the lamb". In Genesis 22, Abraham was willing to sacrifice his own son, but God stopped him and provided him with a ram instead. Similarly, God sacrificed His Son on the day of the orthodox Passover (the day after the Essene Passover), thus providing His Son as the Passover Lamb sacrificed for the atonement of all of mankind's sins.

In conclusion, there is no contradiction between Mark and John because Mark is referring to the Essene Passover meal that Jesus had eaten with his disciples the previous day, while John is referring to the orthodox Passover meal, which would be eaten later that day.

70. Did Jesus both pray (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42) or not pray (John 12:27) to the Father to prevent the crucifixion?

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all agree that Jesus did indeed pray alone to express his fears to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane, shortly before his crucifixion. John 12:27 does not contradict this, because when we look at the context of this verse, we see that Jesus is not praying alone in this verse, but speaking to a group of people.

In John 12:27 Jesus explains that, "it was for this very reason I came to this hour." In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, when Jesus is praying alone in the garden of Gethsemane, he expresses his fear, but he does not ask God to prevent the crucifixion, but rather he prays for God's will to be done, praying, "Yet not as I will, but as you will."

71. Did Jesus move away three times (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42) or once (Luke 22:39-46) from his disciples to pray?

There's no contradiction here, because Luke's record never states that Jesus did not move away three times. Just because Luke does not say that Jesus moved away three times doesn't mean that Jesus didn't move away three times. We know from Matthew and Mark that Jesus did move away three times. Mark and Matthew were written first, and Luke was written later. It wouldn't make sense for Luke to regurgitate minor details already recorded in Mark and Matthew.

72. When Jesus went away to pray, were the words in his two prayers the same (Mark 14:39) or different (Matthew 26:42)?

Who said that Jesus only prayed twice? He prayed two prayers that were the same, and a third that was different. After all, he went away from his disciples to pray in private three times, so it would only make sense that he prayed three times.

73. Did the centurion say that Jesus was innocent (Luke 23:47), or that he was the Son of God (Mark 15:39)?

Both. He said, "surely this is a righteous man!," *and* he said, "surely this man is the Son of God!" This is yet another example in which a "contradiction" between the gospel records is nothing more than one gospel record containing details that another does not. By combing the gospels, we get a clearer picture of exactly what happened. That's the whole reason that we have multiple gospels.

74. Did Jesus say "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" in Hebrew (Matthew 27:46) or in Aramaic (Mark 15:34)?

Jesus was speaking in a mixture of both Hebrew and Aramaic. The first two words ("Eli, Eli" or "Eloi, Eloi") seem to be a combination of the Hebrew *Eli* and the Aramaic *Alohi*. The next word "lama" seems to correspond with the Hebrew word *lamah*. The final word "sabachthani" seems to correspond with the Aramaic word *shebachtheni*.

In conclusion, Jesus said “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” in a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic. Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:35 agree on the wording used by Jesus, except for the first two words. According to Matthew, Jesus began his statement with “Eli, Eli” while Mark writes that Jesus said “Eloi, Eloi”. The most likely explanation is that Jesus said “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” twice - once with “Eli, Eli” and again with “Eloi, Eloi”.

75. Were the last words that Jesus spoke "Father into thy hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46), or "It is finished" (John 19:30)?

Jesus either said, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. It is finished,” or “It is finished. Father, into my hands I commit my spirit.” As usual, each gospel writer emphasized important phrases more than others, and left out phrases considered unimportant. But by combining the gospels, we can clearly see that Jesus said both of these things before he died. That’s the whole reason that there are four gospels. We can compare and combine them to get a clearer image of exactly what happened.

76. Did the Capernaum centurion come personally to ask Jesus to heal his slave (Matthew 8:5), or did he send elders of the Jews and his friends (Luke 7:3,6)?

Both, actually. He first sent elders of the Jews and his friends. Then he came to Jesus himself.

77. Did Adam die the same day (Genesis 2:17) or did he continue to live to the age of 930 years (Genesis 5:5)?

Adam lived to be 930 years old. Genesis 2:17 says that Adam would die if he ate the apple. But it never says *when* he would die. Adam did indeed die after he ate the apple. He died several centuries later, when he was 930 years old.

