

The Gospels in Harmony

It's a Trap

June 3, 2018

Welcome to where we're learning to beware of God's snare!

Ever feel like God is testing you? He probably is ... in one way or another.

The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is the Lord your God you must follow ... – Deuteronomy 13:3b-4a NIV



We looked at the un-weavable stories, and saw the contradictory disappear *only* when we trusted *every word* to be true.

We saw how a Centurion came to Jesus *without* coming to Jesus; how disciples wore sandals and didn't wear sandals; how a blind man was healed as Jesus' entourage entered *and* exited Jericho; and how *two* demoniacs *and* just *one* came to Jesus.

We saw that **God's Word is like a shepherd's crook** that we can't straighten. But, **if we trust Him, He'll straighten it without changing it, by changing the way we see it.** (Ecc 1:15, 7:13; Prov 3:5-6) Because, of all the things the Word of God is (Lamp, Rock, Sword, Witness) a critical one we overlook is that **it's a trap.**

The Bible is perfect truth perfectly engineered for its perfect purpose: **to teach humble children while snaring wisenheimers.** Which is why it looks so irrational and foolish to atheists and arrogant intellects. **Can you imagine the brilliance God employed to achieve such a freewill-honoring illusion?!**

The omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, all being, who sustains reality, and *defines* love, truth, and life has made himself look *foolish* by engineering a crooked path that is actually straight.

How has the Lord told us that He'll teach His little children?

... **precept** [**instruction**] **must be** upon **precept**, **precept** upon **precept**, **line** upon **line**, **line** upon **line**, Here a little, there a little. ... [**But, for those who refuse to play seek and find**] the word of the Lord was to them, **precept** upon **precept**, **precept** upon **precept**, **line** upon **line**, **line** upon **line**, here a little, there a little, that they might go and **fall backward**, and **be broken** and **snared** and **caught**. – Isaiah 28:10-13 NKJ

The wicked is snared **in the work of his own hands**. – Psalm 9:16b NKJ

Whether that means ignoring God's Word, or rejecting God's Word, or modifying, "fixing", or reinterpreting the work of His hands.



Want to see one of the biggest traps in the Gospels? This is the Sea of Galilee. Now, Matthew and Mark say that Jesus took the Twelve by boat to a “solitary place” (i.e. an unpopulated countryside).

By boat privately to a solitary place (Mt 14:13)

By themselves in a boat to a solitary place (Mk 6:32)

[Luke says] They withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida (Lk 9:11)

John says they crossed to the far shore of the “Sea of Galilee”, which he explains is also called the “Sea of Tiberias”.

Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias) (Jn 6:1)

This is in reference to a specific shoreline. That’s why it’s called the Lake of Gennesaret in Luke 5:1. So far so good. And, all four say that the crowds ran to where Jesus was going.

The crowds followed him on foot from the towns (Mt 14:13)

They ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them (Mk 6:33)

The crowds followed him (Lk 9:11)

A great crowd of people followed him (Jn 6:2)

Now Matthew, Mark, and Luke say that Jesus taught and healed them.

He had compassion on them and healed their sick (Mt 14:14)

He began teaching them many things (6:34)

He spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed (Lk 9:11)

But, John says Jesus went up on a mountainside when He arrived.

Then Jesus went up on a mountainside (6:3)

And, there’s *no mountainside* near Bethsaida’s countryside.

Then, Jesus had the 5,000 sit down on the plentiful green grass.

He directed the people to sit down on the grass (Mt 14:19)

Jesus directed them to ... sit down in groups on the green grass (Mk 6:39)

There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down (Jn 6:10)

And He fed ‘em. That’s where Luke ends. But, Mark says Jesus then sends His disciples “to Bethsaida” ... where Luke says they already went. And, John says they “set off across the lake for Capernaum”.

Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida (Mk 6:45)

His disciples ... got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum (Jn 6:17)

A strong wind storm takes them by surprise.

[Mark says] The boat was in the middle of the lake (Mk 6:47)

[And John says] They had rowed three or three and a half miles (Jn 6:19)

Now we have a math problem. If the *middle* of their voyage is about 3.25 miles, their sailing route had to be about 6.5 miles. That rules out the two places claiming to be the historic site.

