“Couldn’t Jesus’ Disciples Have Just Fabricated Fulfilled Prophecy Claims?”

First of all I’d like to thank you for helping me so much. You have really cleared up a lot of questions I’ve had about my faith in Christ and have given me some great answers. I have another question for you that I have been struggling with. Couldn’t the disciples have made it look like Jesus fulfilled all those prophecies, and simply fabricated them?

This may seem possible in some instances, but in many others it becomes very difficult to believe. For example, consider those prophecies which were fulfilled during the last week of Jesus’ life (i.e. from the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem through His death by crucifixion). Quite frankly, these events were observed by too many people for the disciples to have fabricated them. Not only did Jesus’ loyal followers witness these events, but so did unbelieving Jews and Romans (the very people responsible for executing Jesus). These events are too well-established historically for anyone to seriously suggest that the disciples fabricated them. What the skeptic will typically do, therefore, is simply deny that such Old Testament texts are truly prophetic. They’ll argue that the disciples misinterpreted these texts when they applied them to Jesus. It would be unusual to seriously argue that the disciples made up stories about how Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. In this sense, the debate really tends to be over how these Old Testament passages should be interpreted, and whether such texts can be fairly applied to Jesus’ life and ministry. Although this is a technical and complicated debate, I’m convinced that these texts do accurately prophesy certain things about the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Hope this helps.

Michael Gleghorn, Probe Ministries

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“What About People Who Live Longer than 120 Years?”

In Genesis 6, God says man will not live past 120 years of age. I heard that someone lived to be around 140 in modern times. I searched this out and found a woman was reported to have lived 122 years. How can we explain this apparent contradiction to the Bible?

Let’s look at what Genesis 6:3 actually says.

Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

There are two interpretations that have been offered, and they can both be true at the same time. One is that the 120 years refers to how much longer God would allow mankind to live on the earth before He sent the Flood.

The second interpretation is that God was about to limit the individual lifespans of mankind to 120 years, which would start to happen after the Flood. (You can see the decline recorded in Genesis 11 by noting the ages at which the patriarchs died.) That is the upper limit for all but a few hardy souls, such as the one you found. This is not a contradiction in the Bible since the middle-Eastern mindset from which the Bible was written was not concerned with the

excruciating attention to detail and minute accuracy that our Western mindsets have come to expect. It's not wrong, and it's not a contradiction—it's just a different way of seeing things. Consider the difference between 120 and the amazing longevity of pre-flood folks: Noah lived 950 years, Adam 930, Methuselah 969. The point is the difference between 969 and 120, not the difference between 120 and 122. Does that make sense?

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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"How Do We Know Eyewitnesses to Jesus' Ministry Ever Existed?"

I came across your website and looking for first-hand eyewitness evidence of Jesus' ministry. I wish to quote a line you wrote:

> *In the early years of the church the story of Jesus was being told and retold by eyewitnesses of these events.*

My question is, where are the original source documents that cite (at least some of) these eyewitnesses? Many Christian apologetics claim that there were many eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus. The question is, what evidence do we have that such eyewitnesses even existed?

Thanks for your question; it's a good one. My first observation may sound a bit silly, although I don't intend it to be so. But when I think about it, if there were no eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry, if literally no one witnessed anything of his teachings, miracles, etc., then it seems that we would simply have no record of these events at all (for no one would have witnessed them). But in fact, conservative scholars agree that we have a great deal of eyewitness testimony recorded in the New Testament documents themselves. For instance, the gospels of Matthew and John were written by two of Jesus' original disciples. So both of these gospels are based on eyewitness testimony. Early church tradition claims that Mark's gospel was based on the preaching of the apostle Peter (another eyewitness of Jesus' life and ministry). And Luke's gospel begins by noting the importance of eyewitness testimony to the ministry of Jesus:

Luke 1:1-4 says,

> *Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

In addition, Peter (in his second epistle) wrote: "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

Similarly, the apostle John begins his first letter this way:

> *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of*

> *life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-4).*

Finally, Paul writes of seeing Jesus after his resurrection: "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?" (1 Corinthians 9:1)

These are just a few examples. Others could be offered as well. But these are sufficient (I think) to show that the earliest records we have of the life and ministry of Jesus claim to be solidly grounded in eyewitness testimony.

