
HOW CAN WE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE SCRIPTURES?

PETER J. WILLIAMS

@DRPJWILLIAMS

SUMMARY

- **Summary:** This talk explores the different ways people come to trust the Scriptures and how trust in the Scriptures is rational, relational, and moral. We will look at the way evidence in the Scriptures is morally structured, so that the Scriptures provide stumbling blocks for those who don't want to believe as well as grounds for belief by those who are seeking.

WAYS INTO A DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

- Your parents told you to trust Scripture
- “No one ever spoke like this man!” (John 7:46 ESV)
- Scriptures’ teaching
- Accepting Jesus, and then his attitude to OT
- Scripture on Scripture, e.g. 2 Timothy 3:16
- Miraculous features of the text, e.g. prophecy
- Historical evidence
- Conversion

I WILL TAKE FOR
GRANTED STANDARD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL &
HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

I. THE NATURE OF TRUST IN SCRIPTURE



Rational



Relational



Righteous



2. WHAT ABOUT CONTRADICTIONS?



DOES GOD THINK THAT LOVING THE WORLD IS GOOD?

-
- **John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (ESV)
 - **1 John 2:15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (ESV)

DID PEOPLE BELIEVE WHEN THEY SAW THE SIGNS JESUS DID?

-
- **John 2:23** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. (ESV)
 - **John 12:37** Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him ... (ESV)

DO THE PEOPLE KNOW JESUS AND WHERE HE'S FROM?

-
- **John 7:28** So Jesus called out, as he taught in the temple, “*You know me, and you know where I come from.*” (ESV)
 - **John 8:14** Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but *you do not know where I come from or where I am going.*” (ESV)
 - **John 8:19** They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “*You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.*” (ESV)

IS JESUS' WITNESS TRUE IF HE BEARS WITNESS ABOUT HIMSELF?

-
- **John 5:31** If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. (NKJV)
 - **John 8:13-14** The Pharisees therefore said to Him, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.”¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.” (NKJV)

DOES JESUS JUDGE?

-
- **John 8:15** You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. (ESV)
 - **John 8:16** Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. (ESV)
 - **John 8:26** I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him. (ESV)

DID JESUS COME TO JUDGE THE WORLD?

-
- **John 12:47** If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. (ESV)
 - **John 3:17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (ESV)
 - **John 9:39** Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. (ESV)

ARE THE CROWD IN JOHN 8 OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM?

-
- **John 8:37** 'I know that you are offspring of Abraham, but you are seeking to kill me.'
 - **John 8:39-40** Jesus said to them, 'I you are children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham, but now you are seeking to kill me.'

A FAVORITE CONTRADICTION OF BART EHRMAN

“One of my favorite apparent discrepancies—I read John for years without realizing how strange this one is—comes in Jesus’ ‘Farewell Discourse,’ the last address that Jesus delivers to his disciples, at his last meal with them, which takes up all of chapters 13 to 17 in the Gospel according to John. In John 13:36, Peter says to Jesus, ‘Lord, where are you going?’ A few verses later Thomas says, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going’ (John 14:5). And then, a few minutes later, at the same meal, Jesus upbraids his disciples, saying,

A FAVOURITE CONTRADICTION OF BART EHRMAN



‘Now I am going to the one who sent me, yet none of you asks me, “Where are you going?”’ (John 16:5). Either Jesus had a very short attention span or there is something strange going on with the sources for these chapters, creating an odd kind of disconnect.’



IS EHRMAN MISSING
SOMETHING?



HOW GOOD WRITERS USE CONTRADICTION

-
- It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. (Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*).



COULD
CONTRADICTIONS
ACROSS DIFFERENT
BOOKS BE DELIBERATE?



ARE WE JUSTIFIED BY WORKS?

-
- **James 2:24** You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. (ESV)
 - **Romans 3:28** For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (ESV)

DID JESUS ABOLISH THE LAW?

-
- **Matthew 5:17** Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (ESV)
 - **Ephesians 2:14-15** For he [Jesus] himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace ... (ESV)

WHY WOULD GOD ALLOW CONTRADICTIONS IN THE BIBLE?

-
- **Matthew 7:7** ‘Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.’ (ESV)
 - **I Corinthians 3:19** For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”. (NIV)
 - **I Corinthians 1:23** ‘but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles...’ (ESV)

GETTING MORE OR GETTING LESS

- ‘For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not even what he has will be taken away.’ (Matthew 13:12)
- ‘For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.’ (Matthew 25:29)
- ‘For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.’ (Mark 4:25)
- ‘Take care then how you hear for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.’ (Luke 8:18)
- ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.’ (Luke 19:26)



SOME BIBLE 'TRAPS'





NUMBER CONTRADICTIONS



IF YOU WONT
TO KONTACT
MI YOU NEEDED
TO PHON +44
1224 566515

WHICH WORDS
AND NUMBERS
ARE WRONG?

