Keeping Faith
in an Age of
Reason

Refuting
Alleged Bible
Contradictions

Jason Lisle

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Printed in the United States of America

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

We have all heard the claim "You can't trust the Bible — it's full of contradictions." But when asked specifically which verses supposedly contradict each other, most Bible-deniers can't actually produce any examples. They have *heard* that the Bible contradicts itself, and they have merely repeated that claim in ignorance, without bothering to check. This shows that most Bible critics are not interested in rational scholarship. Instead, they simply don't emotionally like the Bible, so they choose not to believe it. They then uncritically accept any claim they hear that happens to reinforce their uninformed choice. For the Bible critic, there is no need to research claims to see if they are actually *true*. It is enough that they support the critic's preconceived choice.

The Internet is a great place to find examples of such rhetoric. Moreover, the Internet allows the uninformed critic seemingly to support his claim by linking to articles written by other uninformed critics. Some websites include long lists of claims of biblical contradictions, sometimes with several hundred entries. These lists look impressive. And it would seem to prove the critic's point. With *hundreds* of contradictions, how could anyone trust the Bible? Many critics in their Internet debates mindlessly cite these lists as the definitive refutation of Scripture. After all, surely these hundreds of contradictions

have been thoroughly researched, deal carefully and fairly with the text, and represent genuine contradictions, right?

As it turns out, this is not the case. When we actually bother to check, we find that *not one* of the hundreds of listed examples is genuinely contradictory at all. In most cases, it is clear that the critic has simply not read the text carefully or in context. In other cases, it is clear that the critic is not reasoning properly — he has made a mistake in logic. And in still other cases, the critic has merely cited a *compatible difference*, which leads me to believe that some critics really don't understand what a contradiction is.

To demonstrate the veracity of Scripture, this book will address *every* alleged Bible contradiction that I have seen posted on the Internet. Whereas there may be a few obscure claims of contradictions that I have not seen, this list covers the most often used examples. It is instructive to go through each of these alleged contradictions and read the text carefully to see what the Bible actually states. This helps us to understand the biblical text better, which is always a blessing. And it increases our confidence in Scripture, showing that even the best of the best Bible critics have not been able to find a single, genuine contradiction in Scripture. It further demonstrates that the Bible critic's choice to reject Scripture is not a rational one but an emotional one driven by the critic's hatred of God. Thus, the critic's lists of hundreds of alleged contradictions shows only his own lack of scholarship and ironically confirms the truth of Romans 1:18–25.

All of the claims below have actually appeared on the Internet. In fact, a common list that critics cite contains every item we address in this book. Before we go through the list in its entirety, let's briefly discuss what a contradiction is *and what it is not*.

What Is a Contradiction?

It is always helpful to define any relevant terms at the outset of the discussion. And since our topic involves the concept of contradiction, we must define this term. Two statements are said to be contradictory when one *asserts* what the other *denies*. The statement "The sky is blue" is contradictory to the statement "It is not the case that

the sky is blue." Both statements together form a contradiction: "The sky is blue and it is not the case that the sky is blue." One can turn any statement into its contradictory statement by adding the prefix, "It is not the case that."

In logic, a contradiction is defined as "*A* and not-*A* at the same time and in the same relationship or sense." Here "*A*" is any truth claim, which in logic is called a proposition. Any given proposition is either true or false. And the contradictory proposition will have the opposite truth value. So, if "*A*" is true, then "not-*A*" is false. Conversely, if "*A*" is false, then "not-*A*" is true. Therefore, the combination of *A* and not-*A* must always be false.

The qualifier "at the same time" is very important. It is *not* a contradiction to say "The sky is blue today, and it is not the case that the sky was blue yesterday" because the two claims address two different times. Some things change with time, so "*A*" might be true today while "not-*A*" is true tomorrow. For example, God required circumcision of male children for Israelites during the time of the Old Covenant (Genesis 17:10–13). At a later time, under the New Covenant, God no longer required circumcision (Galatians 5:1–6). There is no contradiction between the claim "God requires circumcision" at one time and the claim "God does not require circumcision" at a *later* time. Yet, this is one of the alleged contradictions that Bible critics have posted online (see #185).

The qualifier "in the same relationship or sense" is also very important. It is not a contradiction to be "unmarried" in the sense of not having a spouse, and yet "married" to one's job. The sense of the word is different in the two cases, and so one claim does not deny what the other asserts. There is no contradiction in the claim "Bear one another's burdens" in the sense of helping those in trouble, and "bear your own burden" in the sense of taking responsibility for your own obligations. Yet, the critics have posted this very claim as addressed in #172. The principle that we should *not* answer a fool according to his folly *in the sense of becoming like him* is perfectly compatible and does not contradict the principle that we *should* answer a fool according to his folly *in the sense of reflecting his absurdity back to him* so that

he cannot be wise in his own estimation. The critics make this very mistake as illustrated in #299.

A *compatible difference* is not a contradiction. There is no contradiction between the claim "the car is fast" and the claim "the car is red." The claims are different, but compatible since a car can be both fast and red. The Gospel writers each chose to record different details of what they observed, but the differences are compatible with each other and thus non-contradictory. So, when Matthew states that Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus this does not contradict John's statement that Joseph *and Nicodemus* buried Jesus. Both statements are true, even though they are different. Now, if Matthew had stated that *only* Joseph *by himself* buried Jesus, then we would have a problem. But that is not what he states. The critic makes this very mistake in example #173.

A distinct but related concept is that of *contrary*. Two statements are contrary to each other if they cannot both be true at the same time. But, unlike contradictory statements, two contrary statements might both be false. Thus, two statements can be *contrary* to each other without necessarily being *contradictory*. For example, the statement "the traffic light is red" is contrary to the statement "the traffic light is green." But it is not in contradiction because both statements might be false: the traffic light might be yellow. However, the statement "the traffic light is red" is *contradictory* to the statement "it is not the case that the traffic light is red." Many times people will mistakenly say that two things are in contradiction when they really mean that the two things are merely *contrary*.

Common Fallacies

A mistake in reasoning is called a *fallacy*. In many of the following cases, we see that the critic has made a mistake in reasoning, leading him to conclude that two verses contradict each other, whereas correct reasoning shows that they do not. For the sake of space, I'd like to discuss here some of the most common mistakes that the critic makes below so that I won't have to repeat them over and over.

The argument from silence is the mistaken assumption that if something is not mentioned then it did not happen. The absurdity

of this assumption is quickly revealed when we consider that the Bible never states anywhere that John the Baptist ever had to "use the restroom." But the fact that this is never stated obviously doesn't mean that it never happened! Sometimes one Gospel author will record a detail that another author omits. This is *not* a contradiction! Different authors will make different decisions about what to include and what to omit. But when they omit something, *that doesn't imply that it didn't happen.*

One of the errors frequently committed by Bible critics I will call, for the sake of simplicity, **the subset fallacy.** This is the error of claiming that A and B are contradictory when in fact A is a subset of B, or B is a subset of A, and the two are therefore perfectly consistent. For example, five is a subset of ten — it is not contradictory to ten. So, the statement "I have five fingers" is not contrary or contradictory to the statement "I have ten fingers" since five is a subset of ten. That is, anyone who has ten fingers necessarily has five fingers (and five more).

The subset fallacy is actually one type of argument from silence, because the fact that an author does not include some details or persons in his account does not in any way prove that they did not exist. So, one author may state Jesus healed a demon-possessed man, whereas another states that Jesus healed two. This is not a contradiction because if Jesus healed two peopled then He necessarily healed one (and one more). The first author didn't mention the other person for whatever reason (perhaps the second healing was less noteworthy), but that doesn't mean he didn't exist. Now, if the first author had written that Jesus healed *only* one man, and the second author stated that He healed two men at the same time and in the same sense, then there would be a problem. But no such problem is found in Scripture.

