

Evidence and the Law of Contradiction

Jack Elder

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I would like to use a scenario for the introduction to what I'm going to speak about today. I call this scenario the dead body on the riverbank. You may recognize this—I've brought it up in conversations before by way of introduction. I want to make it very clear this is a *make-believe* scenario. Any resemblance this scenario has to the past, present or future is purely coincidental. I'll also minimize any graphic descriptions so as not to offend the sensitivities of the young and the old.

Here's the scenario: These two fishermen, we'll call them Joe and Bill, are going out for a good day's fishing. They jump into their pickup truck and go down to the river to their favorite spot. You know it's their favorite spot because right off the highway onto the dirt road there's a pointy sign that says, "The Old Fishing Hole". At the river they spread out and find the best spot for the day.

All of a sudden Joe says, "Hey Bill, I see something in the water here—looks kind of funny to me. Come take a look at it." So Bill goes over there and takes a look at it. They say to each other, "That looks like a body there just below the surface of the water." They jump on the cell phone and call the police. The police come out, take a look, and say, "Sure enough, that's a body there." They call in a team of divers and pull the body out of the river. Here's the condition of the body: The feet are encased in a washtub-size piece of concrete, there's a heavy chain around the torso, a bullet hole in the forehead, a noose around the neck, and besides all that there's a knife sticking out of the chest.

The police put crime scene tape all around and call in a team of investigators. It's a large team so the crime scene chief says, "Okay, we're going to split you up into two groups; half will be group A and half will be group B. We're going to have you look at the body and tell us what you think happened here." After a couple of hours, the chief gets the investigators back together and asks the spokesman of group A, "What are your initial findings?"

The spokesman says, "Well, all of us compared notes and after a lengthy consultation we've concluded that the victim died of natural causes." The chief looks at the body, shakes his head, turns to group B, and asks their spokesman, "What are your initial findings?" He replies, "Chief, the concrete and chain were used as weight to try to hide the body; the perpetrators just made a mistake and it didn't go deep enough into the water. For the rest of the things we see, the other trauma, and all of that, we don't know what exactly killed the victim, but we do know for sure that he didn't die from natural causes." The chief agrees.

The point and moral of that little story? Half the investigators were foolish and half were wise. The point I'm making is it's foolish to ignore clear evidence. What I'm going to talk about today is evidence from the scriptures, and the "law of contradiction". My first point is (and I'm going to answer this question):

1. What is the law of contradiction?

You can google that (you can google anything; you could probably google the men on Mars and find something). It's a basic principle and in its simplest form, the law of contradiction states that *a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time*. It just won't work.

A good illustration of this would be in a court of law because they use this all the time. You have the prosecutor and you have the defense. The prosecutor is accusing the individual—the defendant—of a crime. The defense lawyer, of course, is trying to take the defendant's side. The prosecutor says, "Well, this individual was at the scene of the crime, we have evidence," and the defense says, "That's not so, he wasn't anywhere near there," but the only trouble is each one is trying to prove guilt or not guilt.

The problem is the evidence is *against* the defendant, so he can't use it any more in his defense—there's a contradiction. The evidence says the defendant was there; the defendant did commit the crime. The law of contradiction comes into play because a defendant cannot be guilty and not guilty at the same time. Logically the truth lies in the evidence, proof the other one is lying—you can't have it both ways; it just doesn't work. The legal system understands this law and uses it.

A near cousin of the law of contradiction is the "law of rationality" that suggests that one should draw only such conclusions as the evidence warrants. You can't make the evidence say something else, according to the law of rationality, but I'm not going to go there, I'm going to stick to the law of contradiction. We see it frequently in the news. It's going on right now in a high-profile investigation. The lead prosecutor wants his target to answer a series of questions in the hope of catching him in a contradiction and tripping him up. The prosecutorial team is trying to engineer or manufacture some kind of a contradiction. Then they can say, "he's lying" and then they have their "evidence."

For our purposes, how does the law of contradiction work when applied to the question of who is the God of the Old Testament? To me, one of the strangest things happened when this whole subject came up. It came up in one sermon. (I won't say who gave that sermon, but his initials are "RR". In the military, we used to use "R&R" as rest and recreation, to take a break from the grind of military life. That description does not apply to this guy. He doesn't get rest and recreation.) When this whole controversy started people embraced it when they heard it, but in some cases, the emotions went nuclear and people hated it, or anyone who spoke of it—anyone who would dare say anything about it was considered really strange.

For my own personal case, I grabbed right onto it rather quickly, and not because of any intellect on my part. It's just after all those years (45 years) of studying God's Word and seeing the differences in the uppercase "LORD" and the lowercase "Lord", we never had a really good explanation for the difference. I never could figure that out, and all of a sudden, these things started to answer that, so I grabbed right onto it.

