

Analyzing Bible Difficulties

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Chapter-I

The Categories Of Difficulties In The Bible

History tells us that the attempt to find difficulties and contradictions in the Bible is thousands of years old. Over these millennia several thousand alleged difficulties have shaken many Bible-believing Christians, but the actual number of difficulties is far less than it at first appears. Careful analysis shows that these difficulties fall into certain categories, the total of which is not more than about two dozen.

This means that instead of a few thousand different difficulties in the Bible, there are less than two dozen types of difficulties to answer, most of which are not really difficulties at all. The actual number looks so large because hundreds of examples of same type are found, inflating the total number. Of these two dozen categories, only about a dozen are of any serious interest and it is only these we mention in this work.

Difficulties, problems, and apparent contradictions arise because of the following reasons:

1--Difficulties Arising From The Original Text: All of us know that the Holy Scriptures are absolutely infallible and inerrant, but this applies only to the original writings (or autograph). Today we do not have the original autographs with us. What we have are copies which have come to us through centuries of hand-copying.

Any type of copying is bound to introduce errors of spelling, repetition, omission, and others; the problem is compounded when this process of hand-copying is repeated for hundreds or thousands of years without the help of modern writing aids. In fact many of the ancient nonbiblical books have altered so much in this process that in some cases up to 90% of the extant text of a book is corrupted. However, those men who copied the books of the Bible knew that they were not handling an ordinary book, so they took exceptional care during hand-copying. As a result, the number of errors that have crept into the biblical manuscripts is minimal compared to other ancient manuscripts.

This process resulted in some errors of translation in the King James Version that most people use in English. Some of these errors have crept into other languages also because of the same influence. However, the tens of thousands of ancient biblical manuscripts available today have helped Bible scholars to restore the original text with great certainty. Another difficulty of the original text is the language. The ancient Hebrews did not write like the modern man. Their language had only capital letters. Further, they wrote words without vowels and, to compound the problem, these words were not separated from each other. Thus in the original writings of Genesis 1:1 might have looked something like:

NTHBGGNNGGDCRTD...

and 1 John 1:9 might have looked like:

FWCNFSSRSNSHSFTHFL...

These examples are given in English, but are sufficient to explain what the biblical text might have looked like in original Hebrew.

The words were finally separated, and vowels inserted, by modern scribes. Even a single wrong division or insertion of vowel done by them could drastically change the meaning of the original, though the original text is still intact.

Further, instead of numerals, the ancient Hebrews used alphabets for expressing numbers. Thus many a times names and words could be numbers and vice versa, adding to the potential problems.

Interestingly most copyist' errors are of such a nature that they do not affect the essential nature of the message of the Bible. Nor do any such errors affect any major doctrine of the Bible. This is because most of the errors are related to spelling and numbers (such as some ages mentioned in the chronologies) which do not affect the Bible's message.

A good proportion of the alleged difficulties are based upon the King James Version of the Bible which was translated about four hundred years ago. But after this translation was done, archaeologists have discovered thousands of ancient biblical manuscripts, some of which are more than two thousand years old. The science of recovering the original text by comparison of these manuscripts has developed to a high degree of precision, and many scholars have painstakingly worked out the original text with great certainty. All of this has helped scholars to make the newer translations like the New American Standard Bible and the New King James Version more accurate even in trivial matters like numbers and ages mentioned in genealogies.

It must be understood very clearly that there is no other ancient book of comparable age and size which is represented by so many ancient manuscripts and therefore we are fully able to reconstruct the original autographs to a high level of precision without actually having them in our possession. Secondly, even though many errors had crept into the manuscripts used for making translations like the KJV, most of the errors (over 90%) were insignificant in nature. The small number of significant errors do not affect the sincere readers because by comparison of different manuscripts, the original words are being retrieved. In essence, no copyist's error has affected the essential message of the Bible; the remaining non-significant errors are now being corrected by scholars involved in Textual Criticism.

