

I wrote this post a while ago, and now that I reread it, I think I might be kicking a dead horse. (Something, in case you wonder, I've never actually done.) But, well, I suppose it's sometimes OK to leave written twat has been written, so to say. So here 'tis.

There are times when I debate a committed evangelical or fundamentalist Christian on whether the Bible is reliable or not, and I feel like I'm talking to a Martian. Or maybe I'm a Martian. We are both educated human beings and do indeed seem to be speaking the same language (English); but how we understand what very same words virtually certainly have to mean is completely opposite. How can that be?

Again, I'm not going to be trying to provide further counter-arguments for the back and forth that Matthew Firth and I had over whether there are contradictions in the Gospel or not. I said emphatically yes, he said emphatically no. But both of us seem to have felt like we were talking to a wall, and I'd like to explain why I felt/feel that way. He is free to respond if he chooses.

I have a deep sense, based on what debate partners often say themselves, that extremely conservative Christians who think there are not contradictions in the Bible read the Bible very literally when doing so supports what they already think (the world was literally created in six days something like 6000 years ago). But if a reading runs contrary to what they think, they say the text can't be read overly literally. Instead, it needs to be read in a non-literal way so that what it says is not what the author actually meant. Anyone who doesn't see this is "arrogant."

That's how some conservative Christians can ...

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