

The Gospels in Harmony

Unbelievably Weavable

July 1, 2018

Welcome to where we're learning how to handle the truth!

Is there a truth you're being tested to trust?

What would it take to get you over the hump? Be careful, *He'll do it!*

For me it's been a 5-year test of trust that the story blocks in the Gospels are *actually* perfect and purposed *as written*.

It's one thing to tell yourself you believe something.

It's entirely another to test it with everything you have.

As I've told you, my final hurdle involved moving a mountain.



When the devil tempts Jesus, Matthew and Luke have their mountains and temples in different orders.

For a long time, I just couldn't make myself put it how it demanded to go: stones into bread, Luke's mountain, the Temple, and Matthew's mountain.

Looking at Mt Ebal from Mt Gerizim

With the barest mustard-seed faith I finally moved the mountain.

But, when I read it in its trusted order, I noticed something:

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain ... – Matthew 4:8a NIV

And this led to a series of discoveries, beginning with another small inconsistency: “this stone” versus “these stones”.

When *Jesus* was being tested ...

The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell **these stones** [as Matthew says; and] tell **this stone** [as Luke says] to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written [in Moses' final speech]: **'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'**” – Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4 NIV

Why can't He have both? Why is it one or the other?

Turns out, *that's a huge clue!*

Everything Jesus quotes during His test is from Moses' last speech. For instance, Moses says:

Remember how the Lord your God **led you** ... to **humble you** and to **test you** in order to know what was in your heart, **whether or not you would keep his commands** ... **causing you to hunger** and then **feeding you with manna** ... to **teach you** that **man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.** – Deuteronomy 8:1-3 NIV

How does giving them manna teach them *that*?

Because, the **manna came with directions on gathering, storing, consuming, and sharing.**

Otherwise, it quickly became infested.

Then the Lord said to Moses ... In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. – Exodus 16:4b NIV

It's not enough to have the Truth.

Man does not live by Truth alone.

You got'a trust the Truth Giver.

We must receive it, believe it, and then live by it.

Otherwise, like manna, it gets infested fast.

In Moses' final speech, he gives instructions on where the Rock of Salvation must go immediately after crossing over the Jordan.

It shall be, **on the day when you cross over the Jordan** ... that you shall set up for yourselves **large stones**, and **whitewash them with lime**. You shall **write on them all the words of this law** ... **on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones** ... and you shall whitewash them with lime. – Deuteronomy 27:2-4 NKJ

Thus creating a Rock of Salvation containing every Word of God.

This explains Jesus' cryptic answer. To turn those stones into bread, He'd have to sacrifice Truth to satisfy His own desires.

And, it explains how several stones can also be *one stone*.

This is the first time God gives His Word to the world.

And, after Moses commands Joshua to do this, Moses sings:

I will proclaim the **name** of the Lord ... **He is the Rock**, [the Living Stone; the Word made flesh] his works are perfect ... a warped and crooked generation ... rejected the **Rock his Savior**. – Deut 32:3-5, 15 NIV

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The **stone** which the builders **rejected** Has become the **chief cornerstone** ...’” – Mat 21:42a NKJ



Bethabara

[Jesus was baptized] ... in **Bethabara** [lit. Place of the crossing] **beyond** [on the other side, the non-Israel side of] the Jordan, where John was baptizing. – John 1:28 NKJ

This is directly east of Jericho, which *Joshua* (3:16) describes as the crossing point where he led Israel into the Promised Land.

While baptizing at the place of crossing, John the Baptist said:

Do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that **out of these stones** God can **raise up children** for Abraham. – Matthew 3:9 NIV

What stones? After the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan ...

Joshua set up **twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan**, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant [that contains God’s Word, Testimony, and power] stood; and they are there to this day. [But, that’s not them in the photo] – Joshua 4:4-9 NKJ

This is where John-the-Baptist, the last Levitical priest and his disciples stood and held *Jesus*.

[And, sure enough! God raised up a child from those stones!] When he had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and ... a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son ...” Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, **returned from the Jordan** [crossing over as Joshua had] and **Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness**. [Just as it had Joshua (N.T. *Jesus* and O.T. *Joshua* are two pronunciations of the same name: *Yeshua*)] – Mat 3:16-4:2; Mk 1:10-13; Lk 4:1-2 NKJ

Then Joshua called the twelve [and said] “... each one of you take up a stone on his **shoulder** [*shĕkem* (the name of a city at the base of Mt Ebal and Mt Gerizim)] ... these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.” [And, ten verses later] ... the people went up from the Jordan and **camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho**. And **Joshua set up at Gilgal** the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. – Joshua 4:4-7, 19-20 NIV

This presents a *huge* problem: Mount Ebal isn’t even *close* to their camp in Gilgal at Jericho.

It’s in the opposite direction.



So, how do we move *that* mountain? Same as always: **by trusting enough to take that first mustard-seed step.**

And then seek until you find ... *God's way.*

Remember Isaiah's warning about God's Word being a snare? (Is 28:13)

I was given a book as a gift; and, I promised to read it. As I was reading, I found a \$20 in it. I called the giver and asked about it. He said he wanted to see if I was a man of my word!

Well, tucked 16 chapters back in Moses' speech are some other instructions along with this little *twenty dollar bill*:

... you are to proclaim on **Mount Gerizim** the blessings, and on **Mount Ebal** the curses. [These are the two mountains; but, more on that next week] As you know, these mountains are **across the Jordan, west of the road** ... in the territory of those Canaanites living in the **Arabah** [lit. *wilderness*] in the vicinity of **Gilgal**. – Deuteronomy 11:29-30 NIV

Two Gilgals! One to the east. One to the west.

But, you sure wouldn't know it from a casual reading.

... the **people** went up from the Jordan and camped at **Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho**. And **Joshua** set up at **Gilgal** [in the *wilderness* by Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal] the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. – Joshua 4:4-7, 19-20 NIV

Hear this loud and clear: **casual reading will not produce right handling**, whether it's His Word, or your life, or choices, or relationships, or whatever.

The issue is *whole-hearted* commitment.

Ever find yourself saying what someone wants to hear, just to get 'em off the phone, out the door, or off of your back? Ever find yourself singing or praying, yet knowing you're not about to change or do what the Lord has revealed to you?

Truth will set us free; but, it won't save us.

It sets us free to choose who we will serve.

We're *saved* by grace through faith in *Christ*.

And, faith is all about attitude and action.

Sunday's conviction *best be* Monday's action.