

The Gospels in Harmony

In With the Old

June 10, 2018

Welcome to where we're learning how to not hate the Bible!

If Jesus spoke this morning, how would He make you feel? The Gospels are quite clear. You'd feel confused or confronted or perplexed or upset or offended or scared or amazed or moved. But, no matter which it was, you'd be *shaken*.

Do you come to church to feel good? *Ooh*. That's a path that can lead to hell. We come to church to be challenged and stretched, to hear hard truth, and to grow, and to be encouraged to fight the good fight.



So, scale of 1-10, how much do you *hate* the Old Testament? (The other 77% of the Bible.) It's also known as *Jesus' Bible* (since it's the *only Bible* that He studied and knew and loved and taught and fulfilled on earth).

Jesus' Bible is a banquet table feast!

[Isaiah writes] The Lord of hosts will make for all people a **feast of choice pieces** ... and **He will destroy ... the veil** that is spread over all nations. – Isaiah 25:6-7 NKJ

[Then Paul writes] But their minds were blinded. For until this day **the same veil remains** unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament ... **a veil lies on their heart**. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. – 2 Corinthians 3:14-16 NKJ

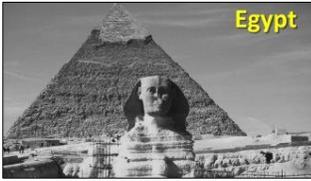


I'll ask the opposite: **How much do you love the Old Testament?** A 10 being a *passionate craving* to read and receive and absorb every detail in it – and a 1 being none of *that*.

Subtract *that* number from ten, and you have your *hate number*. **“But, I don't hate it; I'm just ... unenthusiastic.”** Uh-oh. Paul writes about *that too*.

“God gave them a **spirit of stupor** [lacking enthusiasm], eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear ...” David says: **“May their table become a snare and a trap ...”** – Romans 11:8b-9a NIV

And, the “stupors” take pride in demonstrating how the Gospels can't be trusted from the very beginning of Jesus' story.



[Joseph] went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem ... to be registered with Mary ... who was with child. So it was, that while they were there ... **[surprise!]** she brought forth her firstborn Son ... and laid Him in a manger **[a stall]**, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields ... when the angels had gone away from them ... they came with haste and **found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger**. Now when they had seen Him, **they made widely known** the saying which was told them concerning this Child. ... And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus ... Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ... and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." ... So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit ... – Luke 2:1-40 NKJ

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea ... behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? ... When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled ... And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes ... he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea ... Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me ... they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had **come into the house, they saw the young Child** ... [and] they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ... Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod ... – Matthew 2:1-15 NKJ

So, did they return to live in Nazareth or flee to live in Egypt?

To overcome God's childlike seek-and-find challenges, we must: **Trust that every word in His Word is true.** And, **be prepared to trade tradition for truth.** And, according to Isaiah's prophetic line-upon-line *instructions*: **We must weave it in order to perceive it.** *But*, according to his line-upon-line *warning* in the *same passage*: **We must watch for the snares that conceal the truth.**

And, all of those come into play in working this one out. *Plus*, **this one's in a set of conflicting Scriptures that require a passionate love for Jesus' Bible and ears to hear.**

[God said] "Son of man, **receive into your heart all My words** that I speak to you, **and hear with your ears.**" – Ezekiel 3:10 NKJ



But first, let's just apply a little logic: **why would that star need to reappear to lead them again?** If the shepherds had spread the word, just imagine the *Messiah-mania* at that manger! Doesn't seem like it'd be all that hard to find Him. So ... why did *"they rejoice with exceedingly great joy"* when they saw the star? *Because ...* when they got to Bethlehem, baby-Jesus was long gone.

Joseph and Mary only went there to register - *to sign a thing*. **After Jesus was born why wouldn't they return home?** It's a just a 33 hour donkey-cart ride.

[And] When **eight days [after Jesus' birth]** **were completed** for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus ... (2:21)

This is a big family affair done at home. (Lk 1:59)

Now, watch how cleverly Luke conceals essential details while enticing us to seek them out.

When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord **[This is a critical piece of information that Luke knowingly obscures]** ... and to offer a sacrifice **in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."** (2:22-24)

He's writing to *non-Jews* unfamiliar with this. So, just **like us, his readers have to choose if they want to put on their ears**. This treasure is found in Leviticus ...

On the **eighth day** the boy is to be circumcised. **Then** the woman must wait **thirty-three days** to be purified ... **[That's one day for each year of Jesus' life]** – Leviticus 12:3-4a NIV

Jesus was taken to the Temple at least 41 days after His birth. Think they're still sittin' in that stall wishin' they're home? And, Luke even declares that the wise men have not yet arrived.

Would you care for some ears to hear?

[That Leviticus treasure goes on to say] When the days of her purification ... are over, she is to bring ... **a year-old lamb** ... and a young pigeon or a dove ... **[But] If she cannot afford a lamb,** she is to bring **two doves or two young pigeons** ... – Leviticus 12:6-8 NIV

Mary's pair of doves proves that they've received no gold.

