

Biblical Contradictions, Fictional Books, Failed Prophecies & Pseudepigrapha

A Scholarly Quick-Reference Guide — Companion to: Biblical Inerrancy & Infallibility Debunked

1. NON-HISTORICAL / FICTIONAL BOOKS

These books are recognized by mainstream scholars as literary compositions, not historical records. This demotes inerrancy without diminishing their theological value.

Book	Genre	Key Evidence Against Historicity
Jonah	Satirical novella	Nineveh called "great city" after 612 BCE destruction; no Assyrian record of mass conversion; city-wide fast incl. animals = comedy; "3-day journey" city was 3 miles across
Job	Wisdom literature	"Uz" = semi-mythical land; perfect symmetry (10 children die/10 born); prose frame + poetry = literary device; no dates, kings, or verifiable events
Esther	Court tale / novella	Xerxes' queen = Amestris per Herodotus (not Esther/Vashti); no Persian records of events; "127 provinces" contradicts records (~20-31 satrapies); Purim has no pre-exilic attestation
Daniel	Apocalyptic literature	"Darius the Mede" never existed (Cyrus took Babylon); Belshazzar's father = Nabonidus not Nebuchadnezzar; accurate to 167 BCE then wrong = written then; Greek loanwords; Aramaic/Hebrew language shift
Tobit	Pious folklore	Fish organs cure blindness; demon Asmodeus driven by burning fish liver; geographic errors; Protestant/Jewish canon rejects it entirely
Judith	Theological novel	"Nebuchadnezzar king of Assyria" — he was king of BABYLON (deliberate signal of fiction); Bethulia never existed; no historical corroboration
Ruth	Novella	Post-exilic polemic against Ezra-Nehemiah's intermarriage ban; idealized narrative; set in Judges but language = 5th century BCE
Song of Solomon	Erotic love poetry	Zero historical claims; Solomonic attribution = pseudepigraphal; Aramaic vocabulary = post-exilic composition; explicit sexual content, no theology

2A. GOSPEL CONTRADICTIONS

Resurrection: 4 Irreconcilable Accounts

Element	Matthew 28	Mark 16	Luke 24	John 20
Who went?	2 Marys	2 Marys + Salome	3+ women	Mary Magdalene alone
Stone moved?	NO — angel rolls it as they watch	YES — already moved	YES	YES
At tomb?	1 angel outside	1 young man inside	2 men inside	2 angels inside
Told anyone?	YES — ran to tell	NO — "said nothing to anyone" (16:8)	YES — told the eleven	YES — told Peter
1st appearance	Galilee	(Original ends at 16:8)	Jerusalem / Emmaus	Jerusalem garden

Mark 16:8 says women "said nothing to anyone" — directly contradicts the other three gospels. Mark 16:9-20 is a later scribal addition absent from earliest manuscripts.

Birth Narratives: Matthew vs. Luke

Element	Matthew 1-2	Luke 1-2
Announced to	Joseph (dream)	Mary (angel Gabriel)
Original home	Bethlehem (house, 2:11)	Nazareth (2:4)
Visitors	Magi from East	Shepherds
After birth	Fled to Egypt (Herod's massacre)	Temple presentation, home to Nazareth
Herod massacre?	All boys under 2 killed	No mention at all

Mutually exclusive: If family fled to Egypt (Matt), how did they visit Jerusalem Temple 40 days later (Luke 2:22)? **John 7:41-42** suggests people didn't know Jesus was from Bethlehem — possibly a theological invention for Micah 5:2.

Genealogies: Two Incompatible Lines

Matthew 1: David → Solomon → ... Jacob → Joseph (28 generations)
Luke 3: David → Nathan → ... Heli → Joseph (43 generations)
Different son of David, different grandfather, different names throughout. "Mary's line" defense: Luke 3:23 explicitly says "Joseph, son of Heli" — not Mary. No textual support. (R. Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*)