2 SAMUEL 24:13 & 1 CHRONICLES 21:12 (THE TRAP)

2 Samuel 24:13: So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, “Shall **seven** years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days’ pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me.”

1 Chronicles 21.12: ‘Either **three** years of famine, or three months of devastation by your foes while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else three days of the sword of the Lord, pestilence on the land, with the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.’

THE KEY

-
- 2 Samuel 21:1: ‘Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year.’
 - Solution to famine was the offering (somehow) of Saul’s descendants, which only took place at the time of the barley harvest (2 Samuel 21:9).
 - Only at the end of the season did God allow the land to prosper (2 Samuel 21:10, 14).
 - Census took 9 months and 20 days to complete (2 Samuel 24:8)
 - The famine lasted 4 years already
 - Extension of the famine would mean 7 years

HOW MANY IN ISRAEL'S CENSUS? (THE TRAP)

‘And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were **800,000** valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were **500,000**.’ (2 Samuel 24:9)

‘And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to David. In all Israel there were **1,100,000** men who drew the sword, and in Judah **470,000** who drew the sword.’ (1 Chronicles 21:5)

COUNTING DIFFERENT THINGS

-
- 2 Samuel is giving us the number given to the king
 - 1 Chronicles is giving us the total number of men *available* for the army
 - The key: Joab had 288,000 men he didn't need to count because they were already arranged in military divisions
 - 1 Chronicles 27:1-15, where 12 divisions of 24,000 gives us 288,000 men
 - 800,000 counted by Joab in census + divisions already numbered 288,000 = 1,088,000 \approx 1,100,000



EXAMINE EZRA 2 AND NEHEMIAH 7



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Ezra 2:1 Now these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried captive to Babylonia. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town.

Nehemiah 7:5 And I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it ...

Ezra 2:21-22: The sons of Bethlehem, 123. The men of Netophah, 56.

Nehemiah 7:26: The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, 188.

THE WELL

MORE EVIDENCE OF THE WELL

-
- 2 Chronicles 2:2, 18: 3,600 overseers
 - 1 Kings 5:16: 3,300 overseers
 - *Get ready to stumble*
 - The key: 2 Chronicles 8:10 refers to a different 250 people in oversight
 - $3,300 + 250 \approx 3,600$

THINGS WHICH AT
FIRST SEEM EVIDENCE
AGAINST, ON CLOSER
INSPECTION BECOME
STRONG EVIDENCE
FOR THE BIBLE



BECAUSE
EVIDENCE IS
MORALLY
STRUCTURED:
SEEK OR STUMBLE





3. JESUS AND THE OLD TESTAMENT



THE PURPOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- ‘And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.’ (Luke 24:25-27)

FULFILMENT QUOTATIONS IN MATTHEW

- 1:22-23 virgin < Isaiah 7:14
- 2:15 Out of Egypt I have called my Son < Hosea 11:1
- 2:17-18 a voice heard in Ramah < Jeremiah 31:15
- 2:23 Nazorene < ?
- 4:14-16 Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali < Isaiah 9:1-2

DÉJÀ VU: JESUS IN MATTHEW

Chapter	OT comparison
1-2	Jesus = David
2	Jesus = Moses; Herod = Pharaoh
2	Jesus = Israel
3	Jesus = Israel
3	Jesus = Elisha? John the Baptist = Elijah
4	Jesus = Israel
5	Jesus = Moses

MATTHEW 5:17-18

- “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

THE TYPOLOGICAL NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

- Genesis 12: Abraham goes down into Egypt; Pharaoh is plagued; Abraham is driven out by Pharaoh (prequel)
- Exodus: the main event
- Jeremiah 16:14-21: second Exodus
- ‘This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet “Out of Egypt I called my son.”’ (Matthew 2:15; quoting Hosea 11:1)
- ‘And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure [Greek: *exodos*] which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.’ (Luke 9:30-31)

‘IT’S LIKE DÉJÀ
VU ALL OVER
AGAIN’
(YOGI BERRA)



MAIN STORY LINE CORRELATIONS

- Promised seed
- Promised only son (Gen. 22, offered on same mountain)
- Oppression and rescue
- Separation from God and God's presence in the desert
- Priests / Judges / Kings / Prophets

CORRELATIONS OF CATEGORY

- Sin (3rd chapter)
- Death for sin (3rd chapter)
- Sacrifice (4th chapter)
- Blood is important (9th chapter)
- The Passover (central part of second book)