When you think about this whole subject, no one questions the two Beings in Genesis—two God Beings. No one questions that, but that never answered the question of who was who and who did what. There was no explanation of the roles each of these Beings had, but when all that scriptural evidence started to pile up, it started small and grew into this big mountain; it evolved somehow and morphed into this huge argument amongst the people of God. But remember, there was no argument when it came to the two Beings, the Father and the Son in the New Testament—there's no argument. But somehow in the Old Testament, the way we approached it, there was something that was wrong with it.

Historically, we all learned the same thing from Mr. Armstrong, that the God of the Old Testament was none other than the Being who became Jesus Christ. Now part of the argument (I've been approached with this too) was he never said dogmatically that Christ was exclusively the God of the Old Testament, but I have that article, and if you read it and look at it, you can't take anything else away from it. There was no equivocation in that, there were no options whether He was or wasn't, so that's what we believed and most of us preached that.

Looking back (this isn't derogatory in any way towards Mr. Armstrong), he had a conclusion; that's what he understood at the time. Remember though, he never made mistakes, God wouldn't allow him to make mistakes (I'm smiling for a reason). Frankly, that's a crock—we all know that by now. He made many mistakes as we all have, that's how we learn. It's called growth—we learn something, we change our thinking. All due respect to his memory, he drew an incorrect conclusion—a conclusion that was contrary to the evidence of scripture. We're going to look at some of that evidence. As the argument goes, some in the ministry are still using that same conclusion as their premise for what they're saying in regard to this controversy.

That brings us to the second point:

2. You can't arrive at a right conclusion with the wrong premise.

You can't do that; that's a contradiction in itself. I have a quote from Ayn Rand (you can look her up, again on Google); she was a Russian journalist, a very smart woman. She said, speaking from an investigative journalist's point of view, "Contradictions do not exist. Whenever you think you're facing a contradiction check your premises. You will find that one of them is wrong." That observation is true as it pertains to God's Word and the law of contradiction. Whenever you start to think that scripture contradicts itself,

you should check your premises, and you'll most likely find that one or more of them is wrong. You just started from the wrong place and arrived at a wrong conclusion. That's certainly true of this controversy in which we find ourselves in the middle.

You know, just thinking about the way we argue amongst ourselves, we're human beings—we're God's people, but we're human beings. Thinking about that, human nature has a setting when we disagree on something. It has us setting ourselves apart. The walls go up, the wedges go in the relationships, and all of this starts to happen, and we start choosing sides. We start thinking in terms of I'm right and they're wrong, and all of that goes back and forth. Looking again at what Ayn Rand said about a contradiction, "There are no contradictions." So, we both can't be right. See how that works?—we both can't be right. But here's the caveat: We can both be wrong. If we all started from the wrong premise, we can all be wrong. When it comes to accuracy and the truth, there are not two sides; it's either truth or it's not. Remember it can't be one thing at the same time that it's something else—it doesn't work that way. The truth is, in those kinds of arguments, there really are no winners. It only matters what God says is true. Let's look at a few scriptures. Let's turn over to 1 Thessalonians 5:21 (we've probably been here about a gazillion times), from the King James Version.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 [Paul says] *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*
(KJV)

The New King James says "Test" for *Prove*—how do you do that? If you're going to prove something you have to do it with the evidence available. You have to look at all the evidence, not just a piece of the evidence, and that's what people are doing when they state dogmatically those scriptures say, "no one has ever seen or heard God." We've heard that so many times it's almost like if it didn't happen, you'd think something is wrong—somebody's forgotten that's a piece of evidence about God. It's a clue, it's not the sum total of all the evidence about God—it's just not. Just looking at the dead body on the riverbank scenario—there are *multiple* pieces of evidence. You can't just look at the cement and say, "Well, the individual drowned", the same as you can't conclude that the individual died of natural causes. Such conclusions present contradictions when looking at *all* the evidence that's right there in front of you.

The law of contradiction also says that the facts can't contradict one another. If they do, you need to examine the evidence further to find the problem—maybe your initial premise was wrong. That happens all the time. You'll never understand or solve the mystery with just one piece of evidence, or just a small handful of evidence—you just won't. It's only when you look at all the evidence that you can draw a correct (at least a more intelligent) conclusion. You're closer to the truth, and isn't that what we want? That's what we should be striving for in any study that we're doing in God's Word.

You can't say Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament, exclusively, and ignore all the evidence about the God Being who is the Father. You can't do that. You can't get away with that unless you choose to do that, unless you choose not to look at the

evidence—that's the only way you can do it. *That body of evidence about God will not go away just because someone wants it to say something else.* People can hold on to their wrong conclusions. We've done that for years; think about Pentecost, other things like that—we've done that for years. But you can't have it both ways. If the evidence says one thing, you can't have it your way just because you want it your way; it doesn't work. That's like saying, "Everyone can worship God in any way they choose." There's a reference scripture for that over in John 4; it's very familiar. You can turn there, John 4:23-24. Can you worship God any way you want? No!

