**The Inerrancy of the Bible, No. 2 – BD43-01**

The inerrancy of the Bible is our subject. This is the second segment. We have found that among conservative Christians, all of them hold to the inspiration of the Bible, but many neo-evangelicals among the conservatives are in doubt as to the inerrancy of the original manuscripts, that is, that the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts are free of all error. The neo-evangelical conservatives often say that God did not intend to secure inerrancy in what are called peripheral matters, but only in those of faith and life. The question of course arises of how we decide what is peripheral and what has to do with actual faith and what actually has to do with our Christian life.

However, the fundamentalist conservative holds that inspiration insured the total inerrancy in both words and thoughts of the originals. Now many neo-evangelicals say that if we insist on the inerrancy of Scripture, we become obscurantists and ultra-fundamentalists. Now those are two dirty words that you should become acquainted with in ministerial talk. When one evangelical wants to cut down another he calls him an ultra-fundamentalist or an obscurantist. That means he’s just a do-do who’s standing … like a donkey in the road refusing to move. They also say that insistence on this will lose us all claim to the opportunity for successful dialog with scholarship today. If we insist that the Bible is inerrant, all of the scholars and all of the intellectuals will not talk to us, and for the neo-evangelical, this is a very hard low because he wants dialog.

This is something comparable to saying that when Paul stood on Mars Hill, and he proclaimed the unknown god to the intellectuals, the men of scholarship of Athens, this is to say that when Paul came to the subject of the resurrection that he should not have insisted on the fact that there is a resurrection, even though the Bible teaches it, even though God the Holy Spirit declared it, and even though Jesus Christ taught it. The minute he mentioned resurrection, Acts 17:32 says, “And when they heard the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others said, ‘We will hear thee again of this matter.’” The minute he mentioned the resurrection, they shut off the dialog.

Now the neo-evangelical in effect is saying what Paul should have done is buttoned up about the resurrection and not insisted on the resurrection because that’s going to cut out dialog with the scholarly people. But what did Paul do? Verse 33 says, “So Paul departed from among them,” and that’s the biblical doctrinal principle. If someone will not listen to the truth, you depart from them. This is exactly the principle by which the Lord Jesus Christ sent out His disciples when he said if someone will not listen to Bible doctrine, the Lord said, “Shake the dust of your feet off against them and go on to the next town.”

We are constantly plagued in local churches with the habit of people who want to concentrate on spiritual cripples. They are constantly zeroing in on the guy whose negative, and they want to devote all the attention of the local organization to somehow getting this negative personality to come around. A minister’s business is to explain the Word—clearly, intelligently, and as truthfully as he can, and that’s all God calls upon him to do. Then it is up to the priesthood of the believer to act according to the Word that he has heard. God will never hold a minister responsible for what you do with the Word that you hear. He holds each of us responsible for our response to the Word of God.

Paul was not concerned so much with having dialog with men of scholarship that he would button up on the truth of the Word of God. That’s what the neo-evangelical conservative says—take it easy and lay off inerrancy because this is a bone that is hard to swallow for the liberal. If you’ll just go along with him and say, “Yes, there might have been mistakes in the originals. They may have been mistaken in what they recorded. It’s not so much to yield that, is it? And right away the liberal will talk to us. He’ll look upon us and say, ‘You fellows aren’t as dumb as you thought you were. You are smart after all,’” and so. The liberal rejects both inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. He does this on the basis of his rationalism as expressed in higher criticism which rejects the supernatural.

The current nationwide ecumenical evangelism program that you’re hearing more and more about called Key 73 provides churches with a guidebook which is called the Congregational Resource Book. This guidebook lists certain authors which are recommended for study and reading in preparation for participation in Key 73. One of the authors which is recommended in the Congregational Resource Book is a liberal named Dr. Elton Trueblood. He wrote a book entitle Philosophy of Religion. In it he says, “Though some fringe groups still resist the fearless application of scientific inquiry to the origin, authorship, and composition of the Bible, the agreement among thoughtful people in this area is almost universal. In the area of biblical studies, the struggle for intellectual integrity has ended in victory. Yet we take victory so for granted that we fail to realize how phenomenal it has been. How amazing it is that it has been possible in spite of years of reverence for the very letter of Scripture to face the sacred writings with complete scientific honesty, boldly pointing out its mythical and legendary elements in both the Old Testament and New Testament.”

