

The Gospels in Harmony

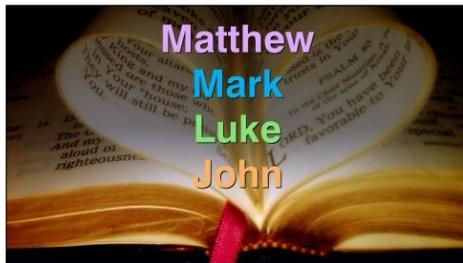
In My Own Way

May 6, 2018

Welcome to where we're developing a more noble character!

What is your hope in Christ based on?

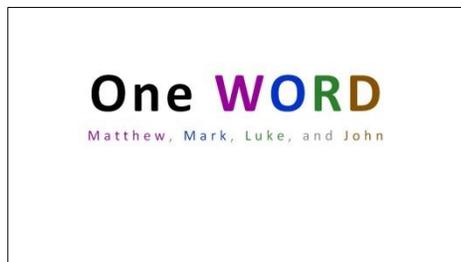
Intuition? Tradition? Feelings? Beliefs of others? Or, truth?



Let's pick up right where we left off.

The gospels can be *perfectly* harmonized *without guesswork* by recognizing their flashbacks and flash-forwards, and matching and anchoring them.

Then, once set in chronological order, **we can weave 'em and read 'em as One.**



Four distinct voices. One singular Gospel of God.

It obliterates every accusation against its credibility, and offers empirical evidence, and forensic proof, of the God-breathed inspiration and infallibility of *all Scripture*.

"So what? I don't need proof. I already trust that it's perfect. I mean, if you need something like that, go for it; but, I've already accepted it as it actually is: the Word of God."

Some of you have received this type of response when you tried to share your excitement for what we're beholding. So have I. But, look what Paul had to say about the Thessalonians:

[We] thank God continually because, when you received the word of God ... **you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God** ... – 1 Thessalonians 2:13a NIV

That's pretty good. Until you compare 'em to the Bereans:

Now the Bereans were of **more noble character than the Thessalonians**, for they received the message with great eagerness **and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.** – Acts 17:11 NIV

What's the difference?

They examined the Scriptures every day to see for themselves. Do you?

Now, you *don't have to have* a more noble character.

Just don't let your heart deceive you into thinking it's *more noble not* to feel a need to examine God's Word to verify it; or you'll think you're expressing *more faith*; when it's actually *less*.

Now ***faith*** is the ***substance*** of things ***hoped for***, the ***evidence*** of things ***not seen***. For by ***it*** [the substance and evidence of the unseen] the elders obtained a good testimony.
– Hebrews 11:1-2 NKJ

This isn't about the *un-seeable* that can't be tested or proved, but the *hidden* and *concealed* that must be sought and found.

You see, **the Thessalonians settled for hope based on hope.**

Whereas, **the Bereans were obtaining a hope based on *faith*.**

Because, **rock solid substance comes from seeing for yourself.**

It's a milk versus meat thing. (Heb 5:12-14)

And, according to Hebrews, it's time for the big-boy cup.

Now, a *Thessalonian* might say: "I don't *need* to examine it. I mean, if *you* need something like that, go for it; but, *I've* already accepted it as it actually is: *the Word of God.*"

Careful you don't fool yourself.

That's just putting hope in your hope.

That's belief in the belief of others.

That's a house built on intuition, tradition, and feelings.

And, sometimes **it's just a face-saving defense for apathy.**

If you say, "But, I don't have a *problem* with the Bible," I'm sure that's true.

But, it's not the point; **the Bible has a problem with you.**

It's designed to bring us to a point of decision on whether it has the right to judge me, or I have the right to judge it.

Our preconceived notions and assumptions of how God works unintentionally hinder Him from empowering us to overcome.

When I was 80% finished harmonizing the Gospels, I hit a wall.

If I wove 'em how they wanted, they ruined some of the stories:

Jesus ascends on the wrong day.

Peter goes to the tomb more than he should.

Jesus calls Matthew to follow *after* he was an Apostle.

I couldn't let 'em say what they wanted, the way they wanted, because they refused to say it the way they were *supposed* to.

And, they were very stubborn!

We wrestled for a year before I came to the end of myself.



It came to a head with Peter's denials.

No matter what I did, the four accounts wouldn't coalesce into three denials.

I finally got so frustrated, that I pitched a fit and put it together the wrong way that it was determined to go.

If God couldn't make or didn't want the Bible to work, so be it!

After I wove them together, I pouted and counted the denials.



Six! But, something caught my eye.

There were two sets of three: three "I am not" (a disciple), and three "I don't know the man". That's odd.

So, I took a look at Jesus' predicting the three denials, and I remembered a *major contradiction*: Luke and John put Jesus' prediction at the Last Supper; but, Matthew and Mark place it on the Mount of Olives.



Two sets of three denials; and now two separate places where He predicts 'em?

Did Jesus say two different things? Yes!

At the supper He says: **"You will deny three times that you know me."** (Lk 22:34)

And, on the Mount of Olives He says: **"You will disown me."** (Mt 26:34)

And sure enough! Three times Peter says, "I don't know Him," and three times he says, "I am not (a disciple)".

The six denials correct the “contradiction” of the two predictions!

And Jesus’ two statements require six denials!

I just had to get out of my own way and stop forcing the stories to fit my preconceived notions, traditions, and assumptions.

I just had to do what big-cup believers are prophesied to do.

Whom will he [the Lord (Is 28:5)] teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? **Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?** [Many translations, including KJV don’t add question marks, and translate this as the answer; and, Hebrews warns us to be weaned from the milk of the Word that’s intended for *baby believers*; and, Jesus warns us to become like little children, in order to enter the kingdom. Why children? Because God’s Word is a matching game of seek-and-find] For **precept [instruction]** must be upon **precept**, **precept** upon **precept** [Is it a coincidence that Jesus’ precepts come in four instruction books?], **line** upon **line**, **line** upon **line**, **Here a little, there a little.** [The way they’re divided up in the Gospels] – Isaiah 28:9-10 NKJ

Detained at the Dock	
6:31	Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat,
14:13	When Jesus heard what had happened, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So
9:10b	he took them with him and they withdrew he took them with him and they withdrew
6:32	they went away by themselves in a boat privately to a town called Bethsaida to a solitary place. But they went away by themselves in a boat privately to a town called Bethsaida to a solitary place, but
9:11	the crowds learned about it
6:33	many who saw them leaving recognized them and Hearing of this, the crowds ran and followed him on foot from all the towns. Hearing of this, the crowds ran and followed him on foot from all the towns Hearing of this, the crowds ran and followed him on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.

Here’s what Isaiah’s description looks like when put into practice. Four Gospels stacked line upon line with a little from here and little from there.

We’re beholding the rock solid substance!

So often we trust our empty assumptions about God, and then get hurt and angry at God when our assumptions disappoint us.

We really need to let the Lord say what He wants to say.

But, that requires ears that are willing to hear.

And, that requires pursuit in His Word.

And, that requires a more noble character.

Maybe you’re here this morning and you’re thinking, “I don’t know the Word of God at all.”

That’s okay. Be encouraged.

Those Bereans weren’t more noble for *knowing*.

They were more noble for *seeking understanding*.

And, for refusing to settle for hope based on hope.