

Demolishing Supposed BIBLE Contradictions

VOLUME 2



Exploring Forty Alleged Contradictions

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& Tim Chaffey
EDITORS

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Introduction

A Good Defense Is a Good Offense

◁ Bodie Hodge and David Wright ▷

We often hear skeptics attack Christians with pointed questions in an attempt to poke holes in the Christian worldview. In many cases, they directly attack the Bible or the character of God. The debate usually goes something like the following:

1. The skeptic attacks with the first question.
2. The Christian responds to the first question.
3. The skeptic attacks with a second question.
4. The Christian responds to the second question.
5. The skeptic attacks with a third question.
6. The Christian responds to the third question.
7. It continues like this until they part ways.

Many times these debates can be heated, and we've even found numerous instances where the skeptic asks a question and gives no time for a response before he or she fires off another question. Other times, we've seen skeptics ask multiple unrelated questions all at once trying to overwhelm the Christian. But notice the tactic — attack and make the Christian defend his viewpoint until the battle is over. They are trying to make the Christian give up ground with all these attacks.

But in the battle over these humanistic religions and the Bible, should Christians simply be on the defensive? Sooner or later, the Christian needs to have a “Normandy.” Normandy was the

largest-ever-in-history amphibious offensive to the Nazi invasion of Europe. In other words, the Christian needs to take an offensive in the debate, rather than always staying on the defensive.

Turning the Tide

In fact, we are called to demolish arguments, but unlike the unbeliever (2 Corinthians 10:4–5; Romans 14:6), we need to do this with gentleness, respect, and graciousness (1 Peter 3:15; Colossians 4:6). We can respect a person and be gentle to the person with the same grace the Lord showed to us, while being fierce toward the false philosophy that has taken him or her captive (Ephesians 6:12).

The atheists, agnostics, humanists, and so on are not the enemy — for they are made in the image of God, just as we are, whether they acknowledge it or not. The false ideas of atheism, agnosticism, and humanism are enemies of the truth, and these enemies need to be attacked so the person deceived by them can realize their errors and see the truth. Sadly, many unbelievers do not realize they are merely being used as pawns in a chess match — a spiritual battle between good and evil.

We need to get these unbelievers to realize they have been duped. This is where an attack on their false philosophies becomes important. We need to show them the weakness of their religion. Otherwise, they will continue to think they are standing on a solid foundation, when they aren't. Our battle tactic should change to be as follows:

1. The skeptic attacks with the first question.
2. The Christian responds to the first question¹ and attacks the false philosophy. He should be gentle and respectful to the person but not hold back on the truth or neglect to use Scripture as foundational truth.

1. Answers in Genesis has shown on numerous occasions that biblical Christianity is defensible to hostile questions. We've answered the top questions in the creation-evolution and biblical authority debates, and we will continue to do so. Sadly, not all Christians know these answers, but we want to encourage you to have them. A great place to start is with the New Answers Books series (1, 2, and 3) and the general apologetics book series called *How Do We Know the Bible Is True?* You can also visit us on our website, www.answersingenesis.org.

3. The skeptic defends his philosophy. He will be forced to evaluate his religion to see if it really stands firm. This will be a first for many skeptics.
4. The Christian attacks the false philosophy again.
5. The skeptic defends his philosophy.
6. It continues like this until they part ways. Before this happens, the Christian should look for an opportunity to share the gospel message.

Notice this is not attacking the person but his or her philosophy. You may need to point this out to the person.

Practical Example (Bodie Hodge)

One day I was called to deal with a hostile professing evolutionary atheist who was questioning a young Christian lady. As I approached, the skeptic fired off question after question to the lady and did not even permit her to respond. Every time the Christian tried to respond, the skeptic would ask another question in a rather aggressive tone.

When I cut into the conversation the skeptic turned to me and asked who I was. I kindly told him who I was and gave my credentials. He said something sarcastically to the effect of “finally someone with an education.” Then, he launched into a tirade, one question after another attacking Christianity. Every time I tried to respond, he cut me off with another question.