Now that’s a typical expression of the liberal’s attitude toward the Word of God—not words that fell from the mouth and the lips of almighty God, anthropologically speaking, but words that men invented, and therefore that came out as myths and legends and the other mistakes that they had and they incorporated. Well the neo-evangelical is seeking, though he is a conservative, to accommodate himself to this kind of so-called scholarship and intellectualism by yielding on the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scriptures, and this is an insult to God our Father. To challenge inerrancy is challenging biblical theism, and get the two connected. When you challenge that the Bible in its originals was not free of error, you’re challenging the nature of God Himself as the omnipotent God who is sovereign and in control.

So this morning we’re going to look at some of the purported mistakes in the Bible. Now let’s get it straight by what we mean by inerrancy. The liberals say the Bible does not claim infallibility nor does it profess to be free of error. Infallible means that it carries final authority in everything it teaches. It cannot teach any kind of deception. Inerrant means that the Bible contains no mistakes in the original manuscripts of doctrine, of facts, or of ethics. The Bible does claim to be the Word of God, and as such to be breathed from the mouth of God, and as such it automatically claims to be both inspired and inerrant. Since God cannot lie, His written Word has to be without error, and we are told that it cannot be broken simply because it is true.

The Lord Jesus Christ repeatedly made the point that the events which followed His arrest were the result of exactly what Scripture declared was to come to pass (Mark 14;21, 27, 49, Matthew 26:54, 56). What happened after the arrest was the result of the declaration previously of Scripture. It cannot be broken. The Bible clearly claims to be infallible by the phrase that it frequently uses—“as it is written.” When the Bible says something and adds, “as it is written,” that settles it. That’s authoritative. Nothing more has to be said because there is no error in this written record.

Now since God is omnipotent and He can produce an infallible Bible, any errors in the original manuscripts would have to be deliberately put there by Him. Then the book would not be inerrant. That raises the question that if any part of it is in error, the whole thing is suspect. How do we know where to trust it? How do we know why God put certain errors in and did not put others in? So you can’t justify this that it is only unimportant peripheral matters that are in error. Inspiration, in the very nature of the case, involves infallibility, and infallibility in the nature of the case requires inerrancy. Some people suggest there’s no harm in admitting that the writers made a slip of the tongue or a slip of the pen on some details of their memory, and these are all minor things. But if there actually are errors, then again, God is at fault, and he should have kept man from injecting his fallibility. Well we have no hint in the Bible that God did fail to preserve the book from man’s fallibility. The originals are trustworthy and the copies that we have today of the original languages are in all practical effects the same thing.

So many many times the Bible with further knowledge has been proven right. No other ancient document has been so consistently accurate as has the Bible, and the batting average is very great. Now this is not to say that we do not find difficulties in the Bible. We will try to show you a few this morning that we can come up with possible answers, but after we’ve said that, we’re not sure on the basis of the information we have what is the answer for this apparent contradiction, for this problem that exists within the Scripture. But we do know that the Bible has consistently stood up under critical examination, and as more information has flowed in, areas of contradiction have been cleared up. Areas of doubt have been clarified.

So the point is that if the Bible is proven to be in error, even once, just once, and the liberal understands this: He knows that if he can prove the Bible definitely in error just once, then the book is no longer trustworthy at all because you never know where else it may be in error. If God is going to give us a book where He says, “You have to obey what it says whether you like it or not, whether you agree with it or not. You can have no attitude toward My Word when it is truthfully explained and you understand it, except a positive response.” He cannot say that unless He gave us a book without one single error because then we know that everything it says we must believe. For that reason, the liberal does his best to find at least one error.

So as you listen to a liberal and his propaganda, you get the impression that the Bible is so error ridden that no intelligent person can deny the fact. However, most of these alleged errors are really old stuff, some of them as far as 100 year ago, and all of them have been adequately, in one way or another, refuted to unbiased minds. The liberal deceptively will treat difficulties in the Bible and say these are errors.

Often the Bible is vindicated on errors that it purportedly has had in the past as we have gotten more information. You remember we said that for a while the liberal said that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible even though Jesus Christ said that he did—he couldn’t have written them because they didn’t know how to write in Moses’ day. Archaeology has since demonstrated they knew how to write hundreds of years before the day in which Moses lived. It is the height of arrogance for anybody to declare with our limited state of knowledge that there are errors in the Bible.

