**What Should We Do When Verses Seem To Contradict?**

On Bible Crossfire on Oct 1, 2017 a caller brought up Eph 2:8-9 to try to prove we didn’t have to do anything to be saved. When I suggested James 2:24 to counter-act that false teaching, the caller said “God cannot lie.” I was glad to hear him say that because I thought that meant he was going to proceed to tell us how both verses were true, since God cannot lie. I was disappointed when it turned out that what he meant by “God cannot lie” is that he could take what he thought Eph 2:8-9 was saying and just ignore James 2:24. In other words, he could take the passage he thought fit his position, but call what God said in another passage a lie.

That is not the proper approach to Bible study/investigation. What we should do when two verses seem to contradict is figure out how both passages can be true – since God cannot lie in either passage. Actually when we do that, we fine tune our understanding; we learn details of the truth we may have overlooked before.

Examples …

* Acts 9:7 “And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, **hearing a voice**, but seeing no man.”
* Acts 22:9 “And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they **heard not the voice** of him that spake to me.”

**When Paul was on the road to Damascus he saw a light and heard a voice. Did those who were with him hear the voice (Acts 9:7), or did they not (Acts 22:9)?**

* They heard a voice but could not understand what was being said (the meaning). Paul, on the other hand, heard the voice and also understood the words.
* I Cor 14:34-35 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.
* Acts 21:9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

**I Corinthians 14:34-35, Acts 21:9, etc. women may or may not be preachers?**

* in the church no, out of the church yes (“preach” means “teach the gospel,” not necessarily publicly)

**John 3:13 Jesus on earth at the time, or in heaven?**

* this is a comment by John written about 30 years after Jesus went to heaven (like Matt 10:4)

**Exceptions are not contradictions …**

* Luke 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.
* Matt 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.
* I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
* Matt 12:31-32 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.
* Eph 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast.”
* James 2:24 “Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified**, and not by faith only.”

**Ephesians 2:8-9 / James 2:24 saved by works or not?**

* notice the walls of Jericho fell by grace (Josh 6:2), thru faith (Heb 11:30), not of works (Josh 24:13), yet the Jews still had to meet the condition of walking around the walls for them to fall
* the death of Christ is the earning basis (grounds) for our salvation, not our works
* difference in the source and conditions - Heb 5:9 being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.
* but we must obey God as a required condition of salvation:
* Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven
* I Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth
* Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved …, Acts 2:38, 22:16, Gal 3:26-27, I Pet 3:21
* II Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
* Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.
* II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.