78. Did God decide that the lifespan of humans was to be only 120 years (Genesis 6:3), or longer (Genesis 11:12-16)?

Genesis 6:3 tells us that the days of man will be a hundred and twenty years. Obviously, this is an average value. If it were not, everyone would die at exactly one hundred and twenty years. Nowadays, most people don’t live past one hundred. But back in the book of Genesis, most people lived for several centuries. When you look at all of human history from Genesis until now, the average human lifespan would be around a hundred and twenty years, between our modern lifespan of about eighty years, and the Genesis lifespans of hundreds of years.

79. Apart from Jesus there was no-one else (John 3:13) or there were others (2 Kings 2:11) who ascended to heaven?

In John 3:13, Jesus says that no man has ever entered heaven. What Jesus said was true. This supposed “contradiction” stems from a misunderstanding of what the Bible means when it says that Elijah was taken up into heaven. There are actually three heavens in the Bible. The word “heaven” can refer to:

1. Heaven, the spiritual realm where Jesus ascended to the “right hand of God” (Deuteronomy 26:15).
2. Outer space, also known as “the heavens” (Psalm 8:3, Genesis 26:4, Deuteronomy 1:10, Deuteronomy 28:62, Isaiah 13:10).
3. The Earth’s atmosphere, commonly referred to in the Bible as “heaven” (Genesis 7:11-12, Job 35:11, Jeremiah 16:4)

So how do we know which heaven the Bible is referring to when we see the word “heaven” used in the Bible? It’s really just a simple matter of looking at the context:

Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

--2 Kings 2:11

So which heaven was it? It was the Earth’s atmosphere. We know this because in 2 Chronicles 21:12-15 Elijah writes a letter to King Jehoram, *several years after he was taken into heaven!* Obviously, Elijah would not have been able to do this if he had died there and his spirit was in heaven, nor would he have been able to do this if he had entered outer space, since he would have died instantly. The only logical explanation is that the whirlwind carried Elijah into the air (also known as “heaven”). Miraculously, Elijah survived, and several years later, Elijah wrote a letter to King Jehoram.

In conclusion, Jesus was correct. When Jesus said that nobody had ever entered heaven, he really meant it.

80. Was the high priest Abiathar (Mark 2:26), or Ahimelech (1 Samuel 21:1; 22:20) when David went into the house of God and ate the consecrated bread?

Jesus states that the event happened “in the days of Abiathar the high priest” and yet we know from 1 Samuel that Abiathar was not actually the high priest *at that time*; it was his father, Ahimelech. So is this a contradiction? Not at all. Would a statement like, “When President Bush was a boy...” be incorrect because he wasn’t a president when he was a boy? No, because he became the president later in life so we call him “President” even if

we're referring to a time when he was not president. Likewise, "in the days of Abiathar the high priest," does not mean, "in the days that Abiathar was the high priest," but rather it means, "in the days the high priest Abiathar was alive." If I said, "In the days that President Bush was alive," you would think of his entire life span, not just his term in office. The same applies here.

81. Was Jesus' body wrapped in spices before burial in accordance with Jewish burial customs (John 19:39-40), or did the women come and administer the spices later (Mark 16:1)?

Both, actually. He was wrapped in spices before in accordance with Jewish burial. Then later the women came to administer more spices.

82. Did the women buy the spices after (Mark 16:1) or before the Sabbath (Luke 23:55 to 24:1)?

Both. Jesus was crucified on Wednesday. Luke states in verse 54 that the women also bought spices after the Sabbath (the previous Saturday) and bought spices before the next upcoming Sabbath day (verse 56). They bought those spices after the second Sabbath.

83. Did the women visit the tomb toward the dawn (Matthew 28:1), or when the sun had risen (Mark 16:2)?

Let's examine these two verses:

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.
--Matthew 28:1

And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.
--Mark 16:2

When does the sun begin to dawn? It begins to dawn very early in the morning. There is no contradiction here.

84. Did the women go to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55-24:1), or to see the tomb (Matthew 28:1), or for no reason (John 20:1)?

We know from Mark and Luke that they went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices. The fact that Matthew and John do not list a reason for the women going to the tomb does not mean that there is no reason. Archeological evidence suggests that Mark's

gospel was written first, then the others. There would be no reason for Matthew and John to regurgitate minor information like the spices, if it was already recorded in the book of Mark.

85. When the women arrived at the tomb, was the stone "rolled back" (Mark 16:4), "rolled away" (Luke 24:2), "taken away" (John 20:1), or did they see an angel do it (Matthew 28:1-6)?

Shabir Ally is really clutching at straws here, since “rolled back,” “rolled away,” and “taken away,” all mean the same thing! An angel came and moved the stone so that the tomb entrance could be accessed. Even if Mark, Luke, and John do not mention the angel, that doesn’t mean that the angel wasn’t there.

