Paradox and the Centrality of the Doctrine of God in Hermeneutics

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Abstract

This essay examines the legitimacy of paradox as a valid hermeneutical category. The arguments of theologians and authors on both sides of the debate are examined and critiqued. Importantly, the way that R L Reymond applies his anti-paradox principle in his systematic theology is evaluated in order to provide insight into the debate. The author of this essay concludes that while the anti-paradox position is correct in principle, it can be applied in a narrow or mechanistic way that does not give adequate recognition to the semblance of paradox in scripture. Also, while the pro-paradox position has some validity, some of the statements made by those holding to this position are problematic and destroy the foundation for being able to differentiate between truth and error. A modified statement is therefore proposed that upholds the anti-paradox principle, but still gives expression to the semblance of paradox found in scripture.

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[1] The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

Introduction[2]

There are two distinct camps in the theological debate on the validity of paradox as a legitimate hermeneutical category. On the one hand, a number of theologians, such as Packer (1961:18–25), Grounds (1978), Kuiper and van Till, affirm the presence of paradoxes in scripture (see Reymond 1998:103–104) (hereafter referred to as the 'pro-paradox group'). These paradoxes seem to represent two contradictory statements (called 'antinomies' by Packer); statements that appear irreconcilable to human logic. According to them, the only resolution is to live with the apparent contradiction and deny that it is real (Packer 1961:21; Grounds 1978:4). Examples of doctrinal antinomies include God's sovereignty and human freedom (Packer 1961:21), and unconditional election and the free offer of the gospel (Waldron 1989:122, 145).

On the other hand, a second group of theologians deny the validity of such a category of hermeneutics (hereafter referred to as the 'anti-paradox' group). Basinger (1987:213), for example, concludes from his analysis that self-contradiction is not a category into which biblical truth can be fitted. Reymond (1998:104–106) agrees, and raises a number of problems with holding to a pro-paradox position (noted in a later section). Reymond (1998:108–109, 692–693) then applies this principle in a number of important areas, including the doctrine of the

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[2]Two disclaimers are in order. Firstly, this paper is not an attempt to reconcile every opposing doctrinal system on the basis that 'seeming contradictions' are true but are soluble somewhere in God's mind. Some doctrinal systems are simply wrong, on the basis of poor exegesis and reasoning. Seeming contradictions need to be shown to have their basis in the word of God. Secondly, the criticism of Reymond in this paper is not a large scale rejection of his works. His publications are largely good and would greatly benefit the reader.

Trinity, and whether God desires the salvation of all men or the elect only.

However, after reading Reymond's application of his anti-paradox position to the Trinity and the question of God's desire for the salvation of all men, some serious and problematic questions arise. Therefore, this paper critiques Reymond's *application* of his anti-paradox principle on the issues/doctrines of the Trinity and God's desire for all men to be saved, thus hopefully providing insight into the debate on the legitimacy of paradox as a category for hermeneutics.

1. Definitions

Definitions are crucial in this discussion, especially as contributors to the debate tend to use terms interchangeably (Basinger 1987:205). Grounds (1978:3–4), for example, use 'paradox' and 'mystery' interchangeably, as does Waldron (1989:122, 145).

The definitions of Basinger (1987:205–206) are adopted in this paper. Accordingly,

- A 'verbal puzzle' refers to seemingly incomprehensible statements that can be resolved by clarifying the meaning of the terms therein.
- A 'mystery' refers to concepts that may never be open to human explanation, but nevertheless are logically possible. A miracle is an example of a mystery, as we are unable to explain how God performs them.
- A 'paradox' refers to concepts that appear to be self-contradictory to human logic.

2. Reymond's Approach and Methodology

This section is a critique of Reymond's application of his anti-paradox position to two important doctrines, namely, the Trinity and God's desire for the salvation of all men. While acknowledging the strength of his position, this segment of the article exposits and evaluates his application of his method to these two areas of doctrine.

2.1. The strength of his position

The anti-paradox position has some inherent strengths. The primary consideration that makes this position compelling to its adherents, is the claim that if paradoxes are permitted to exist in the Word of God, then Christians will have no basis on which to separate truth from error (Reymond 1998:106). The anti-paradox group argues that an apparent contradiction, because it cannot be reconciled by human logic, looks like a real contradiction to us. Therefore, there is no basis to distinguish between true and apparent contradictions, and hence, there is no basis for us to establish truth.