The bifurcation fallacy is a false-dilemma, also called the "either-or" fallacy. It occurs when a person asserts that there are only two exclusive options, when in fact there is a third possibility. "Either the traffic light is green or it is red" is a bifurcation fallacy because the light might be yellow. "Either a person is justified by faith or by

works" is a bifurcation fallacy because a person can be justified by faith before God and justified by works before man. The critic makes this very mistake in #139.

The equivocation fallacy is when a person shifts the meaning of a word within an argument. For example: "James 1:13 teaches that God cannot be tempted, but Hebrews 4:15 teaches that Jesus (God) was tempted in all things — a contradiction." But the word "tempted" is used in two different senses; it can mean to be "tested" (which Jesus was) or it can mean to be "enticed" (which Jesus was *not*). It is no contradiction to affirm that Jesus was tested but never enticed. The critic makes this very mistake in #406.

The semantic range fallacy occurs when a reader determines a word's full semantic range (all the possible meanings that the word might have) and then chooses a definition that *suits* his preconceived *interpretation*, rather than allowing context to constrain the meaning. Context determines the meaning of a word — not the reader's preferences.

The semantic anachronism fallacy occurs when people import a modern meaning of a word into a text where the word did not have such a meaning at the time. For example, suppose someone claimed "The Bible clearly endorses extra-terrestrial life, because many biblical laws have instructions on what to do with the 'alien' (Numbers 9:14, 15:15)." But the biblical word translated "alien" refers to a foreigner — a human being who is not a native or citizen of the land.

The sweeping generalization fallacy is the failure to recognize that some principles are stated as generalizations that have some exceptions. The Book of Proverbs is a collection of such generalizations — things that are generally true in most circumstances, but that have some exceptions. It is the sweeping generalization fallacy to claim that an exception is *contradictory* to the general trend. It is not a contradiction to state "most of the time *A* but occasionally not-*A*." For example, divorce is generally unacceptable — in fact in all cases except infidelity. It is therefore *not* a contradiction to state that divorce is acceptable (not sinful) in cases of infidelity. Yet the critic makes this very mistake in #197.

Failure to do textual transmission analysis is another mistake that critics sometimes make. Textual transmission analysis (sometimes called *textual criticism*) is the science of discovering the wording of the original text of Scripture where minor variations exist. The Christian claim is that the *original* text of Scripture as penned by the authors was infallibly guided by God and thus has no genuine errors or contradictions. We recognize that the process of copying the text of Scripture over the centuries is not perfect, and a few scribal errors exist, causing slight variations in some of the ancient manuscripts. Variations are minor, but they do exist. Sometimes critics will point to a scribal error in a manuscript variation and claim that this contradicts another text where no such error exists. But this is not a genuine contradiction in the actual original text of Scripture. For his claim of a genuine contradiction to be legitimate, the critic needs to show that there is actual manuscript evidence that it is *not* a scribal error and that the contradiction *was in the original*. Bible critics occasionally make this mistake (as in #29 and #74), although it is not as common as one might suspect.

The genre fallacy is the failure to read a text in a way that is consistent with its style of literature. The Bible contains several different styles of literature: history, poetry, prophecy, and parables. And they are not to be interpreted in exactly the same way. Poetry typically contains metaphors and other figures of speech, whereas historical narrative is fairly literal. It would be out-of-context to interpret poetry as history or history as poetry. For example, when the Psalmist asks why God doesn't answer his prayer, why God "sleeps," this "sleep" is not to be taken as a literal loss of consciousness. Yet the critic makes this very mistake in #400.

We will find that many of the errors committed by the critic can be described simply as a **"failure to read the text carefully."** That is, the critic seems to have merely glanced at an isolated text without reading it in context, and has come away with an interpretation that no careful reader would hold. It would be silly to say, "The Bible claims that there is no God in Psalm 14:1," because in context this verse actually says, "The *fool has said* in his heart, 'There is no God.' "

And yet, this is precisely the kind of error the critic commits in #24 and in #420.

Some of the critic's errors I can only describe as a *"bluff."* These are instances where there is not even an *apparent* inconsistency between the verses listed. That is, no rational person would conclude, even from a casual first look, that the verses listed are contradictory. It seems that the critic has merely bluffed, listing verses that are not remotely contradictory, and has hoped that no one would bother to check. Sadly, most people probably did not.

"**Specious reasoning**" refers to an illogical leap — where the critic's conclusion simply does not rationally follow. Suppose a critic claimed that the statement "Agag was executed" is contradictory to the claim "Agag had many descendants." That would be an example of specious reasoning, because there is no logical reason why Agag couldn't have children and then *later* be executed. His children and grandchildren would not suddenly vanish at his execution. And yet, this is the sort of silly reasoning we see in the critic's example #59.

This covers the more common errors committed by the critic. For a more complete list of logical fallacies and fallacies of interpretation, see my other books *The Ultimate Proof of Creation, Discerning Truth,* and *Understanding Genesis.*

The List: 420 Claims of Contradictions

We will now examine each of the critic's claims of Bible contradictions. I will list the critic's claim in bold and will then state the error made by the critic, followed by a brief explanation. In cases where additional verses would have remedied the critic's confusion, I will display those verses in bold text in my explanation. For the sake of space, I have not written out the text of most of the verses cited. So, the best way to read this book is with a Bible open next to it. For best retention, consider looking up each of the verses listed so that you can see them in context. Some readers will choose to carefully examine each and every example. Others will focus only on those that seem most compelling or interesting and may skim the rest. The list does not need to be read in any particular order.

The list I used as examples of alleged Bible contradictions can be found here: http://i.imgur.com/8goDAGG.gif, accessed 6/19/2017.

Note that a number of claimed contradictions in this list are duplicates or repeat the same type of claim. Aside from these duplicates, each of the claims in this list is addressed in this book.

Quantitative Differences

In this chapter, we examine claims that the Bible contradicts itself concerning the number of something. If one verse states that *only* three people were present at a certain time and place, but another verse states that at least four people were present at the same time and place and in the same sense, then the two verses would be in contradiction. The word "only" is an important qualifier because a verse listing three people does *not* contradict the claim that more people were there. To assume that "three" means "only three" without sufficient contextual warrant is the subset fallacy. This is the case with many of the claims below — but not all. If one verse indicates that a king began to reign at age 22, but another verse lists 42, it would make no sense to think that one is merely reporting a subset of another. But are the verses genuinely contradictory?

1. How many men did the chief of David's captains kill? Second Samuel 23:8 says 800, but 1 Chronicles 11:11 says 300.

Subset fallacy. Jashobeam killed 300 men at one time *with a spear* (1 Chronicles 11:11). He also killed an additional 500 (perhaps with a different weapon) for a total of 800 men (2 Samuel 23:8). Note that 2 Samuel 23:8 does not specify what weapon was used but gives the

total number, whereas 1 Chronicles 11:11 lists only those killed with a spear. The texts are thus fully consistent.

2. How many sons did Abraham have? Hebrews 11:17 and Genesis 22:2 indicate only one. But Genesis 4:22, 16:15, 21:2–3, 25:1–2 teach more than one.

Subset fallacy and failure to distinguish different times. At one time Abraham had no sons. At a later time, he had one son. At a still later time, he had several. The above verses refer to different times — a fact the critic failed to notice. Furthermore, not all of Abraham's sons were legitimate sons of a biblically sanctioned marriage. Abraham's first son, Ishmael, was not born to his wife Sarah but rather to his wife's handmaid — Hagar (Genesis 16:15). Later, Sarah bore him a son, Isaac (Genesis 21:2–3). Abraham then sent away Ishmael (21:14). So, at the time God tested Abraham in Genesis 22:2, Abraham had only one son living within his household. This is the time to which Hebrews 11:17 refers. *At a later time,* Abraham begat six additional sons with his second wife Keturah (Genesis 25:1–2; 1 Chronicles 1:32). None of the passages listed by the critic contradict these facts or each other.

