

Handling Alleged Discrepancies

1. We have a presupposition that the Bible is true in all its parts.
2. There is always a possible solution to the problem.
3. If there is a problem that we cannot seem to resolve, it is not that the Bible is wrong, it is that our understanding of the problem is wrong.

Internal Historical Problems

- I. There is no need to have verbal identity in every parallel account. (Verbal identity would mean the exact same words.)

This is the problem when parallel accounts in different parts of the Bible seem to be contradictory.

Matthew 17:14-16

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

Mark 9:17,18

And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I speake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

Luke 9:38-40

And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

These quotations all appear to be different.

1. He may have said all of them. Each Gospel penman thus selected a part of the conversation.
2. He may have said none of them. Jesus spoke in Aramaic and we are reading an English translation of a Greek manuscript.

Note: We do not hold every record to be explicit, verbatim account. This also does not diminish its inspiration or authority. In fact, it strongly argues for its authenticity.

- II. Some accounts in the Bible are supplementary. (Each passage contributes to the whole picture.)
- III. Sometimes what we interpret as the same event in differing passages are in fact two different events.
- IV. Different penman had different purposes in mind when penning a particular passage. (I.e. the Gospel records speak to different people groups, The Jew (Matthew), The Greek (Luke), The Roman (Mark), The Gentile (John))

- V. Christ said and did similar things on different occasions.
- VI. Rules for writing history then were different. The Bible is not necessarily trying to make scientific statements. For example, numbers oftentimes are mentioned as whole numbers versus a precise account. (This is sometimes called using ‘phenomenological language.’ Phenomenological language— is the language of everyday appearances, in other words when the Sun is said to rise, it is not making a scientific statement but rather communicating what is readily seen by natural observation. Even a scientist does not go around talking about watching the earth rotate when watching a sunset with their spouse.)

New Testament Quotations of the Old Testament

- I. The Old Testament is written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek. (Sometimes the New Testament Writers seem to quote from the Septuagint.)
- II. Often there is no attempt to make a direct quotation.
- III. God as the Author has the right to interpret His own words.
- IV. There are quotations in the Bible that quote from extrabiblical sources or are quoting sources that no longer exist.

Archaeological Discrepancies

- I. Many discoveries have been made that consistently validate Biblical records.
- II. When discoveries seem to conflict, **there is either a misinterpretation of the facts of the discovery or a misinterpretation of the Bible.** (In other words, Let God be true and every man a liar. For example, popular thought in times past was that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because there was no writing during the time that Moses lived. But now archaeology has found many examples of written language before Moses’ time.)

Alleged Scientific Discrepancies

Miracles – Many who are scientifically minded see the miracles presented in the Bible as a discrepancy.

- I. **The problem is not actually scientific, but rather philosophical.** If one presupposes that an all-powerful God exists, there is no problem with God working outside of the normal laws we observe today. If one presupposed that an all-powerful God does not exist, then miracles cannot take place because everything has to operate under empirical evidence (What we can see, observe and measure).
- II. **Historical evidence is based upon the validity of witnesses.** (Of which the Bible has very credible witnesses.)

Scientific Theories – Many revolve around creation. Because of this, there is no way to disprove either side. Keep in mind the following:

- I. **The Bible was not given to man as a science book.** (God’s purpose is to reveal Himself and also the way of Salvation. This does not mean that the Bible does not present any “scientific truth.”)
- II. **Scientific Theories are just that, they are theories.**