The truth is that none of the errors that the liberals claim are irrefutable problems. We cannot intelligently say that the Bible contains a clear-cut error at any single point. We have serious problems in Bible study that we encounter, but there are possible answers, and if we had the information we could settle it.

So the Bible’s past record of accuracy is what we depend on. We dogmatically declare that it has proven itself accurate, and therefore we depend upon it. To challenge the Bible is to challenge God Himself.

**Alleged Errors in the Bible**

Alright, here are some of the alleged errors. Some of these are contradictions that result from copying. We’ve already seen that a great many of these are the results simply of copying from the originals. The doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration claims inerrancy for the original writings only. Textual criticism has produced, in effect, those originals. The errors which are present were not present in the originals.

**2 Kings 24:8 / 2 Chronicles 36:9**

So here’s one that you find in 2 Kings 24:8 that a liberal will point out to you. In 2 Kings 24:8, we have the statement that Jehoiachin was eighteen years and that he had reigned for three months when he was taken captive. In 2 Chronicles 36:9, it says that Jehoiachin was eight years old and that he had reigned three months and ten days when he was taken captive. Now obviously here is a contradiction of statement. One of the things to remember is that in the Hebrew language, eighteen is written as “eight and ten,” and it is quite easy to see that here is an error of copying in 2 Chronicles, where the “ten” was probably misplaced and became “ten days.” It was switched here to “ten days,” instead of being placed with “eight” as “eight and ten,” indicating eighteen. The Septuagint manuscript and the Syriac have “eighteen years of age” in 2 Chronicles.

Also the reason that we know that the “eighteen year” age is correct in 2 Kings is correct is because it also says he took his wives with him, and there aren’t too many eight-year-old kids running around with the wives going on into captivity. So we can put things together and come up with an indication of what the original was and how an error in copying interjected a mistake that was then recopied and recopied down the line. You find many of this type of attacks by the liberal but it’s easy enough to analyze, put it together, and say, “Here’s what happened in the course of the copying.” We have many examples of this and we can usually identify the correct one.

**Acts 9:7 / Acts 22:9**

Another error that’s often pointed out is relative to the conversion to the apostle Paul in the book of Acts. It would be very strange if Luke, who was a companion on Paul’s travels, could contradict himself in his very own book, and that’s what the liberal says he does. In Acts 9:7, it says that Paul’s companion on the Damascus road heard a voice speaking to Paul, but in Acts 22:9, it says that they did not. Here seems to be a clear contradiction. Well the Greek word for “voice” here is “phone.” “Phone” means “sound.” What the Scripture says is that the men which were riding with Paul when he was struck down by the light from heaven on the road to Damascus heard a sound from heaven, but what they did not hear was this sound as intelligible specific words of the message which was conveyed to Paul in Acts 26:14. For only Paul heard the words of the Lord Jesus Christ speaking from heaven in the Hebrew tongue. “Saul, Saul, why perescutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.” Now the men with him heard the sound from heaven, but they did not hear the intelligible distinct words from heaven, and there is no contradiction here at all. This is the type of contradiction which is due to false exegesis.

**1 Chronicles 21:1 / 2 Samuel 24:1**

Another error is claimed in 1 Chronicles 21:1. Here it says that Satan moved David to number Israel, but in 2 Samuel 24:1 it says that the Lord moved David to do so. Here you have something which is similar to Job’s case. For we know that Job was under persecution by Satan, but we also know that the reason he was under that persecution was because God permitted Satan to do it. So in effect what was the cause of persecution upon Job? It was the decision of a sovereign God to bring that persecution upon him through Satan as the agent. That’s what you have here. Indeed Satan did move David to number Israel, but it was God who permitted Satan in this case to move upon David and for David to be responding to Satan’s direction. We have several alleged contradictions of this type in the Scriptures which are simply one agent working for another.

**1 Samuel 8:7**

You have this illustrated in 1 Samuel 8:7 where Samuel is getting a little discouraged because of the way Israel is treating him. As Paul says in the New Testament, “The more I put myself out for you, and the more I spend myself for you, the less positive you are toward the Word of God. And the less I do for you, in effect, the more you would appreciate.” The Lord Jesus pointed out the same principle. This is inherent in the old sin nature and it takes a very mature Christian who has developed in the spiritual maturity structure of his soul to be able to resist what the Lord called “not honoring the prophet in his own country.” You and I constantly see believers who will break their fool neck for some distant religious personality that they have no contact with whatsoever, and who has in effect done very little for them directly, but they will not mind tearing to shreds the local spiritual leader whose life has really been put out on the line for them.