The implications of the pro-paradox position are therefore far reaching. One of the most profound implications is in canonics. For example, rejections of letters or documents are made on the basis that they contradict accepted scripture (Grudem 1994:66). However, a consistent pro-paradox position can never exclude a document on this basis, as the contradiction may, after all, only be apparent. Since, according to the pro-paradox group, scripture contains other apparent contradictions, exclusion of any document is therefore not possible. This is clearly unacceptable.

Reymond (1998:105–106) also notes other problems with the pro-paradox position, such as frustrating all attempts at systematising

theology. The very nature of systematic theology is to harmonise and systematise doctrines in a coherent manner. Another problem pertains to meaning. For example, the paradoxical concept of a square circle has no meaning.

On this basis, it is an inevitable conclusion that the anti-paradox position is correct, *in principle*. However, the evaluation that follows shows that Reymond's application *modus operandi* is also problematic and, therefore, some refinement is required.

2.2. An exposition of Reymond's method

In order to test the consistency of Reymond's application of the anti-paradox position, it is important to elucidate his method by examining his classification of a miracle as a 'mystery' (Reymond 1998:107). This will require some discussion, since Reymond does not fully justify this categorisation, nor make his reasoning explicit.

A miracle in scripture approaches human reason initially as a paradox. For example, it is simply impossible for the weight of any person (distributed over the surface area of their feet) to be sustained by the surface tension of water. This is another way of stating that it is impossible for a man to walk on water. However, the scriptures assert this miracle. A number of options present themselves as to the interpretation of such biblical statements:

- The statement is a mistake or a lie. The author either is trying to deceive us or was mistaken.
- The statement is not literal, and thus such passages require an allegorical or spiritual interpretation.
- The statement is some form of idiom, and a literal interpretation is erroneous.

The above list is obviously not exhaustive. The three examples merely represent a secular, atheistic, anti-supernatural assumption; an epistemological framework which excludes the possibility of miracles—it is impossible for a human to walk on water. The root of such preferences is the common experience (people do not walk on water) and scientific research (the surface tension of water is too minimal to support the tension created by two feet). Therefore, the declaration that a literal man walked on literal water is, in the first instance, paradoxical, for it contradicts human experience.

However, the evangelical epistemology permits the acceptance of Peter's account of Jesus walking on water as literally true. The basis of this epistemological acceptance is the concept of an omnipotent creator who established the laws of nature and science (and can therefore suspend them), making the possibility of a man walking on water rational, even though the mechanism of how this was done by God is inscrutable. Thus, Reymond (1998:107) has labelled a miracle a 'mystery', not a 'paradox'.

The main point of this brief analysis is that the doctrine of God (his nature, being, and attributes) is central to hermeneutics and understanding paradox. Our understanding of who God is, what he is, and what he is like, turns a seemingly paradoxical and impossible statement into a rationally acceptable and reasonable statement, even though there are still some unexplained aspects to the statement. It is important to note that the truth statement (i.e. that Jesus walked on water) is not modified in order to remove the 'paradox'. The meaning of 'man', 'walking', or 'water' are not spiritualised or modified, for they are accepted as literally true. Simply, the paradox receives acceptance in light of an omnipotent God who has complete control over the laws of nature and is able to do the impossible.

Based on this analysis, then, Reymond's categorisation of a miracle as a 'mystery', rather than a 'paradox', is sound and acceptable. However, the application of this anti-paradox principle to the doctrine of the Trinity requires careful examination.

2.3. Reymond and the doctrine of the Trinity

Reymond (1998:108–109) makes the rather remarkable statement that the doctrine of the Trinity is not paradoxical, and that the historical confessions have so defined the doctrine of the Trinity to avoid any contradiction. His main argument is that the historic confessions (such as the Westminster Confession) have applied the terms 'God' or 'Godhead' to the 'one', and 'person' to the 'three'. By doing this, a direct contradiction is avoided.

Although a full evaluation of this is beyond the scope of this paper, a few comments are in order. Irrespective of how the church and its confessions have grappled with and articulated the doctrine of the Trinity, a neat and precise statement of the Trinity, using terms that eliminate all paradox, is problematic; the biblical data is more complex than that.

