



Raising of Jairus' Daughter by Paolo Veronese, 1546

Critics and skeptics claim the gospel of Matthew contradicts the gospels of Mark and Luke about the time of Jairus daughter's death. They claim Matthew has her dying before he healed **"a woman suffering hemorrhages for twelve years"** (**Matthew 9:19 NAB**), while Mark and Luke have the girl dying after this healing. So, when did Jairus' daughter die?

Here is the alleged contradiction:

When Jesus met Jairus was Jairus' daughter already dead?

(a) Yes. **Matthew 9:18** quotes him as saying, "My daughter has just died."

(b) No. **Mark 5:23** quotes him as saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death."

The accounts in Mark and Luke add an additional detail that clears up the confusion:

"While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. 'Your daughter is dead,' they said. 'Why bother the teacher anymore?'"—Mark 5:35 NIV; Luke 8:49

When Jairus first mentioned this to Jesus, he was not yet informed of his daughter's death, as **Mark 5:23** and **Luke 8:42** indicate. **Matthew 9:18** can be translated as indicating the girl was near death, but not yet dead, as follows:

"As he was telling them about these things, suddenly one of the leaders came and knelt down before Him, saying, 'My daughter is near death, but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live'"—Matthew 9:18 HCSB

How do we know this rendering is accurate? The following commentary by Bible scholar Albert Barnes helps us better understand it:

"My daughter is even now dead – Luke says that this was his only daughter, and that she was twelve years of age. Mark and Luke say that she was "at the point of death," and that information of her actual death was brought to him by one who was sent by the ruler of the synagogue, while Jesus was going. Matthew combined the two facts, and stated the representation which was made to Jesus, without stopping particularly to exhibit the manner in which it was done. In a summary way he says that the ruler communicated the information. Luke and Mark, dwelling more particularly on the circumstances, state at length the way in which it was done; that is, by himself stating, in a hurry, that she was 'about to die,' or 'was dying,' and then in a few moments sending word that 'she was dead.' The Greek word, rendered 'is even now dead,' does not of necessity mean, as our translation would express, that she had actually expired, but only that she was "dying" or about to die. Compare Genesis 48:21. It is likely that a father, in these circumstances, would use a word as nearly expressing actual death as would be consistent with the fact that she was alive. The passage may be expressed thus: 'My daughter was so sick that she must be by this time dead.'"—Barnes Notes On The New Testament

Skeptics and critics actually backhandedly do God's work by pointing out things in the Bible that appear on the surface to be contradictions, but upon close examination are revealed to be consistently truthful testimony, with divergent details. This type thing is what brands the

Bible as **“an accurate account . . . so you can be certain of the truth of everything”**
(Luke 1:3,4 NLT).