

## ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BIBLE DIFFICULTIES ON JESUS

Gleason W Archer's Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties is one of the books (two editions considered in this work) 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. For Christians, the Bible is the word of Jesus for Jesus is God so they say that Jesus did not sit down and write any books but is still the person who is more responsible for what is in the Bible than the human authors were. Somehow both Jesus and man wrote the Bible. If Jesus is just a man, this claim amounts to spiritism or occultism.

The book goes,

**QUOTE ABOUT CONFUSION IN FAMILY LISTS IN THE BIBLE:** Others have proposed that perhaps Abimelech was another name for Achish. It was not an uncommon practice in ancient times to have two names. Gideon was also named Jerubbaal (Jud. 6:32; 7:1), and Solomon also went by the name Jedidiah (2 Sam. 12:25). It is possible that the name Abimelech was a recurring name in a certain dynasty of the Philistines.

**COMMENT:** Matthew and Luke had to show Jesus was Messiah but that is primarily done through showing the bloodline. A Messiah is the king sent by God and has to be a real king in body and soul. What use then is Jesus' genealogy given by Matthew and Luke if confusion is that rife? It amounts to saying they failed to show he really had a Messiah bloodline.

Attempts to say that both Matthew and Luke were tracing Jesus' line through Joseph are doomed to fail. It is supposed Matthew was about the legal royal bloodline and Luke the natural bloodline. The differences are put down to Levirate law. Levirate law allowed a dead man's line to be performed by his brother so that the children were not the brothers! A bizarre form of artificial insemination that transcends all biology! But this ignores how rarely such law was used and there was no way to show where it could apply. Where were the certificates for there was no other way to manage the system?

Is Matthew giving the lineage legally through Joseph? Then why does he write as if he is not? It reads like a natural lineage and thus that is what it is. He would have said. Luke could be giving the legal line too for he does not mention Mary though many wish to believe he is giving the natural bloodline through Mary.

**QUOTE** [was Jesus's alleged kingship/Messiah-ship annulled if he was a son of a divinely banned bloodline?]: **JEREMIAH 22:30** - Was Jehoiachin childless or did he have heirs? **PROBLEM:** Jeremiah was told here to "write this man down as childless." However, Jehoiachin had a son, Shealtiel, who is listed in Matthew 1:12. **SOLUTION:** First of all, the verse does not say he would actually be childless. Jeremiah was simply told to write him down "as if childless" (NI). Further, this is explained by the last part of the verse, namely, "none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah." This is true of His immediate successors. And it is even true of his long-range successor, Christ, who was not an actual son of Jehoiachin but only a legal son through his legal father, Joseph (see comments on Matt. 1:17). Jesus, however, was the actual son of David through Mary, His actual mother (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12ff; Luke 3:23, 31).

**COMMENT:** It still says Jesus was not Messiah for God is clear that even if Jehoiachin has children it will not matter – they will be non-existent in God's eyes. As if childless may mean that allowances are made for this man having had illegitimate children. It does not say any known children were around.

**QUOTE:** It should be noted that when the Hebrew verb *yāšab* ("sit enthroned") is used of a king, it implies a certain degree of permanence rather than so short a time as ninety days. As Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin was not permitted to sit on the throne and carry on the career of the Davidic dynasty. On the contrary, he was removed; and no son or descendant of his was ever permitted to reign as king thereafter on the throne of David. Zerubbabel may have been descended from Jehoiachin through Shealtiel.

**COMMENT:** Archer is playing lets pretend. The text rules out this man or his line being king and so it rules out Jesus his descendant.

**QUOTE:** [Jesus is clear that he got the expression abomination of desolation from the Bible author Daniel but scholarship denies that Daniel wrote that bit] If these words of Christ are reliably reported—as of course they are—we can only conclude that Christ personally believed that the historic personage Daniel was the author of the book that contained this eschatological phrase. Moreover Christ made it plain that the fulfillment of the prediction concerning this "abomination of desolation" yet lay in the future. It was not fulfilled by what happened back in 168 B.C., even though a type of this

abomination may have been erected by Antiochus in the Jerusalem temple.

