

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adult Sunday School

**DOCTRINE OF THE VERBAL PLENARY PRESERVATION
OF GOD’S WORD IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES**

LESSON NINE: APPARENT DISCREPANCIES IN THE BIBLE (PART 2)

I. INTRODUCTION

In our firm stand for the perfect Bible, we abide by the biblical principle by Apostle Paul: “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (see Romans 3:4). There are many things in the Bible we may not understand or fully understand. And when we do not understand, the problem does not lie with the Bible but with us!

Apostle Peter has sounded a strong warning to those who were in danger of being led away with the error of the wicked. He wrote “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Peter 3:15-17).

Apostle Peter called those who wrest with scriptures as unlearned and unstable. How did they wrest with scriptures? They claimed to teach the Bible but did so by teaching what the Bible did not teach. They put meaning into what the Scriptures did not mean. That’s how they wrest with Scriptures. And such a stand is unfaithful which the anti-VPPists are also found guilty with. They are ‘wrestling’ with Scriptures by undermining the verity of the perfect Bible. To believe and say the Bible has mistakes is committing “the error of the wicked.” And we are to be warned against them, lest we are “led away with the error of the wicked”!

At the same time, we acknowledged that there are “some things hard to be understood” in the Holy Scriptures. But our attitude towards the Scriptures must always be by way of humility and not of arrogance and pride. The humble attitude a child of God must have is to seek God earnestly by studying to show himself “approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Let us not become a critic or judge of God’s Word.

II. 2 SAMUEL 24:24 COMPARING WITH 1 CHRONICLES 21:25

2 Samuel 24:24, “And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.”

1 Chronicles 21:25, “So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight.”

Problem 1: Who own the land, Araunah or Ornan?

Answer: There are 3 possible solutions to this problem. The first solution is Araunah and Ornan are the same person with different names. In other words, Araunah is also called Ornan. It was fairly common in those days for one man to have more than one name. The second solution is Araunah could be an official title and Ornan is a proper Hebrew name.

The last solution is Araunah could be a Canaanite name. Once translated into Hebrew, it becomes Ornan. According to Strong's Lexicon (#728), it identifies Araunah as an "orthographical variation" of Ornan. These are the possible solutions to the problem. There is no discrepancy here.

Problem 2: How much did David pay for the threshingfloor, 50 shekels of silver or 600 shekels of gold?

Answer: Based on 2 Samuel 24:24, the cost of the threshingfloor and the oxen is 50 shekels of silver. However, in 1 Chronicles 21:25 records the cost of the "place" is 600 shekels of gold. According to 1 Chronicles 22:1, the place will be where "the house of the LORD God" and "the altar of the burnt offering for Israel" were located. It was not just the threshingfloor but also where the place of worship was located. This place must be a large piece of land (see 2 Chronicles 3:1-4) which David has bought from Ornan. The land cost 600 shekels of gold while the threshingfloor and oxen cost only 50 shekels of silver. There is no discrepancy here.

III. 1 KINGS 9:23 COMPARING WITH 2 CHRONICLES 8:10

1 Kings 9:23, "These *were* the chief of the officers that *were* over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work."

2 Chronicles 8:10, "And these *were* the chief of king Solomon's officers, *even* two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people."

Problem: Clearly these two verses presented two different numbers of the same account. Which is correct, 550 or 250? Can both numbers be correct at the same time? Is it not better to admit honestly this is a mistake?

Answer: One possible solution is to find out the total number of chief officers recorded in Kings and Chronicles. The total number of chief officers provided by Kings was 3,850 men (3,300 from 1 Kings 5:16 and 550 from 1 Kings 9:23). The total number of chief officers provided by Chronicles was 3,850 men (3,600 from 2 Chronicles 2:18 and 250 from 2 Chronicles 8:10). The total is the same for both accounts. Therefore, we can see that there is no discrepancy at all.

According to Keil and Delitzsch, "The difference does not lie within the numbers of the text, the two authors simply classified the officers according to different standards. Whereas the chronicler might have been dividing the supervisors according to their nationality, the author of 1 Kings seems to have been dividing them by their authority." As such, there is no contradiction.