John 4:23 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.*

24) *God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.* (KJV)

You see any contradictory options there? No, there aren't any. Remember who He was talking to—He was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, and what was her problem? She had a wrong concept of how and where to worship God. Christ didn't tell her it was okay to just worship God in any way she saw fit. That's what the world's religions do. That's what all the religions we see out here do—they worship God in any way they want to. Let's go back to Thessalonians. Again, repeating what we read earlier but from the New Living Translation.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 *but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.*

22) *Stay away from every kind of evil.*

23) *Now may the God of peace [that's got to be the Father] make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. [Note there are two Personages there.]* (NLT)

The Thessalonians had a problem. We find that over in Acts 17. The Thessalonians, whether they were different in makeup, it's hard to say (we weren't there), but they didn't look at the evidence. They didn't really want to look at things, and Paul says something about that here in Acts 17:

Acts 17:11 *And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.* (NLT)

In other words, they sought evidence of what Paul was teaching from the scriptures. They didn't just take his word for it. Paul admired that and yet think about why he admired that; he knew that when they were looking at it in-depth they were gaining knowledge. He appreciated that—he saw that quality. It works the same way with us, whenever we close our minds we'll never make any gains in knowledge. That's especially true of spiritual knowledge and understanding.

There are all kinds of proverbs that admonish us to keep growing spiritually. You can't do that if you're ignoring scripture, especially the evidence in scripture—holding onto something that you may have concluded from a false premise that wasn't true.

I heard a quote recently, this is from an unknown, and here is the quote, "A comfort zone is a beautiful place but nothing ever grows there." I like that one; maybe I'll write that one on my whiteboard in my office. We all like to be comfortable, we really do. The older we get the more we hate change; we just hate it—all these new-fangled gadgets, these cars that won't shut off, these smart TV's ((laughs)).

But if you back up in the context here [Acts 17], you'll see that Paul and Silas went into the Jewish synagogue in Thessalonica and they preached those things about Christ for three Sabbaths. Some were persuaded and some were not because they were hanging on (remember, this is a Jewish synagogue) to traditional beliefs that they did not want to let go of. The idea was, don't mess with my long-held beliefs, don't mess with my comfort zone, I'm very comfortable with my Jewish beliefs. For the record, I'm not saying it's wrong to hang on to long-held beliefs if they're true. We should do that, but what we believe should be supported by scriptural evidence.

If we have made a mistake somehow when we're faced with irrefutable evidence that's contrary to what we believe, we should examine that. We shouldn't ignore it and say, "Well, I don't like that right now, I'd rather hold on to what I have." Or we're listening to someone and they're trying to convince us of something—we need to check that out. In Romans 3:4, a reference scripture, what does it say? "God forbid, yes, let God be true but every man a liar." We have to take that approach. But what did they do there in Thessalonica whenever Paul was preaching that and they didn't like it? Well, they started persecuting Paul and Silas; they drove them out of town, basically. Paul and Silas moved on to Berea from Thessalonica, and that's where they found these other people that would look at things—would look at the evidence.

3. Beware of anyone who says evidence doesn't count.

People will say, "I don't want to hear that, I don't care what the evidence says, I just don't want to hear it"—beware of that kind of an approach. You're thinking, "Okay, Jack, what are you saying?" What I'm saying once again is that you can't ignore the evidence found in scripture. Remember that with the law of contradiction a thing can't be true and not true at the same time. Christ had something to say about that. Maybe you never looked at it this way, but it's always interesting whenever you study into something and take a certain approach to scripture, and then come at it from a different angle. I'd like to go over to Matthew 24. Christ talked about evidence—have we ever looked at it that way? What He actually mentioned in Matthew 24 is seeing evidence and watching out for people who spoke to the contrary. Been here about a gazillion times, too. Matthew 24:4 from the New Living Translation.

Matthew 24:4 Jesus told them, "Don't let anyone mislead you,

5) *for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah.' They will deceive many.* (NLT)

I like that word *claiming* there. Anyone can claim anything but should we accept that on its face? Usually not. We shouldn't, especially when it comes to scripture. We should let scripture speak for itself, no matter what someone tries to say, or what they think it says. It always gets me the folks that claim to speak for God. Someone asked me one time (I know I'm pretty much a nobody), "Why doesn't God heal me?" That's a really common question. I said, "I don't know, I can't speak for God." I can get up here and try to speak the inspired words of God. I don't know God's mind, I can't get into God's mind. Read the last chapters of Job, and God really took him down because he thought he could do that—he thought he was righteous enough to do that. We can't speak from God's mind is what I'm trying to say. We'll look at some words along those lines later on. Let's continue in Matthew 24 because Christ goes on:

Matthew 24: 6 *And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately.*
7) *Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world.* (NLT)

What's He saying? He's saying we need to be alert and awake spiritually to recognize the evidence that we see, and we see it all around.