Semantic range fallacy. English translations of Hebrews 11:17 often describe Isaac as Abraham's "only begotten" son. However, the Greek word translated "only begotten" is *monogenes* and has the basic meaning of "one-of-a-kind." An only child would fall into that category but so would a *unique* son. Indeed, the same word is used for Jesus in John 3:16. While God has many adopted sons (Matthew 5:9; Luke 20:36; Romans 8:14; Galatians 3:26), Christ is unique in His sinless and perfect obedience to His Father. Likewise, the Hebrew word translated "only" in Genesis 22:2 means "unique" or "solitary," which certainly applies to Isaac who was — at that time — the only legitimate son from a biblically sanctioned marriage.

3. How long was the Ark of the Covenant at Abinadab's house? First Samuel 7:1-2, 10:24 say 20 years, but 2 Samuel 6:2-3 and Acts 13:21 indicate that it was actually much longer than 20 years.

Subset fallacy and failure to recognize different times. The ark was at Abinadab's house for at least 20 years (1 Samuel 7:2), and apparently another 20 years minimum, since it was there during Saul's reign which lasted 40 years (Acts 13:21), and was retrieved during David's reign (2 Samuel 6:2–3). The 20 years mentioned in 1 Samuel chapter 7 apparently refers to the period of time when the house of Israel lamented after the Lord (1 Samuel 7:2). But there is no verse in Scripture that precludes the ark being at Abinadab's house for an additional 20 or more years before this.

4. How old was Abram when Ishmael was born? Genesis 16:16 contradicts Acts 7:2–4; Genesis 11:26, 32.

Failure to read the text carefully. Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born (Genesis 16:16), and no verse says otherwise. Certainly none of the other verses listed by the critic contradict this at all, and it isn't clear why the critic claims that they do. His confusion may stem from a misconception about when Abram left Haran, as addressed in #36.

5. When did Absalom rebel against David? Second Samuel 15:7 says 40 years, but 2 Samuel 5:4 indicates that it must be less than this.

Failure to do textual transmission analysis. Many English translations describe the treachery of Absalom as lasting "40 years" (2 Samuel 15:7). Yet, the text of 2 Samuel 5:4 indicates that David was 30 years old when he began to reign and that he reigned as king for 40 years. It doesn't seem reasonable that Absalom's treachery lasted for David's entire reign or that it began before his reign. However, many ancient manuscripts (the Syriac, the Arabic, and some versions of the Septuagint) list this time of rebellion as "4 years." So, does Josephus (Antiquities 7:196). Many Bible scholars conclude that this "4 years" is what the original text of Scripture records. And David's reign was

40 years (2 Samuel 5:4). So, there is no inconsistency here in the original manuscripts.

6. How many Israelites from each family returned from Babylon? The list recorded in Ezra 2 contradicts the list recorded in Nehemiah 7. For example, Ezra states that 454 sons of Adin returned, but Nehemiah 7:20 states that 655 returned. Which is it?

Failure to distinguish different times or senses. Ezra 2:15 indicates that 454 sons of Adin returned, and Nehemiah 7:20 indicates that 655 returned. This is not a contradiction since 454 is a subset of 655. That is, if 655 people returned, then 454 returned (along with an additional 201). So, technically, the critic has committed the subset fallacy. Nonetheless, we must ask why Ezra does not include the additional 201 in his list. Furthermore, we note that the numbers of several other families also differ between the list in Ezra 2 and that of Nehemiah 7. Why the difference?

Recall that the return from Babylon occurred over a period of time — not in an instant. Over the course of time, additional people would make the journey, while others passed away. And so, depending on the time when the events are reported, differences in the numbers are to be expected. Such differences must occur if the two lists reflect two different dates. So, were Ezra and Nehemiah written at different times? Historians estimate that Ezra was written in the 500s bc. whereas Nehemiah was written in the mid 400s b.c. In a timespan of one hundred years, of course there would be additional people who would make the trip, and some would move out or pass away.

Far from demonstrating a contradiction, the numerical differences demonstrate the authenticity of Ezra and Nehemiah, showing that they were indeed written at different times, during which different numbers of people had made the journey. Recall that Ezra records the census of the people that left for Babylon (Ezra 2:1), whereas Nehemiah records a registry *that he found*, which is apparently an *updated* list (Nehemiah 7:5). Note that the total was not

updated in the Nehemiah list, and that neither list records every family that returned. So, the critic's objection is as absurd as claiming that the 2010 national census must be wrong because it contradicts the 2000 national census.

Furthermore, even if the two lists had been recorded at the same time, we might still expect some differences if they each classified family lineage by different *criteria*. (Some have suggested that this is also the case with Christ's genealogies listed in Matthew 1:1–17 and Luke 3:23–38.) For example, the Ezra list might use legal ancestry, while the Nehemiah list uses biological ancestry. That would inevitably lead to numerical differences in cases of remarriage as the following hypothetical scenario illustrates.

Suppose, as one possibility, that Adin adopted a son. This person would be legally the descendent of Adin but biologically the offspring of someone else. If the rest of Adin's children were sired by him, then they and their descendants (454) would belong to Adin both biologically and legally. So, by biological reckoning, 454 of Adin's descendants returned, but by legal reckoning, 655 returned. There are other ways this could occur too. But clearly there is more than one way to classify lineage, and we would expect some numeric differences in terms of which son belongs to which family. So, there is no contradiction, only compatible differences between the two lists that were recorded at different times.

In some lists that circulate on the Internet, the critic lists each and every numerical difference between the Ezra census and the updated Nehemiah census as separate examples of supposed contradictions. Presumably this was done to make the list appear larger than it really is. It would be like claiming that the 2000 U.S. census contradicts the 2010 census for (1) Ohio, (2) Colorado, (3) Michigan, (4) Arizona, and so on, counting it as 50 contradictions. But all numerical differences between these two lists have the same resolution; they are non-contradictory and are in fact expected because the lists were recorded at different times.

7. When did Ahaziah begin to reign? Second Kings 8:25 says this happened in the *12th* year of Joram, whereas 2 Kings 9:29 says this happened in the *11th* year.

Failure to distinguish different senses and semantic range fallacy. In English translations, the text of these two passages indicates that Ahaziah "became king" or "began to reign" in the 11th (9:29) or 12th (8:25) year of Joram respectively. But the Hebrew word used here is "malak" and has a range of meanings. It can mean to "become king" or it can mean to "reign." These are slightly different meanings, and so we might expect a numerical difference depending on which meaning is in play, particularly if the events took place near the end of Joram's 11th year. That is, the ceremony in which Ahaziah was installed as king could have taken place near the end of Joram's 11th year, while Ahaziah did not actually take power until the beginning of the 12th year. Or the reverse: if Ahaziah's father (Jehoram) died unexpectedly near the end of the 11th year, then Ahaziah may have reigned in his father's place for a short time until he was officially installed as king during the 12th year. Similar things takes place in our culture: Donald Trump was elected president in 2016 but began his presidency in 2017. Surely, there is no contradiction here.

8. How old was Ahaziah when he began to reign? Second Kings 8:26 says *22*, but 2 Chronicles 22:2 says *42*.

Failure to do textual transmission analysis and failure to consult the original language. Ahaziah was 22 when he began to reign, according to 2 Kings 8:26. Some ancient manuscripts of 2 Chronicles 22:2 indicate that Ahaziah began to reign at *42*. But does this "42" refer to his age, or the age of Omri's dynasty? The word "was" is not in the Hebrew text. Without it, the text reads "a son of 42 years." The same verse mentions that Ahaziah's mother is the granddaughter of Omri; Omri was a king of Israel whose reign began 42 years before Ahaziah's (1 Kings 16:23; 2 Chronicles 16:13, 20:31, 21:20).

Even if the reference to 42 years is meant to indicate Ahaziah's age, not all ancient manuscripts have this number. Therefore, many Bible scholars, such as John Gill, believe the "42 years" to be an earlier

copyist error. Several ancient manuscripts, including the Septuagint, the Syriac, and Arabic texts read "22 years" both in 2 Chronicles and in 2 Kings, as reflected in some modern English translations such as the New American Standard, the ESV, and NIV. In fact, there is only one Hebrew letter that distinguishes "22" from "42." And this letter can easily be confused, particularly since these were handwritten copies. For this passage to be a genuine contradiction, the critic would have to know that it is not an early copyist error and that the number "42" definitely refers to Ahaziah's age — neither of which he has been able to do.