Samuel fell to this occupational hazard that ministers have and he was really blue and down in the mouth because Israel insisted they wanted to be like other nations. They were just hell bent and determined that they were not going to be God’s people. They were going to be like other churches and they were going to see to it one way or another that they were going to be like other churches, so they insisted, “We want a king. We’re tired of people coming a long and saying, ‘Where’s your king?” We can only say, ‘He’s up there.’ We want a king down here that can stand in the reviewing stand when the troops march by. That’s the kind of king we want.” So Samuel was pretty blue and the Lord said unto Samuel, “Harken unto the voice of the people and all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me that I should not reign over them. A minister has to learn that when he has sounded forth positive truth of doctrine his hands are clean and he need not expect to be thanked, to be appreciated, to be commended, or anything else. If he’s on the ball, he won’t, but he should be prepared to see that rejected, but not personally, but to know that God has been rejected. Here you have God’s agent working for God. The two join together so that in effect when David acted in numbering the people, Satan was moving him, but God was permitting.

**John 1:18 / Exodus 24:10**

Another contradiction the liberal brings up is about seeing God. John 1:18 says that no man can see God at any time. Exodus 24:10 says that Moses and the elders saw God. The liberal say, “Here’s a contradiction in the Scripture.” Well what we’re told in the Bible is that Moses was allowed to see God’s back, and the Hebrew there means “after effects.” After God had passed by in Exodus 33:23, Moses saw the after effects. No man including Moses and the elders have ever seen the essence of God in His deity. That’s what the Scriptures mean. They have never seen God in His Essence as deity, but we have seen God in Christ. He declared that He revealed the Father. Those who have seen Him have seen the Father. Those who came in contact with the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, the pre-incarnate Christ, were seeing and meeting God, but in the form of that angel of the Lord, in the form of that being. No man has ever seen God in His essence but we have seen God in other forms and in His effects.

**Variations in the Gospels**

Another attack is on variations in the gospel of the same incident. These variations are merely differences from a different viewpoint of the individual writer. He’s speaking about an incident, he’ll describe it from his viewpoint in each gospel, and these are not contradictions. These are variations of details. There are few if any flat contradictions of the same incident between the writers of the gospel. These writers may actually summarize a sermon by the Lord. Without using His very words they will convey what He said, but they will say it in a different way conveying the same thing.

Many of the reports that they gave on parables and teachings of the Lord could actually have been reports of incidents of different occasions—the same sermon preached in different places, and so on. So there are not any flat contradictions.

**The Inscriptions of the Cross**

The inscriptions on the cross are one that the liberals like to bring up. You have this inscription in the gospels. You have it in Matthew 27:37, Mark 15:26, Luke 23:38, and John 19:19. Now these inscriptions on the cross that each of these gospel writers report do not contradict each other. Let’s make that clear. They’re just different, and this difference again is due no doubt to the emphasis and the particular point of view of each gospel writer as he wrote that gospel. These were written to bring out different facets of the person of Jesus Christ. Also remember that the inscription put up by Pilate, we’re told, was written in Latin and in Greek and in Hebrew. These writers may be translating into the Greek from the Latin or the Hebrew. Therefore it would come out a little different in its wording. Probably the full inscription, as we put the gospels together, would be, “This is (which is found in Matthew and Luke) Jesus (found in Matthew and John) of Nazareth (found in John) the King of the Jews (which is found in all of them).” Then this inscription would be followed, as was customary, by the list of crimes for which the person was being executed. So when you put it together, there is no real problem here—just partial inscriptions emphasizing certain parts of that total inscription that was probably up there.

**Acts 7:14 / Genesis 46:8-27**

Another account is the number of people in Jacob’s family that went into Egypt. Acts 7:14 says 75. This happens to be quoting the Septuagint version, the Greek translation of the Old Testament which says 75. Genesis 46:8-27 in the Hebrew text says 70 persons. This is simply different ways of adding the people who were actually there. This includes Joseph’s five grandsons for one thing for a possible reason for the variation of these two figures. The Dead Sea Scroll fragments supports the Septuagint number of 75 in Exodus 1:5, but this again is a matter of how they counted it and is not a prime question of difference of numbers.