8) *But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.*
9) *"Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers [Christians].*
10) *And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other.*
11) *And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people.* (NLT)

How do you recognize false prophets and false ministers? By their fruit. What fruit? The evidence that they produce in their lives, and you see that.

12) *Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.* (NLT)

When you read those verses, notice how often the word *many* appears. It's kind of scary. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. It goes on in context to verse 42.

42) *"So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your Lord is coming.* (NLT)

How do you keep watch? You're aware of the prophetic evidence; those "signs" He said to *watch* for. It makes me think of 2 Timothy 3 where it talks about perilous times. There's all kinds of evidence around us going on right now. How should we react to that evidence? It should be kind of like a glass of cold water in the face. It should wake us up when we see that evidence around us, of what's happening to the world, because

Christ tells us those things. He says look at that—look at that evidence. Let's continue down to verse 43.

43) Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into.

44) You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.

45) "A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. (NLT)

That's kind of an idiom for managing your spiritual life—the way that we should. Let's jump down to verse 48.

48) But what if the servant is evil and thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while; (NLT)

Kind of a no worries attitude, quite satisfied. I'll ignore all the evidence all around me of the times I'm living in; I just won't look at that—I won't choose to look at it.

49) and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? [being spiritually irresponsible]

50) The master will return unannounced and unexpected,

51) and he will cut the servant [that would be us] to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (NLT)

That sounds like a salvation issue to me, to ignore what He's warning about. Plus He gives evidence to look at—He told us. He told us what to look for along the way.

You know about trusting people—what people say. We used to have a saying in the corporation where I worked: "Trust but verify." It didn't matter what department you were in, didn't matter who you were in the corporation. There were about 1,800 employees, everybody followed that mantra, "Trust but verify." It meant *you needed more than someone's word* because if you just took someone's word (I worked in the nuclear industry), you could get into a lot of trouble, so we were very careful with that. The point is that it's a good policy for us to follow, too. When someone tries to convince of us something, especially without evidence, or some bogus evidence—verify it.

4. Can you trust yourself in what you believe?

Can you trust yourself? Proverbs 3:5, from the New Living Translation.

Proverbs 3:5 *Trust in the LORD [upper case] with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. (NLT)*

And Jeremiah 17—you should know where I’m going. Can you trust yourself? “Yeah, I figured this all out. I don’t need anybody to tell me anything different, I’ve got it all figured out.”—that’s an approach some folks take. How do we get there? How do we get to a place like that where we never need to learn anything, especially when it comes to God’s Word? That’s a pretty thick book; there’s a lot there. I’ll never get through it in a lifetime. Jeremiah 17—been here a couple of times. Beginning from verse 7, again from the NLT. The NLT is paraphrased, but there is nothing wrong with it. It doesn’t change the intent.

Jeremiah 17:7 *“But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence.*

9) *“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? (NLT)*

I don’t know about you, but I’d sure hate to be trusting in that old guy that’s looking back at me in the mirror every morning. You know, if that’s where my confidence is, I’m in a whole lot of trouble. Frankly, trusting ourselves, spiritually speaking, will never lead to good results. If we do like it says here, to lean on, to look to God, we’ll have the best spiritual results. As it says in verse 8, we get good results from depending on and trusting in God.

8) *They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots [that’s spiritual roots] that reach deep into the water. Such trees [representing people that grow spiritually] are not bothered by the heat [just life in this world; I don’t know about you, but it has never been a free ride for us] or worried by long months of drought [don’t wither and die when a little trouble, when a trial, comes along]. Their leaves stay green [no matter what], and they never stop producing [spiritual] fruit. (NLT)*

We used to have a thing in the Church, I’m sure you remember this, called human reasoning. It was mostly used as a control mechanism by the ministry, to keep people in line—kind of a brow-beating tactic. The thinking was, don’t you dare step out of our belief-system box. If you do we’re going to kind of slap you down, and in some cases, you might get disfellowshipped. But the fact of the matter is I always used to cringe when they said, “Oh, you’re just using human reasoning.” I used to cringe at that; sometimes it might be true, but again, if you’re using it the way it was used then, you would need to consider for a minute that God is the one who gave us the intelligence—the intellect that we have, the ability to reason as we should—but (there is a but) we should use it in conjunction with God’s thinking to reach a right conclusion based on godly evidence—that’s how we should use it. We find that, actually, over in 1 Corinthians 2 (from the New Living Translation. I like it when Paul speaks to us in the New Living language).

1 Corinthians 2:10 *But it was to us that God revealed these things by His Spirit. For His Spirit searches out everything and shows us God’s deep secrets.*

11) *No one can know a person's thoughts [all of us] except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit [working together].*

12) *And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), [we had it, but hopefully we're moving away from that spirit of the world] so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.*

13) *When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom [using God's Word]. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. (NLT)*

The point is we have to use our intelligence with God's Spirit to look at the scriptural evidence and come to the right conclusions. I'm speaking in terms as it relates to this God controversy that we find ourselves in. You know another really familiar scripture, over in Isaiah 28:13. (You probably don't need to turn there.)