So I changed my tactic. While he took a breath, I slipped in a question that almost silenced him. I asked him, “Why are you wearing clothes?” He was taken back and became speechless. So I asked again and then said something to the effect that “animals don’t get up in the morning and put clothes on. You are an atheist, right? You believe people are just animals, so why are you wearing clothes?”

Then he paused and thought for a moment and said, “Because it’s cold.” So I instantly came back and said, “So when it warms up you don’t wear clothes?” He was speechless. Obviously, he had not

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considered, in his professed worldview, why he wore clothes. Yet there he was with shirt and pants on. (Thankfully!)

I explained that he “wears clothes because in a literal Genesis, a literal Adam and a literal Eve ate a literal fruit and literally disobeyed God, and that caused us to be literally shameful. So we wear clothes as a result. And in your heart of hearts, you know God exists, and your actions reveal that you know you are shameful (Romans 1).”

Then I noticed he was wearing a wedding band. So I asked, “Why did you get married?” He said that it was because he loved his wife. I pointed out that love, in an atheistic worldview, is no different from sadness — both being chemical reactions in the brain that are essentially meaningless. Love exists in a Christian worldview where we are made in the image of a loving God.

I also pointed out that “getting married is contrary to what adherents of an evolutionary worldview teach. You have one basic goal in evolution — to pass your genes on to as many people as you can. Getting married and being faithful to one woman [which he said he was and I do want to encourage that by the way] goes against what a professed evolutionary atheist should be doing.”

I continued by saying that marriage comes from the Bible, specifically in Genesis, because God created a literal man and a literal woman, hence the first marriage. After all this, the atheist just stopped to think about what we had discussed (obviously not wanting to believe it). But his hostile tone was gone, and he realized that he didn’t have answers to defend his worldview. From there, we carried on a good conversation before parting ways with a handshake.

I had to neutralize his attack by pointing out contradictions in his own worldview. He assumed his view was true and was attacking the Christian view, but he was not really living out what he professed to believe. In many ways he was actually living his life as though he were a biblical Christian. I just needed to help him realize that.

Many unbelievers are used to attacking Christianity, but they are rarely required to defend their own worldview. By questioning them about it, we help them realize that their own professed worldview falls tremendously short.

Contradictions in the Unbeliever's Worldview

In our example we pointed out a few contradictions in the evolutionary atheists' worldview.

- Marriage versus no marriage
- Love being real versus love not being real
- Wearing clothes versus not wearing clothes (in public settings)

But there are a host of other problems in an atheistic worldview based on philosophical naturalism that are self-refuting. The following includes a few examples:

1. The consistent atheist says there is nothing immaterial. Those who say otherwise can't be atheists, as that would allow God, who is immaterial (John 4:24), to possibly exist. But this means that logic cannot exist either as it is immaterial (i.e., abstract). Logic has no mass and is universal (even the universe obeys the laws of logic, such as the law of non-contradiction). Being made in the image of a logical God who created and sustains the universe makes sense. Of course, many people do not perform logic correctly. That is because we have lived in a sin-cursed world ever since Genesis 3. Our fallible, imperfect minds do not always correctly "think God's thoughts after Him." But in the atheistic viewpoint, how can one maintain that there is no immaterial and yet refer to the immaterial at the same time in the same relationship?
 - a. Information is immaterial, so this can't exist either.
 - b. Truth is also immaterial.
 - c. Love, hate, sadness, and all other emotions are immaterial.
2. The consistent atheist says the universe came from nothing, is going to nothing, and nothing matters (i.e., no purpose). So why debate the subject of God, the Bible, Christianity, and so on (why have *this* purpose)? In other words, how can one have

purpose and have no purpose at the same time in the same relationship?

