

# Gleason Archer on Inerrancy

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Faith EFC, Fall 2008

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## Outline

- Gleason L. Archer, “Alleged Errors and Discrepancies in the Original Manuscripts of the Bible,” in *Inerrancy*, edited by Norman Geisler, Zondervan, 1980.
- Addresses difficulties raised by:
  - William LaSor
  - Dewey Beegle

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## LaSor's Memoir

- William LaSor, "Life under Tension—Fuller Theological Seminary and 'The Battle for the Bible'," Fuller Seminary, 1976.
- Primarily a memoir about Fuller's first 17-year history.
- Pleas for Biblical authority that preserves "theological errorlessness" without vouching for freedom from factual mistake in matters of history or physical science.

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## LaSor Quote

- "I believe that the Bible is without error, but I refuse to let someone else define what that means in such a way that I have to go to ridiculous extremes to defend my faith."
- A kind of "apologetic" position.
- "I wonder what he [Jesus] thinks of our internecine battle over the lesser matters of scripture."

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## Archer's Response

- Jesus or his apostles don't suggest anywhere that any OT record has scientific or historical inaccuracy.
- Jesus critical of Sadducees' naturalistic skepticism.
- Christ and apostles all believed that mankind descended from Adam and Eve (Matt 19:4-5, Rom 5:12-19, 1 Tim 2:13-14), as recorded in Gen 1-3.

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## Archer on Probabilities

- Archer: Rejection of inerrancy often based on considerations of scientific probability or historical likelihood.
- Christ unswayed by such considerations.
  - God became man through virgin birth
  - Two distinct natures yet in one person
- "We must therefore conclude that any event or fact related in scripture—whether it pertains to doctrine, science, or history—is to be accepted by the Christian as totally reliable and trustworthy, no matter what modern scientists or philosophers may think of it."

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## Nine Specific Examples

- LaSor cites nine examples that cause him to question the factual trustworthiness of Scripture in matters of history and science.
- Archer responds to them one by one.

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## 1. Numerical Discrepancies

- 2 Sam 10:18 – David slew seven *hundred* men.
- 1 Chron 19:18 – David slew men of seven *thousand* chariots.
- LaSor implies that it is generally in Chronicles that the numbers are higher (e.g., exaggerated to enhance the glory of Israel).

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## 1. Archer's Response

- This is a “decimal point” error introduced in the Masoretic Text. No proof that it existed in the original manuscripts.
- Likely because difficult to make out numerals when copying from worn-out or smudged *Vorlage*.

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## 1. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Several instances of discrepancies where number is lower in Chronicles.
  - 2 Sam 10:18 (40,000 Syrian cavalry) vs Chron (40,000 infantryman – more credible)
  - 2 Chron 36:9 (age of Jehoiachin at accession = 8) vs 2 Kings 24:8 (age = 18)
  - 1 Kings 4:26 (Solomon built 40,000 stalls) vs 2 Chron 9:25 (built 4,000)

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## 1. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Different type of discrepancy:
  - 1 Chron 11:11 (Jashobeam slew 300) vs 2 Sam 23:8 (800)
  - 1 Sam 6:19 – Number of Beth-shemesh men slain = 50,070 vs Chron (no number given). Likely to be garbling decimals, because surprisingly high.

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## 1. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Appears to be 18 numerical discrepancies between Chronicles and Samuel/Kings.
- Fully 1/3 of these have higher figures in Samuel/Kings than Chronicles.
- Therefore, LaSor's charge that there was systematic exaggeration in Chronicles seems unfounded (a theory set forth by Henry Preserved Smith in 1890s).

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## 2. Genealogies of Christ

- Discrepancy in genealogies given in Matt 1 and in Luke 3.
- From the reign of David onward, lists of ancestors differ.
- More links given in Luke than in Matthew.

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## 2. Archer's Response

- Understood by church fathers that Matthew refers to line of Joseph (legal father of Jesus), whereas Luke gives lineage of Mary (mother).
- No valid reason for rejecting this explanation.

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### 3. Location of Joseph's Grave

- Acts 7:16 – Stephen states that Joseph's bones laid in the tomb that *Abraham* bought from sons of Hamor in Shechem.
- Josh 24:32 – Remains of Joseph laid in plot of ground that *Jacob* bought from sons of Hamor, father of Shechem.

