

Supposed Biblical Contradictions –
How do we answer them?

3 types of supposed contradictions –

1 A claim that two passages contradict one another.

2 Events described by two authors have details that do not agree.

3 Numbers of objects, people or years in two different passages do not agree

1 A claim that two passages
contradict one another

1 is illustrated by a claim that Mt
27.5 and Acts 1.18 contradict on
the manner of Judas' death.

Mat 27:5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Act 1:18 (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.

Did he hang himself or did he fall
headlong, burst open in the middle
and spill his intestines?

A living man falling headfirst in a field will not die by bursting open in the middle, spilling his intestines.

However, a man who has been hanging undergoes, fluid collection in the abdomen in two days autolysis beginning at 4 days. After hanging this much time, if Judas was blown down by wind or cut down the results of Acts 1.18 are quite likely.

2 Events described by two authors have details that do not agree.

What did Judas do with the 30 pieces of silver?

In the death of Judas, Mt 27.5 says Judas threw the money in the temple and then went and hanged himself. In Acts 1.18, Judas is said to have purchased a field, after which he fell headlong, bursting in the middle, with his bowels gushing out.

Read the two passages again.

Mat 27:5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Act 1:18 (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.

The idea of “agency” is involved.

Mat 27:3-7 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, (4) saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!" (5) And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Mt 27.6 The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood." (7) And they conferred together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers.

Much like a father telling a child to take a \$5 bill into the store and get bread. When someone asks, Who bought the bread? Two answers are correct, “the child bought the bread” or “The father bought the bread.”

Why, because the child used the father’s money to buy the bread.

3 Numbers of objects, people or years in two different passages do not agree.

How long did the flood last, 40 or 150 days?

Gen 7:17 Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.

Gen 8:3 and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased.

A little more reading helps tremendously!

Did the flood last 40 days or 150 days?

Gen 7:12 The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Gen 7:16 Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him. (17) Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. (18) The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. (19) The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.

The term used in 7.12 says rain fell for 40 days and 7.17 says the flood came and the water increased – obviously the rain and the flood of these two verses are the same. It is then necessary for the water to recede.

In June 1972, Hurricane Agnes hit Pennsylvania with 19 inches falling near Harrisburg. The Susquehanna river flooded within feet of the top of Conowingo dam.

Due to my research on jellyfish, we found the Chesapeake was turning into fresh water and on July 1, the bay, normally at 12 ppm salinity was instead at 0 ppm.

We left for the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point, VA, the following Monday, as we learned that it would take two weeks for the fresh water entering the bay from the Susquehanna to reach Gloucester Point.

The jelly fish did not disappear at Gloucester Point until the fresh water reached the mouth of the Chesapeake.

That was 19 inches of rain in central Pennsylvania. Consider the time for water to recede from Little Ararat, 4000 feet lower than Mt Ararat which tops out at 12,877 feet.

In the book, *Antiquities of the Jews*, (AD 93-94)

Josephus wrote:

“ the ark rested on the top of a certain mountain in Armenia ... However, the Armenians call this place, apobaterion, 'The Place of Descent'; for the ark being saved in that place, its remains are shown there by the inhabitants to this day. Now all the writers of barbarian histories make mention of this flood, and of this ark;" ...(1.3.5-6, trans. William Whiston)

The distance from Ararat to the Euphrates is 3000 km (1800 miles) or about 9 times the distance from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Gloucester Point, VA.

The water from Ararat would take about 140 days to drain to the Euphrates!

Did David take 700 or 7000
horsemen from Hadadezer?

2Sa 8:4 David captured from him 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers; and David hamstringed the chariot horses, but reserved enough of them for 100 chariots.

1Ch 18:4 David took from him 1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers, and David hamstringed all the chariot horses, but reserved enough of them for 100 chariots.

NET online Bible 8:4 David seized
from him 1,700 charioteers⁸

footnote 8^{tc} The LXX has “one
thousand chariots and seven
thousand charioteers,” a reading
adopted in the text of the NIV. See
the parallel text in 1 Chr 18:4.

In other words copying errors do exist. This is especially true of numbers because of their similarity

No important doctrine is changed by such an error in copying.