9. When did Baasha die? First Kings 16:6–8 says the 26th year, but 2 Chronicles 16:1 says the 36th year.

Semantic range fallacy. Baasha died during the 26th year of Asa's kingship of Judea (1 Kings 16:6–8, 15:33.) In English translations of 2 Chronicles 16:1 there appears to be an inconsistency because the text indicates that Baasha went to war in the 36th year of Asa's reign. This would seem to be impossible, since it was ten years after Baasha's death.

But the Hebrew word often translated as "reign" in 2 Chronicles 16:1 is most often translated in the KJV as "kingdom." And thus, it was in the 36th year of Asa's kingdom (the Kingdom of Judah) that Baasha went to war. But Judah had already existed as a separate nation for 20 years when Asa became King of Judah. Thus, Baasha went to war in the 16th year of Asa' reign — the 36th year of the Kingdom of Judah. Baasha died ten years later, with no contradiction or inconsistency.

Alternatively, we again note the possibility of a textual transmission problem in modern copies of 2 Chronicles 16:1. Keil and Delitzsch point out that the Hebrew letter denoting "30" is similar to that denoting "10," and thus "16" might be erroneously rendered as "36" by a careless scribe. By either reckoning, Baasha went to war in the 16th year of Asa's reign, which is fully consistent with the passage in 1 Kings 16:6–8.

10. What was the volume of the molten sea in Solomon's temple? First Kings 7:26 says 2,000 baths, but 2 Chronicles 4:5 says 3,000 baths.

Subset fallacy. Neither text gives the exact volume. Rather, the volume was sufficient to hold 2,000 baths (1 Kings 7:26) and 3,000 baths (2 Chronicles 4:5), respectively. Obviously, if the volume is sufficient to hold 3,000 baths, then it is sufficient to hold 2,000 baths. So, there is no contradiction. It could be that the 2,000 baths was the typical volume of water it contained and useful for the priests in washing, but that 3,000 baths was the maximum volume it could contain. In any case, 2,000 is a subset of 3,000, so there is no contradiction or apparent inconsistency.

11. How many believers were there at the time of the ascension? Acts 1:15 says 120, but 1 Corinthians 15:6 says over 500.

Failure to read the text carefully and specious reasoning. The Bible does not say how many believers there were at the time of Christ's ascension. Acts 1:15 refers to one particular gathering of 120 Christians shortly after the ascension — but it does not remotely suggest that these were the only believers on earth at the time. First Corinthians 15:6 reports that Jesus was seen by over 500 people at one time before His ascension — but it does not say how many believers there were who did not see Christ during this period. So, these texts are addressing different events at different times, are perfectly compatible, and have nothing to do with the critic's question. This type of "criticism" shows that the critic is not serious about scholarship or academic integrity.

12. How many blind men were healed near Jericho? Matthew 20:30 indicate that there were two, but Mark 10:46 and Luke 18:35 say one.

Subset fallacy and argument from silence. This is a classic example of the subset fallacy. Jesus healed (at least) two blind men near Jericho (Matthew 20:30). Mark 10 and Luke 18 mention only one of the two, and Mark gives the name as "Bartimaeus." But neither Mark nor

Luke states that there was *only* one blind man. So, there is no contradiction even though only Matthew mentions the other blind man.

13. How long was the Egyptian Captivity? Genesis 15:13 says 400 years, but Exodus 12:40 and Galatians 3:17 say 430 years.

Subset fallacy and failure to read the text carefully. None of the passages listed by the critic specify the length of time of the captivity but rather the length of time that Abraham and/or his descendants would be strangers in a land that they do not possess (only some of that time was in Egypt). But is this length 400 years (Genesis 15:13) or 430 years (Exodus 12:40; Galatians 3:17)? Of course, 400 is a subset of 430, so there is no contradiction. It would be reasonable enough to infer that one text is simply rounding to the nearest hundred, whereas the others round to the nearest ten. That would be perfectly acceptable, and non-contradictory. However, there is more to it than this.

First, the 400 years refers to the time in which Abraham's descendants would be "strangers in a land that is not theirs" (Genesis 15:13) — not merely the subset of that time for which they would be captives in Egypt. Furthermore, a careful reading of Genesis 15:13 shows that this refers to the time that Abraham's *descendants* would be strangers in a land that is not theirs. Thus, the 400 years refers to the time from Isaac — Abraham's son — to the exodus. It excludes the time that Abraham dwelt as a stranger in the land. From Isaac to the Exodus was precisely 405 years, which is rounded quite reasonably to 400 years.

Paul, in Galatians 3:17, refers to 430 years *between the time the promise was given to Abraham* (Galatians 3:16) and the giving of the Law, which occurred around the time of the Exodus. That promise was given 25 years *before* the birth of Isaac (Genesis 12:1–4, 17:21–24). It was at that earlier time that Abraham left his own land and dwelt as a stranger in the land. So, when we include Abraham, we see that the Hebrews dwelt in a land not their own for a total of 430 years. The Exodus 12:40 passage also apparently includes the time

that Abraham was a stranger in the land, as the Samaritan version reads. So, unlike the critic, the biblical authors were very meticulous in their attention to detail.

14. How high was the chapiter? Jeremiah 52:22 says five cubits, but 2 Kings 25:17 says three cubits.

Subset fallacy. The capital (*chapiter*) on the pillars was five cubits in height (Jeremiah 52:22), which means it was three cubits in height (2 Kings 25:17) and two more. Why does 2 Kings 25:17 not include the remaining two cubits? One possibility is that only three of the five had the bronze pomegranates and lattice work described in both passages (Jeremiah 52:22; 2 Kings 25:17).

15. How many men did David kill? Second Samuel 10:18 says 700, but 1 Chronicles 19:18 says 7,000.

Subset fallacy and semantic range fallacy. As worded in the original Hebrew, both passages literally say that David killed the *chariots*. This is a figure of speech called *metonymy* in which an object is substituted for the people associated with it. That is, David killed the *people* associated with the chariots. The way in which the people were associated is not stated, and so it may differ between the two passages. Only one person would be the primary driver of the chariot, but several others would have been assigned to the unit. If we suppose that 10 men were associated with a chariot, then the perceived inconsistency disappears. That is, David slew 7,000 men from 700 chariot units.

This is further supported by the choice of the Hebrew word *harag* translated "killed" or "slew." This word also refers to the destruction of inanimate objects, such as the chariots themselves. (The word is used to describe the destruction of vines and trees in Psalm 78:47.) Even modern warfare terminology will refer to the destruction of a tank or a plane as a "kill," regardless of how many people within are killed. Thus, to destroy 700 chariots, or chariot units, is 700 kills and could easily correspond to 7,000 individual deaths.

16. Did Jesus say before the cock crows or before the cock crows twice? Matthew 26:34; Luke 22:34; and John 13:38 all say before the cock crows, but Mark 14:30 says before the cock crows *twice*.

Subset fallacy. If the rooster crows twice, then it necessarily crows once (and then once again). Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crows *twice* (Mark 14:30). The accounts of Matthew, Luke, and John do not record this detail (that the rooster would crow *twice*) — but they also do not deny or contradict it. That is, neither Matthew, Luke, nor John say that Peter will deny Christ three times "before the rooster crows *only once,*" or "before the *first* crow." You can search all you like, but there is no passage that says the rooster crowed *only* once.