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### 3. Archer's Response

- Contradiction? Not necessarily.
- Parallel case in regard to well of Beersheba, which Abraham dug.
  - Gen 21:22-31 – Abraham bought land for payment of seven lambs to King Abimelech of Gerar.
  - Gen 26:26-31 – Later, Isaac had to repurchase the land from Abimelech (possibly a son with same name).
- Jacob might have needed to repurchase burial field.
- No explicit mention of Abraham's purchase in OT, but Stephen was aware of it through oral tradition.
- Shechem was region where Abraham erected first altar after migrating to Holy Land from Haran (Gen 12:6-7).

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## 4. Number of Angels at Jesus's Tomb

- Matt 28:5, Mark 16:5: One angel.
- Luke 24:4, John 20:12: Two angels.
- Discrepancy.

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## 4. Archer's Response

- Discrepancy? Not necessarily.
- Many other such instances in the Gospels.
  - Matt 8:28 (two demoniacs meet Jesus) vs Mark 5:2 and Luke 8:27 (one).
  - Matt 20:30 (two blind men petitioned Jesus for sight) vs Mark 10:46 and Luke 18:35 (one)
- In a pair, one character likely to be more dominant/prominent.

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## 5. Other Numerical Discrepancies

- Relates to number of chariots in 1 Chron 19:18.
- Dealt with already under item 1.

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## 6. Source of Potter's-Field Reference

- Matt 27:9 attributes to Jeremiah a quote from Zech 11:13.
- Matthew specifies a field of the potter, but Zechariah doesn't mention a field.
  - The field is the main point of the quote, in light of preceding texts (Matt 27:6-9).
- Only in Jer 19:2,11 do we find mention of potter's field near Jerusalem.  
Also Jer 32:9 – purchase of field.
- Conflate of Zechariah and Jeremiah!

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## 6. Archer's Response

- Where more than one OT author quoted, general practice of NT writers was to refer to more famous one.
- Example:  
Mark 1:2-3 – conflate quotation from Mal 3:1 and Is 40:3 (only Isaiah is named).

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## 7. Dating of Exodus

- 1 Kings 6:1 – Exodus occurred 480 years before commencement of Solomon's temple (about 1446 BC).
- Exodus 1:11 – Refers to city of Raamses as scene of Israelite slave labor, implying Exodus taking place after 1300 (if Raamses = Rameses the Great).
- LaSor implies the 1446 BC date is supported only by 1 Kings 6:1.

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## 7. Archer's Response

- Untrue that 1446 BC supported by 1 Kings 6:1 alone.
- Judges 11:26 – Quotes Jephthah saying to Ammonite invaders: “For 300 years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, etc.”
  - Jephthah lived well before King Saul.  
Statement dates to around 1100
  - Conquest of Canaan around 1400.
  - Add 40 years of wandering → 1440.

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## 7. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Acts 13:19-20 – God gave Israelites land of Canaan until time of Samuel, for 450 years.
  - Between Exodus and end of Samuel's career = 450 years.
  - David's reign in Jerusalem began 1000.
  - Adding, we get 1450, very close to 1446.

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## 7. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Exod 1:11 reference to city of Raamses not strong evidence for proposed 1290 date of Exodus.
- Raamses unlikely to be Rameses the Great (born 1303 BC).
  - Moses was 80 at time of Exodus.
  - Work on Raamses occurred before Moses' birth.
  - Unlikely city was named after Rameses the Great in 1370, long before he was born.
- More likely: Ramose, nobleman in reign of Amenhotep the Third. Name already current in the Hyksos period, before Moses' birth (1526).

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## 8. Laver Measurements

- 1 Kings 7:23 – Diameter of laver = 10 cubits; circumference = 30 cubits.
- Value of  $\pi = 3$ ?
- LaSor recognizes that this is no serious problem.

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## 8. Archer's Response

- Agrees with LaSor that this is no serious problem.
- Possible answers:
  - 30 cubits is just an approximate number.
  - Measurement is of the inside circumference.