Isaiah 28:13 *But the word of the LORD was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little," That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught. (NKJV)*

The "they" mentioned here are the people that He's addressing—they were misleading the people. They wanted it their way. They refused to listen to God—look at the context there. We'll touch on that a little bit later. Let's continue in 1 Corinthians 2.

1 Corinthians 2:14 *But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit [it doesn't resonate, doesn't work]. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.*

15) *Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things [they can look at all the scriptural evidence and can come to the right conclusions—if you have the right kind of thinking], but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others.*

16) *For, "Who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?" [quoting Isaiah 40:13-14] But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ. (NLT)*

The point is we can convince ourselves we got things all figured out. Or we may listen to someone who claims to have it all figured out, and they set themselves up as the last word on any given subject. God will let you choose to believe whatever you want to believe. He won't come down and make you believe something; He just won't do that. But there's a caveat there in Romans 14. There's a caveat to believing and taking off on a certain road of following our own reasoning apart from God. In Romans 14:12 the context here is about judging others, about comparing ourselves to others. Paul tells the Romans something:

Romans 14:12 *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. (NKJV)*

You're going to be responsible for your own self, not other people. That is the context. The point is we're on a lot safer ground in our beliefs if they are based on factual evidence, rather than something we've heard and accepted, even what we've thought was correct. Sometimes we have to check and verify ourselves; we have to do that. Remember: trust but verify. Sometimes we can decide what's right spiritual evidence, and what isn't. We can get on a wrong path. So, the summary of point four is that we and other people are fallible; God is not. He should be the source of our trust.

5. Spiritual evidence about God in the Old Testament.

I call this one putting your money where your mouth is. I started out mentioning that nobody argues about two God Beings in the Genesis account, and nobody seems to argue (we talked about that this morning) about who the Most High is—they don't. We've heard it in sermons, recently. The point is they can't deny the evidence so they have to agree with that one. But it doesn't fit with a lot of things that folks are trying to say. Again, the law of contradiction comes into play. You can't have multiple Most Highs. You can't do that—it's a contradiction. Well, He's the Most High and He's the Most High—you can't do that. You can't have one or both God Beings like a two-in-one; you know, that's been mentioned before. Some seem to think that the Being who became Christ is the only God of the Old Testament, that He had, as we would say today, multiple hats.

You know, I can use myself as an example. As most folks here know I was a deacon for a number of years. I had a deacon hat that I put on (actually, it said on the top of that hat "Useful Idiot"—sorry ((laughs)). Then I became an elder, and now I put on my elder's hat and that one says "Useless Idiot" ((laughs)). I'm just picking on the deacons and elders out there—sorry. What I'm trying to say is, I wear multiple hats because I need to—I'm not in an elite ministerial establishment; I'm not there. You can recall when a minister really wouldn't get his hands dirty, and the deacons and even the deacons' wives were considered hired help for the ministers. We talk about that once in a while.

Let's look at a couple pieces of evidence, not just one. Let's see what we see, and we will pick one—the Most High, or God Most High, same thing. There's a sermon in our archives about that; a sermon by that same RR guy. It says in that sermon, and it's correct, there are forty-three references to that title for one of the God Beings. Remember the law of contradiction, it has to be just one. It can't be both, that's contradictory. Of those forty-three references, as I recall, there was only a handful of those covered in that sermon.

You know we like to recite that rule about Bible study, letting the Bible interpret the Bible, and that's true to a point, but let's add a corollary to that: Let scriptural evidence support the rest of scriptural evidence. Actually, it's saying the same thing. It puts us in a lot better position to arrive at the truth, doesn't it? It really does. Let's apply that law of contradiction because if you have x amount of evidence in one area, and x amount more or less in another area, and they oppose themselves, then you have to reconcile

them. Something is correct and something is not—it can't be both. They both can't be right. The law of contradiction says you can't get away with that. So sometimes you just have to dig into that pile of evidence. We used to call those things difficult scriptures, and you had to really drill down into them to get at the truth. But when you do that, what you are doing when you study in depth is you're actually getting more evidence to support that particular scripture. Then you have a basis for a belief if it's based on evidence. Otherwise, you'll get caught trying to believe two things at the same time. You can't do that, it doesn't work. It won't lead to sound doctrine, it just won't.