2--Difficulties Arising Out Of Translation Problems: Translating matter recorded in one language into another one is quite difficult. The difficulty increases many fold when idiomatic expressions from an extinct language, representing the speech pattern of an ancient society, has to be translated into the present-day speech. The problems faced by Bible translators is beyond imagination, and these difficulties will automatically introduce many unknown errors into the translated text.

Sometimes a Hebrew or Greek word can be translated by many different words of another language, none of which might be adequate for a satisfactory translation. The translator can choose only one word, but that choice might not be fully appropriate. Further, if he uses the same word throughout the Bible to translate the original word, he is being too narrow, and his language becomes too rigid. On the

other hand if he uses different words in different places (as the context demands) to translate the same word in the original, then he is giving rise to many other possible difficulties to the reader as well as the expositor. As a consequence, every translation has to depend upon numerous carefully weighed compromises, and this is bound to cause many problems when the translation is widely circulated.

The original autographs of the Bible were verbally inspired by God, and therefore they are inerrant and infallible, but the same is not true of translations. The paraphrases are removed further from the original text. Even the most faithful translation of the Bible contains some paraphrases, biases of the translators, wrong equivalents, and also archaisms. Archaic words are those which have lost or changed their original meaning so that they no longer mean what the translator intended them to mean.

In addition to this, the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament uses hundreds of different figures of speech. It is not always easy for a translator to recognize them, and even after a correct recognition, it is not always easy to convey the full meaning into another language. In I Thess. 4:4 there is an expression about possessing one's "vessel", an expression not at all easy for the translator. The Greek word used here for vessel may mean not only an actual vessel, but also a ship, the human body, and also one's wife. Even though all these meanings do not have equal weight for this Greek word, they are all important for understanding the correct meaning of the commandment. This puts the translator in a very difficult position because no other language in the world may have an exactly equivalent word, with all these meanings attached to it. Many difficulties arise out of these problems of translations.

Instances of translation-related problems abound both in the Bible as well as in common life. For example "hitting the bull's eye" is in common usage in English. But many non English translators have translated this expression literally into their languages (when translating books), creating havoc with the message. When translating the Bible it is common to find non English speakers translating "the lamb of God" into their native languages as "God's sheep's child".

Today many wonder about the use of the term "sister" for lover in Songs Of Solomon 4:9. The problem has been created by a literal translation of an endearing word that does not make sense to a non Hebrew.

The Scriptures have many sex-related words that sounded perfectly normal to the Hebrews, but that might be offensive to others if translated literally. Thus the translators are forced to substitute euphemisms, or even symbolic words instead of making an accurate translation.

3--Difficulties Arising Out Of False Interpretation Of The Bible: The Bible speaks about numerous subjects: history, geography, politics, ethics, psychology, human relationships, etc. These statements have definite and clear cut meanings because God does not deal in ambiguities. However, this does not imply that every person will necessarily understand everything found in the Bible. No human being can understand all human truth, and therefore it naturally follows that NO human can understand the whole of the divine truth.

Once a difficulty arises in the Bible, the human mind tries to solve the problem by substituting a possible interpretation for the intended meaning. Obviously all interpretations will have a human prejudice in them and therefore the number of such interpretations might increase. Some of these interpretations might violently contradict the ideas cherished by others, and this might make a lot of people upset about the Bible. But the problem here is not with the Bible, but with the differing viewpoints of the people who are trying to bring out the possible meaning or

implication of the biblical text under consideration.

Many times people's philosophical backgrounds bias them to such an extent that they start viewing the Bible in the light of these wrong notions. For example, for thousands of years people all over the world were under the influence of the Aristotelian cosmology, according to which the earth is flat and also the center of the solar system. Since this was the most dominant idea, almost all the people who read the Bible (laymen as well as scholars), interpreted many passages in the Bible to imply that the earth is the center of the solar system. Thus when the heliocentric view (according to which the sun is the center of the solar system) was advanced, a number of theologians arose to oppose this view. They were all laboring under the false notion that the Bible conforms to their Aristotelian philosophy, and that if anyone dared to question this philosophy, they he was questioning the Bible. Nothing could be farther from the truth, but this kind of behavior can be seen even today.