**The Creation Accounts**

The historical nature of the creation accounts is another attack of the liberals. The liberal says that Genesis chapters one through three are not history, but they are legend, they are myth in poetical form from a pre-scientific age. Jesus Christ, however, did consider them history, and He considered them descriptions of God’s supernatural work (Matthew 19:4). The apostle Paul considered the Genesis record of history as evidenced in Romans chapter 6. So there’s no conflict here with any proven facts of science. This again is a conflict with the fact that the liberal rejects what is supernatural. He does not like to say there is a God out there who said, “Come into existence, earth,” and it came into existence. They do not like to say that God supernaturally with His words spoke into existence the created universe. The supernatural is only a problem to the existentialist and the naturalist mood of our day. So you can’t challenge miracles just because the scientist says that we can’t reproduce them in the laboratory. The testimony for miracles is that the Bible calls them miracles and for the well-attested confirmation of the eye-witnesses who were on the scene. The reason that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is challenged is because this counters the philosophical bias against the supernatural.

One thing the unbelieving scientist is always silent about is where it all came from. No matter how far he pushes back evolution, finally he has no answer as to where the original chemicals came from, how the original substance came into being to start all this off. He just pushes things back millions and billions of years, then he just drops it, and he is silent. You can read evolution after evolution after evolution book but you won’t find any explanation as to where it all started from in the first place because he has no answer. Now the Bible is very clear where the absolute beginning was.

Another factor in connection with the creation account is that the liberal says that Genesis chapter 1 and Genesis chapter 2 conflict because they were written by different authors. The truth of the matter is that Genesis 1 deals with creation in general while Genesis 2 deals specifically with the creation of man. Genesis 1 is the account of creation. Genesis 2 is the account of Eden and man in it. When Genesis 2:4 says “generations” of the heavens and earth, the word means what they produced. Genesis 2 is telling us what God’s creation produced in the way of man, in the way of humanity, and in the way of life on this earth. So these are not conflicting accounts—Genesis 1 and Genesis 2—they’re supplementary.

All of this is in stark contrast incidentally to the accounts that we have from pagan people like the Babylonian accounts of creation. Those are just grotesque and weird, and no scientist ever feels compelled to answer the Babylonian account of creation, but they do feel compelled to answer the Genesis account because this bears the strike of truth. It’s a totally different situation.

**Abram Leaving Haran**

Another conflict we have is Abram leaving Haran. This is a real problem. The liberals love to dwell on this one. Genesis 11:26 says that Terah was 70 years old when Abram was born. Genesis 12:4 says that when Abram was 75 years old he left Haran which would make Terah 145 years old at the time. Genesis 11:32 says that Terah died when he was 205 years old which means that he died 60 years after Abram left Haran. Stephen, in speaking to the Sanhedrin in Acts 7:4, says that Terah died at Haran before Abraham left. Stephen says Abram didn’t leave Haran until Terah his father was dead. So here you have a discrepancy of 60 years to try to account for in some way. The liberal says that here you have clear-cut evidence of a mistake in the Bible.

Now one of the things that we must recognize is that Stephen was standing up before a hostile group of religious leaders who were out to take his life as a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Sanhedrin. They were, you may be sure, just sitting there critically examining every word that this man of God had to say, but we have no indication in the passage in Acts that this antagonist Sanhedrin body made any protest to Stephen over this apparent discrepancy in order to discredit his witness. Nobody rose up and said, “Hey, you’re 60 years off in your figures. You’re mistakenly reporting the Old Testament. You think you have something to tell us about God and you can’t even get the facts of our Old Testament history straight.” Nobody stood up and said that. Stephen, as a matter of fact, in Acts 6:10 is said to be speaking in wisdom under the power of the Holy Spirit which means that he was inspired in his words.

Now you and I might say that Luke is just accurately reporting a mistake that Stephen made. But it is strange that the Jews of the Sanhedrin would not have objected, and it is strange that a man speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit could have made this mistake. We might also say that it may be a copy mistake in Genesis 11:32. Perhaps Genesis 11:32 originally did not have 205 years. Maybe it originally had 145 years. This, as a matter of fact, is what the Samaritan Pentateuch does have, but that’s not a reliable enough Hebrew text for us to conclude that that’s the case—that it is a copy mistake.

