

The Gospels in Harmony

The Angel of the Lord

September 9, 2018

Welcome to where we're learning to work out our salvation!



If your Bible was a bicep, how big would it be? My favorite piece of equipment at the gym has always been the hot tub. But if that's all I did, that's all I'd be. We need to stretch beyond our comfort zones, buffet our bodies and make *them our* slave; and run in such a way as to win! **Our salvation is the finished work of Christ; however, just like muscle, we must strengthen what we've been given.**

[Paul urges us to] ... **continue to work out your salvation** [not "work for"] with **fear** [the healthy type an electrician has for the power and authority of electricity] **and trembling**. [What's the difference? The faithful *tremble* at *God's Word* (Is 66:5; Ezra 9:4, 10:3); and, we're told to "**Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling**" (Ps 2:11); so, we work out our salvation with utmost respect and eager expectation at His Word] for it is **God who works in you** [when you work out] to **will [desire]** and to **act** according to his good purpose [He changes you as you pursue Him] ... so that you may **become blameless** and **pure, children** of God **without fault** in a **crooked** and **depraved generation** ... – Phil 2:12b-15a NIV

Now, in another sense, **to work something out is to figure it out**. When I was little I loved taking my toys apart so I could work out what made them do whatever it was that they did.



You don't really own it till you know how it works. Instead of thinking, "I need to know for myself what Christ has done for me," believers tend to think, "Jesus did it; I trust the guy who told me about it; so ... *where's that hot tub?*" **We begin by hearing about;** but, **we continue by hearing from.** **We must expand our trust about Jesus into trust in Jesus.**



If you **continue** in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth ... – John 8:31b-32a NAS

Anyone who runs ahead and does not **continue** in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever **continues** in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. – 2 John 9 NIV



Here's what we've worked out regarding our salvation these past few weeks: the *two robes*, the *two drinks*, the *two veils*, and the *one sign*; and last week the *two confessions* of the Centurion. His declaration at the cross when he saw how Jesus died; and the other at the tomb, when he and his men saw the Angel of the Lord.

Who is this lightning messenger who sits on the stone in triumph?

You know, people could've had airplanes and lightbulbs and TVs and Microwave ovens 2000 years ago; but, they didn't. *Why?* They just didn't put it together and work it out ... *till now*. **How much of God's Word do you suppose has yet to be worked out?** *Thus says the Lord ...*

On that day [What day? The day "*They will look on me, the one they have pierced*") ... the **house of David** [Specifically, the *Son of David*] will be **like God**, [But, since no one can look on **God unfiltered**] **like the Angel of the Lord** going before them. **On that day ... They will look on me, the one they have pierced**, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an **only child**, and grieve bitterly for **him** as one grieves for a **firstborn son**. – Zechariah 12:8-10 NIV

[Jesus] appeared first to Mary Magdalene ... Jesus said, "**Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father**. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, '**I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God**.'" She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was **alive** and that she had seen him, they did not believe it. Afterward **Mary Magdalene and the other Mary** [Jesus' mom (Mt 27:56; 13:55)] went to **look at the tomb**. [But, as they arrived, they looked on One like God, and like the Angel of the Lord; *because*] **Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country**. [This can only apply to the two Marys or the "Emmaus couple"] These returned and reported it to the rest; but **they did not believe them either**. [But, they *do believe* the *Emmaus couple* (Lk 24:13-16); so, it's the Marys who see Jesus' "*different form*"] – Mt 28:1b; Mk 16:9-13; Jn 20:17 NIV

A couple years ago I guessed this *other form* was referring to Jesus' scars. And, though He was *scarred* and disfigured, that's *not* it. I found Jesus' *three forms ... without guesswork*.

... Christ Jesus, who, being in **the form of God** [That no one has ever seen (Jn 1:18)] ... made Himself of no reputation, taking **the form** [lit. *appearance*] **of a bondservant**, [that's the O.T. "*Messenger/Angel of the Lord*"] **and** coming **in the likeness of men**. And being found **in appearance as a man**, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him ... – Phil 2:5b-9 NKJ

Jesus appeared to the Marys in His only other visible form. And, when the soldiers saw Him, they were filled with fear, and trembled (not with joy), and became as dead men. *Not uncommon*.

When the **Angel of the Lord** appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, [Samson's parents] then Manoah knew that He was the **Angel of the Lord**. And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen **God!**" – Judges 13:21-22 NKJ

A **man** wrestled with [Jacob] until daybreak. ... [Jacob] said, "I have seen **God face to face**, yet my life has been preserved." – Genesis 32:24b, 30 NAS

Yes, [Jacob] wrestled with **the angel** ... – Hosea 12:3-4 NAS

[Jacob] blessed Joseph [saying] ... "**God** who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, **the Angel** who has delivered me from all harm — may **he** bless these boys. – Genesis 48:15-16a NIV

And the **Angel of the Lord** appeared to [Moses] in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. ... And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon **God**. – Exodus 3:2, 6 NKJ

Know how I worked this out? **By playing God's matching game, and gathering up the Angel-of-the-Lords**. This is just a *few* of 'em.

