

Question:

If the Bible is infallible, why does there seem to be contradictory accounts within the Bible?

1. Why the Bible is infallible

- The Bible is inspired by God
 - “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” 2 Timothy 3:16
 - “knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:20-21

- Jesus has taught us that the Scriptures cannot be broken
 - “If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken” John 10:35
- He commissioned apostles to teach the church and promised to lead them into all truth.
 - “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”
John 16:13

- He has given his Spirit to open our eyes.
 - “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.” 1 Corinthians 2:14-15
- We receive his Word as the very Word of God.
 - “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.” 1 Thessalonians 2:13

2. Examples of Contradictions

- *THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION IN GENESIS CHAPTER ONE AND TWO*
 - Wrong assumption that chapter two is a different account of creation from chapter one.
 - Chapter two gives no account of the heavens and earth, light and darkness, creatures in the sea, etc ...
 - Chapter one gives us the statement of facts. Chapter two clarifies the details.
 - Chapter two, verse four starts off on day six, which is the beginning of the history of man.

- Distinguish the difference between Greek thinking and Hebrew thought.
- Greek is very logical and ordered (our current state of logic and thought).
- Hebrew thought related to history is “to state the general proposition and then to clarify the details and the particulars.”
- From Genesis 1:27 – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
- Genesis 2:4 – “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created ...”

- Verse 5 – “When no bush of the field [*or open country*] was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up – for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground”
- Does this talk about day three? NO.
- The author is talking about the state of the earth PRIOR to the fall and it is after the fall that these types of plants appear.
- Genesis 3:17(c) - 18 – “cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. (18) thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.”

- Why Genesis chapter one and two are not contradictory.
 - Matthew 19:4-5 – “He answered, ‘Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said “Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh?”’”.
 - Jesus refers to Genesis 1:27(b) – ‘male and female he created them’ and Genesis 2:24 – ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh’.
 - By combining the passages, not regard as separate.

■ *THE ACCOUNT OF DAVID AND THE CENSUS*

- 2 Samuel 24:1 – “Again, the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel and he incited David against them, saying ‘Go, number Israel and Judah.’”
- 1 Chronicles 21:1 – “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel”.
- Is there a contradiction?
- Did the Lord God incite David (who ultimately sins) or was it Satan?

- James 1:13-14 – “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”
- Job 1:6-12 and Job 2:1-7 – God and Satan conversing
- Zechariah 3:1-2 – “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Lord said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?””

- Author of 2 Samuel is unknown and 1 Chronicles is thought to be written by Ezra.
- If two different authors, both see the same events but report it differently.
- God allows evil, but is not the author of it.
- Allows sin to occur for His own glory and purposes.
- Genesis 50:20(a) – “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good ...”
- It is Satan who causes David to sin in both accounts.

- *THE ACCOUNTS OF JUDAS' DEATH*
 - Matthew 27:3-10 – dies by hanging
 - Acts 1:15-19 – dies by falling headlong
 - Two issues of contention
 - Who bought the field, Judas or the Pharisees?
 - Did Judas die by falling or hanging?
 - Answer to the first question – It was both.
 - Answer to the second question – It was both.
 - It is important to point out that a difference does not mean a contradiction.

- Matthew states Judas dies by hanging (v. 5)
- Peter states Judas fell headlong in the middle (of the field) and his bowels gushed out (v.18)
- The Acts passage assumes Judas fell from some height.
- It is important to highlight the similarities:
 - Judas is shown to be remorseful
 - The betrayal money was used to purchase the field.
 - It was called the Field of Blood
- Without the Matthew passage, the Acts passage would be harder to understand.

3. How to deal with difficult passages

- Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the word because:
 - He will reveal all things from God - John 16:12-15 – “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

- (14) He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (15) All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
- 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 – “But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’, these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.”
- Ask those who are more mature (i.e. Pastors, leaders) to shed their insight.

- Use the clear truths to help with the unclear passages. (i.e. John 14:6 – “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”)