Even today there are people who believe that the earth is flat and that all the pictures which show the earth to be a sphere are clever fakes. Interestingly, many of these people claim that they have come to this conclusion about the solar system from their study of the Bible. However, to an honest reader, who is willing to permit the usage of figurative expressions in describing natural phenomena, it will become obvious that the Bible supports neither the concept of a flat earth, nor the geocentric/heliocentric solar systems.

When the activities of the infinite God are expressed using the finite language and limited concepts of mankind, difficulties are bound to arise. Most of the difficulties are of predictable nature, and this is why we are studying the categories of difficulties. Once a person is familiar with the commonest types of errors, he will be in a good position to tackle old as new problems when they are thrown at him.

4--Difficulties Arising Out Of A Wrong Conception Of The Bible:

Many people think that when we say that the Bible is the word of God, of divine origin and authority, then it means that every statement in the Bible has come from the mouth of God. But this is definitely a wrong notion.

The Bible contains a record of what regenerate AND fallen men have spoken, what the good AND the fallen angels have spoken, and also what God has spoken. Divine inspiration only implies that all that is recorded has actually taken place exactly as stated in the word of God. It does not imply that all of it represents truth. Rather both the truth as well as the false statements of men and spirit beings, and even of animals, are recorded so that we might be instructed and warned when we study them in the light of the entire revealed word of God.

For example, the fool's comment that 'there is no God' is recorded not to imply that it is true, but to instruct us in what a human heart thinks when it is bent upon foolishness. The story of Jephthah in Judges 11, in which he vows to sacrifice that which comes to meet him, is not to approve what he did but rather to demonstrate the folly of hasty decisions. The story of the unrighteous steward is recorded in Luke chapter 16 not to commend his unrighteousness, but rather to demonstrate how wise the worldly people are in money matters. A good portion of the book of Ecclesiastes demonstrates how a regenerated person thinks when he is out of fellowship with God.

All kinds of statements uttered by men and spirit beings, and even by animals are recorded in the Bible, not to approve them but to instruct us in what is right and what is wrong. All statements must be examined in the light of the entire word of God to see what God wants us to learn from them.

In Daniel 2:11 we find a very interesting reference to the polytheistic ideas of the wise men who attended King Nebuchadnezzar's court. But this does not mean that the Bible condones polytheism. Similarly comparing Isaiah 36:10 with 37:6 brings out a false claim, but it does not imply that the Scriptures endorse it.

5--Difficulties Arising Out Of The Type Of Language In Which The Bible Was Written: The Bible is a book for all times, ages, and for all kinds of people, therefore it is written in a language which is not 'dated'. It uses the common man's language instead of technical jargon. Technical books are written for a limited readership, and they become outdated very soon, but the Bible was written for every person ever to be born, to serve generation after generation without ever becoming outdated. This is the reason why the Bible uses expressions like 'the sun rises', but this does not imply that sun revolves around the earth. Even in this twentieth century we speak of the 'rising' and 'setting' of the sun even though we know that sun is not rising in reality. Since Bible is a book for all people of all ages, it also uses similar language of accommodation.

Also, prose, poetry, and prophecy have different ways of expressing truth, and they should never be mingled or confused with each other. A good example of such language is found in Leviticus 26:19 which says "And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass". The prophecy only implies a condition of rainlessness, not that the skies will become iron and that the earth will actually become brass.

6--Difficulties Arising Out Of Our Incomplete Knowledge Of The Customs, History, Geography And The Society Of Bible Times: Though archaeologists have amassed a vast wealth of knowledge about Bible times, our understanding of the past is not complete yet in any way. Because of this, many expressions and events mentioned in the Bible pose some difficulty to readers. The tremendous amount of archaeological information that has been coming up in recent times, however, have been solving many of these difficulties.

