**Lists of Bible Contradictions**

Perhaps you have seen them -- those lists of alleged "Bible Contradictions".

They're frequently posted to mailing lists and other discussion forums, and various lists can be found on a number of web sites. Do they prove the [Bible](http://www.apologeticsindex.org/b44.html) to be flawed? Do they present valid observations and arguments? And if so, what does that mean?   
  
It is not surprising that non-Christians point out seeming contradictions in the Bible, nor is it wrong for them to do so. Even [Christians](http://www.apologeticsindex.org/c94.html) who are thoroughly familiar with the Bible sometimes are stumped by what at first glance may look like inconsistencies.   
  
Rather than ignore these issues, Christians should use them as opportunities to teach people about the Bible and its message. Though it appears that many of those who copy-and-paste lists of alleged contradictions have not themselves studied the issues they present, others are sincere in their quest for answers.   
  
The following is a good approach to take with those who post lists of contradictions:

* Find out if the person is posting his own observations, or those of someone else. If it is someone else's material, ask whether the poster agrees with all the issues presented.
* Rather than tackle a whole list in one sitting, deal with one issue at a time. Ask the poster to pick the first issue. Once you've discussed it, you pick the next issue.
* Find out what you know about the issue. It may be tempting to simply cut-and-paste a ready answer, but it is better to first see how far you get on your own. There is, of course, no need to re-invent the wheel. But even if you end up quoting someone else's answer, you should have studied the issue yourself, and formed your own opinion.
* At this point you may discover whether you have a serious discussion partner, or someone who is not interested in pursuing the issues. Either way, your efforts have not been in vain. You may have learned something yourself, and next time you will be better prepared to answer the objection. Too, you have demonstrated to the poster, as well as to those following the exchange, that alleged contradictions can be properly explained.
* If the orginal poster enters into a serious discussion, you may want to continue the thread for a while. However, your object is not so much to convince him or her of your point of view, but merely to show that the alleged contradiction does have an explanation you, as a Christian, can live with. Remember, you get to pick the next issue. Present and deal with it as before.
* If the orginal poster is unwilling to pursue the discussion, or rejects your answer without debating its merits, do pick an issue yourself. Present and deal with it. Others may pick up the discussion, but here too, even if they don't, you'll have demonstrated a willingness and ability to address the issues head-on.

In answering contradictions and other difficulties provide URLs and other references to the sources you use. This will help sincere inquirers to further investigate.