

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BIBLE DIFFICULTIES ON BIBLE

Gleason W Archer's Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties (two editions considered in this work) is one of the books at the forefront of religious systems that allege that there is no error in the Bible for it is the word of God. Let us quote from the book and put this claim to the test.

The book says,

Evangelicals do not try to prove that the Bible has no mistakes so that they can be sure the Bible is the Word of God. One might prove that a newspaper article is free from all mistakes, but that would not prove that the newspaper article is the Word of God. Christians hold the Bible to be the Word of God (and inerrant) because they are convinced that Jesus, the Lord of the church, believed it and taught His disciples to believe it. And ultimately their conviction of its truth rests on the witness of the Holy Spirit. Likewise evangelicals do not hold that inerrant inspiration eliminates the human element in the production of the Bible. True, evangelicals have stressed the divine authorship of Scripture because this is most frequently denied and it is this that gives Scripture its unique importance. But informed evangelicals have always insisted on a truly human authorship of Scripture. Even those who were willing to use the word dictation (as did Calvin and the Tridentine Council of the Roman Catholic church) always made very clear that they were not referring to the model of a boss dictating to a stenographer. Rather, they meant to stress the divine (as well as human) responsibility for the words of Scripture.

Comment: I agree that without God being the chooser of the words of scripture as much as man is the idea of a divine and infallible Bible is not sustainable. Verbal inspiration is the correct Christian position. Or it is the position that the religion needs to take for anything else shouts, "Another man-made religion!"

QUOTE: The First Law of Thermodynamics is often misstated to the effect that energy "cannot be created." However, science is based on observation, and statements such as "can" or "cannot" are not based on observation, but are dogmatic pronouncements. The First Law should be stated like this: "[So far as we can observe] the amount of actual energy in the universe remains constant." That is, as far as we know, the actual amount of energy in the universe is not decreasing or increasing. Stated this way, the First Law makes no pronouncement whatsoever about where energy came from, or how long it has been here. Thus, it does not contradict the Genesis declaration that God created the universe.

Comment: The Bible speaks of miracles such as Jesus rising from the dead. The authors of the book say that you should allow for the possibility that miracles happen and consider evidence that they do on the basis that you cannot really see if nature runs in a way that would always be predictable if we had all the information. If miracles happen the law is simply wrong. The law is a guess if hidden miracles happen. The miracle of Jesus has been hidden from most people so why not assume there are miracles that nobody knows about?

QUOTE: On the sixth "day" Adam was created, went to sleep, named all the (thousands of) animals, looked for a helpmeet, went to sleep, and Eve was created from his rib. This looks like more than 24 hours worth of activity.

COMMENT: If the author did not realise how many animals there actually are then he could imagine Adam naming them in a day. And the story plainly says that language and names for species started with Adam. This is a proposition nobody can accept. It's absurd and refuted by literally everything. Early man did not name animals but used them.

Another account in Scripture that is often considered scientifically and historically untenable is that of Noah's ark and the great Flood found in Genesis 6-8. But Jesus in His Olivet Discourse clearly affirmed that "as in those days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know it until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming [parousia] of the Son of Man be." Here again Jesus is predicting that a future historical event will take place as an antitype to an event recorded in the Old Testament. He must therefore have regarded the Flood as literal history, just as it was recorded in Genesis. The Exodus account of the feeding of the two-million-plus Israelites by the miracle of manna for forty years in the Sinai desert is rejected by some self-styled Evangelicals as legendary. But Jesus Himself accepted it as completely historical when He said, "Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died" (John 6:49). Then in the following verse He presented Himself to the multitude as the antitype, as the true and living Bread sent down from the Father in heaven. It is safe to say that in no recorded utterance of Jesus Himself, or any of His inspired apostles, is there the slightest suggestion that