One such difficulty is the drinking of wine mentioned in the Bible. Most people who are offended by reading about this are ignorant about the three different ways in which most cultures treat alcoholic drinks. Alcohol is used for medicine, as a part of food, and for getting intoxicated. When wine is mentioned in the Bible, most of the time it is part of the food, where there is no hint of intoxication. It is used in this way in numerous agricultural societies. This includes many societies in India too. Also, there are many suggestions from historical records that many a times the wine used as part of food was not intoxicating at all.

The reason why tax-collectors were hated, how salt can lose its flavor, and what "putting fire on the enemy's head" meant can be understood only if we understand the cultures in the context of which these things were spoken.

7--Difficulties Arising Out Of Our Ignorance Of The Conditions Under Which A Certain Book Was Written Or A Certain Commandment Was Given: The meaning and significance of certain books like Esther, Songs Of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes can be understood only if one knows the conditions under which these books were written. Also, certain commandments like the one given to exterminate all of the Canaanites can be understood only if we understand the degeneration of those people, and the impossibility of reforming them.

Let us consider the example of the book called Song Of Solomon. Many people are shocked when they read this book because it contains many statements related to the love of a man and his right woman. In fact such kinds of reaction about this book has given rise to a host of ways in which the meaning and message of this book is interpreted. However, the first thing that we must understand is that "reaction" is never the proper criterion to evaluate, judge or interpret something in the Word of God. The second thing to understand in this connection is that marriage is a divine institution, declared holy by God.

The present day attitude about marriage and related subjects is not the result of Christian thinking. Rather, pagan philosophies and movements have so much vulgarized and profaned the subject that many people shun all discussion of these subjects. But it is not reasonable to expect the Word of God to shun the discussion of a subject merely because men have profaned the subject. This is a modern phenomena originating with perversions of the Western society. The Eastern societies, however, have always considered marriage sacred and discussion of such subject an essential part of training society -- especially the young and people of marriageable age. It was a kind of premarital counseling in these societies, and seen in that light the book takes on a new meaning.

In fact there are many such things in the Bible about which people feel uncomfortable. But it must be pointed out that in almost all such cases, people judge the Word of God in the light of pagan ideas and philosophies which they have so firmly accepted that they don't know what they are doing !!

8--Difficulties Arising Out Of The Many-Sidedness Of The Bible: We all have certain preconceptions, prejudices, and a philosophy of looking at things, and this makes our thoughts one-sided. For example, among theologians there are both Calvinists as well as Arminianists, even though neither of them might have perceived the full truth. God's truth is many-sided, and none of us can comprehend it all in our lifetimes. As a consequence, one aspect of truth might appear to contradict another, even though there is no REAL contradiction. For example, under the influence of humanistic philosophies many people are able to see only the 'love' aspect of life, but not the discipline or balance aspect. Such people speak against all forms of discipline and punishment without realizing what they are actually doing -- sheltering the criminal and abandoning the innocent to danger. Such people are horrified at the thought of capital punishment mentioned in the Bible because it hurts their emotions, but at the same time they exhibit an attitude of apathy towards the persons who were assaulted, murdered, or raped by the criminal who is now facing the capital punishment.

9--The Infiniteness Of God And The Finiteness Of Man's Understanding: God and His wisdom are infinite. It is not possible to accurately describe His thoughts and dealings using the limited human language. As a consequence, when God's acts and attitudes are expressed in human language, difficulties are bound to arise. If we are sufficiently conscious of the fact that the finite mind cannot in any way fully comprehend the infinite, then a lot of frustration would be avoided. Questions related to the sovereignty of God and the free will of man, the problem of pain and evil under a just God, etc. come under this category.

