

– Additional Notes –
St. Matthew's Mistake

December 21, 2004

Hi Bob,

Nice to hear from you again. It is interesting that truth is considered radical in this sin saturated society. I'm glad to hear that you have some in your area who are willing to examine the evidence without fear. I am sometimes known by my peers as the "resident heretic." Just stay true to the evidence and what can be proven.

Few Christians notice that Matthew appears to have made a mistake at chapter 23:35 when he quoted Jesus as saying "...Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar." This is a reference to 2 Chronicles 24:20-22 which states "Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest..." and goes on to describe the murder of Zechariah. The footnote in my Bible for Matthew 23:35 states "Doubtless Jehoiada was Zechariah's grandfather, whereas Barachiah was his father."

However, Zechariah the son of Barachiah was the son (Zechariah would be the grandson) of Iddo (Zechariah 1:1) and was the prophet for whom the book of Zechariah was written. This Zechariah the son of Barachiah was a prophet who lived shortly before the time of Esther and was not murdered in the temple. Was the mistake in Matthew 23:35 an editorial error on Matthew's part? If not, did Jesus Himself have a memory lapse and say it wrong? Which would be worse?

Could it be possible that there might be two famous individuals with the name "Zechariah the son of Barachiah"? It seems unbelievable that Jesus would have cited a different person from the one we know from scripture, and we can see that it doesn't match the most famous Zechariah.

The name Zechariah was a common Hebrew name in Old Testament times and is found 40 times in scripture. In addition to the two mentioned above, Zechariah is specifically mentioned as the son of the following men:

Meshelemiah	1 Chronicles 9:21	Hosah	1 Chronicles 26:11
Shelemiah	1 Chronicles 26:14		
Benaiah	2 Chronicles 20:14		
Jehoshaphat	2 Chronicles 21:2		
Bebai	Ezra 8:11		
Elam	Ezra 10:26		
Amariah	Nehemiah 11:5		
Shiloni	Nehemiah 11:12		
Mattanish	Nehemiah 12:35		

Jeberechiah

Isaiah 8:2

None of these were murdered in the temple. The Zechariah who was murdered in the temple was the son of Jehoiada and not the son of Barachiah. The only reasonable conclusion I can make of this is that Matthew wrote it wrong. But I don't discredit the book of Matthew (or worse yet, the entire Bible) because Matthew made a mistake. This merely proves to me that he was human and his writings are subject to the same problems all of us have from time to time. Unfortunately, we tend to forget that the Bible writers didn't set out to write scripture. Moses was just writing out Hebrew history and the law as he wrote the books that became the Pentateuch. Ezra and others were just making a record of their history. The Gospel writers were just telling the story of the most amazing parts of the life of Jesus. Paul was just writing letters to the various congregations where he had ministered.

If Matthew could write such a verifiable mistake as part of what has become canonized as scripture, is it not conceivable that Ellen White could also have made a few mistakes? She is well known for advising people not to quote her. See the attached letter I wrote to Ken Hart on this with her quotes. Is Ellen White more perfect than the Bible writers? Nonsense! We're all human and every one of us makes mistakes.

A couple years ago a friend gave me a couple statements by Ellen White that she had written to the brethren to get clarification regarding the time of the various events on the closing scenes of the life of Jesus. She admits in her statement to her assistant, Marion, that she was having difficulty understanding the time of all these events. She was never given a response from the brethren. I believe she was struggling with the very same sequence of events that I've struggled with and had some success at unraveling. I'm sorry I don't have those quotes in front of me, but if I find them I'll send them on to you.

I hope this helps.

Cordially,
Jerry