I hope this is helpful.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

Thank you for your reply, and I thank you for your efforts to answer my question. I appreciate that you took time out of your life to answer it.

However, what I am really after is a list of non-Biblical sources that back up the Biblical sources. If the events of Jesus really happened, it would be logical to assume that there would be plenty more writings of this event. Well, this would at least appear logical in my mind.

I know there were at least two historians, Josephus and Tacitus, and also the Jewish writings of the Talmud. Why did these historians and sources only write a small amount? If Jesus really did turn water into wine, or fed 5,000 with two fishes, then this would attracted an incredible amount of

attention.

It appears to me, and perhaps you can shed some light on this matter, that Christianity begun as a political movement whose ulterior motive was social control. It is only the fear of Hell that ultimately connects people to the Christian view, including mine.

Anyway, any correspondence would be appreciated. I'm not trying to debate you, but seek earnestly for answers.

Good questions! I've written a brief article which deals with some of the evidence you're asking for. You can find it here.

One of the best book-length treatments that I'm aware of is Gary Habermas's *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ.*.

Other helpful resources would be Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ*, Craig Evans' *Fabricating Jesus*, and Robert Bowman and J. Komoszewski's *Putting Jesus in His Place*.

Finally, I would highly recommend the articles dealing with the Historical Jesus by William Lane Craig, which you can find here.

These recommendations are all of high quality (some popular, some scholarly).

It's important to understand that the New Testament documents are our earliest and best sources of information about Jesus. Many people don't realize this, but it's a fact that even liberal scholars don't dispute. The New Testament was not originally written as a single volume. Rather, each book is an independent source of information about Jesus and early Christianity. In other words, what we have in the New Testament is not one source, but rather twenty-seven sources. Granted, many of these sources are authored by one individual (the apostle Paul), but my point is that these documents were

originally separate, independent, sources of information. That's an important point to bear in mind.

After the New Testament documents (and assuming you don't include early Christian sources outside the Bible), the earliest non-Christian testimony about Jesus that survives is that of the Jewish historian, Josephus (near the end of the first century). After Josephus, there is Tacitus (a Roman historian) and so on. Three things must be borne in mind here:

1. Most of the written sources from the first and second centuries are simply lost to history. Only a fraction of what was written at this time survives to our own day. Thus, there could have been other sources of information about Jesus which are simply not available to us 2000 years later.

2. It's really not strange that more non-Christian sources don't record information about Jesus. After all, Jesus was a poor Jewish teacher who spent most of his time outside Jerusalem. Since most non-Christian historians of that time focused their writings on great political figures, military leaders, etc., it's really not surprising that they wouldn't mention someone like Jesus. Indeed, what's actually surprising is that he IS mentioned by Josephus, Tacitus, etc. My point is this: Although Jesus is a hugely significant figure today, he was little known in the first century. The church is a worldwide phenomenon in our day, but it began as a very small offshoot of the Jewish religion. We shouldn't think that Jesus' name was a household term in the ancient world like it is today. The spread of Christianity took place over many centuries and continues today.

3. The Gospels (and other New Testament documents) should not be immediately discounted as reliable historical sources of information about Jesus. As I said, these are our earliest and best sources about Jesus. What's more, we have good reason to consider these sources as reliable sources of information about Jesus. In addition to the resources recommended

previously, see also Craig Blomberg's *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*.

Finally, I can only give a very brief response by email. Please be sure to check out some of the resources I've recommended above.

Michael Gleghorn

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"Where Does the Bible Say Jesus is 100% Man and 100% God?"

Where in the bible can I find that Jesus is 100% man and 100% God?

Thanks for your question. If you're looking for an exact quote, then I'm afraid that the Bible doesn't say this anywhere.

Why do Christians believe that Jesus was fully divine and fully human, then? Well, we look at what the Bible does teach and we seem to be compelled to adopt this view.

For example, Jesus claimed, "before Abraham was born, I am " (John 8:58), clearly alluding to Exodus 3:14. He also claimed to be one with the Father (John 10:30-33). He acknowledged that he was the Christ, or Messiah (Mark 14:60-64; compare with Daniel 7:13-14). He also claimed that our eternal destinies hinged on our response to him (Luke 12:8-9).

In addition, Jesus is said to be the eternal word of God incarnate (John 1:1-3, 14). He is called the Creator and head of the church (Colossians 1:15-20). These are just a few of the passages which speak of Christ's deity or divinity.