Since there has to be some way of speaking about the infinite God in spite of linguistic limitations, two practices are common in the Bible: describing the acts and thoughts of God in terms of man's activity, and using human terms to describe what God thinks or does. Both of these practices have their communication value, but if pressed to the extreme, they can give rise to nonexistent problems. For example when the Bible speaks of God "repenting" over something, it must not be

confused with the repentance which man undergoes. These two activities are entirely different, but the writers use the same words to describe them because we do not have other suitable words. It is foolish to debate over such words when they are only what are called "anthropomorphisms" and "anthropopathisms".

10--Difficulties Arising Out Of Fallacies Of Logic: Logic is the foundation of all clear thinking, reasoning and communication. But when a large number of interdependent subjects are discussed, people tend to make errors of logic in their deductions and interpretations. This behavior becomes very prominent with those people who are preoccupied with their own biases and subjectivity. They hear what was not said, deduce what was not intended, and make conclusions which are not warranted in the normal course. For an example let us look at the following statements:

- (A)--All dogs have four legs
- (B)--All tables have four legs

Though both the statements above are true in themselves, it is wrong to conclude that since both objects have the same number of legs, all dogs are tables.

In the same way, it is wrong to put two statements from the Bible together to arrive at conclusions that are not intended by the speaker.

11--Difficulties Which Arise When The Precise Nature Of A Statement Is Not Understood: Every language contains several types of statements. Some are very general in nature, while others are highly restrictive. Some are affirmative, subjunctive, speculative, or figurative. Sometimes it is difficult to translate the precise sense from the originals into other languages, while at other times even experienced translators overlook this peculiarity. At still other times one statement in the original languages might admit or contain more than one sense while the translator is restricted to conveying one single sense.

While this type of difficulty usually does not hinder a seeker from discerning the possible meaning, which is sufficient for his edification, a person who reads the Bible with the express intent of discrediting it will surely find a problem here. Also, most expositors point out these possibilities during the course of their expository messages and therefore people who are given to serious study usually overcome these difficulties in the course of their Bible study.

To clarify the matter, let us consider the common English word "can". It is a word which most of us use commonly in our everyday conversation. Interestingly, this common and simple word can be used in a number of different ways. Depending on the construction of the sentence and the mood and tone of the speaker it can express potential, permission, or even a stern order ! Hence it is the nature of the sentence which dictates the precise meaning that is to be attached with this word.

If this word under consideration has been used by someone to express a possibility, but if someone else interprets it as permission, then strange interpretations can come out of it which will be completely opposite in meaning to what the speaker intended. Consider the following : "You can sin". When it is used to express a possibility, it might mean "You can (fall into) sin (if you are careless)". But a careless interpretation can distort it to mean "(You have permission so that now) you can sin" ! This is enough to demonstrate why one should be careful to discern the nature of a sentence before it is labeled as a problem passage.

12--Difficulties Of Numbers: Numbers have been used throughout the Bible

in connection with money, measurement, age, the number of people in a group, or the number of things, etc. Sometimes the reckoning is approximate while at other times it is exact. Today also we see similar practices in connection with quoting of numerical figures. Where only the approximate value is required people round off the figure while where precision is required people quote numbers with sufficient accuracy, even up to several decimal places. It is the same in the Bible.

A good example of this kind of statement is found in Numbers 14:30. On a cursory reading of this verse it might seem that only two persons, Caleb and Joshua, entered Canaan from the original lot. However, the speaker (God) fully knew that the actual number of people who entered Canaan was in tens of thousands. Yet he quoted the small figure of two because he had qualified (in the previous verses) the number that he is quoting, so that this figure no longer represents the total.

On the other hand, when measurements related to buildings and vessels are given, most of the figures tend to be exact specifications. The best example is the specification given for the huge tank built for the temple of Solomon. The figures given in the Bible (I Kings 7:23-26) are so exact that they can be used to calculate the value of 'pi' (circumference/diameter) accurately up to two decimal places (i.e. 3.14).

Critics have raised many problems related to numbers. Many of these look like problems because the way in which these numbers have been used were not determined by the interpreters.