86. In (Matthew 16:2; 28:7; Mark 16:5-6; Luke 24:4-5; 23), the women were told what happened to Jesus' body, while in (John 20:2) Mary was not told.

We know from John 20:1 that Mary Magdalene did come to the tomb and we know from the other gospel accounts that Salome and another woman named Mary was with her. As soon as Mary Magdalene saw the stone rolled away, she ran to tell the apostles. The angel then explained to the other women what had happened, but Mary was not there.

87. Did Mary Magdalene first meet the resurrected Jesus during her first visit (Matthew 28:9) or on her second visit (John 20:11-17)? And how did she react?

As I explained in “contradiction” number eighty-six, Mary Magdalene ran back to the apostles as soon as she saw the stone had been rolled away. So when Matthew 28:9 records Jesus meeting them, Mary Magdalene was not there. In fact, Mark 16:9 tells us that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which was after she, Peter and John had returned to the tomb the first time (John 20:1-18). Peter and John saw the tomb and went home, leaving Mary weeping by the entrance. From here, Mary Magdalene saw the two angels inside the tomb and then met Jesus himself.

All of this happened before Jesus appeared to the other women. By comparing and combining the different gospel accounts, we can get a clearer image of exactly what happened. Matthew 28:8 tells us that the women (Including Salome and another woman named Mary who was not Mary Magdalene) ran away “afraid but filled with joy,” to tell the disciples. They were afraid alright, so afraid that they never told the disciples, as it says in Mark 16:8. Then, Jesus suddenly met them in Matthew 28:9,10. He told them not to be afraid.

This is just a brief overview of what happened when Jesus was resurrected. For a more in-depth study, I recommend that you read 'Easter Enigma' by John Wenham.

88. Did Jesus instruct his disciples to wait for him in Galilee (Matthew 28:10), or that he was ascending to his Father and God (John 20:17)?

There's no contradiction here, because these are two different sets of instructions given at different times.

89. Upon Jesus' instructions, did the disciples return to Galilee immediately (Matthew 28:16), or after at least 40 days (Luke 24:33, 49; Acts 1:3-4)?

Matthew tells us that they went to Galilee, but he never tells us how long they waited before going or how long it took them to get there. Luke and Acts do tell us: 40 days. The fact that Matthew does not list a specific period of time does not mean that it happened instantaneously.

90. Did the Midianites sell Joseph "to the Ishmaelites" (Genesis 37:28), or to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh (Genesis 37:36)?

Joseph was sold to both the Ishmaelites and Potiphar. The Ishmaelites were traveling merchants that bought Joseph from his brothers. When they reached Egypt, they sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.

91. Did the Ishmaelites bring Joseph to Egypt (Genesis 37:28), or was it the Midianites (Genesis 37:36), or was it Joseph's brothers (Genesis 45:4)?

Genesis 37:28 tells us that the traveling merchants were made up of both Ishmaelites and Midianites. These merchants were the ones that brought Joseph to Egypt. Genesis 45:4 never says that Joseph's brothers brought Joseph into Egypt. Rather, it says that they sold him into slavery in Egypt, and they did, by selling him to the merchants which then sold him to Potiphar in Egypt.

92. Does God change his mind (Genesis 6:7; Exodus 32:14; 1 Samuel 15:10-11, 35), or does he not change his mind (1 Samuel 15:29)?

God does "repent" (to change one's actions) as He did in Genesis 6:7, Exodus 32:14, 1 Samuel 15:10-11, and 1 Samuel 15:35. These verses do not contradict 1 Samuel 15:29 because 1 Samuel 15:29 does not state that God *never* repents, but that God is not required to repent, "for he is not a man, that he should repent". This verse is saying that although men are obligated to repent when they sin against God, God is not, because He is not a man. God is greater than man (Job 33:12) and He does whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3).

93. How could the Egyptian magicians convert water into blood (Exodus 7:22), if all the available water had been already converted by Moses and Aaron (Exodus 7:20-21)?

The Bible clearly tells us that the Nile River was turned to blood, not all the water. In fact, Exodus 7:24 tells us that the Egyptians dug wells to get water, because they could not drink from the Nile. That's where they got that water that the magicians converted into blood.

94. Did David (1 Samuel 17:23, 50) or Elhanan (2 Samuel 21:19) kill Goliath?

David killed Goliath. 2 Samuel 21:19 does not say that Elhanan killed Goliath, but rather, that Elhanan “slew the brother of Goliath”.