Genesis 11:26 may simply be saying that Terah *began* to have sons at 70 years of age, but Abram may have been born to Terah when Terah was 130 years old. It just may be that all it’s saying is that at 70 years of age Terah began to have sons, and Abram just happens to be mentioned first because he was the outstanding one, but he may not have necessarily been the first born. But the problem here would be that Terah, at 130 years of age, would have confronted the same problem that Abram did later when God told him that he was going to have a son. Abram had difficulty believing God that a man his age would be able to reproduce and have a child.

It may be that Stephen here is merely referring to the order of events as they are listed in Genesis. What he meant to say, perhaps, was that after the account of Terah’s death comes the account of Abram’s departure from Haran. That could be what he was doing—just listing in a chronological order, what came after what came after what.

Martin Luther said that he would be very grateful to anyone who was clever enough to solve this problem because we lack the information entirely to do it. We come up with possible answers such as we’ve mentioned, but it would be rash indeed for the liberal to conclude that on the basis of these figures we have a clean-cut once-and-for-all unequivocal mistake in the Bible. This is because there are ways of correlating the records and if we had more information the Bible’s batting average would undoubtedly be maintained at 1000.

**The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage**

Another problem we have is the problem of the length of the Egyptian bondage. Acts 7:6 says it was 400 years. We have the same thing in Genesis 15:13. Exodus 12:40 says it was 430 as Paul does in Galatians 3:17. There’s no real great problem between these figures of 400 and 430 years because it is recognized that in one case we are speaking in terms of round figures (400 years) and in the other case they’re speaking in the exact figure of 430 years. There is a worse discrepancy here that the liberal points out relative to Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:17 because Paul says that between the promise to Abraham and the Exodus and the coming of the law was 430 years, but the truth of the matter is that between the time that the Covenant of Promise was made to Abraham and the time they received the Law on Sinai during the Exodus was 600 years. So the liberal says here is another clean-cut case where there’s a mistake in the Bible of 200 years in this case.

Well the Hebrew historian Josephus came up with a solution which was to interpret Exodus 12:40 meaning 430 years as the total time the Jews were excluded from possession of their land since the promise was made to Abraham. In other words, the Jews, while sometimes actually dwelling in the land of Canaan did not have it as their possession, and 430 years talks about the time when they did not actually have it as their possession. This however, while being a possible answer is a strained answer.

It is better to view this as per what Paul was teaching in this book of Galatians which was a contrast to law and grace. What it seems we have here is that Paul is contrasting the giving of promise to Abram with the period of giving of law, contrasting these as two eras. So in other words he’s viewing the patriarchal period of promise as a whole and he calls that one terminal point. This is terminal point number one. Terminal point number two is the exodus with the giving of the law as Sinai, and he’s viewing these as eras. He’s saying that between the patriarchal period of the promise, between the period when we functioned as a people on the basis of God’s promises of what God would do for us and the period where we came under the legal system of the law, there was a period of 430 years, and this was the period when they were in slavery in Egypt. What Paul is referring to here is these two as terminal points. These are the termini boxing in the two sides of the Egyptian bondage. He’s contrasting grace and law. The actual time element is not the issue. Once you take Paul’s purpose into account in Galatians, the difficulty is not nearly so great. It is comparatively simple, as a matter of fact.

**The Reign of Jehoiachim**

Now in Daniel 1 you have another problem the liberal brings up. Jeremiah 25:1 and Daniel 1. Jeremiah speaks of the fourth year of Jehoiachim while Daniel calls the same incident the third year of Jehoiachim. Jeremiah equates the fourth year of Jehoiachin with the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, but Daniel says that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiachim. Now how could Nebuchadnezzar besiege Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiachim when he didn’t come to power until the fourth year of Jehoiachim? That’s what the liberal points out. Jeremiah equates the fourth year of Jehoiachin with the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel says Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiachim.

Well, all of these are cases of biblical chronology. We have many cases like this. There is a lot about biblical chronology that we would like to know. Because of this, the chronology of antiquity gives us problems with several passages in Scripture. Now in the case of Daniel and Jeremiah, the problem is not so great because Daniel is using what is called the Babylonian method of reckoning while Jeremiah is using the Jewish method of reckoning. The Babylonians in reckoning the years of the reign of their kings called the year the year of accession, whereas Jeremiah, operating on the Jewish system, would call that the first year of his reign. The Babylonians called the king’s first year of accession. Then they started counting the years as the first year, the second year, the third year, meaning the first year after the year of accession, the second year, and so on. But that means that the first year in Daniel would be the second year in Jeremiah, the second year in Daniel would be the third year in Jeremiah, and so on. So the two Scriptures are not in contradiction at all. Daniel is simply speaking according to the Babylonian system of reckoning, and he called the siege in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. That was the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiachim by Jeremiah’s reckoning, the third year by the Babylonian reckoning that Daniel used.

