



New Testament Expositor

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Alleged Contradictions in the Bible (3)

In this continuing series (my third) I am addressing the criticism of the Bible by a historian with respect to what he declares are contradictions. His name is Marko Marina (Ph.D., Author | Historian). To this point in the series, I am seriously questioning his historian credentials. He has, in a fantastic way, done a poor job at offering a) any reasonable biblical analysis, and b) any hint of a contradiction. Just to keep in the forefront of our minds, here is what he said about a contradiction. “In the context of the Bible, contradictions occur when there are two or more accounts of the same event or concept that differ so significantly they cannot both be true at the same time. It’s important to distinguish contradictions from mere differences (we’ll cover both categories).”

He has completely failed in adhering to this approach.

#11 – Contradictions in the Story of Jacob and Esau: Method of Deception. The story of Jacob and Esau, as told in Genesis 27 and beyond, is a rich narrative full of theological and literary significance. However, as noted in Gabel’s Bible as Literature, it also exhibits several biblical contradictions and narrative inconsistencies, likely due to the blending of multiple sources.

One notable inconsistency lies in the methods Jacob uses to deceive his father, Isaac. The narrative presents two separate strategies: Jacob wears Esau’s clothes — which smell of the open country — and covers his arms with goatskins to mimic Esau’s hairy skin. While both methods are effective, the dual explanation seems redundant and **suggests the merging of two versions of the story.**

Each may have originally featured a single method of deception, but they were later combined into the unified account we have today.

RT: First, if Gabel’s Bible “exhibits several biblical contradictions”, would it not be reasonable to expect one to be offered? It would, but there are none offered, so it is not a contradiction he addresses, but something other than that. Perhaps “Gabel’s Bible as Literature” does not know what a contradiction is for surely Dr. Marina would have presented us with that contradiction. Second, what is presented does not even amount to a troublesome inconsistency. The significance of this in the online article addresses 50 Bible **contradictions**. An inconsistency is not a contradiction.

In this so-called number 11 Bible “contradiction,” there is no contradiction, but an apparent inconsistency. When we look at the text and what he says about the text, it does not even amount to an inconsistency. This, by itself, means there is **nothing** here. Just the same, let us give attention to what he considers to be inconsistent. Here is how he describes it: “... the dual explanation seems redundant and **suggests the merging of two versions of the story**” (bold in original, RT)

That’s it, that’s all he offered. First, the merging of two “versions” is not an inconsistency. Second, as a historian, when he submits a “two versions” remark, there needs to be evidence of this, and there is not even an inkling of evidence

presented. Third, what he presents as an inconsistency is the following: “...Jacob wears Esau’s clothes — which smell of the open country — and covers his arms with goatskins to mimic Esau’s hairy skin...”

Pray tell, where is the inconsistency in Jacob wearing Esau’s clothes and covering his arms with goatskins? We can do nothing other than conclude that Dr. Marina made it up, hoping an uninformed reader won’t investigate and conclude anything to the contrary about what he said/wrote.

#12 – Contradictions in the Bible: Jacob’s Departure from Home. Another contradiction emerges in Jacob’s departure from home after the deception. In one account, he flees to Haran to escape Esau’s wrath, acting on his mother Rebekah’s advice (Genesis 27:42-45).

In another, Jacob travels to Haran to find a wife, following his father Isaac’s command (Genesis 28:1-5). These differing motivations for Jacob’s journey point to distinct narrative strands, each with its theological emphasis — one focusing on familial conflict and another on divine providence in securing the lineage of the patriarchs.

As we, in our exploration of the contradictions in the Bible, slowly shift focus to the New Testament, I’m reminded again of [Gail Evans’ assertion](#) that each biblical contradiction “is not so much the hard and fast word of God, but a collection of scrolls, written by various people” who often had different views about the relationship between humans and what they consider to be the Supreme Being or God.

RT: I am utterly amazed at his effort to find something that does not exist. Again, his words on what a contradiction is: “The Merriam-Webster dictionary offers the following definition: ‘A contradiction is a statement or phrase whose parts contradict each other (a round square is a contradiction in terms).’”

With this definition before you, re-read what he wrote concerning what he describes as contradiction number 12. There is nothing in what he wrote that comes close to meeting the definition / description he submits. Let me set forth the reasons for his failure.