COMMENT: Jesus did think Daniel wrote it but he erred in interpreting Daniel. Daniel meant 168 BC. A prophet who can't get the past right can hardly be trusted to get the future right. Jesus' promise to rise from the dead was only written down after the event. Prophecy is so important as it shows God has to be speaking that this speaks louder than finding the body that Jesus is dead.

QUOTE: MATTHEW 22:39 - Does Jesus want us to love ourself first or others? PROBLEM: Jesus says in Matthew that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. But, if we love ourselves first, before we love our neighbor, then this would be putting self before neighbor. Is Jesus teaching that we should be selfish? SOLUTION: Loving others as we love ourselves can be understood in different ways, but in no way is Jesus implying that we should be selfish. The Bible condemns "lovers of themselves" (2 Tim. 3:2). It exhorts us not to consider only our own interests, but also the interest of others (Phil. 2:4). There are three ways to understand the phrase, "love others as yourself." First, some believe that Jesus is saying that we ought to love others as we ought to love ourselves, namely, unselfishly. This, however, seems far too subtle and dialectical for Jesus' normally straight-forward moral assertions. It would have been more forthright to simply say do not be selfish than the tangled command of loving oneself unselfishly. Second, Jesus could have meant that we should love others as we ought to love ourselves, namely, properly. There is a legitimate self-respect or self love. Ephesians tells us to care for our own bodies, "for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it" (5:28-29). There is nothing wrong with a legitimate self-care and self-respect. The Bible condemns someone for "thinking of himself more highly than he ought," but urges him to think "soberly" (Rom. 12:3). In this sense, Jesus may be saying love others as you ought to love yourselves. Third, Jesus could have meant that we should love others as much as we do love ourselves. That is, He might have been saying that we should measure how we ought to love others by how we actually do love ourselves without implying that the way we love ourselves is correct. Rather, God may be simply pointing to love for self as the standard by which we should judge how much to love others. In this way, there would be an automatic check on our selfish love, since we would have to love others this much too.

COMMENT: Love is all about the motive. Legitimate self-love for a Christian means doing it for God and keeping it all about God. It is looking after yourself but not at all for your own sake.

QUOTE: Does Matthew 22:39 teach a godly love of self? Matthew 22:39 contains Christ's quotation of Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself (NASB). Some have inferred from this that Jesus taught a godly love of self, for one cannot very well love his neighbor unless he also loves himself. There may be a measure of truth in this, but it involves a somewhat different understanding of the word "love" than what is normally used. Certainly the second great commandment involves a proper regard, acceptance, and respect for oneself; but it seems to be quite misleading—if not altogether dangerous—to speak of the Bible as teaching self-love. Interestingly enough, there is only one passage in Scripture that speaks of self-love explicitly, and that is 2 Timothy 3:1–3: "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self [philautoi], lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving"(NASB). It is interesting to see the categories of character weakness and sinful perversion in which this philautoi appears. And it should be carefully noted that "lovers of self"are grouped with the "unloving"(astorgoi —lacking the natural affection toward one's own flesh and blood), "haters of good,"and "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."There can be no question but what the term "self-lovers" is presented here as a serious character weakness, a trait of sin.

COMMENT: Excellent! Today's self-love movement is just idolatrous sin in the eyes of Jesus.

QUOTE: MATTHEW 10:5-6 - Did Jesus come only for Jews or also for Gentiles? PROBLEM: Jesus told His disciples to "make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28:19), because He had "other sheep ... which are not of this fold" (John 10:16). Even the OT prophets declared that Jesus would be "a light to the Gentiles" (Isa. 49:6). However, Jesus Himself instructed His disciples, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans" (Matt. 10:5). Later, He affirmed, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). SOLUTION: These apparently contradictory commands refer to two different periods. It is true that Jesus' original mission was to the Jews. But, the Scriptures testify that "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (John 1: 11). The official Jewish position was to reject Him as their Messiah and to crucify Him (Matt. 27; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 18). Therefore, it was after His crucifixion and resurrection that the mission of the disciples was to go to the nations.