For example, Isaiah 45:22c states: 'I am God, and there is no other' (NKJV). Reymond (1998:109) is correct when he contends that the title 'God' refers either to the Godhead in their unitary wholeness, or to one of the persons of the Trinity. Whichever way one interprets the term 'God' however, a paradox of some degree is inevitable. For example, if one of the persons of the Trinity was speaking in this passage, it would introduce a seeming paradox as it would imply that this person is unique and no other divine persons exists. We know this not to be true, as each person of the Trinity is fully divine. However, if it is the 'single Godhead' who was speaking, this is also paradoxical, because the

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personal pronoun 'I' is used and not 'we'. In scripture, the pronoun 'I' refers to a single *person*, not a plurality of persons. An attempt to avoid the paradox may be made by theologians by using terms such as a 'singular, personal being' instead of a 'single person' to denoted the 'I'. Unfortunately, in the normal usage of language a 'singular, personal being' is a 'single person.' It is for this reason that many 'lay people' and 'good theologians' do employ language that denotes a level of paradox when describing the Trinity, although Reymond (1998:108) criticises this.

One may accept the seemingly paradoxical language of passages such as Isaiah 45:22, however, without squeezing the doctrinal formulation of the Trinity into neat, non-paradoxical language, as Reymond's methodology seems to suggest. The paradox of the Trinity becomes acceptable in our minds in the same manner the paradox of a miracle does. The concept and contemplation of a being who is 'spirit' allows for the *logical possibility* that such a 'non-material' being can have triune properties that defy our human conceptions of what a 'person' is when referring to God. The 'properties' of such a 'spirit' allow for the possibility of a singular, personal God, (or a single person; I don't think we can really distinguish between these concepts), to also consist of three distinct persons. The point is this: inasmuch as one may try to define the doctrine of the Trinity in human language and concepts (in order to remove a paradox), *some degree of paradox seems to reside in scripture*. The seeming paradox is rendered acceptable, however, not by changing the statements of scripture, but by introducing the concept of a being who is 'spirit,' the properties of which are beyond us, and allow for the possibility of a single, personal being to also be three persons. Following this methodology, then, one may render or classify the doctrine of the Trinity a 'mystery' (according to the earlier definition) in the same way that one may render a miracle a 'mystery'.

Two qualifications are in order. Firstly, this article does not advocate a modification of the historic confessional statements. Rather, this article is, partly, an objection to theologians like Reymond, who do not permit the use of 'paradoxical language' to describe the Trinity. After all, some of the language of scripture does have a semblance of paradox.

In addition, Reymond should also acknowledge the limitations of confessional statements, especially in the light of the complexity of the biblical data pertaining to some doctrines. The Confessions are not inspired, and some of their statements may substantively (but still not perfectly) represent scripture.

Secondly, as discussed more fully in a later section, it is more appropriate to introduce a new category of paradox into the debate, as the definition of a 'mystery' does not give adequate recognition to the paradoxical language sometimes found in scripture.

This discussion of paradox, in relation to the Trinity, points to another important conclusion in the paradox debate. The idea of what exactly constitutes a 'paradox' (with regard to the relationship of the 'one' and 'three') when referring to a being, whose exact nature is incomprehensible to us, is not immediately self-evident. After all, God is not an apple, and the three persons of the Trinity are not apples either (see the rather simplistic example of Reymond [1978:108]). The physical properties of apples can be defined and are apparent to us, and it is therefore logically impossible for three apples to equal one apple. The Godhead, however, is a non-material being, and each of the three persons are non-material beings (except for Christ after the incarnation).

Their 'non-material properties' are not apparent to us. This means that as humans we need to be cautious when trying to establish what constitutes a real contradiction when speaking of the persons of the

Trinity. An example from the world of physics can illustrate the point. The fact that light can exhibit both particle and wave properties is still puzzling to scientists, and does seem to pose an apparent contradiction. However, this apparent contradiction is accepted in the scientific world as it has been proven to exist, and also scientists admit that there are unknown factors regarding the properties of light. In other words, even science has a category of 'apparent contradiction.' It is an acceptable category because scientists acknowledge that they don't know all there is to know about the universe. Is it then totally unacceptable for theologians to have a category of 'apparent contradiction' when trying to understand the self-revelation of a being whose non-material properties are inscrutable to us?