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## 9. Number of Peter's Denials

- Source: E. Chong, "Detailed Inerrancy and the Gospel Accounts of Peter's Denials," *American Journal of Biblical Theology*, Vol. 7, No. 28, 2006.
- Jesus' prediction of Peter's denials: Matt 26:31-35, Mark 14:27-31, Luke 22:34, John 13:31-38.
- Mark is the only Gospel writer to quote Jesus as saying that the rooster will crow *twice*.
- Perhaps examining the actual accounts will help.

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## 9. Number of Peter's Denials (cont'd)

- Denial accounts: Matt 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-62, John 18:15-17, 25-27.
- Actual accounts don't seem to resolve the previous conflict about number of crows.
- Footnotes in NIV:
  - Early manuscripts of Mark 14:30 and 14:72 omit the word "twice" (and "the second time" in the first part of 14:72).
  - In Mark 14:68 (first denial), early manuscripts record that the rooster crows (for the first time). KJV explicitly includes this appendage to Mark 14:68: "and the cock crew."

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## 9. Number of Peter's Denials (cont'd)

- Complicating matters even further, although each Gospel records exactly three denials, the people involved in each of the denials differ.

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	First denial	Second denial	Third denial
Matt	A servant girl (26:69)	Another girl (26:71)	Some standing people (26:73)
Mark	A servant girl (14:66)	The same servant girl (14:69)	Some standing people (14:70)
Luke	A servant girl (22:56)	A man (22:58)	Another man (22:59)
John	A girl at door (18:17)	Anonymous person(s) (18:25)	High priest's servant (18:26)

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## 9. Number of Peter's Denials (cont'd)

- LaSor criticizes Harold Lindsell's handling of the problem of Peter's denials of Christ.
  - Lindsell relies on Johnston M. Cheney.
  - No fewer than six denials(!).

## 9. Archer's Response

- Archer also finds Lindsell's solution unsatisfactory.
- Gospels each only refer to three denials.
- Christ required Peter to reaffirm his love for Him three times by Sea of Galilee (John 21).
- Questionable interpretation.

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## 9. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- "As we compare the four Gospels, ... [they] supplement one another and together give us a fuller, composite picture stage by stage ..."
- "We may thus piece together the various details in the four accounts and not come up with any genuine discrepancies or contradictions."

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## 10. Phenomenological Language

- Again, LaSor criticizes Lindsell rather than Scriptural discrepancy itself.
- LaSor accepts as true that the Bible speaks in “phenomenological language.” But ...
- Lindsell: The ancients were not teaching that the sun revolves around the earth.
- LaSor: The ancients really believed that the sun did the orbiting rather than the earth.  
“At this point, it seems to me that Lindsell is himself placing something above Scripture, namely modern scientific knowledge and theory.”

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## 10. Archer's Response

- Dual authorship of Scripture: God is the ultimate Author of the Bible.
- Therefore, there is no contradiction between operations of nature and revelations of Holy Scripture.
- Quite proper to speak of the language of Scripture as being phenomenological.

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## 10. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- “If God is the author of the data of science and the author of revelation of Holy Scripture, there can be no question of putting true science “above” the Bible. It is simply a question of using the increasing knowledge of physics or astronomy or biology or geology—whatever the science may be—to understand more perfectly what the Divine Author meant by the terms He caused the human authors to use when matters of this sort were being discussed. God does not and cannot contradict Himself!”

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## Beegle's Book

- Dewey M. Beegle, Emeritus Professor of Old Testament, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington.
- *Scripture, Tradition and Infallibility*, Eerdmans, 1973.
- Chapter 8: Inerrancy and the Phenomena of Scripture.
- Eleven passages Beegle considers “damaging” to inerrancy.
- One overlap with LaSor (Acts 7:16).
- Beegle's cases are more technical.

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## 1. Jude's Reference to Enoch

- Jude 14: "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied ..."
- Not from OT, but from the pseudepigraphical Book of Enoch (1:9).
- First Enoch 93:3 quotes Enoch as saying " I was born the seventh in the first week..."
- Jude thought that Book of Enoch derived from the antediluvian patriarch himself, rather than a writer in the later intertestamental period.