So, okay, we have one of the God Beings called the Most High mentioned in scripture, and people concede grudgingly that has to be the God Being we now know as the Father. But wait a minute, some people also believe that the God Being that we now know as Jesus Christ was the only one active in the Old Testament because no one has ever seen or heard His voice—heard that one a few times, too. The fact is some people say that God Being, the Father, was virtually unknown in the Old Testament; Christ had to come to reveal Him, otherwise we wouldn't know anything about Him. You can believe what you want but what does the evidence say? Let's go to Daniel—both are mentioned in Daniel—it's in the evidence. We're going to come at this backwards here, in a sense; we're going to see one Being, and then we're going to see the Most High. We're going to come from that approach. In Daniel 3:25 we know what's going on here. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were thrown into the fiery furnace and Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace and said:

Daniel 3:25 *Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."* (NKJV)

That sure looks like a different Being there. This Being would appear to humans on occasion. Now detractors out there are going to jump on that right there and say, "Okay, Jack, we gotcha, because go down to verse 28 of Daniel 3, where it says in the New King James ... "

28) *Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!"* (NKJV)

... because they will say, "That was an *angel*", and that's true if you don't investigate further—if you don't look at the evidence. Now a good Bible scholar, let's say any good Bible detective (and that should be us as Bible students) knows that no language is perfect. English isn't perfect, Hebrew isn't perfect, the Greek isn't perfect, nor is any other language. But you have to remember something about Daniel; all or most, or maybe all of it was written in Aramaic. If I remember correctly that is the only book in the Old Testament that was. These young men were taken captive to Babylon and put

under Nebuchadnezzar, and to survive they had to learn Aramaic, and that actually carried on into the New Testament—Christ spoke Aramaic. Some of the terms used in the New Testament are Aramaic. In Aramaic the generic term “angel” means one thing, but if you go to the Hebrew the same word includes more meaning. Let’s play detective and examine that piece of evidence.

Strong’s number for “angel” is H (for Hebrew) 4398, and in Aramaic it also means *angel*. It is mentioned in Daniel 3:28, Daniel 6:22, etc., but the word is a “cognate”—related to, or having the same root—of the Hebrew noun #4397, one number down. James Strong never intended his work to be any more than a system of coding—a brief dictionary of each word. It was an indexing system, one that works well, but if you want more depth you have to compare with more exhaustive concordance sources. In this case, we can find the Hebrew language provides more evidence on the deeper meaning of “angel”.

This gets really interesting from the BDB—if you’re not familiar with that acronym, it’s Brown-Driver-Briggs—the Hebrew and English lexicon. Here are their three definitions for “angel”, and they understand the Hebrew: The first one (a) is a *messenger, representative*, (b) is an *angel* (the generic term) and (c) gets really interesting: They say it’s a *theophanic* angel. That’s kind of a weird word—you can look that up. It’s expressed more often as a *theophany*. The online dictionary defines “theophany” as *an appearance of a god to a human; a divine manifestation*. Wow, so by examining the evidence, pursuing a little further, we can learn more, and The Word Study Dictionary gives even more depth. It says it’s a masculine noun, meaning *a messenger, an angel*—the term often denotes one sent on business or diplomacy, like an ambassador—or a representative. It has to be of the same kind, or origin, if you send someone to do that. For example, America doesn’t send Chinese diplomats to another country and the Chinese don’t send Americans. It goes on here in The Word Study Dictionary: *Very often the term referred to messengers sent from God. Sometimes these were human messengers—prophets or priests. More often, however, the term referred to heavenly beings who often assumed human form and appeared to people as bearers of the Lord’s commands and tidings. Who do you think of there? Melchizedek—Melchizedek appeared as a human being. It goes on to say, Sometimes the Angel of the Lord and his message are so closely identified with the Lord Himself [God the Father] that the text simply refers to the Angel as “the Lord” or “God.”*

That’s an interesting definition, but that’s another whole subject to pursue. In any case, we see two distinct Beings here in Daniel. We see the evidence of the other God involved—Daniel 3:26, and I’m going to go quickly through a few of these. (We have that sermon in our archives, Who Is The Most High God, The Almighty God?, recorded Sept. 16, 2017.) Daniel 3:26; I’m using the New Living Translation throughout.

Daniel 3:26 *Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!”*

Daniel 4:2 [Nebuchadnezzar is speaking here] *“I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me ...*

17) ... [the middle of that verse] *the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world ...”* (NLT)

That includes all the nations of the world from the beginning to the end. God is the one in charge. In verse 24, talking about dreams, he [Daniel] mentions the *Most High*. In verse 25 he talks about what’s going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar because he defied the Most High—he’s going to be driven from society and he’s going to eat grass like a cow, be drenched in dew of heaven until ...

24) ... *you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone He chooses.*

Breaking into the last part of verse 32:

32) *Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses.’* (NLT)

That sounds like the Most High God is pretty active, *really* active. In Daniel 5 (I’m jumping ahead here), in verse 21, again from the New Living Translation, it’s talking about Nebuchadnezzar:

Daniel 5:21 *He was driven from human society [remember, he defied the Most High]. He was given the mind of a wild animal, and he lived among the wild donkeys [he probably smelled like one, too]. He ate grass like a cow, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he learned that the Most High God rules [that phrase is repeated over and over].* (NLT)

Even this pagan king knew who the God of the Old Testament was—he knew it’s the Individual that we call the Father now—he knew that. But he’s not supposed to know that, God’s not supposed to do that, if you listen to some reasoning (and you can’t do that). There are all kinds of references in Daniel; it [the title “the Most High God”] is used throughout. In Daniel 7:22, as a reference, there are two titles for God; it says, *until the Ancient One, the Most High came and judged in favor of His holy people* (and this is towards the end of the book of Daniel). I just skimmed through Daniel; I didn’t read them all, but I had thirteen pieces of evidence. There are sixteen pieces of evidence, total—on the Most High—in Daniel. Sixteen pieces that identify who the Most High was and is.