inaccuracy in matters of history or science ever occurs in the Old Testament. To the scientific or rationalistic skepticism of the Sadducees, Jesus cited the precise wording of Exodus 3:6, where Moses is addressed by God from the burning bush (the bush that burned miraculously without being consumed) in the following terms: "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"(Matt. 22:32). From the present tense implied by the Hebrew verbless clause, our Lord drew the deduction that God would not have described Himself as the God of mere lifeless corpses moldering in the grave but only of living, enduring personalities enjoying fellowship with Him in glory. Therefore the Old Testament taught the resurrection of the dead. So far as the historicity of Adam and Eve is concerned, Christ implied the validity of the account in Genesis 2:24, where it is said of Adam and Eve: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh"(Matt. 19:5). In the preceding verse He referred to Genesis 1:27, which states that God specially created mankind as male and female—at the beginning of human history. Regardless of modern scientific theory, the Lord Jesus believed that Adam and Eve were literal, historical personalities. Similar confirmation is found in the Epistles of Paul ...

Likewise, in John 7:19, Jesus said, "Did not Moses give you the Law? And yet none of you does the Law."

Comment: This is clear that Jesus took a literal interpretation of the Bible and advocated it. Most Christians who condemn literal interpretations are just heretics or liars.

My note on the flood: "Unfortunately, the latest results show no direct evidence for the flood; however, this does not mean there is no evidence for the flood." (Rana, F., with H. Ross. 2015. Who Was Adam? A Creation Model Approach to the Origin of Humanity. 2nd edition. Covina, CA: Reasons to Believe Press.) This is a statement from Bible believers.

We must distinguish between evolution as a philosophy and evolution as a descriptive mechanism for the development of species from the more primitive to the "higher" or more complex stages in the course of geological history.

Comment: It does not follow that philosophical and descriptive evolution through different are separable. They are not. If life is about warfare as evolution says then that is both a description and a philosophy.

QUOTE: Abraham so trusted in God's love and power that he willingly obeyed because he believed God would raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19). This is implied in the fact that, though Abraham intended to kill Isaac, he told his servants, "I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and we will return to you" (Gen. 22:5, NASB). Finally, it is not morally wrong for God to order the sacrifice of our sons. He offered His own Son on Calvary (John 3:16). Indeed, even our governments sometimes call upon us to sacrifice our sons for our country. Certainly God has an even greater right to do so.

COMMENT: Glad to see an admission that the Bible advocates extremism or is open to it. Even if you are never called upon to be extreme the door is still open and that is the bottom line. That is the reason for rejecting the faith outright.

And why couldn't Abraham have meant we will return as in himself and his son's corpse? There is no hint of the resurrection or its possibility in the Bible up to that time so we cannot read later concepts back into what Abraham said.

Once you allow somebody to kill for they have a message from God the problem is showing that the message really came from God. Man would need to be wiser and smarter than God to know. It would mean you should just take their word for it if there is a God.

QUOTE CONCERNING WHY JOB IS VIRTUALLY CALLED SINLESS BY GOD: God's praise of Job was not absolute, as is clear from His later condemnation of him (in chap. 38) and from Job's own confession, "I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). Further, God only pronounced Job "blameless" before man, whereas Romans is speaking about no one, apart from Christ's work, being blameless before God (cf. Rom. 3:19).

Maybe it is the same with Jesus. The New Testament does not always try to make him likeable and does seem to describe behavior on his part that can only be called immoral.

We close this discussion with the episode that first ushers Darius onto the stage in Daniel's narrative. Daniel 5 relates the dramatic episode of the divine handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's banquet hall. The third term in that fateful inscription is PERES, which Daniel himself (in v.28) interprets as "PERES—your kingdom has been divided [perīCsa, from the same p-r-s root as PERES] and given over to the Medes and Persians [Pārās]"(NASB). This double word-play on the root p-r-s makes it absolutely certain that the author of this book believed that kingdom number one (the Chaldean Empire) passed directly and immediately into the control of the Persians, allied with the Medes, as kingdom number two. This leaves no room for the critics' theory of an earlier and separate Median Empire as being intended by the author of Daniel. That author must therefore have believed that kingdom number two was Persian (i.e., Medo-Persian), that kingdom number three (of Dan. 2) was the Macedonian-Greek-Syrian Empire, and that kingdom number four would overthrow and replace the Greek Empire. The only power that ever did that was the Roman Empire. Therefore, successful predictive prophecy cannot be eliminated from Daniel even by a Maccabean date hypothesis!