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## 1. Jude's Reference to Enoch

- "Is it possible that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the Israelites knew of this oral tradition and yet failed to mention it? Hardly. It is equally difficult to show that God preserved the material by an oral tradition distinct from Abraham and the people of promise." [Beegle]

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## 1. Archer's Response

- Adam and Eve's dialog with serpent in Eden were preserved by oral tradition for thousands of years before they were written (Moses, late 15<sup>th</sup> century BC).
- Therefore, far greater time between Adam and Moses than between Enoch and Jude.
- How is Enoch's prophecy any less preserved by the "people of promise" than the remarks of Adam, Eve, or Cain?

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## 1. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- No reason why pseudepigraphical works may not have included historically accurate facts and reports.
- It is certain that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew far more about the deeds and words of their forebears, even before the Deluge, than has been recorded in Genesis.
- Same is true of other biblical figures: e.g., Elijah and Elisha in 1 and 2 Kings.
- Wrong to suppose that they prophesied nothing but what appears in the bible.

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## 2. Jude's Reference to Michael and Satan

- Jude 9: Michael contends with Satan over the body of Moses.
- “Joshua and the prophets never refer to any such struggle, so there is no biblical reason, aside from Jude’s allusion, for believing in the actuality of the story.”

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## 2. Archer's Response

- Beegle's underlying assumption: Jude had no other valid source but the OT.
  - “In other words, although his writing was inspired, he enjoyed no advantage over 20<sup>th</sup>-century Bible students...”
- Beegle apparently feels that statements must appear more than once in the Bible to be trusted.
- What about John 3:16?

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### 3. Length of Pekah's Reign

- 2 Kings 15:27 – King Pekah of Israel began his reign in the 52<sup>nd</sup> year of Azariah and reigned in Samaria for 20 years.
- Pekah did not begin to reign in Samaria until the death of Pekahiah, son of Menahem, in 739.
- 20-year reign would end up at 720, a year or two after northern kingdom of Israel had been carried into captivity by Assyrians. This also leaves no room for the 9-year rule of Hoshea, who lost throne in 723 or 722.
- Doesn't add up: Too many years of reign.

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### 3. Archer's Response

- Solution by Thiele: Pekah laid claim to the throne of Israel at the same time Shallum or Menahem seized power in Samaria.
- Pekah's domain restricted to Gilead until he made a deal with Pekahiah to serve in the army (and gave him access to the king). Pekah then killed the king and seized the throne (2 Kings 15:25).

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### 3. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- So the 20-year “reign” in 2 Kings 15:27 can be interpreted to mean that Pekah had been the only legitimate king of Israel from 752 to 732.
  - The reigns of Menahem and Pekahiah from 752 to 740 were “usurpations.”

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### 3. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Other examples:
  - 1 Kings 2:11 – David reigned over Israel for 40 years, even though the first seven were limited to tribes of Judah and Simeon only.
  - King Thutmose III (Egyptian 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) – Effectively in power for only 35 years till 1447, yet official reign was 48 or 49 years. (His mother's reign as Pharaoh was considered illegitimate.)

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## 4. Dating Sennacherib's Invasion

- 2 Kings 18:1 – Hezekiah became king in third year of Hoshea.
  - No later than 728.
- 2 Kings 18:13 – In 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib attacked Judah.
  - Must be either 714 or 711.
- But Sennacherib didn't become king until 705, and his own annals say the invasion of Judah took place in 701.
- Must've been 24<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah's reign.

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## 4. Archer's Response

- “Obviously a scribal error was made in the transmission of the decade numeral.”
- If the *Vorlage* (earlier model copied from) had blurred horizontal stroke, “20” preceding “4” would look like “10”.
- Or, if number was spelled out, error could be caused by mistaking *mem* for *he* (only difference in Hebrew for 14 and 24).
- No reason to think error was in autograph.

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## 5. Time Span of Genesis 5 Genealogies

- Formula used by the Hebrew authors: *A* became father of *B* at age *X* and lived *Y* years afterward.
- Using this formula, Gen 5 implies that human race began very recently: between 4004 (Ussher) and 3760 (Jewish tradition).
- Not until development of geology and geochronology that evangelicals began to revise interpretation of Gen 5 to allow for gaps in the genealogical chain.
- “But how did this relate to the intent of the author?”