3. The consistent atheist says there is no morality (since there is no God who sets an absolute standard of morality). Yet many atheists say there are some absolute moral standards, such as not to murder.² I recently heard an atheist say, “I don’t believe in relative morality. Well I do and don’t. It’s great in a philosophical sense, but in practicality it doesn’t always work that way. Obviously, we have universal morality such as murder is wrong.” Evolutionary atheist Hitler believed murder to be acceptable,³ as did mass murderer Jeffrey Dahmer.⁴ How can one have an absolute standard and not have such a standard at the same time and in the same relationship?
4. Science comes out of a Christian worldview where God upholds the universe in a consistent fashion (e.g., Genesis 8:22; Hebrews 1:3). And God, who knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10; Revelation 22:13), has declared that this consistency will be the same in the future until the end (Genesis 8:22), so we have a basis to do science since things like the laws of nature should not change (i.e., allowing repeatable and observable science). But why would that be the case in an atheistic evolutionary worldview? How can one know things won’t change tomorrow? Furthermore, how can one know that one accident could explain another accident? There is no basis for science in an atheistic worldview. How can

2. If an atheist really was consistent in saying there is no morality whatsoever and opted to live that way, then they are saying that it would be okay for someone to shoot them, by their own worldview because such a thing would not be wrong in that worldview. Few atheists realize the implication of their worldview. Clearly, atheism is not the correct worldview though.

3. Hitler made this clear in the first and second chapters of his second book, simply called *Hitler’s Second Book*, a sequel to *Mein Kampf*.

4. “If a person doesn’t think there is a God to be accountable to, then — then what’s the point of trying to modify your behavior to keep it within acceptable ranges? That’s how I thought anyway. I always believed the theory of evolution as truth, that we all just came from the slime. When we, when we died, you know, that was it, there is nothing.” Jeffrey Dahmer, in an interview with Stone Phillips, *Dateline NBC*, Nov. 29, 1994.

one have no basis for science and yet do science? Unbelievers must borrow from the biblical worldview to make sense of the world. They must betray their professed worldview and stand on the Bible's truth to argue for atheism and oppose the Bible!

These are a few tips to utilize in a debate with people who have been duped into believing atheism and evolution. But others, such as agnostics, say that one can't know if God exists or not. But how can they know that? How can these people who claim that "one really cannot know anything for certain" be certain about not being able to know about God? Empiricists say that all truth claims must come from our senses, but when has *that truth claim* ever been confirmed by our senses?

This method works with all religious perspectives, even those that incorporate Christianity in their beliefs while mixing it with other beliefs (like those who mix evolution and millions of years, which are subsets of the religion of humanism, with the Bible). For more good questions to ask, please consult *The New Answers Book 3*, chapter 30 by Dr. Jason Lisle and Mike Riddle.⁵

Conclusion

Pointing out supposed contradictions in the Bible is really nothing more than a smoke screen to keep people distracted from the real issue — the numerous contradictions in the humanistic worldview. The sad thing is that skeptics don't realize it is just a smoke screen. Not only are they blinded from the truth of God's Word, but they also have a tendency to be blinded to the contradictions and inconsistencies of their own worldview. Scripture refers to such people as those "whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

As we have said in our many articles, our books, and our website (www.answersingenesis.org), the Bible cannot and does not contain any legitimate contradictions or inconsistencies. It is infallible in its original autographs. When we place our faith on Christ and trust His

5. Ken Ham, general editor, *The New Answers Book 3* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2010).

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Word, we build for ourselves a firm foundation (Matthew 7:24–27) rooted in truth. This truth is absolute, and it allows us to make sense of logic, morals, ethics, the human condition (sin), death, suffering, science, and everything else in the world around us. If the Bible is not true, then logic and morals would have no basis.⁶

One of the main things we must remember when reading Scripture is that, whether saved or not, we still live in sinful human bodies. We still read God’s Word with fallible limited minds, skewed perceptions, and broken emotions. Our first reaction to something we don’t understand might be to say, “Is this a contradiction?” or maybe, “This can’t be right.” But we need to keep in mind that we are reading words that are God-breathed and infallible. Even though we may not immediately see the solution, we must have faith that it does exist.

At the same time, we must carefully examine each instance, rather than jumping to accept potentially dubious solutions. Even with good intentions, some explanations just make it worse. For example, it does not help the case of inerrancy to say that the details are wrong, but only the big picture matters.

