





Excursus: Did Jesus' apostles teach that there were '2 voices' in the OT?

Critically testing the arguments for a 2-voice OT (from the OTHER VOICE)

The main arguments offered (in the slides/videos I have examined) would be these:

-  We are told to 'rightly divide the word of truth' in 2 Timothy 2.15, on the basis of how the OT passages 'line up with Jesus' actions and plain speech."
-  The OT authors were not 'born again' and so were 'natural men' who cannot receive the things of God. There was a veil on the people of Israel so they couldn't discern in what they wrote down, between verses authored by Satan and those authored by Father.
-  We are told to 'test the spirits' to see if they / their prophecies are of the Father.
-  Jesus rejected many scriptures.
- 5. There are contradictions in the bible—especially between OT and NT. We should reject the part of a contradiction that does not align with Jesus.

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Here is one statement of the principle:

“Let’s be honest, there are contradictions in the Bible, in particular between the OT and the NT. Anything that does not align with Jesus, we reject and do not add to our foundation, nor add to our image of God.”

We should all be honest, but honesty is about VERIFIED TRUTH, not just APPEARANCES.

- **“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment”** [Jesus, John 7:24]
- **“Test everything; hold fast what is good”** [Apostle Paul, 1 Thess 5:21]

When a skeptic or teacher claims that there is a contradiction somewhere, and parades the alleged poles of the contradiction around, it OFTEN seems that way at first – but honesty demands that the OTHER SIDE be considered carefully too:

- **“The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.”** [Proverbs 18:17]

That claim must be researched IN THE SCRIPTURES, to see what is really being said in the text, and to (possibly) understand why it might appear so).

- **“”Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”** [Acts 17:11f]
- **“To the teaching [Torah] and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no light in them.”** [Isaiah 8:20]

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There are two main problems with this principle:

1. The requirement to ‘align with Jesus’ is (like in an earlier argument) both impossible to implement and self-defeating;
2. Proving that an ‘apparent contradiction’ at the surface level contains an ‘actual contradiction’ at the core is surprisingly DIFFICULT. (I personally have not been able to find one in the Bible so far—after half-a-century of looking.)

The first problem above – the ‘alignment’ one – cannot have any force because:

1. As we saw earlier, the range of characteristics and actions ascribed to both Jesus and the Father is much too broad to be able to judge anything in the OT as being ‘inconsistent’; and
2. This position is self-defeating because Jesus USED ‘surface contradictions’ in his teaching and argument with the leaders. Consider this famous passage in Matt 22 from the Psalms:

“Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

““The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet””?

If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.”

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It seems somewhat easy to FIND surface contradictions, but when you realize that so many (if not all) of them are DELIBERATE, and designed to ‘force’ somebody to think deeper, EVERY APPARENT / SURFACE CONTRADICTION becomes ‘suspect’— things are ‘not what they appear’.

For examples, Peter Williams points out ‘*deliberate formal contradictions*’ in the writings of John [*Can We Trust the Gospels?* Crossway:2018, chapter 7]:

1. God loves the world (John 3:16) versus ‘Do not love the world’ (1 John 2.15)
2. People believed when they saw Jesus’ signs (John 2.23) versus ‘they did not believe’ (John 12:37)
3. They know Jesus and where he is from (John 7.18) versus ‘they do not’ (John 8.19)
4. If Jesus bears witness of himself, this testimony is not true (John 5.31) versus the opposite (John 8.13-14)
5. Jesus judges no one (John 8.15) versus he has ‘much to judge about them’ (John 8.26)
6. Jesus did not come into the world to judge it (John 13:47; John 3.17) versus he DID come to judge it (John 9:39)
7. At the Last Supper, the disciples asked Jesus where He was going (John 13:36; 14:5) versus they didn’t ask (John 16.5)

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Expanding beyond John, we can add:

1. Do good works in FRONT of others (Matt 5.16) versus only in SECRET (Matt 6.1-6)
2. Jesus did NOT teach in secret (John 18.20) or He DID (Mark 4.34)
3. God tempts (*peirazo*) no one (James 1.13) versus Jesus tempts (*peirazo*) Philip (John 6.6)
4. Jesus was NOT going up to the Feast (John 7.8) or he WAS/DID (John 7.10)
5. Was Elijah’s return still FUTURE (Matt 17.11) or already PAST (Matt 17.12)
6. HONOR your Father and Mother (many passages) versus HATE them (Luke 14.26)

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I have often suspected that the ‘abundance’ of these seemingly discordant statements or challenging linguistic formulations (e.g. ‘let the dead bury their own dead’) are intended to be ‘lab assignments’—to get us to work **THOUGH** the surface issue, to discover the underlying truth that explains the surface phenomena.

Consider this fairly simple one, from Paul:

- God the Father created all things (Eph 3.9)
- The Son of the Father, Christ created all things (Col 1.16)

At the surface, they are discordant – but when we study further, we come to Hebrews 1:

“Long ago, ... , **God** spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by **his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world.**”

[I remember being devastated by the first ‘deliberate formal contradiction’ I hit as a new believer in Proverbs 26:4-5:

*“**Answer not** a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself.*

*“**Answer** a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.”]*

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But not all of these are so simple.

Some require researching the original languages, or the historical and theological background. Some require understanding how a specific author USES a word differently from another gospel author.

But they ALL require a trust in the Lord/Spirit/Father to guide us into 'all truth', a confidence that He has a message for us 'laying just under the surface', and a disciple's willingness to 'do the work' to find that message.

Here is a more complex one, from the lips of Jesus:

- *"Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; **take ("ktaomai") no bag** for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals **or a staff**; for the worker is worth his keep.* (Matthew 10.9-10)
- *These were his instructions: "**Take ("airo") nothing** for the journey **except a staff** -- no bread, no bag, no money in your belts.* (Mark 6.8)
- *He told them: "**Take ("airo") nothing** for the journey -- **no staff**, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic.* (Luke 9.3)

At the surface, the 'contradiction' seems obvious: Matthew and Luke SEEM to agree that Jesus prohibits the disciples from taking a staff, while Mark SEEMS to allow them to take one...At first blush--assuming all the 'takes' mean the same thing(!)--SOMEBODY must be wrong!

So what do we do? Give up and decide that one 'half' of the contradiction is 'from Satan, instead of Jesus'; or trust Jesus' provision of trustworthy gospels, and dig in to find His message? Walk by faith or walk by sight (2nd Cor 5.7)?

[<https://cttx.org/nostaff.html>]

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But in any event, the existence of a contradiction doesn't really prove anything about the authorship of ANYTHING. It is just an interpretation of the content of some text.

In other words, either pole of a 'contradiction' or BOTH poles could be from humans, angels, God, the devil.

It is just not strong enough criteria to use for supporting this belief in a 2-voice OT, as well as impossible to implement and being self-defeating due to Jesus' use of 'deliberate formal contradictions'.






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Notice something here: EVEN IF a point or two of the details in this mass of counter-argument can be questioned or refuted, the rest of the data is virtually OVERWHELMING – there is no support for this belief, and—rather—there is a ton of STRONG data against it.