

Does Jesus judge or not? Apparent contradictions...

There are many apparent contradictions in the Bible. However, these “contradictions” exist when one does not read the Bible objectively and / or the reader lacks adequate Bible knowledge. With this example, we’ll learn how we can work out these apparent contradictions.

1. Study these two verses presented by the apostle John. Underline the apparent contradiction.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17, ESV)

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. (John 5:19-24, ESV)

2. What are your observations of John’s statement, “God did not send His Son into the world?”

3. What are your observations of John’s statement: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

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Teacher Notes

There are many apparent contradictions in the Bible. However, these “contradictions” exist when one does not read the Bible objectively and / or the reader lacks adequate Bible knowledge. With this example, we’ll learn how we can work out these apparent contradictions.

If the student is reading the Bible and is confronting apparent contradictions, it is a good sign that he is grappling with the text. When an apparent contradiction is denied or ignored, then sound interpretation and theology is at risk which results in the inappropriate application of God’s word to our lives.

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Inform the student that judgment is defined as condemnation. It can be understood as going before a judge to receive a sentence or punishment.

Encourage the student to share what he thinks is the apparent contradiction. Explore his thoughts. Ask the student: how does this contradiction affect your thoughts about Jesus Christ?

2. What are your observations of John’s statement, “God did not send His Son into the world?”

If the student is having difficulty with his observation, help develop his skill by asking questions: why was Jesus sent by God? For the more advanced: what divine covenant is this about?

The provision of Jesus was an expression of God’s love in fulfilling His promises set out in the New Covenant, which elaborates on the universal blessings God promised in the Abrahamic Covenant and provides all people the means for salvation.

Jesus came in loving obedience to His Father will and shared His Father’s love of mankind.

Ask the student: who is this statement referring to – people who are alive or dead?

The gospel message is for the living.

3. What are your observations of John's statement: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."

Ask the student: when you read this statement, is this referring to people who are alive or dead? Circle the words that are the basis of your observation.

Jesus' statement is in reference to the dead - "he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."

Ask the student: how is Jesus capable of judging – condemning those who are not saved? Ask questions to help the student understand this concept.

Salvation is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ. He is the door to salvation. He knows who came through and those who didn't.

Ask the student: if someone challenged you with this apparent contradiction, how would you explain it?