

Does God's Word, The Christian Bible, Contain Errors?

If the Christian Bible is God's inspired Word, it cannot contain errors.

But critics cite supposed Biblical contradictions and inaccuracies.

This article will address the supposed errors and prove that the Christian Bible is entirely correct.

Sceptics assert that the Christian Bible cannot be completely trusted and that it is full of errors, especially in areas such as history and science.

What is the truth about these so-called errors?

Let us examine some of the examples critics use to support their doubts.

The two genealogies

Matthew chapter one and Luke chapter 3 both give genealogies of Jesus Christ, but they appear to contradict.

Actually they complement each other.

Matthew's genealogy is clearly that of Joseph. Matthew recorded it for legal purposes, he was writing to prove to the Jews that Jesus Christ was the Messiah and the Jews' custom in keeping records was to trace descent through the father.

Legally, the Jews of Jesus Christ's day looked on Jesus as a son of Joseph, [**John 6:42**].

Also, Joseph's lineage was given to emphasise the fact that Jesus was to be born of a virgin, He could never sit upon the throne of David if Joseph were His real father, since Jechonias [or Jeconiah] was one of His ancestors, [Matthew 1:11-12].

Jechoniah, called Coniah in **Jeremiah 22:24-30**, was so evil God cursed him and his descendants and said "*no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah,*" [**verse 30**].

Jechoniah did have children [**1 Chronicles 3:17**] but was childless as having any descendants on the throne.

Joseph's children could not, therefore, ever sit on David's throne.

How, then, could Christ be a descendant of David and qualify to sit on the throne?

Now we see the need for the genealogy recorded in Luke 3.

Luke's genealogy is actually Mary's.

According to Jewish usage, Mary's genealogy was given in her husband's name.

The original Greek merely says Joseph was "*of Heli,*" [**Luke 3:23**]. In fact Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli, since his father was Jacob, [**Matthew 1:16**].

Unlike in Joseph's lineage, there is no block to the throne of David in Jesus' actual blood genealogy through Mary.

Mary's ancestor was David's other son, Nathan, [Luke 3:31].

To fulfil His promise to David to establish his throne forever, God honoured Nathan by making him the ancestor of the promised King who would sit on David's throne through eternity, [Luke 1:31-33].

But how could Mary transmit David's royal inheritance, the right to the throne, to her son, since all inheritances had to pass through male descendants?

According to Israel's law, when a daughter was the only heir, she could inherit her father's possessions and rights if she married within her own tribe, [Numbers 27:1-7; Numbers 36:6-7].

Apparently, Mary had no brothers who could be her father's heirs.

Joseph became Heli's heir by marriage to Mary, and thus inherited the right to rule on David's throne.

This right then passed on to Jesus Christ through Mary.

Both genealogies had to be recorded to establish Jesus Christ's right to rule on David's throne.

Joseph's genealogy shows Christ was a descendant of Jeconiah and thus could not sit on David's throne by inheriting the right through Joseph.

This further proves the virgin birth!

The curse on Jeconiah's line would have passed to Jesus Christ if He were Joseph's real son, but He was not.

Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit so was the physical Son of God as well as the Son of Man, through birth to Mary.

Jesus Christ was Mary's son through Nathan and can inherit the throne of David legally, because of Mary's marriage to Joseph, whose genealogy shows he was of the tribe of Judah.

Matthew's so-called mistakes

Matthew 27:1-9 [New King James] *"When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!' Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.' And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced,'"*

This presents three difficulties according to sceptics.

First concerning the death of Judas.

Matthew says Judas died by hanging himself.

But in Acts 1:18, Peter says Judas fell.

Contradiction? No.

The hanging must have been improperly carried out, since it resulted from Judas falling from the noose and bursting asunder on the ground below.

We do not have sufficient details to know whether Judas was dead before the fall, he may have been hanging dead for some time, and his body decomposed and fell, or he may have slipped from the noose!

Matthew's and Peter's accounts also differ as to how the 30 pieces of silver were used.

Matthew says the chief priests bought the potter's field, while Peter indicates Judas bought the field.

When we put the two accounts together we can conclude that Judas had made arrangements to buy the field. But when Judas saw Jesus was condemned to death, he felt remorse over his treachery.

He returned the 30 pieces of silver to the priests and then committed suicide in a potter's field.

The chief priests used the money to buy the field in Judas' name to bury aliens in.

Biblical passages add to each other's meaning, they do not detract from or contradict other scriptures.

The third "*difficulty*" is that **Matthew 27:9** purports to be a quotation from Jeremiah. But you can search the 52 chapters of Jeremiah's book and you will not find it.

Instead a similar quotation is found in **Zechariah 11:12-13**, although Zechariah mentions 30 pieces of silver and a potter, there is nothing about a potter's field.

Notice carefully Matthew's words again, "*then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet...*"

This prophecy was spoken by Jeremiah and for some reason not recorded in his book.

Matthew obviously had access to it, though, through other records.

"Historical errors" disproved

What some consider classic examples of errors in the Christian Bible's historical sections can be explained.

Some think the apostle Paul's statement in **1 Corinthians 10:8** contradicts **Numbers 25:9**.

Did 23,000 or 24,000 die in the plague?