We know that it’s been mentioned, and I believe that RR guy mentioned this the other day, that it’s even found in the New Testament [Mark 5:7], where Christ came upon the man that was living in the graveyard because he had a demon. He approached that

individual with the demon, and the demon was actually controlling the man and speaking for him. The demon knew who Christ was the Son of—he said, “Jesus, Son of the Most High God, in the name of God, I beg you, don’t torture me!” He knew it—even this demon had no trouble knowing who God was, no problem at all.

It flies in the face of the idea that the God Being who became the Father was, somehow, “incognito” back then. If you look up that word it comes from Latin and it means *unknown*. We think of it as someone running around in disguise—nobody knows who it is. In my Phrase Concordance, I counted fifty-nine references to “the Most High”. That’s quite a pile of evidence to ignore—you can’t do it, actually.

Let’s look briefly at another piece of evidence about the God of the Old Testament. There are actually two Gods, not two in one, can’t have it both ways—not just wearing many hats—one God wearing many hats. That makes no sense, no sense at all when you look at the evidence. This evidence is also covered in that same sermon about the Almighty. That term *Almighty* is used some forty-eight times in the Old Testament. It’s first used and introduced in Genesis 17:1. I can give you that as a reference:

Genesis 17:1 *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, [This identifies that as uppercase: LORD] “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. (NKJV)*

The Hebrew word there is “Shaddai”, usually with the “El” before it—*God Almighty* or *Almighty God*. It’s sometimes translated either way. And of those forty-eight times it’s mentioned, thirty-one are in Job. Let’s go there. Again, I like to think of the folks who seem to think that God can’t do something they disagree with. Let’s see how God explained that to Job. I like the statement early on, in Job 9:32, where it says, from the New Living Translation:

Job 9:32 *God is not a mortal like me, so I cannot argue with him or take him to trial. (NLT)*

We’ll just look at a few of these:

Job 21:15 *Who is the Almighty ... ;*
Job 21:20 *[says,] ... the Almighty;*
Job 22:17 *What can the Almighty do ... ?*
Job 22:23 *If you return to the Almighty ... (NKJV)*

The *Almighty*, the *Almighty*—all the way through here. You can use any translation you want and it’s going to translate “Shaddai” the same—the *Almighty*. I have about twenty translations on my software, plus I’ve probably got another dozen more hard copies of translations in my library. They translate “Shaddai”, “El Shaddai”, the same way—the *Almighty*. By the way, when we think about scriptural evidence—I know we all know this—when we look at that evidence, look at the time span of that evidence of God’s

Word, it's decades, it's centuries, it's millennia, and the evidence is consistent all the way through. That's why we can trust that evidence because it's God's Word. It's in the record and we have the record. What's the point here? The point is El Shaddai, God *Almighty*, the Almighty God, was the only God Job knew. Well, people are saying, "That can't be!" Well, I like Job 40:1, from the New Living Translation. I like the New Living in most of these; it makes it so clear.

Job 40:1 *Then the LORD said to Job,
2) Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?* (NLT)

In the closing chapters, El Shaddai, the Almighty, asked a series of questions no human being could answer: *Where were you?* He keeps asking Job, Did I consult with *you*, Job, when I engineered, when I planned, when I made the universe? And it goes on and on and on. Again, the only God that Job dealt with and knew—talked to—was the Almighty. Doesn't mean the Other wasn't there; it just doesn't show it.

The sixth and last point:

6. What is Pacific doing with this?

I'm going to address it briefly. You know one thing people are saying about the ministry of Pacific (and you have to remember, that's all three of us) is that we have an agenda. That really upsets me, it really does. Not because people are saying that; people are saying that because that's their opinion. (I don't really care about people's opinion; they're entitled to it just like I am.) What's upsetting about that is that I didn't get that in-house memo. Nobody picked up the phone or sent me an email that said, hey Jack, we've got an agenda now (and I feel left out! ((laughs)) I'm being silly right now, I know that). But from where I sit, we're just trying to be faithful ministers doing what God says to do. Hopefully, we're not driven by opinions, politics, or emotions. What does God tell us to do? Let's look briefly at what God tells us to do, actually tells all ministers to do. He does that through the Apostle Paul—in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus. Let's look at a sampling: 2 Timothy 4:1, New King James Version. Paul says, talking to Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:1 *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ [Wow—both of Them; we answer to both of Them; we have to take instruction from both of Them] who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:* (NKJV)

We'll all be accountable but the ministry especially so—accountable for what? Down in verse 2:

2) Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering [patience] and teaching.