Other passages speak of his humanity. For example, Jesus was conceived and born of a woman (Matthew 1:18-25). He thus had a human body. He experienced hunger, thirst and fatigue (Matt. 4:2; John 4:6; etc.). He suffered and died (John 19:34). He could be heard, seen and touched (1 John 1:1). He evidenced the emotional and intellectual qualities of a human being (see Matt. 26:37 and Mark 9:21).

Again, there are plenty of other passages concerning Jesus' humanity. When theologians try to put all of this together, they conclude that the Bible teaches that Jesus was both divine and human.

Hope this is helpful.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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"Conflicting Genealogies of Christ?"

How do you reconcile the difference in Christ's genealogy given in Matthew and Luke?

Bible.org answers your question here: bible.org/question/why-do-matthew-and-lukes-genealogies-contradict-one-another:

"Matthew and Luke actually give two different genealogies. Matthew give the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, the legal, though not the physical father of Jesus. Luke, on the other hand, gives the ancestry of Jesus through Mary from whom Jesus was descended physically as to his humanity. This is a beautiful fulfillment of prophecy and actually testifies to the accuracy of the Bible. Through Joseph, Jesus became the legal heir to the throne while at the same time bypassed the curse of Coniah as prophesied in Jeremiah 22:24-30. Both, of course, were in the line of David so that Jesus had a legal right to the throne as the adopted son of Joseph and was at the same time a physical descendent of David through Mary.

"The Ryrie Study Bible gives an excellent summary of the issues here:

> *Although Coniah had seven sons (perhaps adopted; cf. 1 Chron. 3:17), none occupied the throne. So, as far as a continuing dynasty was concerned, Coniah was to be considered "childless." Although his line of descendants retained the legal throne rights, no physical descendant (no man of his descendants) would ever prosperously reign on the Davidic throne. The genealogy of Matthew traces the descent of Jesus through Solomon and Jeconiah (Heb., Coniah; Matt. 1:12); this is the genealogy of Jesus' legal father, Joseph. Luke traces Jesus' physical descent back through Mary and Nathan to David, bypassing Jeconiah's line and showing accurately the fulfillment of this prophecy of Jeremiah. If Jesus had been born only in the line of Joseph (and thus of Jeconiah), He would not have been qualified to reign on the throne of David in the Millennium. See note on Matt. 1:11."*

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries Webmistress

+ + + + + + + + + +

I have noticed that there is an error in your article concerning the genealogies of Christ. You say that the line goes through Mary in Luke, but this is not so, I have looked this up in the NIV, ESV and the Bible in my own language. Luke chapter 3:21-38 does not even mention Mary, it says Joseph. This still creates a conflict in the genealogy. Maybe I am reading this wrong. In the Matthew account it says: ". . .Mary, of whom is born the Christ. . ." one can argue for Mary in the Matthew account, but this feels like a stretch.

Glad you asked! It's not an error; this has been a point of discussion among Bible scholars for many years. Here's insight from the GotQuestions.org website, answering the question, "Why are Jesus' genealogies in Matthew and Luke so different?"

> *"[M]ost conservative Bible scholars assume Luke is recording Mary's genealogy and Matthew is recording Joseph's. Matthew is following the line of Joseph (Jesus' legal father), through David's son Solomon, while Luke is following the line of Mary (Jesus' blood relative), though David's son Nathan. There was no Greek word for "son-in-law," and Joseph would have been considered a son of Heli through marrying Heli's daughter Mary. Through either line, Jesus is a descendant of David and therefore eligible to be the Messiah. Tracing a genealogy through the mother's side is unusual, but so was the virgin birth. Luke's explanation is that Jesus was the son of Joseph, "so it was thought" (Luke 3:23).*

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“Did Abraham Speak Hebrew?”

What language did Abraham speak? What I really want to know is, did Abraham speak Hebrew?