IV. 1 KINGS 16:8 COMPARING WITH 2 CHRONICLES 16:1

1 Kings 16:8, "In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years."

2 Chronicles 16:1, "In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah."

Problem: How could Baasha still be ruling over Israel in the 36th year of Asa's reign when 1 Kings 16:8 clearly indicates that Baasha had died when Asa was in the 26th year of his reign? Is there not clearly a mistake here?

Answer: According to 1 Kings 16:4-6, God judged Baasha for following the way of Jeroboam and he died. “So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead” (1 Kings 16:6). His death occurred at the 26th year of Asa’s reign in Judah. How could Baasha be alive at the 36th year of Asa’s reign in the Chronicles’ account?

The possible solution to this apparent discrepancy is the issue of co-reign rulership. The 26-year account was Asa’s reigning over Judah alone while the 36-year account was Asa’s co-reigning with his mother queen Maachah before she was dethroned (see 1 Kings 15:9-13). The period of co-reign could have lasted more than 10 years. With this answer, there is no contradiction at all.

V. 2 KINGS 8:26 COMPARING WITH 2 CHRONICLES 22:2

2 Kings 8:26, “Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.”

2 Chronicles 22:2, “Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.”

Problem: 2 Kings 8:26 reflects Ahaziah is 22 years old while 2 Chronicles 22:2 reflects Ahaziah is 42 years old. Is there not a scribe error as regards to the age of King Ahaziah when he began to reign?

Answer: It can be explained that prior to Ahaziah's official reign at the age of 42, he might have co-reigned with his father Jehoram at the age of 22. The co-reign might have lasted 20 years. So, there is no contradiction here.

VI. 2 KINGS 16:9 COMPARING WITH 2 CHRONICLES 28:21

2 Kings 16:9, “And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried *the people of it* captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.”

2 Chronicles 28:21, “For Ahaz took away a portion *out of the house of the LORD*, and *out of the house of the king*, and of the princes, and gave *it* unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.”

Problem: Did the king of Assyria help Ahaz or not? These two accounts presented opposite response. Is this not a contradiction?

Answer: There is no contradiction because they were two different kings of Assyria. Their names may be similar but they were different. The king of Assyria according to 2 Kings 16:7 goes by the name “Tiglathpileser” while in 2 Chronicles 28:20 is “Tilgathpilneser.” It was a minor difference of the placement of 2 Hebrew letters “g” and “l.” Some even retorted that this was a scribal error that caused the confusion. All the 3 occurrences of “Tiglathpileser” in 2 Kings 15:29; 16:7,10 are rendered the same spelling. All the 3 occurrences of “Tilgathpilneser” in 1 Chronicles 5:6,26 and 2 Chronicles 28:20 are rendered the same spelling. In other words, the differences are deliberate. Clearly these are 2 different kings of Assyria.

Moreover, it was recorded that in 2 Chronicles 28:16, “At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him” (emphasis mine). King Ahaz used the same method of approach to different kings of Assyria. Out of all the kings of Assyria whom Ahaz approached, Tiglathpilesar agreed to help while Tilgathpilneser refused to. The problem is thus solved and there is no contradiction at all.

VII. 2 KINGS 16:19 COMPARING WITH 2 CHRONICLES 28:19

2 Kings 16:19, “Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?”

2 Chronicles 28:19, “For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD.”

Problem: Ahaz was the king of Judah but 2 Chronicles 28:19 presented him as the king of Israel. Is this not clearly a scribal mistake?

Answer: There is no mistake here. If there is, it would have been corrected already by the scribes. Surely, they knew better than we do on the biblical history of all the kings of the divided kingdom. Let us understand that by this time in 2 Chronicles 28, the northern kingdom of Israel had already been destroyed by the Assyrian superpower in those days. By naming Ahaz as a king of Israel describes him spiritually as following the evil deeds of all the kings of the northern kingdom without an exception.

Not only that, after the northern kingdom was destroyed, the only people left on earth as God’s witnesses were those found in the southern kingdom. Are they not referred to “all Israel?” (see 2 Chronicles 28:23) In addition, the past kings of Judah were also regarded as the kings of Israel (see 2 Chronicles 28:27). Therefore, it is not wrong per say to call Ahaz “king of Israel” though in reality he was the king of Judah. There is no mistake here.