More Gospel Contradictions

- Last Supper timing:** Synoptics: IS Passover meal (Mark 14:12). John: BEFORE Passover; Jesus dies as lambs slaughtered (John 19:14). Can't be both.
- Crucifixion time:** Mark 15:25 = 9 AM ("third hour"). John 19:14 = still before Pilate at noon ("sixth hour"). 3-hour gap.
- Last words:** Matt/Mark: "My God, why forsaken me?" (anguish). Luke: "Into your hands I commit my spirit" (peace). John: "It is finished" (triumph). Three different final utterances.
- Temple cleansing:** John 2 = beginning of ministry. Matt 21/Mark 11/Luke 19 = final week. Same event, opposite placement.
- First disciples called:** Mark 1:16-20: after Baptist's arrest, by Sea of Galilee. John 1:35-42: before arrest, via Baptist's introduction. Luke 5:1-11: after miraculous fish catch.
- Jairus's daughter:** Matt 9:18: "has just died." Mark 5:23: "at the point of death" (still alive). Luke 8:42: "was dying."
- Who carried the cross?** John 19:17: Jesus carried his own cross. Matt 27:32/Mark 15:21/Luke 23:26: Simon of Cyrene carried it.
- Ascension (same author!):** Luke 24: ascends Easter Sunday. Acts 1:3: ascends 40 days later. Luke wrote both.

2B. NUMERICAL CONTRADICTIONS

2 Samuel vs. 1 Chronicles

Event	2 Samuel	1 Chronicles
Horsemen captured	700 (8:4)	7,000 (18:4)
Charioteers killed	700 (10:18)	7,000 (19:18)
Census: Israel	800,000 (24:9)	1,100,000 (21:5)
Census: Judah	500,000 (24:9)	470,000 (21:5)
Famine duration	7 years (24:13)	3 years (21:12)
Chief warrior's kills	800 (23:8)	300 (11:11)

Who incited David's census?
2 Sam 24:1: "The LORD incited David"
1 Chr 21:1: "Satan incited David"
GOD or SATAN? Theologically irreconcilable.

Who killed Goliath? 1 Sam 17: David. 2 Sam 21:19: Elhanan killed Goliath. 1 Chr 20:5 "fixes" it to "Elhanan killed Goliath's brother" — transparent harmonization.

Jehoiachin's age: 2 Kings 24:8 = 18 years old. 2 Chr 36:9 = 8 years old.
Ahaziah's age: 2 Kings 8:26 = 22. 2 Chr 22:2 = 42 (older than his father who died at 40!).

2C. DEATH ACCOUNT CONTRADICTIONS

How Did Saul Die? (4 Accounts)

Source	Account
1 Sam 31:4	Fell on own sword
2 Sam 1:8-10	Amalekite killed him
2 Sam 21:12	Philistines killed him (implied)
1 Chr 10:13-14	The LORD killed him

Where Did Aaron Die?

Numbers 20:28, 33:38: Aaron died on Mount Hor.
Deuteronomy 10:6: Aaron died at Moserah.
Different locations in the wilderness itinerary.

2D. CREATION CONTRADICTIONS

Element	Genesis 1	Genesis 2
Plants	Day 3 (before humans)	After man (2:5-9)
Animals	Day 6 (before humans)	After man (2:19)
Humans	Male + female together (1:27)	Man first, then animals, then woman (2:7,19,22)

Ark animals: Gen 6:19-20 = two of every kind. Gen 7:2-3 = seven pairs of clean animals. Two vs. seven — J and P sources merged.

2E. GOD'S CHARACTER CONTRADICTIONS

Omniscient or not? Gen 3:9: "Where are you?" Gen 18:21: "I will go down and see." Gen 22:12: "Now I know you fear God." VS. Psalm 139:1-4, Heb 4:13: God knows everything.

Does God tempt? James 1:13: God "does not tempt anyone." VS. Gen 22:1: "God tested Abraham." 2 Sam 24:1: The LORD incited David (then punished him).

Creates evil? Isa 45:7 (KJV): "I...create evil." VS. 1 John 1:5: "In him is no darkness at all."

Does God lie? Num 23:19, Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18: God CANNOT lie. VS. 1 Kings 22:23: LORD put "lying spirit" in prophets. 2 Thess 2:11: God sends "powerful delusion." Ezek 14:9: "I the LORD have deceived that prophet."

Peace or war? Rom 15:33: "God of peace." Matt 5:9: "Blessed are peacemakers." VS. Exod 15:3: "LORD is a man of war." Matt 10:34: "I came not to send peace, but a sword."

2F. LAW & COMMAND CONTRADICTIONS

Kill / Don't Kill: Exod 20:13: "Thou shalt not kill." VS. Num 31:17: "Kill every male among the little ones." 1 Sam 15:3: "Slay man and woman, infant and suckling."