I honestly don’t know for sure what language Abraham spoke. It would have surely been one of the ancient Semitic languages and thus would have been quite similar to ancient Hebrew in many respects. Easton’s Bible Dictionary has this to say about the Hebrew language and the language of Abraham:

> *“It is one of the class of languages called Semitic, because they were chiefly spoken among the descendants of Shem.*
>
> *When Abraham entered Canaan it is obvious that he found the language of its inhabitants closely allied to his own. Isaiah (19:18) calls it “the language of Canaan.” Whether this language, as seen in the earliest books of the Old Testament, was the very dialect which Abraham brought with him into Canaan, or whether it was the common tongue of the Canaanitish nations which he only adopted, is uncertain; probably the latter opinion is the correct one….*
>
> *The Hebrew is one of the oldest languages of which we have any knowledge. It is essentially identical with the Phoenician language… The Semitic languages, to which class the Hebrew and Phoenician belonged, were spoken over a very wide area: in Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Arabia, in all the countries from the Mediterranean to the borders of Assyria, and from the mountains of Armenia to the Indian Ocean. The rounded form of the letters, as seen in the Moabite stone, was probably that in which the ancient Hebrew was written down to the time of the Exile, when the present*

square or Chaldean form was adopted."

If you've never heard of the Biblical Studies Foundation website, I would strongly encourage you to check it out at www.netbible.com. They have hundreds of articles on biblical and theological issues.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

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"Where Are the References to Jesus From His Lifetime?"

I'm not a Christian but I have a great appreciation for a lot of the messages attributed to Jesus in the writings about him.

The idea that Jesus was, in fact, a real person seems to rely 100% on hearsay. I have read a lot of the strong arguments against a historical Christ and they all note the major flaw in the evidence you have put forth in your article: Not one of the men you named lived when Jesus supposedly did. All of their references to him are made by people born decades after the crucifixion supposedly happened. This holds true for every single reference I have ever seen. If there are any mentions of Jesus as a real person that were written or recorded during the time he supposedly lived, I would greatly appreciate you sending them to me. I say that not as a challenge to you but as someone who truly wants to know all there is to know about the subject. I am fascinated by this and I would hate to have made a decision without all of the available information.

I’m not disregarding any post mortem references to Jesus in history as being unimportant to the argument for his existence but I feel they would be excellent companions to support any actual contemporary evidence. I’m looking for any mention of him in the records of any historian living in his time. Such record keepers as Philo Judaeus or Pliny the Elder, who both lived in the area at the time that Jesus supposedly lived and died never mention him or any of the stories attributed to him in the New Testament. They are not the only reliable sources for such contemporary references but they certainly would have heard of Jesus Christ. Also, the Romans kept records but I have not heard of any mention of Jesus made by the Romans during his lifetime. This seems odd considering the fame and following Jesus is given in the stories of the Bible.

Thanks for your letter. I’m glad to see that you’re researching this important issue and really taking it seriously.

I’ll offer a few comments in response to your letter, but I will also list a few resources that will allow you to go much deeper than I can do over email. Also, although I have some knowledge in this area (and am interested in gaining more), I really don’t have the same level of expertise as the resources that I will mention at the end of this letter.

First, by way of responding specifically to your main question, as far as I’m aware we have no written testimony regarding the life of Jesus that dates to his own lifetime.

On the other hand, I personally believe that it would be a rather unwarranted leap to draw the conclusion that, because of this, Jesus of Nazareth was not an actual historical person, or even to draw the conclusion that the information that we do have about him is therefore untrustworthy or unreliable. What many people don’t realize is that the New Testament writings themselves, including the Gospels, constitute our earliest and best sources of historical

information about the life and ministry of Jesus. And this fact is recognized not only by conservative scholars, but by the broad spectrum of religious and theological scholarship.

Moreover, even those scholars who doubt that the Gospels are historically reliable in all that they affirm would still acknowledge that they contain much reliable history about the life, ministry, and death of Jesus. With only a few exceptions, the vast majority of scholars qualified to comment on this issue would not hesitate for a moment to declare that Jesus of Nazareth was a real figure of history, nor would they hesitate to say that the Gospels give us much (or at least some) historically reliable information about him. To see this, one need only remember that even very radical New Testament scholars, like John Dominic Crossan, do not doubt that Jesus was a real figure of history, nor do they doubt that the Gospels preserve at least some historically reliable information about him.