BIOGRAPHICAL CORRELATIONS





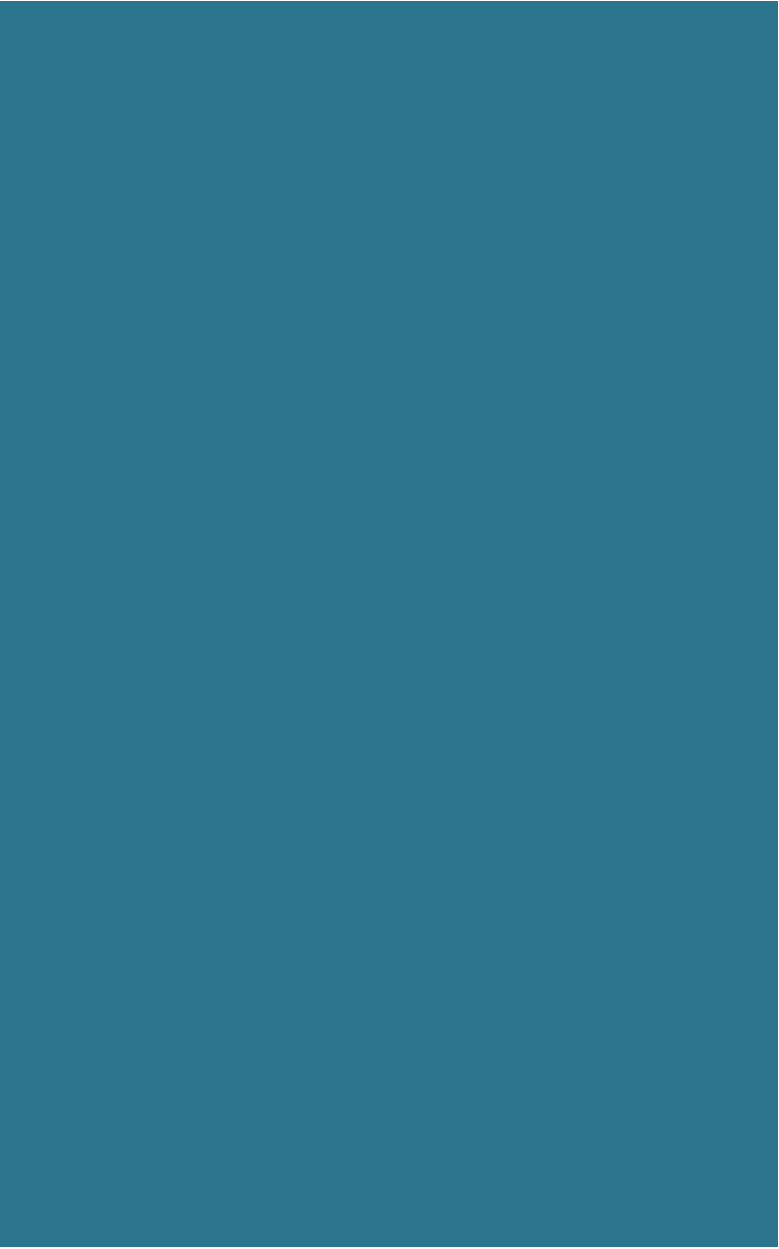
SAMSON

SAMSON

- Nazirite: not to touch dead things, not to touch fruit of vine
- Breaches; sailing close to the wind
 - Lion carcass in vineyard
 - Fresh jawbone of an ass
 - Feasts [implying wine]
 - After this he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek [grapes], whose name was Delilah. (Jdg 16:4 ESV)
- Seems to get away with anything

SAMSON'S EYES

- ‘Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines.’ (Judges 14:1)
- ‘Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.”’ (14:3)
- ‘Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her.’ (16:1)
- ‘And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes.’ (16:21)



HOW CAN
SAMSON BE A
PICTURE OF
CHRIST?

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SAMSON AND CHRIST

- Angelic announcement of birth
- Saviour
- Spirit of God
- Achieve greatest salvation by dying
- Position at death
- Thirst
- Betrayed for money

Christ	Samson
Deliberately saves	Accidentally saves
Does not follow his eyes (Isaiah 11:3)	Follows his eyes
Dies calling for people to be forgiven	Dies calling for revenge
Brought the most life through his death	Brought the most death through his death
Obedient to God	Disobedient to God
Self-sacrificing	Pursues self-interest

CONTRASTS BETWEEN SAMSON AND CHRIST



ELISHA

ELISHA AND JESUS (JESHUA)

- Similar structure to name: Divine name + 'save'
- Preceded by Elijah
- Greater than one before them
- Cleanse lepers
- Multiply food
- Raise dead sons and give them to their mothers
- Make something float
- Greedy disciple
- People flee from their tomb

A close-up photograph of a typewriter's carriage and typebars. The carriage is in sharp focus, showing its metal frame and several typebars. The background is blurred, showing more of the typewriter's mechanism. A teal-colored rectangular overlay is positioned on the left side of the image, containing white text.

QUESTIONS?

@drpjwilliams