The first thing Dr. Maria does is frame the situation entirely wrong; he manipulates the text he referenced and asserts there are two **different** strands of traditions in Genesis 27:42 – 28:5. When one reads the sections identified, one easily reads it as one continuous strand, separated by chapter and verse division long after the text was in print. Thus, what is asserted as two strands or versions is nothing more than a single story. Rebekah, being actively complicit in the whole affair, had a concern about how Esau would respond to Jacob’s role in the deception, and she presented to Isaac a view on how to address that concern. Rebekah’s concern and view is perfectly in keeping with the narrative’s reading without there being any inconsistency.

#13 – What Did the Voice at Jesus’ Baptism Say?

The accounts of Jesus’ baptism in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke reveal fascinating examples of discrepancy in

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From Mist to Majestic Glory

The God who created the Heavens and the Earth has often chosen to reveal Himself through the very creation He made. Among the great examples of this truth is His association with clouds. When God chose to make His presence known among men, He often came in the clouds. From the mist of creation to the majestic glory of Christ's return, the clouds trace a fascinating theme throughout history. Throughout scripture, these clouds have both concealed and revealed the God who loves, protects and guides His people. They shielded mankind from the full glory of God while assuring His abiding presence.

The first time the word cloud appears in the Holy Writ, it relates to God's promise. After the flood, God placed the rainbow in the cloud as a sign of His covenant with mankind to never destroy the earth by water again (Genesis 9:13-17). The bow is a constant reminder of God's faithfulness and mercy. As biblical history unfolds, the cloud becomes a manifestation of the presence of God.

The Exodus

In the days of the Exodus, God went before the children of Israel in a cloud by day and in a fire by night. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people" (Exodus 13:21-22).

This pillar of cloud was far more than a means of direction. It was a constant assurance that God was with His people, protecting them and guiding them through forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Moses never had to wonder when to move or where to go; God directed their journey every step of the way. Whenever the cloud lifted, Israel followed. Whenever it remained, they camped.

The cloud not only guided God's people but also protected them. When the Egyptians pursued the fleeing Israelites to the shores of the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud moved from before the camp of Israel to its rear. Standing between the two camps, it gave light to Israel while bringing darkness upon the Egyptians. What was a source of comfort and security for God's people became a barrier of judgment to their enemies. In this remarkable display, the cloud revealed both the protective care and sovereign power of God.

Mount Sinai

With the Egyptians destroyed in the waters of the Red Sea, the Israelites continued their journey through the wilderness. As they approached Mount Sinai, God chose to meet with His people and reveal His Law. Before this sacred encounter, the nation was commanded to consecrate themselves in preparation for the appearance of the Lord.

"Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled" (Exodus 19:16).

The cloud that had guided Israel through the wilderness now rested upon Mount Sinai. Accompanied by thunder, lightning, fire, and the sound of a trumpet, it proclaimed the majesty and holiness of God. The thick cloud served as both a revelation and a veil. Through it, God made His presence known to the people, yet the cloud shielded them from the full brilliance of His glory.

At Sinai, the Israelites learned an important truth about the

God they served. He was not merely their Deliverer; He was also the sovereign Lawgiver of heaven and earth. The cloud upon the mountain reminded them that while God desired fellowship with His people, He was also holy and worthy of reverence. His presence inspired both comfort and awe, drawing His people near while teaching them to approach Him with humility and fear.

The Tabernacle and Temple

God's presence was not to depart from His people. His desire was for them to remember that He alone is God and that He alone is worthy of worship. While on Mount Sinai, the Lord established this truth through the Law given to Moses: "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3). Israel was to worship the one true God exclusively. Later, the Lord reaffirmed this command, saying, "For you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Exodus 34:14).

God also provided a place where His people could worship and commune with Him. During Israel's wilderness wanderings, the Tabernacle served as a portable sanctuary, moving with the people wherever they journeyed. Centuries later, King Solomon would build the Temple in Jerusalem as a permanent house dedicated to the worship of God.

Yet neither the Tabernacle nor the Temple was significant because of its craftsmanship or beauty though the craftsmanship and beauty were stunning and patterned by God. Their significance was found in the presence of God. When the Tabernacle was completed, "the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34). The same divine presence later filled Solomon's Temple: "And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:10-11).

This visible manifestation of God's presence remained with His people until the tragic days recorded by Ezekiel. Because of Israel's persistent rebellion, the glory of the Lord departed from the Temple (Ezekiel 10), signaling divine judgment upon the nation. Yet God was not finished with His people. Later, Ezekiel was given a vision of the glory of the Lord returning (Ezekiel 43), offering hope that God's presence would once again dwell among His people.