13--Problems Related To The Dullness Of Our Spiritual Perception:

Even the spiritually mature person has not reached the final knowledge or understanding that is necessary in spiritual matters. Even in mature people, spiritual perception still remains so dull that it can be compared to seeing an image in smoked or ground glass or mirror.

Also, answers to many classes of problems can be understood only by spiritually discerning people, and they will remain problematic issues for the immature person who has only a very dull spiritual perception. Concerning doctrinal issues, they cannot be understood by unregenerate people because such subjects can be understood only with the help of the Holy Spirit, and this help is available only to believers in Christ.

Problems dealing with God's justice, the presence of evil, injustice, and suffering in God's creation, and the untold miseries suffered by the innocent are some difficult problems in this category. If an unregenerate person, or a believer who has not grown significantly, has difficulty with these problems then it is only natural. They are trying to understand matters for which they do not have any mental or spiritual preparation or background. Even spiritual maturity is not a guarantee that we will comprehend all the answers.

Many times a believer gets a better view of the whole matter only after passing through a personal crisis or misery. After the crisis is over, he might reflect and find that God allowed it all only for his spiritual good.

CONCLUSION

There are plenty of people all around us who would like to discredit the Bible somehow or other. One standard tactic of such people is to bring up a lot of 'difficulties' in the Bible. They argue that if the Bible is the Word of God then there should not be any difficulties. The first thing that we should note about these people

is that they are being naive ! In fact whenever there is any persons-to-person communication of substantial length, difficulties are bound to arise. This is more so when the finite man tries to understand the infinite God.

The second thing to understand is that most of the difficulties advanced by the critics fall into certain definite categories. Knowing these categories of difficulties will help us to understand the reason for the difficulty and to solve it.

We face difficulties even in simple books written by human beings. Therefore it is to be understood that the Book that has been written by God, and which tries to capture that acts of the infinite God in the finite language of man, will give some difficulties to its readers. These difficulties do not discredit the Bible in any way, and they do not hinder the communication of the main message of the Bible. Rather, if such difficulties were absent then one should have suspected whether it is God's word, or a carefully written and edited book produced by mere humans.

Chapter -- 2

Common Sense About Difficulties In The Bible

Difficulties are bound to arise whenever a difficult subject is discussed. Since the Bible discusses numerous topics, many of which require spiritual discernment for proper understanding, difficulties are to be expected. In the last chapter we saw the most common types of difficulties and the methods to solve those problems. However, no person will ever be able to solve every problem that is put to him. This might cause a lot of distress if the apologist is not aware of this possibility. To prepare the readers in this direction, we will list some commonsense observations on difficulties in the Bible. These are termed as "commonsense" comments because one does not need a theological background to understand the validity of these statements.

1--When The Finite Man Tries To Understand The Infinite God And His Actions, Difficulties Are Bound To Arise: A certain minimum amount of intelligence and experience is necessary to understand any subject. What is easy for a doctor or an engineer to understand seems like an impossible task for a unlearned person. A similar problem arises when the finite man tries to understand the thoughts and deeds of the infinite God. There is no way in which man can understand everything about God to his full satisfaction. If an uneducated laborer cannot understand the intricacies of Quantum Mechanics, then the finite man should never even dream of understanding everything about the infinite God. This, of course, does not preclude him in any way from gaining an understanding that is sufficient for living an abundant Christian life.

2--The Presence Of Difficulties Or Objections Do Not In Any Way Prove The Bible To Be Untrue: Our understanding of the Bible is growing day by day. Many difficulties and problems which were there in the past have vanished with this kind of development. However, our understanding of the Bible is not complete yet and therefore many problems still remain to be solved. Our past experience with the disappearance of problems shows that the presence of a few unsolved problems does not prove the Bible to be wrong. We must grant the necessary time to the Bible so that new light might be thrown on alleged difficulties. The past history of criticizing the Bible clearly shows two things:

(I)--Numerous objections were raised from time to time against the Bible, and they seemed to completely destroy the credibility of this book, but a good number of these difficulties have been solved with the growth in understanding either of the Bible or of science. This implies that we should wait for some time before pronouncing every problem and difficulty as unsolvable.