3) *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, ...* (NKJV)

That's teaching and when you think about it that's teaching based on evidence. That's based on scripture, not something we invented, not our ideas. We didn't put together something, at least nothing I know about ((laughs)). Okay, continuing in verse 3:

3) *but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;* (NKJV)

We just want to hear smooth things—don't mess with our comfort zones. That's an unfortunate place to be, it really is, because that's saying we don't want to learn anything more, we don't need to learn anything more, we don't want anything new, at least, new to us. But it's not new, the evidence is right there, it's been there for a long, long time. Down in verse 4:

4) *and they will turn their ears away from the truth [sound doctrine], and be turned aside to fables.* (NKJV)

It's the opposite of truth—fables are the *opposite* of truth. Truth trumps our comfort zones; it does every time. In Titus 1:7 it says we have to be *blameless*. (I haven't quite figured out what the degree is—I don't think I'm there.) But down in verse 9 here's what the ministers should do:

Titus 1:9 *... holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who [what?] contradict.* (NKJV)

The King James says who are *gainsayers*; that means they deny truth or evidence, and then “gainsay”, or speak against it—that's what that word means. Pretty much describes what we see people doing, and doing even when confronted with abundant, clear evidence. They would rather hold to the belief that has little or no supporting evidence, and is in fact a contradiction, and you can't have both; it doesn't work both ways.

One of the biggest contradictions is to try and take a handful of scriptures, a small amount of evidence, in comparison, and make it say something that a larger body of evidence refutes—that's a huge contradiction. You run into a whole string of contradictions when you try to do that. It's like literally hundreds of scriptures that clearly identify the activities and the titles of the God Being we know as the Father, and yet people say, “That can't be Him, it has to be Christ.” That's crazy—just crazy. When I think of that and read that, I get this picture of an editorial cartoon where this guy is standing there with a little handful of scriptures and he's shaking it at God and this big pile of evidence, saying, “*This* is right! *That* can't be!” But people who do that have a big contradiction on their hands—they're in a lot of trouble, they really are. Continuing in Titus 1, verse 16:

Titus 1:16 *They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. (NKJV)*

We see that going on today, too. Another one in Galatians 1:10—it's another admonition that Paul gives and it's directed to all of us, really, but especially the ministers. You know what the context here is in Galatians—it's differences of opinion on what the true gospel is, based on God's Word—people wanted it both ways. They were having a lot of trouble in that congregation. Galatians 1:10 (I'll read this from the Holman Bible):

Galatians 1:10 *For am I now trying to win the favor of people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave [or a servant or a minister] of Christ. (HCSB)*

The whole point there is, it's what God says that matters, not what men say. We're trying to preach and teach what God says, not what people would have us do. Some say the study is too hard.

You know that pesky RR guy, again? He made the mistake of trying to tell people to be patient. Some people were *enraged* at that. They read something entirely different into what he said. You know what any good counselor will do when you're faced with something really hard that might seem insurmountable at the time? It's like if you're being counseled on your finances, or your marriage, and you have this train wreck running down the track. The minister won't tell you you've got to stop that train right now—no, he'll say, take a piece of that, take this boxcar, take care of that, get it off the track, and pretty soon you'll get to the engine, and you'll have the whole thing solved. Well, you can do the same thing looking into the evidence of God's Word—take it a piece at a time—you prioritize.

Look at the Most High, look at the Almighty, look at all the other names and titles for God because there's a lot of them. That's how this should have been taken, not the other way—not getting angry and violent about it. If we did have some kind of agenda, I can tell you what it wouldn't be: It wouldn't be to suppress or withhold evidence, or what scripture plainly says. We wouldn't do that.

On the other hand, if someone is withholding or suppressing evidence, that would describe an agenda. In fact, in a legal system that would be criminal! To preach or not preach something because you don't know it is one thing, but if you deliberately don't teach it, it's being disingenuous—dishonest with God's Word. I don't see how that can be remotely pleasing to God and Christ. It can't be. Okay, wrap this up—I hope you can see what I've been trying to get across.

Where we—or anyone else, for that matter—stand on an issue of God of the Old Testament needs to be based on scriptural evidence that does not contradict itself. If we start looking at things that contradict themselves, our approach is to figure out if

there is an appearance of a contradiction there. We can't, as some do, start with a premise—one God Being only, the Other is way off somewhere—that's the entirely wrong approach. That approach leads to an erroneous conclusion which some try to support with flimsy evidence. It just doesn't work—that's called circular reasoning. That's when you *start* from a conclusion and proof-text to support that conclusion. That's not proving anything—that's not real evidence. That approach will never get at the truth of a matter, it just won't.

Like the body on the riverbank scenario, no one, including us, can ignore the evidence and still claim to solve the mystery of the roles of the God of the Old Testament, God the Father, and Jesus Christ. We *can't* ignore the evidence.