So what are we to do? First, we need to remember God’s Word is perfect and relevant in all areas of life (2 Timothy 3:15–17; 2 Peter 1:3). We are sinful, imperfect human beings (Romans 3:23). The correct approach would be to state, “How am I misunderstanding these two passages?” With further study of the Scriptures, guidance from Holy Spirit, and a desire to uncover the truth, you will likely find the answer.

But for humanists, no matter what sort of mental gymnastics they try to perform they will never be able to reconcile, explain, or make sense of the contradictions within their own worldview. So as you read this book and as you live every day, keep in mind the words of Psalm 118:8, which states, “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.”

6. For more on how these things only make sense in the Christian worldview, please read Dr. Jason Lisle’s book, *The Ultimate Proof of Creation*.

Genesis

Planting Confusion

← Tim Chaffey →

Were plants created on day 3 or day 6?

The “Problem”

Critics have charged that the first two chapters of the Bible contain a contradiction regarding the creation of the vegetation. Some old-earth creationists have pointed to the same passages to bolster their claim that the early chapters of Genesis need not be interpreted as historical narrative. The passages are found in Genesis 1 and 2:

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day (Genesis 1:11–13).

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst

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of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:4–9).

The Solution

There is a rather simple solution to this alleged contradiction. On the third day of the creation week, God made certain types of plants: “grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree” (Genesis 1:11). Each of these terms translates specific Hebrew terms for grass (*deshé*), the seed-yielding herbs (*‘eseb mazria zera*), and the fruit trees (*ets pariy*).

Beginning with the fourth verse of Genesis 2, the writer zooms in on the events of the sixth day. God made Adam (v. 7), the Garden of Eden along with the plants therein (specifically mentioned are the fruit trees, v. 8–9), and Eve (v. 22).

What about the plants described in verse 5? Why weren’t those created on day 3 when God made the other plants? The context provides the answer. Verses 5 and 6 provide a description of what the world was like prior to the creation of man. Two specific types of plants are translated from specific Hebrew terms: “plant of the field” (*siah hassadeh*) and “herb of the field” (*eseb hassadeh*). Hebrew scholar Mark Futato defines these terms as “wild shrubs of the steppe” and “cultivated grain,” respectively.¹

This verse is preparing the reader for what is going to happen next in the narrative. The cultivated *herbs of the field* were not around because Adam had not been created yet, so there was no one to till or cultivate the ground. The “wild shrubs of the steppe” are plants that often have thorns, and those with thorns would not have been present until after the Curse.²

1. Mark Futato, “Because It Had Rained: A Study of Genesis 2:5–7 with Implications for Genesis 2:4–25 and Genesis 1:1–2:3.” *Westminster Theological Journal*, 60:1–21 (Spring 1998): 4. It may not be the best practice to identify something as “wild” prior to the Fall, but the definition given here is based on how the term is commonly understood — not just before sin.

2. Kenneth L. Gentry and Michael R. Butler, *Yea, Hath God Said?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), p. 91.

While announcing the Curse, God said to Adam, “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both *thorns* and *thistles* it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the *herb of the field*. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:17–19, emphasis added).

As a result of the Curse, Adam would no longer have it easy. Instead of eating the abundance of fruit from the trees in the garden, he would need to till the ground and grow crops for food.³ This would be hard work, because the ground was now going to produce thorns and thistles.

Conclusion

A closer look at the text reveals there is no contradiction. In Genesis 2:5–6 the writer set up the narrative and informed the reader of what was to come. These verses provide a description of the world on day 6 before God created Adam. The grasses, fruit trees, and seed-yielding herbs were created on day 3 (with the exception of those within the garden), but the thorny plants and cultivated grains came about after Adam was created.

3. Genesis 2:15 does state that Adam was put in the garden to “tend and keep it.” The word *tend* likely refers to cultivation, but this still fits within the proposed solution since Genesis 2:5 states that the “herb of the field” had not grown yet since it had not rained and “there was no man to till the ground.”