That hope found its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, a new dwelling place for God was established. No longer would God's presence be identified with a cloud resting upon a physical structure. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, God now dwells within His people. The cloud that once filled the Tabernacle and Temple pointed forward to a greater reality—the living presence of God within those who belong to Christ.

Daniel 7

The prophetic vision was not limited to Ezekiel. Daniel, too, was given a glimpse into the heavenly realities surrounding God's kingdom and glory. In the night visions, he saw One who would forever change the understanding of the cloud motif in Scripture.

"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall

not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13–14).

In this vision, the cloud is no longer merely a symbol of God’s dwelling presence among His people, nor simply a veil concealing His glory. The cloud now becomes the royal chariot of divine authority, bearing the Son of Man into the presence of the Ancient of Days.

Daniel sees the exaltation of a figure who receives everlasting dominion, glory, and a kingdom that will never be destroyed. This One comes not only in association with the cloud but is revealed as the rightful ruler over all nations and peoples. What once guided Israel through the wilderness and filled the Tabernacle now becomes the backdrop for the enthronement of the Messiah.

During His trial before Caiaphas, Jesus directly identifies Himself as the Son of Man, bringing Daniel’s vision into sharp focus. “Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven’” (Matthew 26:64).

In this solemn declaration, Jesus connects His identity not only to suffering and judgment but also to exaltation and divine authority. He affirms that the One seen in Daniel’s vision is none other than Himself—the Son of Man who will come in the clouds with power.

Caiaphas responds by accusing Him of blasphemy, but in truth, Jesus is affirming what Scripture has already revealed. He is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. Though rejected by the religious leaders of His day, He stands as the only hope for all who believe and obey.

Mount of Transfiguration

For me, one of the most profound appearances of God in the cloud is seen at the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James, and John accompanied Jesus up the mountain to pray. Luke records, “As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:29–31).

The disciples had been sleeping, but upon awakening they witnessed a scene of overwhelming glory. Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ in glory, speaking with Him concerning His approaching death in Jerusalem. In their awe, Peter suggested building three tabernacles—one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah—seeking to honor each in the moment.

Yet perspective is crucial. They were not observing this glory from a distance. Scripture reveals something far more significant:

“While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!’”

The disciples were not merely standing near the manifestation of God’s glory—they were enveloped within the cloud itself. In this moment, Peter, James, and John, along with Moses, are among those uniquely recorded as being drawn into the cloud of divine presence, witnessing the glory of God revealed on the holy mountain.

Peter would later reflect on this event with great conviction, writing:

“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received

from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain” (2 Peter 1:16–18).

On the Mount of Transfiguration, the cloud no longer merely leads, fills, or conceals—it surrounds. Within it, the Father’s voice confirms the identity of the Son, and the divine glory is revealed in a moment that unites law, prophets, and fulfillment in Christ Himself.

The Ascension

A cloud once again appears as a sign of God’s presence following the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Before His departure, Jesus gave His apostles final instruction. He promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, saying, “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever” (John 14:16).

In Acts 1, Jesus once more instructs His disciples to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. After speaking with them, He is taken up into the air. “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven’” (Acts 1:9–11).

The cloud that received Him is not merely a detail of departure but a continuation of the consistent biblical pattern. It signifies divine presence, transition, and exaltation. Just as He ascended in a cloud, so He will return in like manner. The ascension of Christ thus becomes both the culmination of His earthly ministry and the promise of His future appearing.

The Second Coming

As Jesus ascended in a cloud, so His return will be in like manner. Paul states, “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep...” (1 Thessalonians 4:15–18). The Lord Himself will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

It is then that all believers will be with the Lord, beholding the majesty of our Savior in His glory.

The terms cloud, clouds, and cloud-related expressions appear in the Bible more than 100 times. Space does not permit a full exploration of the many fascinating aspects of this usage in relation to God, His people, and His judgments upon the nations.

The imagery of God and Christ in the clouds consistently conveys themes of glory, presence, protection, power, divine authority, and guidance. While we observe clouds in nature as part of God’s marvelous creation, Scripture draws our attention beyond the physical phenomenon to God’s activity in history from the very beginning.

Throughout the biblical record, the cloud serves as a recurring testimony that God is both near and sovereign—guiding His people, revealing His presence, and fulfilling His purposes in time and eternity.

Scott Judge (Minister—Elm Gove Church of Christ)

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the Bible regarding the words spoken by the divine voice from heaven. While all three narratives describe this pivotal event, the exact wording and audience of the voice differ, reflecting unique theological emphases and textual traditions.

In **Matthew 3:17**, the voice appears to address the gathered crowd, proclaiming: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Bart Ehrman, in his book [Jesus Interrupted](#) (an excellent study of numerous contradictions in the Bible), notes: “The voice appears to be speaking to the people around Jesus, or possibly to John the Baptist, informing them who Jesus is.”

In **Mark 1:11**, however, the voice speaks directly to Jesus: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” Here, the statement is more intimate, suggesting a personal affirmation of Jesus’ identity and mission.

Luke 3:22 presents an even more intriguing variation. In some of the oldest manuscripts, the voice says: “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.” This wording echoes Psalm 2:7 and carries significant theological implications, suggesting a moment of divine appointment or recognition of Jesus’ sonship at his baptism.

RT. Dr. Marina cites the three verses: Matthew 3:17: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” Mark 1:11: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” Luke 3:22: “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”

The difference between the three verses is “this” and “you.” Read the three passages carefully; do you see a contradiction? There is neither a contradiction, inconsistency, nor discrepancy. Did the Father of Glory speak to Jesus? He did. Dr. Marina called the problem here a “discrepancy,” which is defined as “the quality or state of disagreeing or being at variance” (Merriam-Webster online).

Before I give attention to the words “this” and “you,” let me say a word about Luke 3:22. The remark is made: “In some of the oldest manuscripts, the voice says: ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you.’” Of the English versions I have, not one reads as our critic indicates. The ASV reads, “Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased.” This is followed by the ESV, NKJV, KJV, Williams New Testament, Weymouth’s New Testament. Furthermore, in the New English Translation (NET) **text critical** notes, “Instead of ‘You are my one dear Son; in you I take great delight,’ one Greek MS and several Latin MSS and church fathers (D it Ju [CI] Meth Hil Aug) quote [Psa 2:7](#) outright with ‘You are my Son; today I have fathered you.’ But the weight of the MS testimony is against this reading.” The bottom line is this: Dr. Marina completely fabricated a problem in Luke 3:22 that does not exist in the Bible. To say it differently, he manipulated the text to support his lie.

What about the “this” and “you”? In what way does the text contradict? First, Jesus submitted to John’s baptism; second, Jesus came up from the water in John’s baptism; third, a voice from heaven spoke; fourth, Matthew reads “This is my beloved Son” while Mark reads “You (thou) are my beloved Son...” “beloved Son” is in both passages. The difference is “this” is a demonstrative pronoun, while “you” is a second-person pronoun. The contradiction is what? The word used? That is not a contradiction, only a variance. Complete rubbish by Dr. Marina!

Ron Thomas (Minister— Rio Grande Church of Christ)

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

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AREA EVENTS UPCOMING

August 2-5, [North Central Ohio Lectures](#), Strengthening the Church, Various Speakers, 5075 Toledo Rd. Lorain OH 44055

August 7-9, [Gospel Meeting](#), Washington St. Church of Christ 601 Washington Street St. Albans WV 25177

September 19, [Crum Lectureship](#), Crum Church of Christ 278 Crum Rd. Crum WV, 25669Crum WV

September 25-26, [Youth Rally](#), Scott Judge, Hosted by Sunrise Church of Christ, 4-H Grounds 2203 Butcher Bend Rd. Mineral Wells WV 26150

October 4-7, [Gospel Meeting](#), Tim Hatfield, Henderson Church of Christ 209 Walnut St., Henderson WV 25106

October 10, [Elm Grove Lectureship](#) Elm Grove Church of Christ 8155 Chenoweth Fork Rd. Piketon OH 45661, 740-434-8721

October 25-29, [Victory Lectureship](#), West Virginia School of Preaching, 4th St. and Willard Ave. Moundsville WV, 26041

Preacher Swap

August 30, 2026

Henderson Church of Christ

Gavin James

Rio Grande Church of Christ

Robert Leedy

Bidwell Church of Christ

Scott Judge

Blackburn Hills Church of Christ

Kieth Kress

Elm Grove Church of Christ

Ron Thomas

South Logan Church of Christ

David Brothers

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