

Bible Contradictions: Answer The Fool or Not?

Read this article online here:

<http://www.creationliberty.com/articles/bc-answerfool.php>

Author: Christopher J. E. Johnson

Published: June 11, 2014

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts... For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old,
-2 Peter 3:3-5

Skeptic's Argument:

One who scoffs at God's Word.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.
-Proverbs 26:4

This section says not to answer the fool according to his folly, but the next verse says to do the opposite.

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.
-Proverbs 26:5

This is an obvious contradiction, therefore the Bible is wrong.

Bible-Reader's Answer:

One who takes God's Word seriously.

The Bible-hating scoffer obviously has no clue what this is saying, nor do they really care, because **they are the fools the Bible is referring to** when it is describing how we should answer them. Many Christians often have a misunderstanding of what these verses are telling us, because don't answer the fool according to his folly.

To help understand this verse, we first need to look at how the meaning of a sentence changes based on how we emphasize specific words. Let's experiment by using the question "Should I walk the dog?"

- "**Should** I walk the dog?"
This implies ethics, "Is this something I have to do?"
- "Should **I** walk the dog?"
This implies responsibility, "Isn't there someone else that can do it?"
- "Should I **walk** the dog?"
This implies means or speed, "Is there another means of transportation I can use?"
- "Should I walk the **dog**?"
This implies the object, "Is there another pet I can walk?"

The understanding and meaning of the sentence can be drastically changed depending on which words are emphasized, and this can be done with almost all sentences in the English language. The Bible-hating scoffer refuses to acknowledge context by putting emphasis on the words "*answer*" and "*answer not*," rather than building the context the entire sentence, "*according to his folly*." Bible-hating scoffers don't pay attention to the entire sentence, so let's look at the verses how they are choosing to read them:

- "**Answer not a fool** -- [stop reading the rest of the sentence]"
This implies to give no answer at all.
- "**Answer a fool** -- [stop reading the rest of the sentence]"
This implies to give an answer.

The scoffer typically stops here without investigating the rest of the verse. This is a common tactic used by scoffers, and by Satan, where they only quote, or put emphasis on, *PART* of a verse, instead of the whole thing. The Christian who takes the Bible seriously knows that this is the wrong way to approach the Bible, and the English language in general.

- "Answer not a fool **according to his folly**, lest thou also be like unto him."
This implies the means by which you answer.
- "Answer a fool **according to his folly**, lest he be wise in his own conceit."
This also implies by what means you answer.

In the English language, we tend to give details *BEFORE* the main subject of thought, but in other languages, they tend to give details *AFTER* the main subject of thought. Though the Lord's Words are perfect as they are, if you have some difficulty understanding what these verses are saying, try swapping the first and second halves.

- "Lest thou also be like unto him, answer not a fool according to his folly."
If you don't want to be like the fool, don't answer him with his own flawed logic.
- "Lest he be wise in his own conceit, answer a fool according to his folly."
To demonstrate the fool's conceitedness, answer him with proper logic.

In fact, this article is doing exactly what Proverbs 26 instructions to do. The Bible-hating scoffer uses flawed logic (and corrupts basic English) by throwing away the context of the sentence, but we are going back and answering those fools according to their folly, their folly being that they deny logical processes, sentence structure, and building context.

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

-Proverbs 18:13

For example, it is foolish for anyone to draw conclusions about something before they have first heard an argument for it. That is the way of fool; refusing to listen. Thus, according to Proverbs 26, though the fool will not hear the words of understand, we need to listen to matters before responding. So if the fool's folly is refusing to hear a matter before he responds, make sure you hear the matter before you respond.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

-Proverbs 26:4



These verses are speaking to the foundations we stand on when we approach men who lack wisdom and understanding. For example, if someone is debating with you on the topic of morals, but he/she does not believe in God, don't allow them to use the Bible's standards morality against you. That's like allowing someone to take the gun out of your holster and hold you hostage with it. If you don't stand on the Word of God when entering debate, you are allowing the fools to pull you off your foundation and enter their illogical, humanistic folly.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

-1 Peter 2:15

There is no contradiction here. The Bible instructs us on how to answer the scoffers and not waste our time. So when you answer, make sure you answer on the foundation of the Words of Him who all men will one day have to confess lordship.

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

-Romans 14:11

Both verses are correct. It speaks to those who answer a fool with his own foolishness, and to those who answer a fool without taking part in foolish thinking.