This is a possible explanation (in part at least) for some of the theological statements of the pro-paradox group with regard to the Trinity. The language of scripture seems paradoxical, as noted earlier. This 'Trinitarian paradox' cannot be eliminated completely by using neat confessional categories. The pro-paradox theologians therefore attempt to express this seeming paradox in their statements.

It is possible to make a similar point from the declaration that the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father (John 14:10). From a human and material perspective, this is strictly a logical paradox. How can the Son be in the Father if the Father is already in the Son? Stated differently, if the Father is already in the Son, how can the Son 'occupy' the Father? The paradox is rendered acceptable; however, on the basis that God is 'spirit,' and 'spirit' has properties that are beyond our scrutiny and comprehension. It is not necessary to try to remove the paradox by re-defining the meaning of the word 'in'. Rather, the problem is soluble and rendered logically acceptable when an immaterial, divine being is part of the equation. The debate on the Trinitarian relations, of course, is further complicated by the

incarnation, which provides the divine Son with a material body and human nature.

Importantly, then, the application of Reymond's anti-paradox principle has missed some of the richness (and paradoxical language) of the biblical data on the doctrine of the Trinity. There seems to be an eagerness on Reymond's part to reduce complex, seemingly paradoxical language into neat and tight definitions or terms that eliminate any suggestion of paradox. This is largely the problem with his approach.

It is perhaps important to stress again that this paper is not advocating rewriting historic doctrinal formulations on the doctrine of the Trinity into largely ambiguous and completely paradoxical language. Rather, this paper is essentially a plea, firstly to recognise that such doctrinal formulations may have limitations, and secondly, to avoid hastily criticising theologians who include paradoxical language in their exegetical explanations. After all, the scriptures do have a semblance of paradox.

2.4. Reymond and God's desire for the lost

Reymond (1978:692–693) criticises the view that God desires the salvation of all men, including the non-elect, for such notions seem to impute irrationality to God—what God desires to happen, he would have decreed to happen. This is, again, an application of the anti-paradox principle, for irrationality in God is a contradiction.

Reymond (1978:693), therefore, resolves the alleged paradox by denying that God desires the salvation of all men. This highlights the centrality of the doctrine of God in hermeneutics and resolving apparent contradictions. The theologian's concept of God is a key factor in

resolving paradox. Since the question of whether or not God desires the salvation of all men has a direct impact on the free offer of the gospel, it requires *brief* discussion.[3]

The scriptural teachings regarding the desire of God for all men to be saved are numerous and compelling, and it is not possible to interpret such passages any other way.[4] Christ weeping over Jerusalem (Matt 23:37–39) is a case in point. Christ's desire to gather them under his wings must certainly include spiritual blessings and salvific intent (Henry 1991:1737). The desire of Christ cannot be relegated to his 'human nature'. His human nature exclusively, void of the attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, would not make it possible for him to gather and watch over millions of people post-incarnation. Rather, it was an expression of the divine Son of God, weeping over a people going to physical and spiritual destruction. Therefore, it seems that in the light of a sovereign God, a semblance of paradox is present. The illustration below is helpful.

A lady makes it known that she enjoys eating chocolate. Yet, when someone offers her some chocolate, she declines. Is there an inconsistency between her desire and her action? Is this paradoxical, to the extent that we must deny either that she enjoys chocolate, or believe that she was somehow unable to eat the chocolate? It has a semblance of a paradox, but another solution presents itself. If we had insight into her dispositional complex (a term used by Murray [1984:61] to denote the whole complex of desires, motives and propensities), one may find that she has many desires, one of them being to stay thin and healthy.

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[3] The main purpose of this paper is to reflect on the issue of paradox in hermeneutics, and not to defend in detail the subject of God's desire for all men to be saved. A fuller discussion would require the inclusion of the more complex subject of the impassibility of God.

[4] See discussion by Waldron (1989:121–122).

She has a number of options available to her when presented with the chocolate. She can eat some of it, and exercise to remain slim and healthy. She could also decline the chocolate, on the basis that her desire to stay thin and healthy is greater than her desire to eat the chocolate. This would not mean that she does not desire the chocolate, but that the desire to eat the chocolate is subordinate to other desires. One may never know why she did not choose to eat the chocolate *and* exercise, especially if we also discover that she enjoys exercise. Her decisions are her own, and they are resolved in her dispositional complex. One could also make the mistake of assuming, that because she did not eat the chocolate (although she did stay thin and healthy), she was left with a sense of frustration for not having had any chocolate. To the contrary, she may have had a sense of accomplishment and joy for not eating the chocolate, and achieved her primary goal.

