

A Few Bible Difficulties

“The Gospels Are Filled With Contradictions!”

Your First Response...

“Will you show me what you think is the most problematic passage in the New Testament/Gospels?”

- Challenge the cliché.
- Assertions are not the same as evidence. Asserting that there are contradictions is not the same as demonstrating that there are contradictions.

A Quick Reminder

- Many difficulties are explained away when...
 - The word “contradiction” is properly defined. Differences are not contradictions.
 - We properly understand the historical/cultural differences that exist between us and the biblical audience.
 - We remember that there are different authors who have different intentions and goals when writing.

A Few Simple Examples...

How did Judas die?

“So he [Judas] threw the silver into the temple and departed. Then he went and hanged himself” (Matt. 27:5)

“Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out” (Acts 1:18)

- Which is it? Hanging or throwing himself?

A Few Simple Examples...

- Answer: It could be both.

Some points...

- The book of Acts speaks only of Judas falling.
- Judas hung himself and his bloated corpse eventually tore resulting in it falling to the ground.
- Touching corpses resulted in uncleanness.
- Death by hanging from a tree resulted in being cursed.
- Comparison/contrast being employed.

A Few Simple Examples...

- Should we display or hide our good works?

“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
(Matt. 5:16)

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 6:1)

- Which is it?

A Few Quick Examples...

- Answer: It depends on our motives.
 - Christians should be known as “do-gooders” because it can be a means to bring men to Christ resulting in the worship of the Father. If that is our motive, then practice your works before men.
 - Christians, however, should be careful about doing good works before men if we do so to draw attention to ourselves. If our ego is in the way, it is better to practice our good works in secret.
- So Jesus is talking about two different situations.

A Few Quick Examples...

- When was Jesus Crucified?

“Now it was nine in the morning when they crucified him” (Mark 15:25)

“It was the preparation day for the Passover, and it was about noon. Then he told the Jews, 'Here is your king!' They shouted, 'Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!’” (John 19:14-15)

- Was Jesus crucified in the morning or noon?

A Few Quick Examples...

- Answer: Probably both.
 - In same area, there were two cultures (Roman and Jewish) that measured time differently.
 - It could be argued that Mark was referencing the Jewish time system while John was referencing the Roman time system.
 - It is common knowledge that John was targeting non-Jewish folks.
 - We have similar things in our culture. (Time Zones, New Years, Leap Years, Time Change)

Review and Final Words

- Review
 - Challenge the cliché
 - Differences are not contradictions
 - Historical/Cultural differences
 - Authors
- Final Words
 - Consults resources
 - Avoid Laziness