

John 8: Righteous Judgment

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Note: Many bible place a mark on John 7:53 through John 8:11 that state it is not in every ancient manuscript. You may note many passages are marked with similar notes in various translations (depending on what version of the English bible you are using. The only three of significance are John 8, Mark 16:9-20, and 1 John 5:7-8. The question Mark 16 is not worth consideration, as the missing text parallels other translation, and it is clear based on both the flow of the context and the location of the missing part (the end) that it was damaged or lost in some ancient manuscripts. The only reason there is any controversy is that skeptics dislike the parallel in Mark 16:18 and Acts 28:5 and "Saved by Faith Only" teachers dislike the clear commandment of baptism in Mark 16:16. As for 1 John 5:7-8, it is nearly universally seen as an addition based on the comments of the person who initially inserted it into the *Textus Receptus* (Erasmus). John 8 is the only enigma; since we have no reason to doubt its authenticity, and it flows well with the text, our assumption is that it is an authentic part of the Gospel of John. (2 Timothy 2:15)

The Issue of Making Judgments

John 8:1-11 can confuse some when certain conclusions are drawn. Is Jesus saying that we should not condemn anyone in sin? Is He saying that we do not execute judgment on guilty people, or that only a certain person can have judgments? In fact, what Jesus is saying is a follow through with His earlier teaching: "*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*" (John 7:24)

Do Not Judge By Appearances

Another way of describing appearances would be to use the expression "walking by sight". Consider the warning we receiving in places such as Proverb 16:25 about making judgments on our own understanding. Paul condemned those in Colossians 2:23 who had "*the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence*". Many people believe that it is wrong to "pass judgment", and yet everyone does that very thing every day. Deciding who is safe to babysit our children is passing judgment; deciding for whom to vote is judgment; choosing what food to eat is judgment. Jesus point is this: WE MUST NOT judge by our own understanding.

JUDGE By Righteous Judgment

Consider the commandments we have to make judgments as Christians. In Matthew 7:1-6 we are commanded to judge, but to first look at ourselves. 1 Corinthians 6:1-7 tells us that we must judge among ourselves (the church). Luke 12:54-58 says that all men are authorized (commanded) to judge what is right. If we refuse to make judgments, we are condemning ourselves.

Judge By RIGHTOUES JUDGMENT

The command to use righteous judgment means to NOT use our own understanding, but God's revealed will. According to Matthew 7:2, we are to judge with that with which we are judged. We are judged by God's word (John 12:47-48). We are judged by our own words (Matthew 12:36) and our own deeds (Romans 2:5-6). Therefore, righteous judgment is the comparison of the Word of Truth to the words and deeds of those around us.

Avoiding Unrighteous Judgment

There are times where we are warned not to judge. We have already seen this in Matthew 7:1, where we are told not to judge when we are with faults of our own. In Romans 2:1-5 we are told that judging others while in sin begins about a double condemnation (for our sins and our unrighteous judgment). James 4:11-12 warns us not to step into the place of God as judge, meaning not to judge things we have no authority to judge, like the heart or the eternal destination. Finally, Colossians 2:16 warns us not to judge on matters of liberty.

*The end of all things is near; therefore, **be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.** 1 Peter 4:7*