One of the devil's most successful deceptions has been convincing Christians that the Bible is bottomless and endless and infinite. Who wants to play *that* game?! This *lie* is the reason why it's never been fully worked out.

[God says] If you receive my words ... and search for her [i.e. *wisdom* and *discernment*] as for hidden treasures; **then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.** – Proverbs 2:1-5 NKJ

Millions of faithful followers have given up before trying to do what Jesus did with the Word because they think it's impossible. But, Jesus *himself* said:

If ***anyone*** chooses to ***do God's will***, he ***will*** find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. – John 7:16-17 NIV

Whatever trial, hurdle, test, or disaster you're facing; **the truest, deepest, answer lies in knowing God's Word for yourself. Not studying it like a scholar; but, knowing it like a child.** It's written to *force us* to ask the right questions, like: who's this Lightning Angel who's stealing Jesus' thunder?! **But, we're often more committed to finding a way to distract or excuse ourselves from tackling them than working them out.**

There was a violent earthquake, for **an angel of the Lord came down from heaven** and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it [in triumph!]. **His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.** [Just like *Jesus* on the Mount of Transfiguration when the disciples saw His *glory* (Lk 9:32); about which God says, "*My glory I give to no other*" (Is 42:8)] ... The **angel [of the Lord]** said to the women, "**Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He [the One who came "in the likeness of men"] is not here [in that form; this is Jesus who was glorified! Because]; he has risen, [to the Father] just as he said [to Mary Magdalene when He told her not to hold onto Him].** ... So the women hurried away from the tomb, **afraid yet filled with joy** [that's the *fear* and rejoicing with *trembling*] ... Suddenly **Jesus** [**"being found in appearance of a man,"** the form they're familiar with] met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, **clasped his feet** [which Jesus didn't allow Mary Magdalene to do *before* He ascended to the Father; but, now that He has ascended and returned exulted it's okay to hold onto Him] **and worshipped him.** – Matthew 28:1-9 NIV

Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. ... **where is the place of My rest?** [In the tomb] ... **Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble [with delight] at His word** ... [Now *this* is a great riddle:] Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child. [Who is she?] Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? [Those who've read Isaiah 26:19! She's the earth and her womb is the tomb! And Jesus is the Firstborn of the dead! That's why *she* doesn't go into labor or feel pain] **Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day?** – Isaiah 66:1-2, 5, 7-8a NKJ

Yes! This is the "one day" of "on that day" when the Firstborn of the dead (Col 1:18) will be "like God, like the Angel of the Lord"! Four days earlier, Jesus ...

... said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see **one of the days** of the Son of Man, **but you will not see it.** [Because, when Mary told them "*they did not believe it*" (Mk 16:11)] **Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them.** [It'll be too late. You should've listened Mary; which He scolds them for on the night of His resurrection (Mk 16:14)] **For the Son of Man in his day** [the one He said they'd not see] **will be**

like the **lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky** [Blink, and you'll miss it] For **as lightning that comes from the east** [where the gate to God's presence is guarded (Gen 3:24)] is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by *this generation*. [Beginning the **next day**] **Just as it was in the days of Noah**, [when everyone was caught off guard] so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ... **It was the same in the days of Lot**. [Everyone was caught off guard] It will be just like this **on the day** [that "you will not see" when] the Son of Man is revealed. – Mt 24:27; Lk 17:22-30 NIV

The night before Jesus' *crucifixion*, He prayed ...

"Father, I **want** those you have given me to be with me where I am, and **to see my glory, the glory you have given me** ... – John 17:24a NIV



Which is *why* He told Mary to tell them He was *returning to the Father*; but, the only one who would return to the tomb with her was the other Mary (Jesus' mom). Just a couple of weeks earlier, Jesus had said:



The Son of Man is going to come in **his glory** and in **his Father's glory** with **his angels**, [which He does at the tomb] and then he will **reward each person** according to what he has **done**. I tell you the truth, **some who are standing here** [Mary Magdalene and mom] **will not taste death before they** [are rewarded according to what they do, and get to] **see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom** [in His glory]." – Mt 16:27-28; Lk 9:26 NIV

Paul later thanks the Galatians' for their warm reception, saying ...

... you received me as **an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself**. [Well, *somebody* worked it out!] – Galatians 4:14b NAS

At the Last Supper, Jesus praised God, saying ...

"... the men whom You gave Me ... have **kept Your word**. Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they **received them** and **truly understood** ..." – John 17:6-8 NAS



We can't truly believe what we won't receive.

You know the OT prophecy about Jesus' triumphant entry that says:

Your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. [Did you know that it goes on to say] ... **Then the Lord will appear over them; his arrow will flash like lightning**. – Zechariah 9:9, 14 NIV



Jesus is the ultimate electricity in the heavens: lightning. **Rightly fear it and behold its awesome beauty. And rejoice with trembling as it lights up the darkness**. You get to handle it. **Nothing of God is out of your reach. It's just hidden. In plain sight. In the dark.**