17. Generations from David to the Babylonian Captivity. First Chronicles 3:10–16 disagrees with Matthew 1:6–11.

Subset fallacy and semantic anachronism fallacy. As is well known, the genealogy listed in Matthew 1:1–17 is a summary, and was not intended to be exhaustive. This was a common practice at the time. Recall that in biblical languages the word "son" can also refer to a grandson or a more distant descendant (Luke 19:9; Matthew 1:1). Matthew intentionally did not list every name, so that he could record the lineage of Abraham to Christ in exactly three groups of 14 each (Matthew 1:17). This should be obvious to even the most obstinate critic because Matthew 1:1 gives an even briefer summary — from Abraham to Jesus with only one name in between (David).

The list in 1 Chronicles 3:10–16 does appear to be exhaustive, so it naturally includes some ancestors of Christ that Matthew does not. Matthew 1:6–11 does not list Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah. But neither does it deny their existence or claim that there were no such ancestors of Christ. So, there is no contradiction just because 1 Chronicles records some details that Matthew omits.

18. How many disciples did Jesus appear to in His first post-Resurrection appearance? First Corinthians 15:5 disagrees with Matthew 28:16–17; Mark 16:14; and Luke 24:33–37, which contradict John 20:24.

Failure to read the text carefully. First Corinthians 15:5 does not say how many disciples were present when Jesus *first* appeared after the Resurrection. It says only that Christ appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the Twelve — referring to the other disciples. Although there were only 11 remaining, the group was still called the "Twelve" (John 20:24) — an example of synecdoche. This verse may imply that Peter saw Christ before the rest of the Twelve, but it does *not* say that Peter was the *first* person to see Christ. Mary Magdalene seems to have been the first (Mark 16:9; John 20:1–18). Matthew 28:16 records Jesus appearing to the remaining 11 disciples, but it does *not* say that this was the *first* appearance — we have good reason to believe it wasn't (see #208, #54, and #115). Likewise, Mark 16:14 records a meeting with the 11 disciples, but it does *not* say that this was the *first* appearance. Luke 24:33–37 also records a meeting of Christ with the 11 disciples, but we know this was not His *first* appearance from verses 13–15. John 20:24 merely states that Thomas was not with the 11 disciples when Jesus had appeared earlier, but it does not say that this was the first appearance. None of the texts listed by the critic even address the issue; thus they cannot contradict each other.

19. Was Enoch the sixth or the seventh from Adam? Genesis 5:3–18; 1 Chronicles 1:1–2; and Luke 3:37–38 contradict Jude 14.

Failure to count properly. Enoch was the seventh generation, and hence the seventh from Adam. Adam was the first generation, Seth was second, Enos was third, Cainan was fourth, Mahalaleel was fifth, Jared was sixth, and Enoch was seventh, as all the biblical texts agree (Genesis 5:3–18; 1 Chronicles 1:1–2; Luke 3:37–38; Jude 14). Perhaps the critic thinks that the "seventh from Adam" means the seventh *after* Adam and not including Adam. But this is not the way genealogies are counted, not in Hebrew, not in Greek, not in English.

For example, "Henry III" or "Henry the third" is the grandson of Henry senior — he is counted as the third, not the second.

20. How many years of famine? Second Samuel 24:13 says seven years, but 1 Chronicles 21:11–12 says three years.

Subset fallacy and failure to read the text in context. God gave David a choice of punishments for the sin of conducting a biblically un-sanctioned census (see #180). As one option, the land of Israel would suffer three years of famine (1 Chronicles 21:11). In 2 Samuel 24:13, this option is presented as *seven* years of famine. This is no contra-diction because if the land experiences seven years of famine then it logically must experience three years of famine (and four more).

A careful reading of the text shows that the land had *already* experienced three years of famine on account of Saul's sin (2 Sam-uel 21:1). Three more would be added due to David's sin (if he had chosen that option) for a total of six years. And since the Israelites were not permitted to work the land on the seventh year (Leviticus 25:3–5), there would be a food shortage for a total of seven years — only three of which were due to David's sin. The text in 2 Sam-uel 24:13 mentions the total number of years of famine, whereas 1 Chronicles 21:11–12 mentions only the three that would be *added* due to David's sin.

21. How long was the Ark afloat? Seven months (Genesis 8:4) or ten (Genesis 8:5)?

Failure to read the text carefully. Genesis 8:4 teaches that the Ark came to rest on the 17th day of the seventh month. At that time, the other mountains still could not be seen from the vantage point of the ark. It was not until the first day of the tenth month that the mountains became visible (Genesis 8:5). There is not even a hint of inconsistency, showing once again that the critic is not engaged in serious scholarship.

22. How long did the Flood last? Forty days and nights (Genesis 7:17), or 150 days (Genesis 7:24, 8:3).

Failure to define terms (equivocation fallacy), and failure to read the text carefully. The Flood occurred in stages: the initial period of rain, the time after the rain when the earth was still globally flooded, the time when the waters steadily receded, the time when the Ark was grounded but other land was not yet visible, the time when the land became visible, the time when the water was no longer upon the land but the land was still muddy, the time when the land became dry, and the time when Noah and those on board the ark disembarked. To which time does the critic refer? He doesn't say, and doesn't seem to have thought through this issue at all, because there is no inconsistency in any of the verses the critic cited:

> The rain fell for 40 days and nights (Genesis 7:17), but the water prevailed (did not subside) for 150 days (Genesis 7:24), after which it began to subside (Genesis 8:3). The tops of the mountains were seen on the 225th day (Genesis 7:11; 8:5). The raven was sent out on day 265 (Genesis 8:6); the dove was sent out on day 272, and again on day 279, and again on day 286 (Genesis 8:6–12). Noah saw that the water was off the surface of the earth by day 315 (Genesis 8:13), and God told Noah to disembark on the 371st day.

Where is there even a *hint* of a contradiction?

23. How many generations from Jesus to Abraham? Matthew 1:17 says 42, but Matthew 1:2–16 says 41.

Failure to read the text carefully and argument from silence. There are 41 *listed* generations from Abraham to Christ — though Matthew does not claim that his list is exhaustive (Matthew 1:2–16). This is actually perfectly consistent with Matthew 1:17, though the critic seems not to have read the latter passage carefully. Verse 17 mentions three groups of 14 people, from which the critic apparently assumes would make 42 people (3 x 14). However, the critic did not

read the text carefully, otherwise he would have noticed that David is included *both* in the first group (as the final member) and the second group (as the first member). To be clear, group 1 includes Abraham through David (14 people), group 2 includes David through Josias (14 people), and group 3 includes Jeconiah through Christ (14 people). Since groups 2 and 1 overlap by one person (David), the total number of individuals in all three groups is 41, exactly what Matthew 1:2–16 lists.

24. How many gods are there? *Just the one* according to Deuteronomy 4:35, 39, 6:4, 32:39; 1 Kings 18:39; Isaiah 43:10, 44:8, 45:5–6, 46:9; Mark 12:29, 32; John 17:3; and 1 Corinthians 8:6. *More than one* according to Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; Exodus 12:12, 15:11, 18:11, 20:3, 5, 22:20, 28, 23:13, 24, 32, 34:14; Numbers 33:4; Deuteronomy 3:24, 6:14–15, 10:17, 28:14; Joshua 24:2, 14; Judges 11:24; 1 Samuel 6:5, 28:13; 1 Chronicles 16:25; Psalm 82:1, 6, 86:8, 96:4, 97:7, 135:5, 136:2; Jeremiah 1:16, 10:11, 25:6, 46:25; Zephaniah 2:11; John 10:33–34; and 1 John 5:7.

Failure to read the text carefully and specious reasoning. The Bible affirms that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 4:35, 39, 6:4, 32:39; 1 Kings 18:39; Isaiah 43:10, 44:8, 45:5–6, 46:9; Mark 12:29, 32; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6). The Bible also affirms that this one God is three in terms of eternally distinct persons — the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This doctrine is commonly called the "Trinity." The Trinity is not contradictory because it does not affirm that God is only one and more than one *in the same sense*. Rather, it affirms that God is one in one sense (in terms of nature or essence) and three in a *different* sense (in terms of persons). Such is true of many things in the world. One molecule may be many in terms of atoms. A church is one group united in fellowship, but it is many in persons. Congress is *one* body but *two* houses and *many* persons. So, obviously there is no logical problem with a triune God.