COMMENT: Jesus spent a lot of time trying to deal with the Jews. The resurrection may have been invented as a ruse to start promoting his brand of faith to Gentiles. Would Jesus spend so much time talking to wilfully deaf ears? To avoid Jesus being seen as a failure and time waster the resurrection where Jesus commands reaching out to all was necessary. Jesus was a Jew and a committed one and so committed that he preferred to bang his head against the Temple wall. He was a racist for nothing stopped him setting up outreaches to the Gentiles while he kept working on the Jews.

QUOTE: Mark 8:11–13 reads: "And the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from

heaven, to test Him. And sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, 'Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.' And leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side" (NASB).

COMMENT: Jesus is annoyed that they want a sign and says that no sign will be granted in those days. To me in the light of how Mark ends without any resurrection of Jesus appearances Jesus is saying that no sign of the resurrection will take place and thus if people say he rose they say that through faith.

QUOTE: Luke 11:23 reads (with Christ speaking): "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." Luke 9:50, however, quotes Jesus as saying, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us." The latter dictum seems much more charitable and kindly than the former. The difficulty is greatly alleviated by the fact that virtually all the Greek manuscripts that are older than the eighth century A.D. do not read "against us ... for us" (kath'hēmōn... hyper hēmōn) but rather "against you ... for you" (kath'hymōn... hyper hymōn). In other words, prior to that, all available evidence is for the reading "you." (The reason for this confusion is that by the eighth century these two Greek words of such different meaning were pronounced exactly the same—ēmōn—and are so pronounced by modern Greeks even to this day. There is a considerable difference between Christ Himself and His disciples, and there is therefore no contradiction whatever between the two statements.

COMMENT: This contradicts the encyclopedia's insistence that no copyist error affects doctrine. Compare, "he that is not with me is against me" with the alleged emended version, "he that is not against you/us is for you/us". The two do not mean the same thing. One is divisive and the other is welcoming and inclusive. It is claimed that as Jesus is so important that not to be for him is against him but the apostles are men so that cannot be said of them. But this does not take note of how Jesus identified himself with the apostles - even during the ministry they were his voice for one man in those days cannot really and literally and solely teach.

QUOTE: MATTHEW 13:34 - Did Jesus always speak in parables or not? PROBLEM: This text states distinctly that "without a parable He [Jesus] did not speak to them." However, Jesus gave His whole Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) without a single parable in it. SOLUTION: There are two qualifying factors that must be noted, one of which is stated and another implied. First, Matthew 13:34 states that Jesus spoke these things "to the multitude," whereas the Sermon on the Mount was given to His "disciples" (Matt. 5:1-2; cf. Luke 6:20), even though the multitudes apparently listened in (cf. Matt. 7:28). What is more, Jesus' statement may have only a reference to what He was doing at that time, not on every occasion. It does not say that He always and on every occasion spoke to a crowd only in parables. However, this interpretation is possible, since we have only a limited record of what Jesus spoke (cf. John 21:25).

COMMENT: It could be a contradiction. Mark shows Jesus hardly ever speaking plainly.

QUOTE: How could Zechariah son of Berechiah be the last of the martyrs? And wasn't he really the son of Jehoiada? In Matthew 23:34-35, Jesus says to the scribes and Pharisees who are plotting His death, "Therefore behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, ... that upon you may fall all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar." It is generally supposed that Jesus was actually referring to Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, who was stoned to death in the court of the temple at the order of King Joash, because Zechariah had the temerity to rebuke the government and the citizenry for their cultivation of idolatry. This is recorded in 2 Chronicles 24:20-22. But once this apparent error concerning the name of the martyr's father has been explained away as a textual error, then it is observed that Zechariah ben Jehoiada, who died 800 B.C., was by no means the last of the Old Testament martyrs; hence he makes a poor balance to Abel, who certainly was the first.

