

Q&A: Do you believe that there are contradictions or errors in the Bible?

Antionin asks: *Do you believe that there are contradictions or errors in the Bible*

Hi Antionin,

Thanks for the question. It depends what you mean by “contradictions” or “errors.” Your question interacts with the nature and communication of truth, which is not always simplistically propositional.

For instance in Job 38:4-7 we read

*“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.
Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone –
while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?*

I assert that this paragraph is true. Yet it is ‘false’ and “in error” in some literal sense: Surely the earth does not have literal cornerstones and foundations; surely God did not use an actual measuring line! Yet the intention of this passage is clear and it is achieved – Job’s finitude in comparison to God’s magnitude is thoroughly and effectively communicated.

It is for this reason that I personally prefer to use the term “infallibility” when referring to the veracity of the Bible. It’s an imprecise term which some use to water things down to

mean that Scripture is only true when it needs to be. I don't mean it like that. I mean that Scripture always communicates truth, it achieves what it needs to be achieved, and this is infallibly true.

As for contradictions, it is hard to respond without specific examples to consider. Most of those that I have googled for usually end up at imprecision in language (or translation), different-perspectives on the same thing that aren't actually contradictory, or forcing one part of the Bible to speak to the context of another part. Even the most famous "contradiction" of the supposedly irreconcilable resurrection accounts can be analysed using these sorts of concepts. (I've had a quick look at this page and it seems to be a good example)

So to answer your question, in the sense that I've outlined, I do not believe that there are errors or contradictions in the Bible.