



Discussion Group after May 14, 2022
"The Proverbial Contradiction"
Proverbs 26:4-5

Introduction to the Topic:

1. Biblical contradictions often divide people into two camps: Believers and Doubters. Believers try to defend the Bible when faced with contradictions, while Doubters feel the Bible loses value when faced with those same contradictions. Do you find yourself to be more of a "Believer" or a "Doubter" when you study the Bible? Why is that?

On the timeline in the film, Craig made five stops at important moments in Christian history:

2. At around the year 30 CE, Craig discussed how the early Christians practiced their faith without any scripture at all. Can you imagine practicing the Christian faith without a Bible? How do you think your practice of faith would be better and also worse without a Bible?

3. Between 300-500 CE, the early church councils intentionally chose to include Biblical contradictions in the New Testament by selecting four gospels of the life of Jesus instead of just one. Why do you think they made this decision? Does this decision help or hurt your faith?

4. In the 16th century, Martin Luther declared that the Bible should be a greater authority on God than the church. However, he also campaigned heavily to remove some books from the Bible (Revelation and James). How do you think Martin Luther would be received today by Protestant Christians, if he went around telling everyone that we need to remove books from the Bible?

5. In the late 19th century, professors from Princeton crafted the doctrine of inerrancy as a response to Darwin's theory of evolution. When we ask

the question, “Where did Protestant Christians get the idea that the Bible needs to be inerrant?” the answer is, “New Jersey.” How does it change your perspective on the inerrancy of scripture when you think about a Biblical doctrine originating from New Jersey?

6. In 1978, Evangelical Christians gathered in Chicago and created a new theological ultimatum: a denial of the inerrancy of scripture is a denial of Jesus Christ. How do you feel when you hear that ultimatum? Why do you feel that way?

In summary:

7. So often Christians believe and tell the world that the way to honor the tradition of Christianity is by believing that the Bible is inerrant. However, this timeline demonstrates that the doctrine of inerrancy is a recent invention in the history of the Bible. If inerrancy isn't the root of the Christian tradition, then what is?

8. Craig suggested the tradition is the “unmitigated inspiration of God.” Is that helpful to you? Or do you find it to be an unfulfilling answer?