Comment: Hardly amazing for some empire had to overthrow it sometime! It does not mean Daniel knew of Rome.

QUOTE ANSWERING HOW GOD HAD ISRAEL STEAL FROM EGYPT WHEN IT LEFT:

The verb translated "borrow" is šā'al, which is the common word for "ask, ask for, request, inquire of." (F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament [Oxford: Clarendon, 1968], p. 981, cite three instances for the meaning "borrow"

Comment: The context is how the Israelites took the Egyptians property. As that was stealing the Christians resort to far fetched excuses for it. The idea of a nation being allowed to borrow all that property is insane.

QUOTE: PSALM 37:9, 34 - When the wicked are cut off, are they annihilated? PROBLEM: The psalmist affirms that "evildoers shall be cut off." Elsewhere where (Ps. 73:27; Prov. 21:28), it says they will perish (see comments on 2 Thes. 1:9). But, does being cut off forever mean they will be annihilated? SOLUTION: Being "cut off" does not mean to be annihilated. If it did, then the Messiah would have been annihilated when He died, since the same word (karath) is used of the death of the Messiah (in Dan. 9:26). But, we know that Christ was not annihilated, but lives on forever after His death (cf. Rev. 1:18; also see comments on 2 Thes. 1:9).

COMMENT: Rationalisation to get around the fact that Daniels apparent prophecy of Jesus denied the resurrection of Jesus. Nobody however says that cut off necessarily excludes annihilation. The context of Daniel demands we accept the annihilation interpretation.

QUOTE: The Babylonians had treated the Hebrews and their children with just such acts of brutality. Ultimately, God would bring the Medes and Persians to inflict His judgment upon Babylon. In the hands of God, the armies of the Medes and Persians would balance the scales of justice, for the Babylonians would reap what they had sown (see comments on Ps. 109:1ff).

COMMENT: So God uses unjust war to punish those who offend him. More callous extremist nonsense.

QUOTE: God's prescriptive will is that all be saved. His permissive will is that some be lost (those who refuse to repent). And God's providential will is that He will bring ultimate good, even out of evil. In this sense, all things are made for (i.e., appointed by) Him.

COMMENT: Permissive will means he does not necessarily approve of what he lets happen. Prescriptive will is God trying to stop it by condemning it and asking people to show some wisdom. Providential will is God actually ruining free will by turning a sinner's bad deeds against him or her so that good results.

QUOTE: PROVERBS 24:11- Does this verse justify breaking the law to stop abortions? PROBLEM: Solomon urged here that we "Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter." Does this justify illegal attempts to "rescue" babies by blocking pregnant women's path into legal abortion clinics? SOLUTION: This passage does not justify breaking the laws of God-ordained human government (cf. Rom. 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13), even if we

believe they are unjust laws. The only time believers are allowed to disobey the law is when it compels them to sin, not when it permits someone else to sin (see comments on Ex. 1:15-21). Otherwise, we would be obligated to block the doors to non-Christian churches or temples where they are sinning by worshipping false gods. We should disobey a law that compels us to worship idols (Dan. 3), but we should not disobey one that permits others to do so.

COMMENT: Interesting! But Jesus did not agree when he broke all laws to attack people in the Temple! The Bible commands extreme reactions against abominations such as homosexuality and idolatry. Abomination means "Take action against it 100% and don't delay".

