

Lesson 15 - Contrasts

A contradiction is a statement that opposes or denies another statement. As we learned in lesson one, the Bible does not contradict itself. However, many sceptics accuse the Bible of having contradictions. All too often, Christians reinterpret what the Bible says in order to remove apparent contradictions. When this happens, both the sceptics and the Christians are mishandling God's Word. Though the Bible is free from contradictions, it is very important to realise that the Bible does contain many contrasts.

A contrast is a difference between things that are compared. Compare each verse in the pairs of verses listed below. [Don't worry about trying to explain these differences right now. You will understand them as you continue to study these Bible lessons. In this lesson just observe carefully that there are undeniable contrasts in the Bible.]

Circumcision

"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Genesis 17:10,14).

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Galatians 5:2).

In the book of Genesis God commands every male to be circumcised. If any male is not circumcised, he is cut off from God's people. Paul, on the other hand, warns against being circumcised.

Healing

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" . . . "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Matthew 10:8; Mark 16:18).

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" . . .

"Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" . . . "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Timothy 4:20; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to go forth and heal the sick and raise the dead. Mark 16 records the Lord's promise that His disciples would heal the sick. In contrast to this, Paul does not heal Timothy or Trophimus. In one case he merely prescribes medicine and in the other case he leaves a valued co-worker in the ministry sick while he departs to another city. Even Paul himself had a physical problem that he prayed about three times without experiencing healing.

Law and Grace

"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them" . . . "Those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 27:26; 29:29).

" . . . for ye are not under the law, but under grace" . . . "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:18).

The book of Deuteronomy commands obedience to all the words of the law. However, Romans and Galatians teach that we are not under the law if we are led by the Holy Spirit.

Eating Pork

"And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you" (Leviticus 11:7-8).

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith . . . commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Timothy 4:1-5).

In Leviticus we read that pork is unclean and must not be eaten. 1 Timothy clearly teaches that pork is not unclean and it may be eaten.

An Unbelieving Mate

" . . . Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives . . . let it be done according to the law . . . And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives . . . separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives . . ." (Ezra 10:2-4,10-12).

". . . If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away . . . the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband . . ." (1 Corinthians 7:12-14). Ezra warned the men that they must separate from their unbelieving wives. Paul encouraged the men not to separate from their unbelieving wives.

The Sabbath

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" . . . "how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days . . ." (Colossians 2:16; Galatians 4:9-11). One of the Ten Commandments in Exodus is that the Sabbath must be observed. Paul says we should not observe holy days such as the Sabbath.

Genealogies

"These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood" . . . "to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites" (Ezra 2:62; 1 Chronicles 31:16-19).

"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do" . . . "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (1 Timothy 1:4; Titus 3:9). In Ezra and 1 Chronicles genealogies were very important and it was necessary to give heed to them. In 1 Timothy and Titus genealogies are not important and you must not give heed to them.

Speaking in Tongues

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews . . . every man heard them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:4-6).

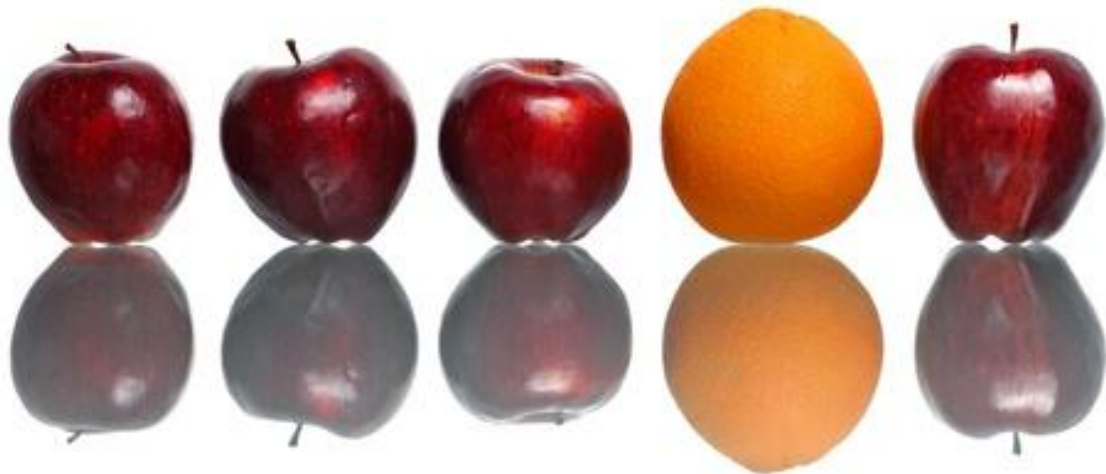
"to another divers kinds of tongues . . . dividing to every man severally as he will . . . do all speak with tongues?" . . . "whether there be tongues, they shall cease . . . that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Corinthians 12:9-11,28-30; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

The disciples in Acts 2 all spoke with tongues. In 1 Corinthians 12 they do not all speak with tongues. Furthermore, in chapter 13 the Corinthians are told that tongues will cease.

Ordinances

"Ye shall do my judgements, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God" . . . "keep the passover unto the Lord; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do" (Leviticus 18:4; Numbers 9:14).

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances" . . . "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14). Leviticus and Numbers command the keeping of certain ordinances. Ephesians and Colossians teach that the ordinances have been abolished; blotted out; taken out of the way.



Review Questions Lesson 15 - Contrasts

True or False

1. The Bible does not have any contradictions.
2. The Disciples of Christ were never commanded to heal the sick or raise the dead.
3. Some cults forbid the eating of pork, but there is no verse in the Bible that forbids pork as part of the diet.
4. The book of Colossians teaches that the Sabbath must be observed.

Multiple Choice

5. In Acts 2:
 - a) All of the disciples spoke in tongues.
 - b) Some of the disciples spoke in tongues.
 - c) the Holy Spirit gave most of the disciples the gift of tongues.
 - d) The gift of tongues had ceased.
6. The Bible:
 - a) contains many contradictions.
 - b) contains many errors.
 - c) contains many contrasts.
 - d) can only be understood by pastors or priests.
7. In the Old Testament, circumcision:
 - a) was optional.
 - b) was commanded.
 - c) was never practised.
 - d) is never mentioned.

Fill in the Blanks

8. James says that a man is justified by _____ .
9. Paul encouraged men not to _____ from their unbelieving wives.
10. In Ezra and 1 Chronicles _____ were very important.