This one *in one sense* and more-than-one in *another* sense is seen in the first verse of Scripture, where the word translated "God" is plural in the original language, and yet the verb associated with it

(created) is singular. It's actually grammatically incorrect, a bit like saying "Gods is good." This formula, a plural noun with a singular verb, is used very consistently in the Old Testament in references to God. These verses demonstrate that the one God is more than one *in persons* (John 8:17–18; Luke 3:22; Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; John 10:33, 14:16–17; 1 John 5:7; Acts 5:3–4). Sometimes one person of the Trinity speaks to another (Matthew 3:17; 2 Peter 1:17; Hebrews 1:5, 8–9; John 17:1, 5). But notice that none of these verses contradict the others; *none* say that there are multiple true Gods.

Also, note that the Bible acknowledges the existence of *false gods*, which are called "gods" but have no genuine power (Exodus 12:12, 15:11, 18:11, 20:3–5, 22:20, 23:13, 24, 32, 34:14; Numbers 33:4; Deuteronomy 3:24, 6:14–15, 10:17, 28:14; Joshua 24:2, 14; Judges 11:24; 1 Samuel 6:5, 28:13; 1 Chronicles 16:25; Psalm 82:1, 6, 86:8, 96:4, 97:7, 135:5, 136:2; Jeremiah 1:16, 10:11, 25:6, 46:25; Zephaniah 2:11; John 10:34). But since these are not truly gods in any real sense, they do not violate the biblical position of one God. First Corinthians 8:5–6 *explicitly* explains this, so the critic is without excuse for missing this. Having examined all the verses listed by the critic, we find not a single inconsistency.

25. How much gold, silver, and clothing did the people give? Ezra 2:69 disagrees with Nehemiah 7:72.

Subset fallacy and specious reasoning. Ezra lists only the total contributions to the Temple, which amount to 61,000 gold drachmas, 5,000 silver minas, and 100 priestly garments. Nehemiah also lists contributions to the Temple, but breaks them down more exactly, and the totals appear somewhat different: 41,000 gold drachmas, 4,200 silver minas, 530 priestly garments, and 50 basins. There is no contradiction since neither list claims to be exhaustive; if the people gave 61,000 gold drachmas, then they necessarily gave 41,000 (along with 20,000 more). Why Nehemiah does not list the additional 20,000 is not stated in the text, but this isn't required for logical consistency. Nonetheless, we might speculate on the reasons for these differences in the following ways.

Most English translations of Nehemiah 7:70 state that the governor gave 1,000 gold drachmas, 50 basins, and *530* priest's garments. But some scholars have noted that "silver minas" may be implied but not stated in the text in between the 500 and the 30, for the sake of consistency with the verses that follow. If so, then the governor gave 1,000 gold drachmas, 50 basins, *500 silver minas*, and *30* priestly garments. If so, then the Nehemiah list would total 41,000 gold drachmas, 4,700 silver minas, 97 priestly garments, and 50 basins. This resolves two of the three differences: the new list matches Ezra's count of the 5,000 silver minas, and 100 priestly garments when we recognize that Ezra is using round numbers. Ezra's count of 61,000 gold drachmas still doesn't match Nehemiah's 41,000, until we notice that Ezra does not list the 50 basins given by the governor. If these basins have a total value of roughly 20,000 gold drachmas, then both lists match nicely. There are other possibilities of course. But clearly the two texts do not contradict each other, even though they have compatible differences.

26. How many talents of gold did Hiram send Solomon? First Kings 9:27–28 says 420, but 1 Chronicles 8:18 says 450.

Subset fallacy. Hiram sent 450 talents of gold to Solomon (2 Chronicles 8:18), which includes the 420 talents mentioned in 1 Kings 9:27–28. Why the First Kings passage does not include the remaining 30 talents is not mentioned, but it seems very likely that the sailors and other workers were paid for their efforts (1 Timothy 5:18), and thus 30 talents of the 450 may have been used for their wages.

27. How many horsemen did David take? Second Samuel 8:4 says 700, but 1 Chronicles 18:4 says 7,000.

Subset fallacy. David took 1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen (1 Chronicles 18:4). These horsemen consisted of 700 ranks with 10 men per rank. Second Samuel 8:4 mentions only the ranks of horsemen (700) and includes the 1,000 chariots in this number, so "1,700

horsemen" is the figure given for the companies of horsemen and chariots, consistent with 1 Chronicles 18:4.

28. How many were in Jacob's family when they came into Egypt? Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5 say 70, but Acts 7:14 says 75.

Subset fallacy and failure to read the text carefully. In Acts 7:14, Stephen says that Joseph invited Jacob and *all his relatives* to come to Egypt, for a total of 75 people. Yet, Genesis 46:26 gives the number as 66 persons. But a more careful reading of Genesis 46:26 says, "All the persons belonging to Jacob . . . *not including the wives of Jacob's sons*, were 66 persons in all." So, the reason the list in Acts is slightly larger than the list in Genesis is because the former *includes the wives,* whereas the latter does not. Each of Joseph's 11 brothers married, so that would be 11 wives. But Judah's wife had died in Canaan before the journey to Egypt (Genesis 38:12). And Genesis 46:10 suggests that Simeon's wife had also died before the journey (and that he later remarried). So, there were 9 living wives who came to Egypt with the 66 descendants of Jacob, for a total of 75 persons.

Why do Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5 list 70 persons? The list from Genesis 46:27 is based on the 66 people mentioned in the previous verse (which excludes the 9 wives), but then *includes* Jacob, and his 3 descendants who were already in Egypt (Joseph and his 2 sons Ephraim and Manassah — see verse 27) — 4 in all. — 66+4 = 70. The numbers are exactly consistent, when the text is read *accurately*. Likewise, Exodus 1:5 either refers to this way of counting or is simply using a round number as the Bible often does.

29. How old was Jehoachin when he began to reign? Second Kings 24:8 says he was 18, but 2 Chronicles 36:9 says that he was 8.

Failure to do textual transmission analysis. Second Kings 24:8 indicates that Jehoachin was 18 years old when he began to reign. Some translations of 2 Chronicles 36:9 state that he was 8 years old but there is evidence that this is a rare transmission error. The ancient Syriac and Arabic translations have 18 years in *both* passages.

So, there seems to be no inconsistency in the original manuscripts. Moreover, the Hebrew language allows for other possibilities as well. We have seen, as with David, that a person can be appointed as king many years before he is officially installed as king.

30. How many sons did Jesse have? First Samuel 16:10–11, 17:12 says 8, but 1 Chronicles 2:13–15 says 7.

Subset fallacy. Jesse had eight sons (1 Samuel 16:10–11). Of these, seven are listed in 1 Chronicles 2:13–15. The eighth is not listed, perhaps having died before being able to start a family of his own.

31. How long did Jotham reign? Second Kings 15:32–33 says 16 years, but 2 Kings 15:30 says at least 20 years.

Failure to read the text carefully. Jotham reigned *as king* of Judah for 16 years (2 Kings 15:32–33), though he had previously reigned for some time *as a representative* of his leprous father King Uzziah/Azariah (2 Chronicles 26:21). No verse contradicts this. Though 2 Kings 15:30 mentions the *20th* year of Jotham, it does *not* say that Jotham was still king at this time; that is, it does *not* refer to the 20th year of Jotham's *reign*. Rather, it describes events that happened in the 20th year since Jotham was installed as king. At that time, Ahaz was king of Judah. But the biblical author had not yet mentioned Ahaz, and therefore marks time from the installment of Jotham as king.