Granted, the above illustration has its limitations. The main character is not divine, or sovereign. However, the illustration points out that even at a human level, to impute irrationality to a person from seeming inconsistencies between statements, desires, and actions is dangerous, especially without a thorough understanding of inner dispositions. Therefore, that which may appear inconsistent and paradoxical initially may, in fact, be fully comprehended and resolved. So, it is not correct to solve the seeming paradox between God's desire to save all men, and his choice not to decree the fulfilment of that desire, by denying God's desire for the salvation of the lost, or negating his sovereignty altogether. Rather, the solving of such a seeming paradox requires cognisance of the following: God is perfectly holy and sovereign, yet he is an emotionally complex personal being who exercises his will for the ultimate ends of his glory.

At the very least, Reymond should have explored this position more thoroughly before discarding it so easily. Therefore, Reymond's solution to this seeming paradox is unsatisfactory and, once again, demonstrates a quickness to resolve potentially paradoxical concepts in the scriptures by placing them into neat and tight compartments, in order to reduce all semblance of paradox.

From the discussion so far, it is desirable to subdivide further the category of paradox defined earlier in the article.

A direct and strict self-contradiction. For example, the statement, 'one apple equals three apples' falls into this category.

A semblance of contradiction on the level of purely human categories, knowledge and experience. While some biblical truths seem to have a semblance of contradiction, they are not contradictions *per se*. If the term 'apparent contradiction' is retained for this category, then, it is important to state that the pro-paradox group's description of this category (of contradiction) is problematic. The following section will comment on the pro-paradox group's statements, and clarify the exact nature of this problem.

It is tempting to classify this semblance of contradiction as a 'mystery'. With only a few minor qualifications, this would be conceivable. However, the definition of 'mystery', cited earlier in the article, does not give sufficient recognition to the degree of contradiction based on purely human knowledge, categories, and experience found in the scriptures. It is therefore advantageous to introduce a range of terms that permit graded levels of contradiction.

Frame (1987:131) adopts a similar approach in his discussion of circularity in epistemology, noting that, while Christian arguments are

circular (as all systems of thought are), the circularity is 'broadened' by introducing other biblical and extra-biblical evidences. This broadening of the circular arguments makes it more compelling and acceptable to our mind and sense of logic. It is critical to this discussion to allow for both a strict, logical self-contradiction, and a semblance of contradiction. A semblance of contradiction allows for the *logical* possibility of resolution in view of the infinite nature and being of God, although the exact nature of the resolution has not been revealed to us. This is developed in the next section.

3. Comments on the Pro-paradox Position

The preceding analysis shows that there is a category of truth in scripture that has a semblance of contradiction to it. These types of contradictions are not direct self-contradictions, but rather, tend to present themselves as contradictions by implication, logical extension, or by the limitations of our 'humanness'. To resolve such apparent contradictions, it is not necessary to change the meaning of concepts, or deny one truth at the expense of the other. Rather, the seeming contradictions can find their partial (but still adequate) resolution in the doctrine of God. God's nature, being and attributes introduce options that make what seems contradictory on a strictly human sensory level, logically possible on the divine level. A miracle, discussed earlier is a case in point. In this regard, then, while the *intent* of the pro-paradox group is correct (i.e. it does reflect some of the semblance of paradox in the scriptures), their actual statements on this semblance of paradox are problematic. They express their sense of seemingly contradictory biblical data in a way that, in principle, destroys the possibility of knowing truth from error.

It is misleading for the pro-paradox group to assert that these apparent contradictions are insoluble by human logic. Such sentiments do not acknowledge that the apparent contradictions are resolved in their minds (to *some extent* and to *some degree*) within the framework of a divine, infinite being. Moreover, such sentiments erroneously imply that the pro-paradox group sacrifices reason, logic, and the possibility of coherence. As rational beings, the pro-paradox group accepts statements that seem *to have a semblance of contradiction*, but, in fact, they are not essentially contradictory—their concept of a divine being has introduced the *possibility of resolution*. This remains the case even if the nature of the harmonisation is not explicit to them.

The next segment is a refined presentation of the notion of *apparent contradictions*.