QUOTE: JEREMIAH 20:7 - Did God deceive Jeremiah? PROBLEM: The KJV of this verse reads, "O Lord, thou has deceived me, and I was deceived." But, God is a God of truth who cannot lie (Heb. 6:18), nor can He tempt others to sin (Jas. 1:13). How then could He deceive Jeremiah? SOLUTION: The Hebrew word (patah) translated "deceived" by the KJV does not imply moral deception here. It can be translated "induced" or "persuaded" (NKJv and Nw note). It simply means that God persuaded or constrained Jeremiah into a ministry of which he was not fully aware of all the consequences. But this is a good description of marriage. And who but the most cynical would insist that all romance and courtship are moral deception simply because the couple could not foresee all they were getting into.

COMMENT: I would advise taking Jeremiah in the natural sense.

[Regarding a verse that says God did not command sacrifice in Jeremiah] liberal scholars invariably point to the Jeremiah passage as proving that the sacrificial regulations of the Mosaic Code were unknown in the seventh century B.C. as having any sanction from God or from Moses himself. This deduction is totally without foundation, however. Jeremiah 7:22-23 refers quite clearly to what God said to Moses and the Israelites in Exodus 19:5: "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples... and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" [NASB]. Apart from the Passover ordinance in Exodus 12, which had nothing to do with offerings on an altar, no sacrificial requirements were made by God to the Israelites until chapter 20, when the Ten Commandments were promulgated and the first reference to a sacrificial altar appeared in v.24. It should be carefully observed that the whole thrust of Jeremiah 7 is to the effect that for sacrificial worship to be acceptable to God, worshippers must come to the altar with yielded and believing hearts, with a sincere purpose to do God's will.

Comment: We still don't have any evidence that Jeremiah had the Torah as we have it today. It is still possible that he contradicted it.

QUOTE: EZEKIEL 16:49 -Was the sin of Sodom selfishness rather than homosexuality? PROBLEM: Ezekiel described the sin of Sodom as selfishness: "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy" (NIV). No mention is made of homosexuality or related sexual sins. Contrary to the traditional view, they were apparently condemned simply because they were selfish, not because they were homosexuals. SOLUTION: Sodom's sin was not only selfishness, but also homosexuality. This is evident from several facts. First of all, the context of Genesis 19 reveals that their perversion was sexual (see comments on Gen. 19:8). Second, the sin of selfishness related by Ezekiel (16:49) does not exclude the sin of homosexuality. As a matter of fact, sexual sins are a form of selfishness, since they are the satisfaction of fleshly passions. Third, by calling their sin an "abomination," the very next verse (v. 50, NKJV) indicates that it was sexual. This is the same word used to describe homosexual sins in Leviticus 18:22. Fourth, the notorious nature of Sodom's sexual perversity is revealed in the very word "sodomy" which has come to mean homosexual activity. Fifth, the sin of Sodom is referred to elsewhere in Scripture as a sexual perversion. Jude even calls their sin "sexual immorality" (v. 7).

COMMENT: Yes the Bible would see homosexuality as selfishness. Catholic doctrine is that sex without intending reproduction is abuse and says that consent for one person to abuse another does not lessen the fact that it is abuse.

QUOTE ABOUT GOD HATING SIN: Hatred in human beings is generally thought of in terms of strong emotional distaste or dislike for someone or something. However, in God, hate is a judicial act on the part of the righteous Judge who separates the sinner from Himself. This is not contradictory to God's love, for in His love for sinners, God has made it possible for sin to be forgiven so that all can be reconciled to God.

COMMENT: Don't forget that the Christians argue that God's hate for sin is worse than any emotional hate. It waters nothing down. Far from it.

QUOTE: EZEKIEL 18:32 - Does God rejoice over the sinner's doom? PROBLEM: According to this verse, God declares,

I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies [in his sins]." Yet in Proverbs 1:26, God declares to the sinner, "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes." But, these seem to be contrary attitudes toward the doom of the sinner.

COMMENT: It is obvious that God is indeed vindictive.

CONCLUSION: Attempts to show such a vile book is free from error are disgraceful. It does not deserve the attention except for condemnation.