

HOW CAN WE ANSWER THE BIBLE'S CRITICS?

A: ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

- I. METHODS for Resolving Discrepancies
 - A. Carefully study the CONTEXT of the passage in question
 1. The CIRCUMSTANCES in which the passage was written
 2. The REASON for writing the passage
 3. The PERSON addressed in the text
 4. The WRITER and TIME of writing
 5. Prior and later DEVELOPMENTS
 - B. Consider the legitimate use of FIGURATIVE language
 - C. Recognize that different ASPECTS of a truth may be EMPHASIZED separately
 - D. Check the ORIGINAL language or other TRANSLATIONS
 - E. Expect accommodation to EVERYDAY LIFE
- II. TYPES of Discrepancies
 - A. DOCTRINAL “contradictions”
 1. Salvation by FAITH vs. Salvation by WORKS (Eph. 2:8-9; cf. James 2:24)

2. The God who cannot CHANGE is said to “REPENT” (1 Sam. 15:11; cf. 15:29)
3. Some claim to have SEEN the INVISIBLE God (Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:11; cf. John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16)

B. ETHICAL “contradictions”

1. Prohibits MURDER but commands EXECUTIONS (Rom. 13:4)
2. Describes David as “after GOD’S HEART” who was guilty of GREAT SIN (1 Sam. 13:14; cf. 2 Sam. 11:27; 12:9)
3. Commands LOVING our enemies, yet permits CURSING them (Matt. 5:44; Eph. 4:32; cf. Ps. 6:10; 58:6, 10)
4. Jephthah vowed to sacrifice his DAUGHTER to the Lord (Judg. 11:31, 39)

C. FACTUAL “contradictions”

1. Did God create animals BEFORE Adam or AFTER? (Genesis 1:24-27; cf. 2:7-22)
2. Who was CAIN’S WIFE? (Gen. 4:1, 17; cf. 3:2; 5:4)
3. Who killed GOLIATH? (1 Sam. 17:50; cf. 2 Sam. 21:19)
4. What did the SIGN on Jesus’ cross say? (Matt. 27:37; Mk. 15:26; Lk. 23:28; Jn. 19:19)

III. REASONS for the Discrepancies

- A. To prevent presumption of COLLUSION or editorial REVISION
- B. To STIMULATE the believer to diligent STUDY of Scripture (Luke 8:15)