Additionally, some of the traditions about Jesus appear to be very early – far too early to have been contaminated by later, legendary developments. For example, the German commentator on Mark, Rudolph Pesch, has argued that the passion story in Mark's Gospel probably dates to within seven years of Jesus' death. This is because the High Priest is never mentioned by name in this section of the Gospel. It's as if I was to say something about what the "President" said today. You would know I was talking about George Bush (the current President). After the election, if I wanted to refer to something that George Bush said, I would have to specify that (for then a different President will be in power). Since Mark never mentions the High Priest by name, he is very likely referring to the High Priest that held power at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. But this was Caiphas, who ruled from A.D. 18 – 37. If Jesus was crucified in A.D. 30, then Mark's passion narrative must date to within seven years of Jesus death. This makes the legendary hypothesis extremely untenable – for

legends simply do not arise that quickly.

Finally, please allow me to recommend some good books and articles. The questions raised in regard to Jesus must be dealt with in much more detail than I can do over email:

1. *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel

2. *The Historical Jesus* by Gary Habermas

3. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* by Craig Blomberg

4. *Reasonable Faith* (2008 edition) by William Lane Craig

5. *Reinventing Jesus* by Komoszewski, Sawyer, and Wallace

6. William Lane Craig's website, www.reasonablefaith.org. Dr. Craig has a number of scholarly articles on the historical Jesus available here: www.reasonablefaith.org/site/PageServer?pagename=scholarly_articles_historical_Jesus. Also, here is a link to a debate on the historical evidence for Jesus' resurrection between Dr. Craig and Dr. Bart Ehrman: www.holycross.edu/departments/crec/website/resurrection-debate-transcript.pdf. Dr. Ehrman is an ex-evangelical New Testament scholar and is a leading authority in his field. Hence, this debate will really give you two top scholars debating the historicity of Jesus' resurrection.

7. Articles about Jesus from the trustworthy Bible.org website: www.bible.org/topic.php?topic_id=6

Wishing you all the best in your continued research!

Michael Gleghorn

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“How Old Was Jesus When He Died?”

Until now I’ve been told that Jesus died at the age of 33 years of age. However your Christmas Quiz says 37 to 38 years old. . .? Please help.

I believe that chronology that Dale Taliaferro was using in the Christmas Quiz was based on the work of Dr. Harold Hoehner (*Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ,* Zondervan, 1977).

Dr. Hoehner assumes that Christ was born in the Winter of B.C. 5 or Spring of B.C. 4. He also assumes that Christ was crucified on April 3, A.D. 33. As you can see, that would make Jesus 37 to 38 years old. You might want to consult the book and the excellent research by Dr. Hoehner (ThM, ThD at Dallas Theological Seminary, PhD at Cambridge University).

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

“How Does the Bible Show Abortion is Murder?”

In my “Introduction to Ethics” class, the topic for the night was abortion. As the discussion progressed, people all around me were saying that an abortion is good to do under any situation (rape, too young, the woman’s choice) and I argued

my point on that abortion is murder. I stated that the Bible had claimed to that statement also. The teacher then told me that I have to prove to him and the class that the Bible says abortion is murder. Can you help me with verses, or anything I could possibly use to make my point valid?

Glad you asked!

The perspective that abortion is murder depends on two points: 1) The Bible condemns murder (taking the life of another human being), and 2) The unborn baby is a person—a human being.

Point #1: What is murder?

> Exodus 20:13, usually translated "Thou shalt not kill," one of the Ten Commandments, actually means "Thou shalt not murder." (There is a difference. Taking the life of another person in war, for example, is not the same thing as murder.)

Point #2: The humanity of the unborn

> 1. Both Hebrew and Greek (the languages of the Bible) do not make a distinction between pre-born and born babies. Whether they live inside or outside the womb is not important as to their value or personhood.
>
> 2. *For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be. (Ps. 139:13-16)*
>
> This portion of scripture is written about the unborn baby.
>
> 3. *The Lord called me from the womb; from the body of my mother He named me. (Is. 49:1)*

The prophet Isaiah says he received God's calling and naming while still in the womb.

4. *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:5)*

The psalmist states that he was a spiritual being from the point of conception. This isn't saying that he sinned while in the womb, but that he recognizes that from the earliest part of life, he was a sinner.

5. *Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jer. 1:4-5)*

Jeremiah declares that God knew him, consecrated him (set him apart), and appointed him a prophet before he was even conceived! From God's perspective, Jeremiah's humanity began even before conception.