From the mountain, Jesus sees the boys straining at the oars and goes to them on the water. And, when He climbs into the boat ...

[John says] immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading (Jn 6:21)

So, *Capernaum*? But Matthew and Mark both say “they landed at Gennesaret”.

When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret (Mt 14:34)

When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret (Mk 6:53)

Mark says Jesus then went into the villages and countryside.

Wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak (Mk 6:56)

[But, John says that] The next day [after feeding the 5,000] ... boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread ... and [then] went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. [And] ... they found him ... [“teaching in the synagogue of Capernaum” (6:59)] (Jn 6:22-25)

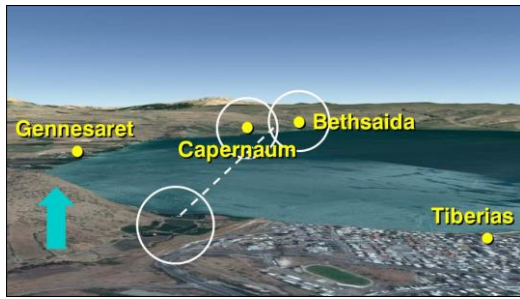
So, did He *take* the Twelve to *Bethsaida* or did they later *cross over* to Bethsaida? Or was it *Capernaum*? Or, *Gennesaret*? And, was He traveling through the countryside or staying in Capernaum? And, **why can't these guys get their stories straight?** Who says they aren't? **They just brilliantly appear crooked.**

The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him ... – 1 Corinthians 2:14a NKJ

The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. – Matthew 13:11 NIV

A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it, but knowledge is easy to him who understands. – Proverbs 14:6 NKJ

If we treat every word as perfect in the feeding of the 5,000, and line upon line 'em without adding or subtracting or altering a single word, we'll see that **John describes a second boat ride.**



Jesus takes the Twelve to the solitary countryside of Bethsaida. And after a long day at the dock, they get back in the boat and head for the countryside of Tiberias. But, this time the crowds who saw the miracles in Bethsaida follow them around the lake.

So, after hightailing it up this shoreline mountain, Jesus feeds 'em on the grassy fields below.

Then He sends the Twelve *back* to the countryside of Bethsaida on the side that overlaps the countryside of nearby Capernaum. Jesus stayed in the area where the countryside overlaps. And the distance from the green fields of Tiberias to the shared countryside of Bethsaida and Capernaum is 6.5 miles.

Jesus then returns to the mountain where He can watch them. Halfway there (about 3.25 miles in), Jesus goes to them as they're straining at the oars, exhausted, the wind against them, making for the nearest port. Any guesses? *Gennesaret*. Now, when Jesus got into the boat the wind storm stopped, so they were then able to immediately land at Gennesaret (which was their desperate destination after abandoning the other). From there they walked through the villages, towns, and countryside, on their way to Capernaum. This is why Jesus didn't stop to heal anyone, but only touched them as He passed.

Meanwhile, boats from Tiberias came to the fields and took a search party to Capernaum (where they knew He'd be teaching), and found Him in the synagogue just as they expected.

It's a trap for wisenheimers, and a test for seeking children. Children work very hard at playing. Not earning. Learning. And having a ball in the process. **He's testing your heart with His Word.**

The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness. – Proverbs 15:14 NKJ

A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. – Prov 18:2 ESV

Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance – for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. – Proverbs 1:5-6 NIV

Does not wisdom call out? ... **along the way, where the paths meet [the line upon line]** ... "you who are foolish, gain understanding. ... All the words of my mouth are just; **none of them is crooked or perverse. [So don't try to fix 'em or pardon 'em] To the discerning all of them are right;** they are **faultless [lit. straight] to those who have knowledge.** ... I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. – Proverbs 8:1-9, 17 NIV

And those who don't won't.

Everyone believes they perceive the Bible correctly, whether they're ignoring it, rejecting it, altering it, or surrendering to it; yet, three of those four are caught in their own trap.

If you don't change direction you'll end up where you're heading.