**The High Priest When David Ate the Shewbread**

One more here: In Mark 2:26, Marks says that Abiathar was high priest when David ate the shewbread, but 1 Samuel 21:1-6 says that Ahimelech was the high priest at the time of this incident. Now there are again several possible explanations for this. It may be that we have a textual error here, that Abiathar was the name that was inserted into the Greek text in Mark in place of Ahimelech which should have been there. Or it may be that Ahimelech was the high priest and that Abiathar was also performing priestly functions. This seems to be the case because Saul, on the basis of the advice of Doeg the Edomite, gave the command to execute the high priest Ahimelech and the priests. We’re told that Abiathar was one of the priests who escaped, indicating that he was a functioning priest. Later he did become high priest. He came to much more prominence among the Jews in Jewish history than Ahimelech did. It is conceivable that what Mark was doing here was speaking about Abiathar in terms of the high priest that he became. We do that today. We have a man who is not president now, and yet we speak of him later as “President” even in things that he did before he was president. He is always to us, “Mr. President,” even when he may have been nothing more than a senator or a congressman. If this is a similar case, Mark is speaking of Abiathar as the one who we all know in our Jewish as the high priest, although at the time of David eating the shewbread, Ahimelech was the high priest. It’s not really that kind of a contradiction.

**Moral Difficulties**

In brief, we want to mention the moral difficulties that the liberal says are errors in the Bible—these wars of extermination where God told them to go and kill out a whole people—men, women, and children, and everything they owned. The Canaanites, you will remember from our previous study, were an extremely depraved people morally, and they exercised a very corrupting influence. They were involved in demon worship including perversions, vile practices of child sacrifice, and so on. Whenever this influence was not removed in the land of Canaan, it served to destroy and to lead Israel away from God. God’s justice separates from Himself forever. This is vindicated in Scripture in Romans 3:5, 19.

So the moral sensibilities of the liberal center is not to be taken as a guideline against the moral sensibilities of a holy God who told His people to go in and exterminate this people from this land. Whenever they disobeyed Him they saw how right God was. Jesus Christ found the eternal punishment of unbelievers to be consistent with the love of God. God acted in full wisdom when He directed His people to do this.

**Vengeance Upon One’s Enemies**

Another object is the Psalms—these psalms that call for vengeance upon your enemies, like Psalm 55, 59, 69, 79, 109, and 137. These are all addressed against public enemies of God. They reflect a call for justice, not a call for revenge. The Psalms announce the faith, in effect, of the godless when divine judgment finally comes.

**The Eternal Punishment of Unbelievers**

The eternal punishment of unbelievers is also struck at by liberals as reflecting a mistake. These again are mistakes according to the liberal philosophy. They say this is cruel. Yet, this is justice when the love and the grace of God have been rejected. But the natural man doesn’t grasp the holiness of God so he doesn’t understand this. Jesus Christ did grasp the holiness of God, and for that reason He had to die for us.

**New Testament Quotations of the Old Testament**

There are New Testament quotations of the Old Testament. These are not always given verbatim. So the liberal says there are mistakes in quoting in the New Testament from the Old Testament. Well, the ideas of an author may be conveyed without quoting his words exactly, and that often is what the writer was attempting to do. The New Testament writers would quote from various translation, but they were giving the ideas. Behind it all, the doctrine on inspiration tells us that how they quoted it in the New Testament was the accurate presentation for the purpose of the spirit of God.

I would summarize this morning. This is just a smattering of types, but I think we’ve covered just about the kinds of general attacks that you would find from a liberal against the Scriptures. Even though you might hear something that you wouldn’t know exactly how to answer, I hope we’ve given you a little bit of indication this morning of the answers that are possible. With a little more background, a little more understanding, or a little more information, or even when we cannot answer it, to realize that when the Bible does get information it needs brought upon it, it has demonstrated itself to be accurate.

Jeremiah 8:9 says this: “The wise men are ashamed. They are dismayed and taken. Lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what wisdom in them? You decide. You’ve heard some of it this morning.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971