6. *At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among*
women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. (Luke 1:39-44)

The unborn John the Baptist had a physical reaction to the presence of Mary and ESPECIALLY her unborn Child. At this point, Jesus was probably only a week- or two-old embryo. (Scripture tells us that as soon as the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary about God's plan for the Holy Spirit to overshadow her and conceive the Messiah in her and she consented, she hurried to see Elizabeth, who lived about 70 or so miles

from Nazareth.)

I believe that these verses indicate that abortion is murder, but all you can do is offer the light they provide. Some people who don't want to believe that abortion is murder or that an unborn baby is anything more than a "potential human being" can and will refuse to accept it. (Remember what the Word says in Jeremiah 17:9—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?") Your job is to pray for God to open the eyes of the hearts of the others in your class, humbly offer the truth, and leave the results to God.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Jesus Contradicts the O.T. Law, Especially Regarding Homosexuality!"

You point out that the Old Testament forbids homosexuality. Yes it does, but Jesus' teachings in the gospels have superseded the primitive teachings of the O.T. For example in Matthew 5:17-34 Jesus systematically rips apart some of the most important Jewish laws. When he says he has come to fulfil the Law, he is not talking about the Pharisees' law, he is talking about God's Law. People who say that Jesus agreed with the Jewish laws are completely wrong— even an idiot can see this.

People who practice homosexuality in their own homes, with each others' consent are not breaking the law "love your neighbor as yourself." They are not harming anyone! What is harmful though is the constant attack by you so-called Christians on them which provides gay people with much misery. I am not homosexual myself – the reason why I am sticking up for gay people is because I am a Christian. Wake up to the fact that the law of loving your neighbor has replaced the O.T. laws.

Your essays clearly show you have some degree of intelligence – why can't you see that Jesus' law is in contradiction to the law of the Jewish scriptures?

Hello _____, Thanks for your e-mail. I will try to respond to your comments as best I can.

> *You point out that the O.T. forbids homosexuality. Yes it does, but Jesus' teachings in the gospels have superseded the primitive teachings of the O.T. For example in Matthew 5:17-34 Jesus systematically rips apart some of the most important Jewish laws. When he says he has come to fulfil the law, he is not talking about the Pharisee's law, he is talking about God's law. People who say that Jesus agreed with the Jewish laws are completely wrong – even an idiot can see this.*

I'm sorry, I fail to see which laws Jesus is ripping apart in this passage. What I see is that He is going beyond the LETTER of the law, to the SPIRIT of the law, to make it abundantly clear that Yahweh is concerned with the motives and intentions of the heart and not merely surface obedience. If a person holds to the SPIRIT (or intention) of the law, he will also obey the LETTER of it. This is a long way from "ripping apart" the law.

I do agree with you, however, that the Lord Jesus did not agree with the Jewish laws that were like fences built around

the inspired laws of God, but which were not, in themselves, laws of God. Those laws don't appear in the Bible though. The commandments against practicing homosexuality, however, were not Jewish laws, but God's laws.

> *People who practice homosexuality in their own homes, with each others consent are not breaking the law "love your neighbor as yourself." They are not harming anyone!*

Morality aside, ask any physician how healthy the homosexual lifestyle is. Ask the Center for Disease Control how healthy the homosexual lifestyle is. Ask counselors who are trying to help people leave the homosexual lifestyle and get beyond their painful homosexual desires. Talk to the parents, siblings, spouses and children of practicing homosexuals and ask if they are not harming anyone.

Let's put the homosexual issue aside and substitute another deviant sexual lifestyle. Do you think you would write to someone and say, "Men who are attracted to pre-school children and entice them into their homes to have sex with them, are not breaking the law 'love your neighbor as yourself.' In fact, these men are loving these children—isn't that admirable? They are not harming anyone! The men are enjoying the sex, and the children are enjoying the attention…and what child doesn't enjoy attention?"

I would suggest that you would never say something like this, and I would further suggest that the reason such a large portion of our culture has decided that sex between two men using parts of their bodies that were intended for excretion, not sex, is acceptable, is a result of a carefully-planned disinformation campaign. It is not a result of something normal and natural and God-intended.

> *What is harmful though is the constant attack by you so-called Christians on them which provides gay people with much misery. I am not homosexual myself – the reason why I am*

> *sticking up for gay people is because I am a Christian.*

It’s interesting to me that you seem so devoted to the issue of “love,” yet do not hesitate to cast aspersions on my relationship with Jesus Christ by calling me a “so-called Christian.” This doesn’t strike me as very loving, or am I missing something?