(II)--The problems which have vanished from the scene arose more due to the misunderstanding or distortion of science and less due to the Biblical narratives. For example the currently popular Big-Bang theory is used by some to attack the creation narrative in Genesis. They forget that Big-Bang is only a **theory** of science, and that it has not yet been elevated to a **fact** of science. Since it is only a theory, it might change or might even be abandoned in the coming days. Something that is still as uncertain as this cannot be used legitimately to attack Genesis. This is a distortion of scientific and logical deduction.

3--All Outlooks On Origin Have Problems And Difficulties: There are many views on the origins question, but ultimately all of them fall into two categories: supernatural and natural. No one has witnessed the origin of the universe in a laboratory, and therefore the view of origin accepted by a person is more a matter of faith and less of scientific observation. Both the above viewpoints have their own problems and difficulties, but the natural-origin view has the greatest odds against it.

According to the natural-origin view, the beginning and evolution of the universe has followed from the physics and chemistry of matter and energy. However, scientific studies of the past one century has demonstrated that most of the fundamental laws of physics and chemistry preclude the possibility of natural evolution of the Universe and of the life in it.

On the other hand, if one accepts the outlook of the Bible, he faces less difficulties. The alleged difficulties are getting solved one after another. The sixty-six books of the Canon have an amazing unity. The historical, archaeological, the scientific, and the prophetic accuracy of its books are being demonstrated every day. It has a life-changing power which is not seen in any other book or in any scientific procedure. Hence the Believer in the Bible faces less problems of logic than the believer in evolution. It is wiser therefore to accept the divine view of origins than the natural view which is plagued with scientific problems.

4--One's Inability To Solve A Difficulty Does Not Imply That The Problem Is Unsolvable: The above statement represents a very common observation of life. When we face a problem for which we seem to arrive at no solution, we do not immediately conclude that the problem cannot be solved. Of course many jump into wrong kinds of conclusions occasionally, but most of the time people have the common sense to look objectively at the issues and conclude that inability to solve does not imply that it is impossible to solve the problem. Instead, it is better to wait for more information.

The least that should be granted to the Bible, therefore, is a similar opportunity. If we seem to have no answer to a problem related to the Bible, we should be willing to wait for a justifiable amount of time before jumping to the conclusion that the problem cannot be solved. Unlike all other books the Bible has a greater claim to this kind of treatment because of its excellent track record. All kinds of problems have been raised against the Bible in the past millennia. This phenomena has intensified in the past two hundred years to such a level that today hundreds of books and articles come out every year with the sole aim of questioning something or other in the Bible. Yet, many of the problems which seemed incapable of solution

a short time ago turned out to be trivial: discoveries in archeology, history, geography, language, or science solved them.

An honest inquirer should be willing to wait for a reasonable time when facing any kind of a problem. In the case of the Bible this is a must if a person is objective about the past experiences about this book.

5--The Apparent Problems In The Bible Become Negligible When They Are Honestly Compared With The Incomparable Excellencies Of Bible: We have pointed out several times in this book that a few problems are definitely to be expected in the Bible. Even the most committed believer may not find answers to all the questions that come to his mind. This is because of the divine nature of the book, and also because of the prejudice and limitations of human understanding. However, no honest person can ignore the unusual power of this book to change human lives. Uncountable wretched and wicked persons have been touched by this book, and in an instant they became new persons. There is no other book in the world which has infused or inspired people with a new life or hope like this. This fact must always be given the due weight when problems and difficulties in the Bible are considered. This itself is enough to point out that the seeming problem might not be a problem at all if all the facts are available.

If a person is determined to spend all his time, energy and intelligence only to criticize the seeming difficulties in the Bible, many of which are trivial, while at the same time he overlooks the incomparable life-giving aspects of this Book, it is more a deliberate or prejudiced attempt to distort the message of the Bible than a sincere doubt.