32. What is the human lifespan? Psalm 90:10 says 70 to 80 years, but Genesis 6:3 says 120 years.

Failure to read the text carefully. In Psalm 90:10, Moses gives a *typical* human lifespan *at that time* (hundreds of years after the worldwide Flood) as 70 or 80 years. That does not remotely imply that this has always been the case or that there are no exceptions. Furthermore, Genesis 6:3 is not addressing human lifespans at all. Rather, the 120 years listed there marks the time that wicked humanity had left before God would destroy mankind with the global Flood. That is,

God gave mankind a 120-year period of grace for repentance before carrying out His judgment.

33. How many children did Michal have? Second Samuel 6:23 contradicts 2 Samuel 21:8.

Failure to read the text carefully or to do textual transmission analysis. Michal had no biological children of her own (2 Samuel 6:23). The critic didn't read 2 Samuel 21:8 carefully, because it does not say that Michal birthed any children at all — only that she "brought up" (KJV, translating from the Hebrew), i.e. raised, five children *for Adriel*. Moreover, the critic should have realized his mistake since Michal was not married to Adriel, but to David. Thus, these five children were birthed by Merab (Michal's sister) — Adriel's wife. So, even in the KJV there is no contradiction.

Moreover, the critic failed to recognize (or disclose) any textual transmission analysis, because there is some evidence of transmission confusion in this passage. In a number of the ancient manuscripts, Merab and not Michal is mentioned in 2 Samuel 21:8. (See page 493, BIBLIA HEBRAICA, 1973 Kittel Stuttgart edition, footnote b for 2 Samuel 21:8, identifying text variants.) The critic would have realized this (or at least would have been alerted to the fact that a translation or transmission factor was relevant to the question) if he had bothered to check other English translations, such as the NASB, the NIV, the NLT, or the ESV. The Chaldee manuscript lists both, specifying "the five sons of Merab which Michal the daughter of Saul brought up. . . ."

34. How many people did God kill for "committing whoredom with the daughters of Moab"? First Corinthians 10:8 says 23,000, but Numbers 25:9 says 24,000.

Subset fallacy and failure to read the text carefully. Moses gives the total number who died as a result of the incident — both the leaders that were hanged (Numbers 25:4), and the rest who fell by the sword (Numbers 25:5), a total of 24,000 people (Numbers 25:9). Paul lists

only those who "fell" (by the sword) and in one day, 23,000 people. Apparently, 1,000 leaders were executed by hanging, and the remaining 23,000 people fell by the sword. So, both texts agree perfectly.

35. How many officers did Solomon have? First Kings 9:23 says 550, but 2 Chronicles 8:10 says 250.

Subset fallacy and failure to read the text carefully. Solomon had 250 officers to rule over the *people* (2 Chronicles 8:10), and he had an additional 300 who were over the *work*, for a total of 550 officers over the work *and* the people (1 Kings 9:23). So, the texts are perfectly consistent. Incidentally, it appears that there were three ranks of rulers; the lowest rank consisted of 3,300 people (1 Kings 5:16). The next rank consisted of 300 people, and when combined with the lowest rank make 3,600 people (2 Chronicles 2:18). And the highest rank had 250 officers (2 Chronicles 8:10), which when combined with the middle rank make 550 officers (1 Kings 9:23).

36. How old was Abraham when he left Haran? Genesis 12:4 contradicts Acts 7:2–4 and Genesis 11:26, 11:32.

Failure to read the text carefully and semantic anachronism fallacy. Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran (Genesis 12:4) and no text says otherwise. The other passages listed by the critic do not speak of Abraham's age at the time he left Haran, nor do they give sufficient information to arrive conclusively at such a number. The confusion may stem from the critic's misreading of Acts 7:4. Some English translations seem to imply that Abraham left Haran when his father Terah died at age 205. But Genesis 11:26 suggests that Terah was 70 when Abraham was born. So, wouldn't this mean that Abraham was actually 135 when he left Haran? No, for the following reason.

The referent of the words "he" and "him" in the last part of Acts 7:4 is left ambiguous. Many people suppose that the "he" refers to God and "him" to Abraham — that God removed Abraham from Haran at the time of Terah's death. But more naturally, the referent

of "he" is Abraham and "him" refers to Terah. That is, at the time of Terah's death, Abraham removed Terah's deceased body from Haran and buried the body in Canaan where Abraham had moved decades earlier. So, there is perfect harmony between all the texts.

37. How many overseers did Solomon have? First Kings 5:16 says 3,000, but 2 Chronicles 2:18 says 3,600.

Subset fallacy (see #35). Solomon had 3,300 rulers of the lowest rank (1 Kings 5:16) and 300 of the middle rank, adding up to 3,600 rulers in these two ranks (2 Chronicles 2:18). He also had 250 rulers of the highest rank (2 Chronicles 8:10). The verses agree very consistently.

38. How many days is unleavened bread to be eaten during the Passover? Deuteronomy 16:8 says *six* days, but Deuteronomy 16:3 and Exodus 12:15, 23:15 say *seven*.

Subset fallacy and fallacy of argument from silence. The answer is: seven days. No text contradicts this. Six of these days were ordinary work days in which unleavened bread was to be eaten. The seventh day was a day of rest and no work was to be done on it. Deuteronomy 16:8 does not specifically say whether unleavened bread was also to be eaten on the seventh day, but neither does it deny this. Hence, the critic has committed the error of the faulty argument from silence (assuming the absence of something on the basis that it is not mentioned). From Deuteronomy 16:3 and Exodus 12:15, 23:15, we read that the unleavened bread was also to be eaten at the assembly on the seventh day. So, where is any inconsistency?

39. How high were the pillars? First Kings 7:15 contradicts 2 Chronicles 3:15.

Failure to read the text carefully. The height of *one* pillar was 18 cubits (1 Kings 7:15). The (combined) height of both pillars was 35 cubits (2 Chronicles 3:15). There is no inconsistency. Either the second pillar was 17 cubits tall, or more likely both pillars were just over

17.5 cubits, which rounded gives 18 cubits, with a total combined height of 35 cubits. The passages show no contradiction, but indicate that the Israelites understood arithmetic.

40. How many men were possessed with devils? Mark 5:1–2 and Luke 8:26–27 say *one*, but Matthew 8:28 says *two*.

Subset fallacy. Two men were demon-possessed (Matthew 8:28). Mark and Luke mention only one of the two. This is perfectly consistent because, obviously, if two men were demon-possessed then one man was demon-possessed (and one more). Mark and Luke chose to mention only one of the two, probably because only the one was seen later and continues the narrative (Mark 5:14–20; Luke 8:36–39), as the critic might have realized if he had read just a few verses more.

41. On what day of the month was Jehoiachin released from prison? Second Kings 25:27 says on the 27th day, but Jeremiah 52:31 says it was the 25th day.

Failure to read the text carefully. Jeremiah 52:31 states that the King of Babylon *showed favor* to Jehoiachin on the 25th of the month and that he (subsequently) brought him out of prison. Note that the text does not say that both events happened on the same day. Favor was shown on the 25th, but the text does *not* say that he was released the same day. The implication is that Jehoiachin's release was as a result of, and therefore sometime *after*, the showing of favor. Thus it would be on or after the 25th day. Second Kings 25:27 confirms that Jehoiachin was released from prison on the 27th day, which indeed is after the king showed him favor, and thus consistent with Jeremiah 52:31.

42. Was Jesus a ransom for many or for all? Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 say "many," but 1 Timothy 2:6 says "all."

Bifurcation fallacy and equivocation fallacy. Christ was ransomed for *all* who receive him, which are *many* (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1

Timothy 2:6). Universal terms like "all" are sometimes restrained by context, as is the case in 1 Timothy 2:6. For example, "All people are required to present a birth certificate in order to obtain a passport." Clearly, this doesn't mean all people on earth are required; rather "all" refers to those who are going to get a passport. Likewise, Christ was a ransom for all people *who are to be saved,* as context indicates (1 Timothy 2:4–6). Christ's payment on the Cross is certainly sufficient for anyone to be saved. But people are actually saved only if they receive God's grace through faith in Christ.

43. How many soldiers? There were 800,000 according to 2 Samuel 24:9, but there were 1,100,000, according to 1 Chronicles 21:5.

