

Vexed Verses

Confronting contradictions in sacred scripture

Four Assumptions

- ◆ Needs to be interpreted.
- ◆ Provides lessons for us today.
- ◆ Is without mistake or contradiction.
- ◆ Comes directly from God.

Modern Interpretation

-Internal analysis

-External comparison





Cleansing of the Temple

St. Paul and women speaking in church



I Cor. 14: “As in all the churches of the saints,
women should be silent in the churches. For they
are not permitted to speak, but should be
subordinate, as the law also says. If there is
anything they desire to know, let them ask their
husbands at home. For it is shameful for a
woman to speak in church. Or did the word of
God originate with you? Or are you the only
ones it has reached?)”

Reading Horizontally v.
Reading Vertically

How is Jesus Arrested?

- ◆ Is it a surprise arrest in which the authorities are under control? (Mark)
- ◆ Is it a planned arrest in which Jesus is in control of the scene? (John)

What does Jesus Say to Pilate?

- ◆ Just three words (“you say so”) and nothing else? (Mark)
- ◆ Or does he talk and talk and talk (“my kingdom is not of this world, etc.”)? (John)

When is Jesus Crucified?

- ◆ Around 9 a.m. on the Day of Passover?
(Mark 15:25)
- ◆ After noon on the Day of Preparation
for the Passover? (John 19:14)



All four gospels agree that on the third day
after Jesus' crucifixion and burial, Mary
Magdalene went to the tomb and found it
empty.

Who went to the tomb?

- ◆ Mary Magdalene alone (John 20:1)?
- ◆ MM and another Mary (Matt. 28:1)?
- ◆ MM, Mary the mother of James and another Mary (Mark 16:1)?
- ◆ MM, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and "other women" (Luke 23:55; 24:1)?

What about the stone?

- ◆ Was it rolled away before the women arrived (Mark 16:4)?
- ◆ Or did an angel roll it away while the women were there (Matt. 28:2)?

Whom do they see?

- ◆ An angel (Matt. 28:5)?
- ◆ A young man (Mark 16:5)?
- ◆ Two men (Luke 24:4)?
- ◆ No one (John)?

What are they told?

- ◆ To tell the disciples to “go to Galilee,” where Jesus will meet them (Mark 16:7)?
- ◆ Or to remember what Jesus had told them “while he was in Galilee” about how he must die and rise again (Luke 24:7)?

What do the women do?

- ◆ Tell the 11 disciples what they saw and heard (Matt. 28:6)?
- ◆ Tell the disciples & others (Luke 24:8)?
- ◆ Tell Peter and the beloved disciple (John 20:2)?
- ◆ Tell no one anything (Mark 16:8)?

What do the guys do?

- ◆ Nothing because Jesus immediately appears (Matt. 20:9)?
- ◆ Do not believe because it seems “an idle tale” (Luke 24:11)?
- ◆ Or do they run to the tomb themselves (John 20:3)?

Where does Jesus Meet them?

- ◆ Jesus and the disciples meet in Galilee, the place of Jesus' ascension (Matt. 28).
- ◆ After appearing to two people on the road to Emmaus, he meets with the disciples in Jerusalem and then ascends from Bethany (Luke 24:36-49).



Where to go from here?

- ◆ Know your assumptions.
- ◆ Realize the Bible is an encyclopedia of many books of many genres with many sources.
- ◆ Don't conflate fact and truth.
- ◆ Understand the metaphor you live by.



OWNER'S
MANUAL
1951



The Bible is not an owner's
manual.



THE EUCHARIST

Scripture as sacrament