Children bear parents' sins?
YES: Exod 20:5: "visiting iniquity on children to 3rd-4th generation." 2 Sam 12:14-18: David's infant dies for David's sin.
NO: Deut 24:16: "children shall NOT be put to death for fathers." Ezek 18:20: "son shall NOT bear father's iniquity."

Eunuchs: Deut 23:1: Excluded from assembly. VS. Isa 56:3-5: Welcomed and honored.

Did God command sacrifices? Lev 1-7: Detailed sacrificial laws at Sinai. VS. Jer 7:22: "I did NOT command your fathers...concerning burnt offerings."

Proverbs 26:4-5 (adjacent verses!):
v4: "Do NOT answer a fool according to his folly"
v5: "Answer a fool according to his folly"

2G. MORE NT CONTRADICTIONS

Paul to Jerusalem? Gal 1:16-17: "I did NOT go to Jerusalem...went to Arabia." Didn't visit for 3 years (1:18). VS. Acts 9:26: Paul "came to Jerusalem" after conversion.

Potter's field: Matt 27:6-7: Chief priests bought it. VS. Acts 1:18: Judas purchased it.

3. HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The Exodus: 2-3 million people (Exod 12:37). 40 years in Sinai. Egyptian records: complete silence. Sinai surveys: zero evidence. Egypt's total population was only 3-4 million. (Finkelstein & Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*)

Conquest of Canaan: Jericho destroyed ~1550 BCE — 150+ years too early. Ai ("ruin") = already destroyed. Many "conquered" cities unoccupied at the time. Evidence supports gradual emergence, not military conquest.

Camels anachronism: Gen 12, 24, 37 mention domesticated camels during patriarchs (~2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological evidence (Sapir-Hen & Ben-Yosef, TAU 2013): camels not domesticated in Levant until ~900 BCE. **600-1000 year anachronism.**

Philistines anachronism: Gen 21:32, 26:1 = Philistines in Abraham's time (~2000 BCE). Philistines (Sea Peoples) arrived ~1175 BCE. **800-year anachronism.**

City of Dan: Gen 14:14 uses name "Dan." Judges 18:29: city renamed from Laish to Dan during Judges period. Name didn't exist in patriarchal era.

Quirinius Census: Luke 2:2 = census under Quirinius (6 CE). Matt 2:1 = during Herod (died 4 BCE). **10-year gap.** No Roman census required ancestral-hometown travel. Census covered Judea only, not Galilee.

4. FAILED PROPHECIES

Tyre (Ezek 26): Nebuchadnezzar would destroy Tyre; "never be rebuilt", "never be found again." **Reality:** Nebuchadnezzar besieged 13 years, didn't destroy it. **Ezekiel admits failure** (29:18-20): "he got no wages from Tyre." Tyre exists today (Sur, Lebanon, pop. ~200,000).

Egypt (Ezek 29:8-12, 30:10-12): Egypt desolate 40 years; Nile dried up; Nebuchadnezzar destroys Egypt. **Reality:** Egypt was NEVER uninhabited 40 years. Nile never dried up. Nebuchadnezzar never conquered Egypt. **100% unfulfilled.**

Damascus (Isa 17:1): "Damascus will no longer be a city." **Reality:** Damascus = oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. Still capital of Syria. Population ~2 million.

Jesus's return "this generation":
• Matt 16:28: "Some standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming"
• Matt 24:34: "This generation will not pass away until all these things take place"

• Mark 9:1, 13:30; Luke 21:32: Same
• Matt 10:23: "You will not finish the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes"
Reality: That generation died 2,000 years ago. No Second Coming.

Paul expected to be alive: 1 Thess 4:15: "We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord." 1 Cor 7:29: "The time is short." Rom 13:11: "The day is almost here." Paul was wrong.

5. PSEUDEPIGRAPHA & FORGERIES

If a book claims Paul wrote it but Paul didn't, the Bible contains a false authorship claim. You cannot maintain inerrancy while acknowledging pseudepigrapha.