95. Did Saul take his own sword and fall upon it (1 Samuel 31:4-6), or did an Amalekite kill him (2 Samuel 1:1-16)?

1 Samuel 31:4-6 clearly tells us that Saul killed himself. 2 Samuel 1:1-16 does not contradict this because it does not say that Saul did not kill himself. Rather, it says that an Amalekite told David that he had killed Saul. Obviously, this Amalekite was lying, because we know from 1 Samuel 31:4-6 that Saul killed himself.

96. Is it that everyone sins (1 Kings 8:46; 2 Chronicles 6:36; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8-10), or do some not sin (1 John 3:1, 8-9; 4:7; 5:1)?

1 John Chapter 3 does not contradict this, because it never says that some do not sin. I’m not sure why Shabir Ally sees a contradiction here. I assume he somehow misread the text.

97. Are we to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), or are we to bear only our own burdens (Galatians 6:5)?

Both, actually. Galatians 6:5 tells us to bear our own burdens, but it does not tell us to bear *only* our own burdens. Galatians 6:2 tells us to bear one another’s burdens. So we are to bear our own burdens, *and* one another’s burdens.

98. Did Jesus appear to twelve disciples after his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:5), or was it to eleven (Matthew 27:3-5; 28:16; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:9,33; Acts 1:9-26)?

After Judas committed suicide, another disciple named Mathias took Judas’s place, but was not counted as the twelfth apostle because he had only take Judas’s place very recently, and not everyone considered him to be a true apostle. So Jesus appeared to twelve men, but they are called “The Eleven,” because Mathias is not counted. 1 Corinthians was written much later, and by that time, Mathias had been with the other apostles long enough to be considered the twelfth apostle. So when 1 Corinthians was written, the writer included Mathias as part of “The Twelve,” instead of excluding him and making it, “The Eleven.”

99. Did Jesus go immediately to the desert after his baptism (Mark 1:12-13), or did he first go to Galilee, see disciples, and attend a wedding (John 1:35, 43; 2:1-11)?

Mark 1:12-13 says that Jesus went to the wilderness for forty days after his baptism. But it seems as if John saw Jesus the next day in Bethany, then in Galilee, and then in Cana, *unless* you go back and read the entire record from John 1:19. John the Baptist himself gives an explanation of the baptism of Jesus. It was "John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was." He refers to the event of the baptism in the past. Just look at the past tense used by John when he sees Jesus coming towards him in John 1:29-30 and John 1:32. While watching Jesus he relates to those who were listening to the event of the baptism and its significance. There is no reason to believe that the baptism was actually taking place at the time John was speaking. So there is no reason to believe that this passage contradicts that of Mark's Gospel.

100. Did Joseph flee with the baby Jesus to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-23), or did he calmly present him at the temple in Jerusalem and return to Galilee (Luke 2:21-40)?

Herod ordered all baby boys to be killed. After this, he would think that he had killed the messiah, so there was no threat to his position as king. During this time, Joseph could present Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem without any danger, because Herod was no longer hunting the messiah down. But after a short while, Herod realized that the messiah was still alive, and then Joseph fled with Jesus to Egypt.

101. When Jesus walked on the water, did his disciples worship him (Matthew 14:33), or were they utterly astounded due to their hardened hearts (Mark 6:51-52)?

Both, actually. Both Matthew and Mark agree that the disciples were astounded because they thought Jesus was a ghost, (Matthew 14:33, Mark 6:49). Matthew tells us that the disciples worshipped him. But Mark left out that detail (and Mark never said they didn't worship him, so there is no contradiction). Historical evidence suggests that Mark was written first, and then Matthew was written. If Matthew had access to the gospel of Mark (historical evidence and biblical similarities between the layout of the gospels of Matthew and Mark suggest that Matthew did have access to the gospel of Mark), then when Matthew wrote the gospel of Matthew, he would have noticed that Mark didn't mention that Jesus was worshipped, so Matthew would have included this detail. However, Matthew wouldn't need to write that they were utterly astounded, since that detail was already recorded in the gospel of Mark. By putting the gospel records together, we gain a full understanding of the passage. That's the whole reason we have four gospels.

Conclusion:

We conclude that there are no contradictions in the King James Version of the Bible.

If you think you've found a contradiction in the Bible, or if you have any questions about the Bible, please email me at matt@faithfirstmedia.com