COMMENT: The error was more likely made by Jesus than the text. There is no evidence for a text error and why did nobody try to fix it? Calling somebody a martyr for God is a doctrinal thing so if Jesus got that wrong then he erred in theology. He was a false prophet.

JOHN 7:8 - Did Jesus lie to His brothers? PROBLEM: Jesus' unbelieving brothers challenged Him to go up to Jerusalem and show Himself openly if He was the Messiah (7:3-4). Jesus refused, saying, "I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come" (v. 8). However, only a few verses later Jesus "went up to the feast" (v. 10). SOLUTION: Jesus did not go up to Jerusalem in the way in which His brothers suggested. They suggested He go and be "known openly" (7:4). But the Scripture explicitly declares that "He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret" (7:10).

COMMENT: This is a stretched interpretation. The text is not about why he might go to Jerusalem but just about going. He lied.

QUOTE: When Jesus said to the multitude that challenged Him to work some miracle, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19), they grievously erred when they interpreted His remarks literally. John 2:21 goes on to

explain that Jesus did not mean this prediction literally but spiritually: "But He was speaking about the temple of His body. Therefore when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this, and they believed the Scripture."

COMMENT: He did mean it literally. For him his body was a temple. If he did not mean it literally then he was a fake prophet giving out predictions that could mean anything.

QUOTE: [The book speculates that the earthquake may have been the cause of moving the stone at Jesus' tomb] The earthquake could hardly have been very extensive; the women seemed to be unaware of its occurrence, whether it happened before they left Jerusalem or while they were walking toward their destination. There is no evidence that it damaged anything in the city itself. But it was sufficient to break the seal placed over the circular stone at the time of interment and roll the stone itself away from its settled position in the downward slanting groove along which it rolled.

COMMENT: So we have a natural explanation for why Jesus tomb was found open. Matthew says however it was an angel came down and rolled it away. But perhaps the angel was thought to have done this using the earthquake. "There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it". The text blames the angel for the earthquake - see Matthew 28.

QUOTE: The Bible says of Jesus' burial cloth that it was lying in a very unusual position. Instead of being spread out in a long, jumbled strip, it was still all wrapped together in one spot (entetyligmenon eis hena topon). Moreover, the soudarion ("long kerchief") that had been wound around the head of Jesus was not unwound and tossed on the shroud but was still wrapped together and lying right above it (vv.6-7). In other words, no one had removed the graveclothes from the corpse in the usual way; it was as if the body had simply passed right out of the headcloth and shroud and left them empty!

COMMENT: Rubbish. The texts only say that they were tidy. If the body dissolved into thin air that does not fit the Turin Shroud which seems to picture a Jesus who floated in the middle of the cloth anti-gravity style and then fixed the image. The tomb was not supervised all the time when it was open so anybody could have tidied up the cloths. A thief might leave the cloths in case they would help identify the body if he was found with it.

Miracles should not be assumed when the account itself gives no hint of assuming them. All it says is that the clothes were lying that way. To the unbiased the question arises - did somebody take Jesus clothes and all and leave those replicas of his burial wrappings to create a decoy or mystery? A good theft leaves deliberate puzzles.

QUOTE: From Peter's scanty attire (John 21:7), we gather that it was a hot summer night...

COMMENT: Jesus appeared after his resurrection to Peter who was not wearing much. If Jesus died in hot weather and was stolen from the tomb he would have been devoured by maggots in no time thus serving the purpose of those who wanted to believe he rose from the dead.

All attempts to prove that Jesus the Bible (the Bible calls Jesus the word of God and calls itself that too so in a sense it is claiming to be Jesus) is the word of God fail because the Bible contradicts itself and attempts to hide this are stupid, irresponsible and are fabricated. Disgusting is the only way to describe such determined efforts to defend and promote and use for worship such a twisted volume as if the blood splatters on it do not count.