Subset fallacy. If there were 1,100,000 men from Israel (1 Chronicles 21:5) then there were necessarily 800,000 men (2 Samuel 24:9) along with 300,000 more. Second Samuel 24:9 apparently does not include the king's militia, which consisted of 24,000 each month (1 Chronicles 27:1–2), which over one year would be 288,000 men. Including the officers, this would be about 300,000 men, which only the 1 Chronicles passage includes. So, there is no inconsistency. Moreover, the 2 Samuel account seems to round numbers to the nearest 100,000, whereas the parallel account in 1 Chronicles rounds to the nearest 10,000. Hence the men of Judah are reported either as 470,000 or rounded to 500,000 respectively.

44. Was Solomon David's second or fourth son by Bathsheba? He was the second son according to 2 Samuel 12:15, 24, but he was fourth according to 1 Chronicles 3:5.

Fallacy of argument from silence. *Neither passage* specifies when Solomon was born relative to his brothers. Second Samuel 12:15 does *not* say anything whatsoever about Solomon's brothers. First Chronicles 3:5 has Solomon as the fourth name in a list of his brothers. But that doesn't necessarily mean he was born fourth — only that he was *listed* fourth. Neither passage gives the order; hence, they cannot possibly contradict each other on a topic which neither addresses.

45. What was Solomon's gift to Hiram? First Kings 5:11 contradicts 2 Chronicles 2:10.

Failure to read the text carefully. Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 kors of wheat as food *for Hiram's household* and 20 kors of beaten oil (1 Kings 5:11). In addition, Solomon also gave to Hiram's *servants* 20,000 kors of barley, 20,000 baths of wine, and 20,000 baths of oil (2 Chronicles 2:10). Where is there any contradiction in Solomon giving different gifts to different people?

46. When did Solomon's reign begin? First Kings 6:1 contradicts Acts 13:17–18, 20–22 and 1 Chronicles 29:26–27.

Failure to read the text carefully and failure to check the original language. Solomon's reign began 477 years after the exodus from Egypt, because the fourth year of his reign corresponds to the 480th year after the exodus (1 Kings 6:1). Acts 13:19–20 mentions a period of 450 years, but it is not obvious what this period refers to. Some English translations imply that this period corresponds entirely to the time of judges — the time between Joshua and Samuel. But if that were so, then adding 450 to the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, plus the 40 years of the reign of Saul, plus the 40 years of the reign of David, would yield a date for the start of Solomon's reign at 570 years or more after the exodus. Presumably, this is how the critic interpreted the passage.

But, had he bothered to check the original Greek text or had he consulted a few other English translations, the critic would have found some other renderings. For example, in Young's Literal Translation, Acts 13:19–20 states, "and having destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He did divide by lot to them their land. And after these things, about four hundred and fifty years, He gave judges — till Samuel the prophet." On this translation, the 450 years refers to the time between the choosing of the people of Israel and their taking the land of Canaan — *not* the time of the judges. So, it is not addressing the same time period at all. The critic was very careless in his analysis.

47. How many stalls did Solomon have? First Kings 4:26 says 40,000. However, 2 Chronicles 9:25 says 4,000.

Fallacy of equivocation. Note that Chronicles uses a slightly different Hebrew word for "stalls" than does Kings, and so we might expect that one refers to the entire stable, while the other refers to the number of individual compartments. Solomon had 4,000 stalls or "stables" (2 Chronicles 9:25), each of which apparently had ten partitions, such that the total number of stalls is 40,000 (1 Kings 4:26).

48. How old was Terah when he died? Genesis 11:26, 12:4 contradicts Genesis 11:32.

Failure to read the text carefully or properly do arithmetic. Terah died at the age of 205 years (Genesis 11:32). No Scripture contradicts this. Genesis 11:26 and Genesis 12:4 do not provide enough information to give the age of Terah when he died. They only state that Terah was 70 when he fathered (the first of) Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and that Abraham left Ur when he (Abraham) was 75. The critic may be confused due to a misunderstanding of Acts 7:4, as covered in #36. But there is no inconsistency in the text.

49. For how much did David buy the threshing floor? Second Samuel 24:24 says 50 shekels of silver, but 1 Chronicles 21:25 says 600 shekels of gold.

Failure to read the text carefully. Again we see that the critic is simply not reading the text with any diligence whatsoever, for there is no inconsistency. David bought the *threshing floor and oxen* for 50 shekels of silver (2 Samuel 24:24). He also bought *the site* for 600 shekels of gold (1 Chronicles 21:25). The site would be the entirety of the land, of which the threshing floor was merely a small part.

50. When did the transfiguration occur? Six days later (Matthew 16:28–17:2; Mark 9:1–2) or eight days later (Luke 9:27–28)?

Subset fallacy and failure to read the text carefully. Both Matthew and Mark indicate that Jesus told of His coming and that the

transfiguration occurred six days later. Luke, however, says "about eight days after these sayings." The critic seems to have missed that important word: "about." It seems that Matthew and Mark started counting from the day after Jesus had mentioned His coming kingdom, but Luke includes the day itself. Moreover, Luke's use of the word "about" indicates that eight days is not exact, but rounded. This would make sense if the transfiguration took place very late on the seventh day, such that it was almost the eighth day and rounding up would be called the "eighth day," whereas Mark and Luke only record the six days *in between* these events. Even in our modern language we refer to the *1900s* as the *20th* century with no contradiction.

51. How many animals of each kind did Noah take into the Ark? Two of each kind (Genesis 6:19, 7:8–9, 15) or seven (Genesis 7:2)?

Subset fallacy. Two of each kind of air-breathing land animal were to be brought into the ark (Genesis 6:19, 7:8–9, 15). In addition to this, a greater quantity of animals that were classified as ceremonially "clean" was also included, though only a small fraction of animals were ceremonially clean. Namely, seven of the clean kinds were brought aboard (Genesis 7:2). Of course, if seven were brought onboard, then two were necessarily brought onboard (and five more). So, there is no contradiction. Not all texts in Genesis 6–8 mention the qualification that an additional number of clean animals was to be included. But no text contradicts it.

52. How many men were in the king's presence? Second Kings 25:18–19 contradicts Jeremiah 52:24–25.

Subset fallacy. All the numbers agree between the two passages except the number of advisors to the king. Second Kings 25:19 indicates that five were taken, whereas Jeremiah 52:25 indicates that seven were taken. There is no contradiction of course, because if seven were taken then necessarily five were taken (and two more). We might speculate as to why the account in Kings does not mention the additional two. Perhaps they were less conspicuous, or

were immediately dismissed. But regardless of the reason, there is no contradiction.

53. Who did the women see at the tomb? One angel (Matthew 28:2; Mark 16:5; and John 20:12), or two angels (Luke 24:4)?

Subset fallacy and failure to distinguish different times and different persons. The women saw two angels (Luke 24:4), though only one of the two angels is specifically mentioned in Matthew 28:1–8 and Mark 16:5. Mary Magdalene, who arrived before the others (John 20:1), saw an empty tomb, but on her second visit she saw two angels (John 20:11–13). She then saw Jesus (John 20:14). Later, all the women saw Jesus (Matthew 28:9; Mark 16:9). So, where is the supposed contradiction?

54. How many women came to the sepulcher? John 20:1 contradicts Matthew 28:1, which contradicts Mark 16:1, which contradicts Luke 24:1, 10.

Fallacy of argument from silence. None of the passages listed by the critic state how many women came to the tomb. But they do provide enough information for us to conclude that there were at least four: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and Joanna. But there may have been others too, as suggested by Luke 24:10. Each Gospel mentions only some of the women by name, but none deny that the others were there as well. Thus, there is no inconsistency.

John 20:1 mentions only Mary Magdalene, presumably because she arrived first. Matthew 28:1 mentions Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (the mother of James). So, does Mark 16:1, which also mentions Salome. Luke 24:10 mentions Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Joanna by name, but also mentions that others were present. Where is the supposed contradiction?