Book	Claimed	Scholarly Consensus	Key Evidence
1 Timothy	Paul	~80-90% reject	1/3 vocabulary absent from Paul; church hierarchy too developed
2 Timothy	Paul	Majority reject	Same Pastoral issues
Titus	Paul	~80-90% reject	Pastoral Epistles consensus
Ephesians	Paul	~80% reject	Verbose style; 50+ word sentences; depends on Colossians
Colossians	Paul	~50/50 split	Unusual vocabulary; cosmic Christology
2 Thess	Paul	Slight majority reject	Contradicts 1 Thess on parousia timing
2 Peter	Peter	~95%+ reject	Different Greek from 1 Peter; copies Jude; calls Paul's letters "Scripture"; latest NT book (~100-150 CE)

Old Testament Authorship Problems

Deuteronomy "pious fraud": "Discovered" in Temple in 622 BCE (2 Kings 22). Its theology perfectly matches Josiah's reforms. Near-universal scholarly consensus: composed shortly before "discovery."

Isaiah = 2-3 authors: Ch 1-39 (8th c. BCE, Assyrian context). Ch 40-55 (6th c. exile, names Cyrus 150 years later). Ch 56-66 (post-exilic, rebuilt temple). Different vocabulary, style, theology at each break.

Moses didn't write the Pentateuch: Deut 34 describes his own death. Num 12:3: "most humble man on earth" (wouldn't write that). Gen 36:31: presupposes monarchy. Gen 14:14: uses name "Dan" (not named until Judges). JEDP Documentary Hypothesis: 4 sources (Yahwist ~950, Elohist ~850, Deuteronomist ~622, Priestly ~550-450 BCE) woven together by editors.

6. WHY INERRANCY IS INTELLECTUALLY INDEFENSIBLE

The evidence above isn't from fringe atheists — it's mainstream consensus from Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Oxford, Duke. Even conservative scholars (Metzger, Wallace, F.F. Bruce, Dever) acknowledge significant problems.

1. "Original autographs" defense = unfalsifiable. We don't have them. Claiming perfection for nonexistent documents is not a serious intellectual position.

2. "Proper interpretation resolves all" = adding what isn't there. Inventing details, claiming rare grammar rules, assuming "incomplete not contradictory." If the Bible needs this much outside help, it's not self-evidently clear.

3. The contradictions are real. God OR Satan incited the census. The women told OR told no one. 9 AM OR noon. Mount Hor OR Moserah. These are mutually exclusive, not "different perspectives."

4. Failed prophecies are verifiable. Visit Tyre. Visit Damascus. Egypt was never depopulated 40 years. Ezekiel 29:18-20 admits the Tyre failure. "This generation" passed away 2,000 years ago.

5. Pseudepigrapha destroys inerrancy from within. If 1 Timothy claims to be from Paul but isn't, the Bible contains a false authorship claim. Inerrancy + pseudepigrapha = logical impossibility.

45,000+ Protestant denominations all claim "Scripture alone." All disagree on salvation, baptism, communion, church government, end times. Sola Scriptura produces chaos, not clarity. The Bible itself warns: "No prophecy is of private interpretation" (2 Pet 1:20).

7. THE LDS POSITION: MOST CONSISTENT FRAMEWORK

8th Article of Faith: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly."
This single statement accounts for EVERY problem in this document. No Protestant doctrine of inerrancy can do the same.

Problem	Inerrancy Response	LDS Response
Fictional books	Must insist historical	Appreciate as inspired literature
Contradictions	Strained harmonization	Expected from imperfect transmission
Failed prophecies	Reinterpret or "future"	Prophets are human; continuing revelation corrects
Pseudepigrapha	Defend traditional authorship	Human error doesn't negate content

Problem	Inerrancy Response	LDS Response
Historical errors	Defend against archaeology	"As far as translated correctly"
Interpretation chaos	45,000 denominations	Living prophets interpret authoritatively

Why LDS is superior:

- **No need to defend the indefensible** — can freely use scholarship without faith collapsing
- **Living prophets** solve the interpretation problem (Amos 3:7)
- **Additional scripture** (BoFM, D&C) supplements and clarifies
- **JST corrects known errors** (e.g., Exod 33:20 → "no sinful man")
- **Every biblical error confirms LDS claim:** the Bible is valuable but imperfect, requiring restoration (1 Ne 13:26)
- **Bible's value preserved:** honored as scripture, studied in worship, used in missionary work

The Bottom Line: Inerrancy requires ignoring scholars, inventing harmonizations, and pretending problems don't exist. The LDS framework acknowledges reality, provides solutions through restoration and continuing revelation, and uses the Bible wisely rather than idolizing it. **That is intellectual honesty.**