Some scriptural truths give the impression of paradox or contradiction. However, such *seeming* paradoxes are not directly self-contradictory, but find some degree of harmony in our minds and hearts, especially in light of the epistemological framework of an omnipotent, divine, sovereign, and perfect being. It is in the triune God that the resolution and explanation of such truths exist, even though the manner of the resolution is not perceivable or obvious. Ultimately, there can be no self-contradictory truth in the scriptures, and therefore, any ideas that contradict the scriptures are erroneous.

With regard to the much-discussed doctrine of divine sovereignty and human freedom or responsibility, three points merit mention.

Firstly, divine sovereignty and human freedom do have a semblance of paradox, if viewed from a purely human knowledge and experience perspective. Importantly, however, these two concepts are not strictly

self-contradictory. They are not on the same level of contradiction as three apples equal one apple, and one apple equals three apples.

Secondly, this seeming paradox is reconciled in our minds, not by denying human freedom (as defined by Reformed theology), nor by denying God's sovereignty. It is resolved in the presence of a divine being with limitless wisdom and power. The 'mechanisms' of how God achieves his will are largely unknown to us. For example, we do not know how it is possible for a being to simply speak, and that spoken word to automatically and immediately come to pass without any apparent 'exertion' from God. This is beyond the limits of our humanness and experience. In the face of such a divine being, it is entirely plausible that he is able to produce creatures that exercise their wills according to their dispositional complexes and, at the same time, accomplish exactly what God has ordained. The pro-paradox group are therefore incorrect to say that these truths are irreconcilable to human logic. The above statement has just 'reconciled' them in the face of the divine being, although the 'mechanics' of how God achieves both remains unknown to us. It is therefore appropriate for the pro-paradox group to express some of this paradox, but faulty to claim it is irreconcilable in our minds.

Thirdly, both human freedom (responsibility) and God's sovereignty is taught in the scriptures. Multiple verses and considerations establish both. Philippians 2:12–13 is the classic text in this regard, bringing human responsibility and divine sovereignty into the closest possible relationship. Acts 4:25–28 describes people sinfully plotting against God and endeavouring to destroy his work. Yet, God fulfils his plans and purposes regardless. This semblance of paradox has therefore not been created by faulty exegesis or systems of theology. Both human freedom and God's sovereignty can be accepted as being true, as they

are not strictly self-contradictory, and they find a degree of resolution in the presence of a divine being.

Conclusions

This paper argued that the position of the anti-paradox is correct *in principle*. They are correct in arguing that there can be no direct self-contradictions in scripture. They are also correct in arguing that there cannot be apparent contradictions that are irresolvable by human logic either. This would destroy any basis for holding to truth and identifying error.

However, Reymond's application of the anti-paradox principle in the areas of the doctrine of the Trinity, and God's desire to save all men, is problematic. It is problematic in the sense that it endeavours to resolve some of the apparent contradictions of the scriptures in a mechanistic or rigid way, at the expense of the complexity of the biblical data. Reymond does not adequately explore the resolution of these seeming contradictions in the face of the divine being, his attributes, and nature.

This paper also argued that, while the *intent* of the pro-paradox group is correct (i.e. they seek to reflect some of the semblance of contradiction found in the scriptures), their actual statements are problematic and seem to imply they have completely sacrificed logic and coherence. Their statements on these paradoxes overstate the case and seem to destroy the basis for differentiating truth from error.

This paper therefore proposes that the debate on paradox in hermeneutics will be furthered by differentiating between a strict, logical contradiction, and a semblance of contradiction. A semblance of contradiction allows for the logical possibility of resolving two seemingly contradictory positions in view of the infinite nature and

being of God, although the exact nature of the resolution has not been revealed to us.

It is also apparent from the preceding discussion that more research is required on categorising and then developing the resolution of apparent contradictions. For example, some of the categories include:

- Paradoxes which find their resolution in God's power, such as miracles. However, miracles are equally classifiable as a mystery, as they are not a point of contention in this debate (their resolution in a miracle working God is rather obvious).
- Paradoxes which find their resolution in God's nature and being, such as the Trinitarian relations.
- Paradoxes which find their resolution in God's inner emotional and volitional being, such as his decrees, acts, and desires.

The doctrine of God is central to ones hermeneutics in resolving apparent contradictions. As evangelicals, it is imperative that we worshipfully and prayerfully labour in God's Word to know him as comprehensively and accurately as possible.

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