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## 5. Archer's Response

- There is evidence of genealogical gaps elsewhere in the Bible.
  - Luke 3:36 (Shelah son of Cainan son of Arphaxad) vs Gen 10:24 (Shelah son of Arphaxad).
  - Matt 1:8 (Uzziah son of Jehoram) vs 2 Kings (Uzziah great-great-grandson of Jehoram).

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## 5. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Careful study of actual usages of Hebrew and Greek terms for “father” and “beget”: often signified nothing more than direct ancestry.
  - Gospels: Jesus “son of David”, born over 960 years after David died!
  - 1 Chron 7:13 lists Bilhah's grandsons as being her “sons.”

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## 6. Age of Terah when Abraham Left Haran

- [Note: First line in Archer's article seems to be wrong.]
- Gen 11:26 – Terah was 70 when Abraham was born, and Terah died in Haran (place) at age 205 (Gen 11:32).
- Gen 12:4 – Abraham was 75 when he migrated to Shechem in Canaan.
- Acts 7:4 – Stephen claims that Abraham did not leave Haran until his father died. Thus, Abraham left Haran at age at least around 130.
- Doesn't add up.

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## 6. Archer's Response

- Gen 11:26 doesn't actually say that Abraham was born when Terah was 70.
- Terah was 70 when he had the *first* of his three sons (Abram, Nahor, and Haran), who were probably not triplets.

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## 6. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Was Abram the first?
- But Abram's name is mentioned first.
  - Perhaps he was the most prominent.
- Haran: first to die (Gen 11:28).
- Nahor: Probably passed away by the time Laban and Rebekah (descendants) were living in Haran at time of Isaac's marriage.
- Likely that Abraham died last. Therefore perhaps youngest.

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## 7. Jacob's Burial Place

- Related to LaSor's third item.
- Beegle's issue centers on where *Jacob* was buried.
- Acts 7:16 – Jacob buried in Shechem.
- Gen 50:13 – Jacob buried in Hebron (see also Gen 23:19).

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## 7. Archer's Response

- Beegle misinterprets the Greek text of Acts 7:16.
- "Their bodies" or "they" refers to whom? Jacob? "Our fathers" (Jacob's twelve sons)? Both?
- Verb *metetithēsan* ("they were removed") significant: implies that the embalmed bodies first temporarily interred in Egypt and then, after the conquest of Canaan around 1400 BC, *transferred* to permanent tombs in Shechem.

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## 7. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Therefore, *metetithēsan* must be construed as referring to the coffins of the twelve sons, not of Jacob.
- Jacob was never buried in Egypt, but immediately after death was interred at Hebron.

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## 8. Length of Israelite Sojourn in Egypt

- Gal 3:17 – 430 years between Abrahamic covenant and Mosaic code.
- Septuagint (Greek) translation of Exod 12:40 implies that the 430 years included the entire sojourn of Abraham and his descendants in both Canaan and Egypt down to the time of Moses.
  - So 215 years each in Canaan and Egypt. Seems too short.
- But Masoretic (Hebrew) text indicates that the 430 years was the Egyptian sojourn only. (So, total 645 years.)
- Masoretic text more likely correct.
- But Paul relied on the erroneous Septuagint!

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## 8. Archer's Response

- Beegle rightly concludes that the Hebrew reading is more reliable.
- Paul is not telling us the time between Gen 12 and Exod 20.
- Gen 46:3-4 – God renewed His covenant to the aged Jacob just before going to Egypt.
- Promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all essentially the same.
- So “Abraham” could just as well mean “Jacob.”
- Paul's comment was perfectly historical and accurate.

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## 8. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- “If God Himself is not concerned with *total* truth—including the area of history—then the Bible must be submitted to the scrutiny and judgment of man in order to determine what portions of it are valid and what are invalid. No longer does God's Word sit in judgment on man; man sits in judgment on God's Word.”
- What's wrong with Archer's argument here, if anything?

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## 9. Number of Rooster Crows

- LaSor brought up the issue of reconciling the synoptic accounts of Peter's triple denial.
- Beegle brings up the issue of number of crows.
- Matt 26:74-75 and Luke 22:34,60-61 – One crow.
- Mark 14:30 – Two crows.

