

## **Introduction to the Bible Difficulties Class**

Welcome to a most interesting class! You will find this class both frustrating enlightening and refreshing. This will perhaps be the most different class you have ever taken. Theologians thrive on a class like this and argue for days over a single word. However, for us, we just want to understand some of those hard verses to understand and with so few theologians to talk to, it isn't easy to get solid answers. First of all, we cannot fully understand every Word of the Bible as it clearly hides some things from us enough to keep us guessing. For example we don't know when Jesus will return but we do have a pretty good idea that he will and we look forward to it just like every Christian since the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem around 33AD.

**Does the Bible have Errors?** NO, it does not. There has not been one demonstrable error in the original text of the Bible.

**Have there been errors in copies.** Sure there have! Most are easily found and corrected. With almost 27,000 manuscripts available today from all over the world of that time, we have been able to get very close to the originals and if we are not, there is not one error in meaning for sure. Thus, you can trust the accuracy of your Bible. That is not the issue of this course and if you want to delve into inerrancy of the Bible, well that is another course!

### **God Cannot Err. The Bible is the Word of God. Therefore, the Bible Cannot Err.**

The above syllogism, or form of logical reasoning, is perfectly valid. However, while the Bible is the Word of God and cannot have any errors, nonetheless, this does not mean there are no difficulties in it.

St. Augustine said, "If we are perplexed by any apparent contradiction in Scripture, it is not allowable to say, the author of this book is mistaken; but either the manuscript is faulty, or the translation is wrong, or you have not understood." The mistakes are not in the revelation of God, but are in the misinterpretations of man. We are not going into these in depth but for your pleasure, I will offer you 17 common mistakes of human interpretation.

1. Assuming that the unexplained is not explainable.
2. Presuming the Bible guilty until proven innocent.
3. Confusing our fallible interpretation with God's infallible Revelation.
4. Failing to understand the context of the passage.
5. Neglecting to interpret difficult passages in the light of clear ones.
6. Basing a teaching on an obscure passage.
7. Forgetting that the Bible is a human book with human characteristics.
8. Assuming that a partial report is a false report.
9. Demanding that NT citations of the OT always be exact quotations.
10. Assuming that divergent accounts are false ones.
11. Presuming that the Bible approves of all it records.
12. Forgetting that the Bible uses non-technical, everyday language.
13. Assuming that round numbers are false.
14. Neglecting to note that the Bible uses different literary devices.
15. Forgetting that only the original text, not every copy of scripture is without error.
16. Confusing general statements with universal ones.
17. Forgetting that later revelation supersedes previous revelation.

What I would like each of you to do is to write down the reference to the verse that has bothered you most and explain why it bothers you. I will probably not address every verse but at least I can see what kind of issues bother most people in the class and we can attack those first. This week we will attach the issue of losing your salvation. I assume you all understand the Presbyterian view of salvation. Right?

Your Difficult Verse: \_\_\_\_\_ (Book, Chapter and Verse number)

Why does this verse seem difficult to you?

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