I’m also wondering if you read my entire article, or just bits and pieces. Because I strongly believe that the responsible Christian response to the homosexual movement is one of deep compassion for the individuals caught in unnatural, unfortunate desires while not compromising on what God has said about the homosexual ACT. In fact, I have received e-mail accusing me of “sticking up for gay people,” to use your term.

People like me who speak out, agreeing with what God has said about homosexuality, are not causing all the misery gays experience. That happens long before someone even comes out or tells their first friend of these unwelcome feelings and attractions. There is misery inherent in a homosexual orientation; it means something is wrong, in the same way that there’s something wrong with someone who is sexually attracted to small children. And that’s why these feelings need to be dealt with and healed, not celebrated as something good and beautiful.

(I will admit, with a great deal of sadness, that there has been a terrible amount of judgmental condescension from Christians towards homosexuals, that has, indeed, caused grief. There is no excuse for not making a distinction between the desires, which are wrong but unasked-for, and the people experiencing them. I know God does.)

> *Wake up to the fact that the law of loving your neighbor has replaced the O.T. laws.*

No, the law of loving your neighbor *sums up* the O.T. laws. At least the moral ones. If you keep all the moral laws of the Old Testament, you will be demonstrating love for your neighbor. Not stealing, telling the truth, not charging usurious interest against your neighbor, and keeping all sexual activity within marriage are all demonstrations of love for one's neighbor.

The law against homosexual actions is part of the moral code; the consequence of death by stoning is part of the civil code, which controlled how the people of God were to conduct their lives in a culture where God was their head and not a law-making king. It makes sense for the civil code to be done away with, because the people of Israel are no longer living under that system. But God has not done away with a single commandment of His moral code, because the moral laws are rooted in the person and character of God Himself.

What is it that makes homosexual activity sin? The fact that God has ordained sex to be the glue that holds *husband and wife* together. Sex is so powerful that it is only safe within the confines of marriage, because it acts like superglue between two souls. Tear them apart and you have broken hearts. So why not make homosexual marriage legal? Because Ephesians 5 says that marriage goes beyond merely a civil convenience; it is an eloquent word picture that God ordained to help us understand the amazing unity within diversity of Christ and the church. Men and women are so different that it's a mystical union when they come together in marriage. Man and man coming together, or woman and woman, does not provide the dynamic difference that mirrors the "otherness" of Christ-and-the-church. Gay relationships are sameness, not otherness. So gay marriage can never be blessed by God because marriage means far more than simply living together, even having sex together. It's supposed to teach us something about God.

> *Your essay clearly shows you have some degree of intelligence – why can't you see that Jesus' law is in contradiction to*

the law of the Jewish scriptures?

Well, I do thank you for the compliment <smile>. . .I don't see it because it's not there. Have you read the whole New Testament? How about just the four gospels? If you look at what the Lord Jesus taught, one thing you'll see is that He mentioned two things people often overlook. One is references to Sodom and Gomorrah as places of judgment, which the Bible makes clear were judged for homosexual sin. Jesus believed in Sodom and Gomorrah, and He believed in the judgment they received. In fact, He was involved in sending the judgment. The other thing is His references to fornication, which means any sex outside of marriage. All homosexual sex is fornication. Even if there is some sort of religious ceremony, it's still fornication because you can't get around God's restrictions on marriage, which is one man and one woman. God is not impressed by our ceremonies when they disregard what He has established.

A lot of people like to talk about Jesus' law of love; what's intriguing to me is how they never balance it with the fact that Jesus also talked about holiness, and purity, and justice. While it's true that many homosexuals love each other, that kind of love still falls short of God's standard of holiness. There's nothing holy about what God has called an abomination. That is not "the law of Jewish scriptures" as if they were written by scribes and Pharisees; that is the very word breathed by God Himself. There is no contradiction between the Old and New Testament when it comes to what is moral, what reflects the character of God. Homosexual sin is not love as God defines it, regardless of how the culture tries to persuade people it is.

Thank you for reading this far. I hope what I've said gives you something to think about. I also pray that the Lord gives you a higher esteem for the ENTIRE Word of God. Jesus said not one jot or tittle of it would pass away. That's a pretty high

value on it. May we all value His word so highly.

Respectfully,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries