

Inerrancy of the Bible and Sarah Palin

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June 7, 2011

The two possible meanings of the title of this post are intentional. It seems to me that the same tactics that Christians who believe in the Bible's inerrancy use to deal with evidence to the contrary are the tactics being used to defend the [inerrancy of Sarah Palin](#) (and [other politicians](#) - Palin just provides one obvious recent example - and to do something similar with [other subjects altogether](#)).

What do inerrantists do when it seems that the Bible, or even Jesus himself, is wrong? Among the responses are: looking for ad hoc explanations, things that *might* have been meant even though they are less likely meanings of the words/phrase in question, and, when necessary, rewriting Wikipedia or positing historical events for which we have no evidence because the Bible - or the politician - *must* have been right.

I'd like to ask a question to those who take this approach: Where in the Bible are Christians called to defend the Bible's reputation? Where do we find any evidence within the Bible itself of authors concerned to reconcile every contradiction or avoid any appearance of historical inaccuracy? In fact, it is precisely the failure of Biblical authors to provide such reconciliations that leaves inerrantists in the position of feeling they must do so. But if writing things that contradict what others wrote, and presenting things that appear to be historically, [scientifically](#), or otherwise factually untrue, without explaining how the reality is different than the appearance, was good enough for the Bible's authors, why isn't it good enough for conservative Christians?

[I suggested recently](#) that one of the most fundamental elements of Christianity is [repentance - acknowledging we were wrong and making efforts to be less wrong in](#)

[the future.](#)

And one can see a faithful expression of this core Christian conviction in the history of Liberal Protestantism and its role in developing and embracing the tools of critical study of the Bible, and the [integration of new scientific knowledge.](#)

Admitting [the Bible was wrong](#), admitting Jesus was wrong, when [the evidence points in that direction](#),

is not a denial of the Christian faith, but an expression of one of its most basic tenets: the fallibility of human beings and the resulting need to be open to correction.

Originally posted at [Exploring Our Matrix.](#)