When we read both accounts carefully, we see that the Old Testament account gives the total number of people who died in the plague.

Paul relates that most of them, or 23,000, died in one day, the remaining thousand died later.

Another possible explanation is that "*round numbers*" were used by both writers.

If the actual number was 23,500 it would be correct to round it off to either 23,000 or 24,000.

Time and again the Christian Bible's accuracy has been vindicated by archaeologists.

One example is Daniel's statement that Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon, [Daniel 5:30-31].

For centuries historians said Daniel was wrong, according to them Nabonidus was the last king.

But the critics were silenced when archaeologists dug up some Babylonian documents that stated Nabonidus named his son "Belsarusus," a variation of Belshazzar.

According to a document now called the Nabonidus Chronicle, Nabonidus "entrusted the army and kingship" to Belshazzar while he campaigned in central Arabia.

Belshazzar was therefore the second ruler of Babylon who reigned in his father's absence.

This explains why Belshazzar wanted to make Daniel the "third ruler" in the kingdom, [Daniel 5:16].

Critics also once attacked the historical accuracy of the account of **2 Kings 18**. It describes the struggle between King Sennacherib of Assyria and King Hezekiah of Judah.

For the sake of peace Hezekiah offered whatever tribute would satisfy the Assyrian ruler.

Sennacherib asked for 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold, [2 Kings 18:14].

A problem developed with this account when archaeologists found Sennacherib's official records, which described the settlement as being 800 talents of silver and 30 of gold.

This was 500 talents more of silver than what the Christian Bible recorded.

But more recent discoveries revealed that Assyria and Judah used different standards for calculating silver, just as countries today have different standards for currency.

It turned out that 800 Assyrian talents of silver equalled 300 Jewish talents of silver.

The Christian Bible account stood vindicated.

Bible scientifically accurate

Did Joshua make a mistake in astronomy?

Critics cite Joshua chapter 10 and other passages as proof that the Christian Bible is scientifically inaccurate.

In order to give the Israelites more time to defeat their enemies, God lengthened the day by causing the sun to "stand still," [Joshua 10:12-13].

Didn't Joshua know that the earth rotates around the sun?

He probably did not.

Technically speaking he should have said "earth stop rotating!" But the Christian Bible was **not** written for astronomers, in scientific language.

Though the Christian Bible does give the foundation for understanding science, it was written in the language of the average human.

Technically, the earth stopped rotating during Joshua's long day but to the observer on earth the "sun stood still."

We still use “unscientific” expressions like “the sun sets” or “the kettle is boiling.”

Critics should not construe such expressions in the Christian Bible as errors in science.

Matthew 13:31-32 [New King James] *“Another parable He put forth to them, saying: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.’”*

Jesus Christ said the Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which He referred to as the smallest of seeds.

This is claimed to be an error in botany, since we know today that there are smaller seeds than the mustard seed.

For instance, mushroom spores are smaller, although some would not consider them seeds.

In any case, we must consider the audience to whom Jesus Christ was speaking.

Many of His listeners were farmers and the smallest seed they sowed would have been the mustard seed, they had no knowledge of anything smaller. Jesus Christ’s object was not to teach science, but spiritual truth.

All biologists know that the hare and rabbit do not chew the cud like a cow. Yet the Christian Bible says it does, [**Leviticus 11:6; Deuteronomy 14:7**].

If this was an error, it wasn’t Moses who made it, he only told the Israelites what God wanted him to say.

And God certainly knows what a hare does and doesn’t do, since He created them.

The answer to this difficulty is that the hare *appears* to chew the cud, and God uses that as a sign to help identify clean and unclean animals. In any case, the hare is still unclean because it “*divided not the hoof,*” the other requirement for clean animals.

Measurement of time

Many supposed contradictions in the Christian Bible relate to time and measurement.

Israel used both a civil and sacred calendar.

The civil year started in the autumn with the month of Tishri.

The sacred year began in the spring with the month Nisan or Abib.

If two writers disagree on the month and day of an event, we need to know which calendar they are using.

John 19:14 appears to disagree with **Matthew 27:45**.

John describes events **before** the crucifixion and says they took place about the “*sixth hour.*”

Matthew agrees with **Mark 15:33** and **Luke 23:44** when he says darkness covered the land **after** the crucifixion from the sixth to the ninth hours.

Is there disagreement as to when the crucifixion occurred?

The Jewish state was then under Roman control.

John used the Roman reckoning of time counting from midnight.

To John, the “*sixth hour*” was six o’clock in the morning.

But according to the Jews’ reckoning of time, which the other gospel writers used, this was the “*first hour*” of the day. The sixth hour, to them, was noon, Roman time.

The crucifixion occurred between these times.

The four versions do not contradict, they add to each other.

There are, in the Christian Bible, discrepancies that might at first appear to be errors.

As we have seen under examination they prove not to be errors.

John 10:35 [New King James] *“If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),”*

Jesus Christ Himself confirms that scripture cannot be broken, [Greek word “*luō*” meaning destroyed or dissolved.] **So there is a solution to all the so-called discrepancies.** The scriptures of the Christian Bible are unified in teaching the truth, [**John 17:17**] and is profitable [**2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12**].

The Christian Bible is the inspired Word of God and we can rely on its trustworthiness.

It is a sure foundation for our faith.