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## 9. Archer's Response

- Archer acknowledges Beegle's comment:  
"But what essential difference is there if the other Gospel writers, Matthew and Luke, follow the general tradition of the rooster's crowing just once? All three Gospels contain the historical features necessary to convey the truth of the matter."
- But Archer thinks this comment is patronizing!

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## 9. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- “There is no discrepancy here at all. Various witnesses to an incident remember the details somewhat differently from one another.”
- Other such examples from LaSor(4):
  - Matt 8:28 vs Mark 5:2, Luke 8:27
  - Matt 20:30 vs. Mark 10:46, Luke 18:35

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## 9. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Another such example:
  - Mark 11:2 (only donkey colt) vs. Matt 21:2 (donkey colt tied up next to its mother).
- Verb *phonēsai* (“crows”) doesn’t specify the number of crows.
- Verb *alektrophonia* (“cockcrowning”) indicates break of day (third watch of the night) used in Mark 13:35.
- Mark is more specific than Matthew or Luke.

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## 10. Paul's Quoting Eliphaz

- 1 Cor 3:19 – Taken from a statement by Eliphaz in Job 5:13.
- Eliphaz not considered inspired (Job was the inspired one).
- Apparently Paul considered this statement to be true, even though it was uttered by someone not inspired.

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## 10. Archer's Response

- "It is hard to see why Beegle bothers to mention the matter at all, as if it were a problem for inerrancy."
- Not true: Quotes are valid if and only if they are by inspired saints.
- Even some of Job's statements were "less than inspired."
- Even Caiaphas expressed prophetic truth (John 11:50).

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## 11. Leading of David to Take the Census

- 1 Chron 21:1 – *Satan* caused David to take census.
- 2 Sam 24:1 – The *Lord* caused David to take census.
- “It is obvious that [the chronicler] simply did not believe that God incited David to take a census in order to express his anger against Israel.”
- Traditional harmonization: Samuel speaks of the *permissive* will of God.
- But, had the two authors met, they would’ve engaged in vigorous debate over the subject.

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## 11. Archer’s Response

- “David’s census taking illustrates a recurring problem in God’s dealings with stubbornly unbelieving and disobedient people.”
- Archer is satisfied with the traditional harmonization: that God permitted Satan to encourage David to undertake the census.
- So both 1 Chron 21 and 2 Sam 24 are not contradictory, because both God and Satan influenced David.

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## 11. Archer's Response (cont'd)

- Other examples:
  - Jonah
  - Rom 1:21-22, 24-25
  - 2 Thes 2:8-12

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## Final Beegle Comment

- “Beegle speaks out vigorously against the principle that if a single genuine error is found in Scripture, it proves that error may be found in any other part of Scripture.”
- “He insists that any number of errors may be found in the Bible and that it still may be the Word of God.”
- Beegle sees “no difficulty in the proposition that God may inspire, or at least tolerate, falsehood in some parts of His holy record.”

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## Archer's Response

- Bible itself teaches that “God is not a man, that He should lie.”
- “... clear and honest thinking can only view [Beegle's] approach as vitiated by the law of noncontradiction.”
- “We might as well protest that a single sin demonstrable against the Lord Jesus Christ does not necessarily disprove His sinlessness, or that a single false prediction given by God does not impair His promise-keeping integrity.”

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## Overall Analysis

- Archer is unmoved by any of LaSor's or Beegle's arguments.
- Probably all these arguments are “standard” and have been considered in the literature.
- For each issue raised, Archer has a response that he believes preserves inerrancy.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- But there are some aspects of Archer's stated position that cannot be taken literally (for on the face of it he himself seems to violate them).
- We will consider a few instances.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- Archer says he rejects considerations of scientific probability or historical likelihood in evaluating Biblical texts.
- But in harmonizing discrepancies in parallel Biblical accounts, he favors one or the other based on scientific probability or historical likelihood.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- “We must therefore conclude that any event or fact related in scripture—whether it pertains to doctrine, science, or history—is to be accepted by the Christian as totally reliable and trustworthy, no matter what modern scientists or philosophers may think of it.”
- But Archer also says: “If God is the author of the data of science and the author of revelation of Holy Scripture, there can be no question of putting true science “above” the Bible. It is simply a question of using the increasing knowledge of physics or astronomy or biology or geology—whatever the science may be—to understand more perfectly what the Divine Author meant by the terms He caused the human authors to use when matters of this sort were being discussed.