6--History Is Our Witness That The Alleged Difficulties Are Given Much More Weight By Superficial Readers In Comparison To Serious Students Of Any Type: A careful examination of the output of people who speak and write frequently against the Bible shows that a good number of them know the Bible only superficially. Most of them have never read the book even once in its entirety, and they do not have any idea of the history, geography, culture, language, or customs, of the Bible times and lands. Neither do many of them exhibit a desire to delve deeper in their studies.

Interestingly, there are many people everywhere who show a greater respect for this book simply because of the depth of their knowledge. These people are not all believers in the Bible, but they are serious students of the sciences, arts, or humanities, and the depth that they have acquired in their respective subjects makes them recognize the manifold character and depth of the Bible. A serious student of anything will know the value of depth in any kind of studies, and he will avoid occasions to criticize subjects about which he is ignorant.

In the past there have been many occasions when critics tried to study either the whole Bible, or parts of it, in more depth. Interestingly, in most cases those critics turned into strong believers in the Bible. The story behind the novel BEN HUR should be known to every Christian. Its author was an infidel, who was challenged to disprove the historicity of the Lord Jesus and His miracles. This man was a genius, and he put all of his talent to achieve this end. Gradually the undeniable truth of it all started to dawn on him, and eventually he became a believer in the Lord Jesus. BEN HUR is the story in which he gives an expression to his discovery -- that Lord Jesus was a historical person !!

Shallow people always give great weight to the supposed problems whereas well informed people tend to be cautious in alleging that the Bible contains errors.

7--Many Problems Are Artificially Created By Propagandists, And These Do Not Have Their Origin In The Scriptures:

From time to time every society goes through periods of hostility and opposition against biblical truths. At such times forceful writers and speakers are able to influence people heavily against the Bible. They successfully sway people against the Bible through the weight of sheer propaganda. Effective propaganda bypasses all that really matters -- truth, facts, analysis, and rationality -- by making a strong appeal to emotions. They manipulate people by playing upon human needs, interests, curiosities, loves, hates, prejudices, fears, lusts, cupidities, and amusements.

When these techniques are used to attack the Biblical faith, the real issues are overlooked while non-issues dominate the air. The tone is emotional, not rational. Unless a person understands this strategy of attack, he will not be able to see how they blame the Bible without any foundation.

This subject is quite specialized and vast, and therefore it has been treated in detail elsewhere by the author.

8--Careful And Prayerful Study Will Resolve Many Difficulties: If a person tries to raise problems against the Bible merely with the aim of discrediting it, he will never arrive at a proper solution. He is already prejudiced against this book, and he will not be able to see anything that is against his own bias. But if a person approaches the Bible with the proper spirit, then many of the apparent difficulties will vanish one by one.

However NOT all the difficulties will ever disappear because man is a finite and limited creature, while Bible is the word of the infinite God. Also, our knowledge of the world is incomplete, and therefore some difficulties are bound to continue in those topics which touch upon history, geography, culture etc. However, for a sincere seeker, sufficient number of problems will be solved for him to confidently trust the Bible.

CONCLUSION

No one can solve all the problems in the Bible. But the way in which the alleged problems raised by one generation get solved in the next generations shows that the Bible is an amazing book. Most of the problems and difficulties arise either because of human ignorance or rebellion. An honest inquirer has to accept that this Book has got an amazing integrity which no one has ever been able to discredit.

Serious study and investigation of any subject is bound to give rise to some problems and difficulties. In the case of Bible, the presence of difficulties is only natural because it is a divine book which requires spiritual insight for a proper understanding. When the finite man tries to understand the infinite God and His deeds, difficulties are bound to arise. Further, many of the people who study the Bible do so with motives of attacking it and it is natural for such people to come up with a good number of presumed or real difficulties. The presence of difficulties should not surprise anyone. On the contrary, the serious Bible student must be prepared to face the issues honestly.

About The Authors

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