[And] When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, **[41 days after Jesus' birth]** they **returned** to Galilee to **their own town of Nazareth**. And the child grew and became strong ... **[enough to travel to Egypt]** (2:39-40a)

Now, *talk about concealing critical information* ... notice how careful Matthew is to never say where Jesus actually is.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem ... wise men ... came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He ... [Herod] inquired of [the chief priests and scribes] where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, “In Bethlehem ... [Herod] secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully [Why? ‘Cause nobody knows where He is] for the young Child [(paidion) not babe (brephos)] ... they departed; and behold, the star ... went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child [whereas the shepherds had “found ... the Babe lying in a manger”] ... [the wise men] presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ... when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.” When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed [from Nazareth] for Egypt ... When Herod realized that he had been outwitted ... he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ... After Herod died ... [Joseph] took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But ... Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.” – Matthew 1:2:1-23 NIV

Problem is, as critics point out, no prophet mentions Nazareth. They also mock Matthew’s failure to use the word “Nazarēnos” (of Nazareth), and his *incorrect use* of “Nazōraios” (separated one). “Nazōraios” is even on the sign above Jesus on the cross. (Jn 19:19) But, what if it’s *not referring* to the town of Nazareth? Could I get you some eyes to see? A common theme of the prophets was that the Messiah would be “separated” from His people and “set apart” as holy unto God. “Nazareth” is just a *red herring*. The prophets were “fulfilled” when the family “withdrew” from “the land of Israel” “to the [non-Jewish] district of Galilee”.

That’s why the Apostle Paul’s enemies later charge that: “[Paul] is a ringleader of the Nazarene [Nazōraios] sect” (Acts 24:5). They *weren’t* from Nazareth. But, **they were separated from vain religion and set apart to follow the Lord with all their heart.**

Our deceitful heart will try to convince us that we don’t need to search the Scriptures. Others have. We can trust them. “It’ll interfere with my life ... and it’s boring ... and how does it apply to me?” Well it doesn’t ... if your life doesn’t revolve around His Word.

But remember, one of the signs of starvation is loss of appetite. Are you cheating yourself out of 77% of God’s masterpiece feast? Are you trying to thrive on the crumbs that fall from the table?

What if the Bible isn’t what you think it is?

What if it’s something that wildly surpasses all of our stupored expectations?

But, what if we can’t see it till we seek it with all our heart?

Imagine the regret on the day that veil is taken away.

So, get your ears on and let’s eat!

The Birth of Jesus

Joseph Cancels His Wedding

- 1:18-19 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

Joseph's First Dream Angel

- 1:20-23 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:²³ *"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"*—which means, "God with us."

Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also?"¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: *The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*" (Is 7:13-14)

Marrying a Pregnant Virgin

- 1:24-25 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.²⁵ But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Caesar's Census

- 2:1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)³ And everyone went to his own town to register.

Joseph Takes Mary to Bethlehem

- 2:4-5 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Born in a Manger

- 2:6-7 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Terrified Shepherds

- 2:8-11 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

Sign of Swaddling

- 2:12-14 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Shepherds Seek the Lamb

- 2:15-16 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Shepherds Spread the Word

- 2:17-19 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Naming Jesus

- 2:21 On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.

Presenting Jesus

- 2:22 When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “*Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord*”),

The Lord said to Moses,² “Say to the Israelites: ‘A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period.³ On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised.⁴ Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over. ... When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting *a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering.*’” (Lev 12:1-6)

Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal. ... You are to give over to the Lord the first offspring of every womb. (Ex 13:2, 12)

Purification in Poverty

- 2:24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “*a pair of doves or two young pigeons.*”

“If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.” (Lev 12:8)

This offering reveals that the Wise Men have not yet arrived with their gift of gold. (Mt 2:11)

Simeon Receives the Savior

2:25-35 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." ³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Anna Declares Redemption

2:36-38 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Back to Nazareth

2:39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

Wise Men Trouble Jerusalem

2:1-2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

Herod's Desperate Research

2:4-6 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶ *"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel."*

They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod. *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."* ... He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace. (Mic 5:1-5)

Herod's Deceitful Demands

2:7-8 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

The Star Reappears

- 2:9-10 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

Coming to the House

- 2:11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Joseph's Second Dream Angel

- 2:13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

Escape to Egypt

- 2:14-15 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "*Out of Egypt I called my son.*"

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and *out of Egypt I called my son.*" (Hos 11:1)

Herod's Kill Order

- 2:16-18 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ¹⁸ "*A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.*"

This is what the Lord says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more." ¹⁶ This is what the Lord says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded," declares the Lord. "They will return from the land of the enemy. ¹⁷ So there is hope for your future," declares the Lord. "Your children will return to their own land. (Jer 31:15-17)

Joseph's Third Dream Angel

- 2:19-21 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

Warned to Withdraw

- 2:22-23 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went ²³ and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."