77

## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- “If God Himself is not concerned with *total* truth—including the area of history—then the Bible must be submitted to the scrutiny and judgment of man in order to determine what portions of it are valid and what are invalid. No longer does God’s Word sit in judgment on man; man sits in judgment on God’s Word.”
- But Archer himself scrutinizes the difficult passages to determine which interpretation leads to preservation of inerrancy.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- Archer thinks that Beegle's comment below is patronizing: "But what essential difference is there if the other Gospel writers, Matthew and Luke, follow the general tradition of the rooster's crowing just once? All three Gospels contain the historical features necessary to convey the truth of the matter."
- But Archer often resolves difficulties in (e.g., numerical discrepancies) by being satisfied with accepting the prima facie discrepancy because no "essential" contradiction arises in its theological message.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- Finally, Archer's view of inerrancy itself is not simplistic, but highly nuanced.
- It is useful, by way of summary, to illustrate just how nuanced Archer's view really is.
- Archer considers himself a strong defender of inerrancy even though he seems to accept these propositions (numbered according to the issues raised by LaSor [L] and Beegle [B]).

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## Disclaimers

- These propositions were written without qualification specifically to illustrate just how nuanced Archer's view of inerrancy really is.
- Warning: Don't read if you're easily shocked!

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- [L1] Although 1 Chron 19:18 says that David slew seven *thousand* charioteers, he actually didn't; he only slew seven hundred.
- [L2] A Biblical genealogy might not be the only possible true genealogy.
- [L3] Although Acts 7:16 says that Abraham bought the land of Joseph's grave, it doesn't mean that someone else (Jacob) didn't also buy the same piece of land.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- [L4] Although Matt 28:5 and Mark 16:5 say that there was *one* angel at Jesus's tomb, there were in fact two.
- [L5] Some numerical values in the Bible are erroneous.
- [L6] Although Matt 27:9 says Jeremiah said certain things, he didn't actually say them (but Zechariah said them instead).

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- [L7] Although Exod 1:11 appears to date the exodus to later than 1300 BC, it actually dates to closer to 1500 BC.
- [L8] Some numbers in the Bible are not "exact" and are only approximations (e.g., 1 Kings 7:22).
- [L9] Some historical accounts in the Bible are incomplete or partial (e.g., Peter's denials).

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- [L10] Some statements in the Bible are phenomenological and are not ontological.
- [B1 & B2] Pseudepigraphical works can be true to the extent of being inspired (i.e., inspired texts can use them as source).
- [B3] Although the (Biblical) historical record suggests that Pekah was king for 8 years, his “real” reign was for 20 years.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- [B4] Although 2 Kings 18:13 says that Sennacherib attacked Judah in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah's reign, he actually didn't; instead it was the 24<sup>th</sup> year.
- [B5] There are genealogical gaps in Gen 5, so that the human race started earlier than it appears. Although Gen 10:24 says that Shelah was Arphaxad's son, he wasn't; he was a grandson.
- [B6] Although Gen 11:26 suggests that Terah was 70 when Abram was born, he was actually much older.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- [B7] Although Acts 7:16 suggests that Jacob was buried in Shechem, he wasn't; he was actually buried in Hebron.
- [B8] Although Gal 3:17 suggests that the timespan between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants was 430 years, it was actually 645 years.
- [B9] Although Matt 26:74-75 and Luke 22:34,60-61 mentions only one cock crow, there were actually two (or more).

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- [B10] Quotes from non-inspired people can still be inspired (e.g., 1 Cor 3:19).
- [B11] Although 1 Chron 21:1 says that Satan caused David to take the census, it could also be that God caused David to do it.

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## Overall Analysis (cont'd)

- What do we learn from all this?
- Even with difficult Biblical passages, we can still be inerrantists.
- Our inerrancy cannot be simplistic, but highly nuanced.
  - A simplistic inerrancy can be apologetically damaging.
- Biblical exegesis and hermeneutics also cannot be simplistic.
  - Some things are not as they seem.