

The Gospels in Harmony

Perfectly Reasonable

September 16, 2018

Welcome to where we're learning how to give an answer to everyone who asks!

Can you reason out your faith with Scripture?

If not, it's not *reasonable ... yet.*



Peter instructs us to ...

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you **to give the reason for the hope that you have.*** – 1 Peter 3:15-16 NIV



That's why Jesus declares, as we saw last Sunday, that **His true disciples continue in His Word and know the truth.** (Jn 8:31-32)

We're directed to **"work out our own salvation** (to figure it out and strengthen our grasp) **with fear and trembling"**. (Phil 2:12)



We revere the Lord and tremble with joy at His Word, which is referred to as the Lord's **"cup of trembling"**. (Is 51:17, 22)

We *worked out* that the whiter-than-snow *Angel of the Lord* who came from Heaven in a flash of lightning, and sat on the stone as a throne in triumph over the enemy cowering at His feet, was *Jesus*.

Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them [and weaving this in reveals them to be Mary Magdalene and His mom] while they were walking in the country. – Mark 16:12 NIV

Do you think they knew it was *Jesus* in a *different form*?

This is a great example of eyes-that-can't-see; because, **I sure assumed they didn't.**

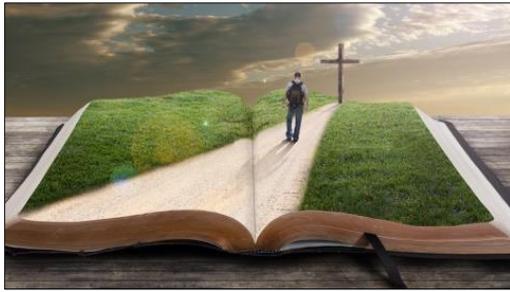
And, **that assumption blinded me.**

And so, I didn't see, until *after* last Sunday, that **it actually says they did!**

These ["two ... in the country"] **returned and reported it to the rest;** [Reported what? That **"Jesus appeared in a different form"**] but they did not believe them either. – Mark 16:13 NIV

There's so much that's so simple yet so veiled that's left to be worked out, for those who are willing to *continue in His Word*.

And, the reason we reason it out isn't only for ourselves.



[Jesus rebuked the Pharisees saying] You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. [How?] You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. – Mt 23:13 NIV

There are people on your path who *want* to believe, but they've been convinced that the Bible has been discredited.

Some are looking for an excuse *not* to believe (and Scripture supplies 'em with that!); but **many, many others are longing for an answer to scratch that deep down, desperate, itch they have.**

But, **they can't see for themselves, or hear from others, how all the assumed contradictions work out as complementary components.**

And, **Jesus longs to show them; but, for that, He needs you.**

[Paul writes] How then shall **they call on Him** in whom they have **not believed?** And how shall **they believe in Him** of whom they have **not heard?** And how shall **they hear without a preacher?** – Romans 10:14 NKJ

Most of you know that I don't like being called *Pastor Bruce*, unless you're referring to what I *do* (I don't call you *Plumber Bob* or *Manager Jill*); but, **feel free to call me Preacher. That's what I am ... as are you; if we're God's children we're the Lord's ambassadors.** (2 Cor 5:19-20)

Good or bad, that's just what we are: **the salt of the earth, the light of the world.** (Mt 5:13-14)

If we have the means to overcome a stumbling block to someone's faith, and don't utilize it, we violate the Great Commission. (Mt 28:19-20) **Without an answer, we hinder those who want to enter.**

Now, **it's not our job to sell God, or convict hearts, or convince those who stubbornly refuse to believe.** *That's God's job.* (Jn 16:8) We're simply commanded and commissioned to ...

Always be **prepared** to **give an answer** to **everyone who asks you** to give **the reason for the hope** that **you have.** – 1 Peter 3:15-16 NIV

This *greatly lightens* the sharing-our-faith load.

Our job is to help remove any obstacles that hinder those trying to enter in.

But to do that, we must have Rock-solid answers.

And to do that, we must work out our own salvation.

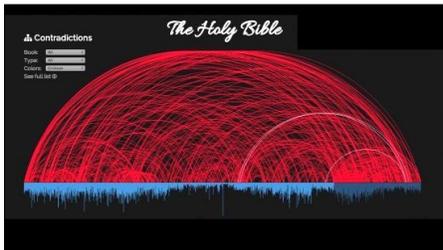
And to do that, we must enter ever deeper into His Word.

As far back as I can remember, I've prayed to change the way the *world* sees Jesus. And I've been searching and watching for a way. *That's* why I went to film school.



Once, on the set of M.A.S.H. (*long story*), the man who played Charles asked what my plans were. I said, “To change the way the world sees Jesus.” He asked *how*; and, I said, “I’m not sure ... *yet*.”

Well, 38 years later, it’s becoming *clearer*.



We are experiencing a continuous cultural assault on the inconsistencies, lack of cohesion, and perceived contradictions of Scripture. This has become the granddaddy of all stumbling blocks.

There are websites (like the one on the left) that compile all of the “contradictions” in clickable color coded categories.

It may not be a problem for *you*; but, for some believers, and those who *would believe*, the enemy uses this as a *huge* barrier. **Believers don’t usually give this a lot of thought until it’s their kids who abandon the faith**, usually in college, because of the **unobstructed claims against the integrity of the Gospels**.

But, **the Gospels are a poignant example of God’s perfection**, which includes His commitment to allowing our free will. The Gospels, like all Scripture, have been brilliantly designed to teach *and* to trap, in order to meet three simultaneous needs:

Those who want to judge and condemn God, *can*.

Those who want to believe without seeing, *can*.

Those who want to seek and find divine perfection, *can*.

[Paul said] My purpose is that they **[believers]** ... may have the **full riches of complete understanding**, in order that they may **know the mystery of God**, namely, **Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**. – Colossians 2:2-3 NIV

The Bible isn’t something to *defend*.

It’s something to work out and solve and share.

We’re not talking about just another *workaround explanation*. The affirming power and assurance of our faith is found in seeing the handiwork of God in His Word. And, the perfect harmonization of the Gospels without man’s guesswork reveals God’s handiwork.

The pure apologetic power of this is off the charts!

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

You don't have to question whether the Gospels are perfect.

You can see that they are.

We've been given the means.

We now know that **each of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) contain self-identified flashbacks and flash-forwards.**

And **when we remove them, everything suddenly, perfectly, aligns.**

And **we can restore them** (the flashbacks and flash-forwards) *chronologically, without guesswork, by matching identical lines with the same story in the other Gospels.*

And **we never ever sever Jesus' speeches or any unbreakable story blocks.**

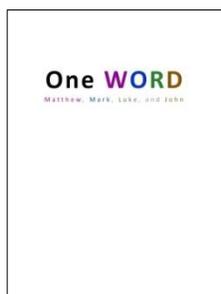
Isaiah warns us that four precepts/teachings must be woven, line upon line, into one.

For **precept** must be upon **precept**, **precept** upon **precept**, **line** upon **line**, **line** upon **line**, here a little, there a little." – Isaiah 28:10 NKJ

And then **we must let it say whatever it says;** which means **we must be willing to get out of our own way** and open our eyes **and trade our traditions for truth;** which means **we must trust every word in His Word to be true,** and **make everything make sense using only the clues within each story.**

Look how much we've learned together. Look how far we've come!

I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. – Psalm 119:101-102 ESV



I plan on taking a week here-and-there in order to get away and finish writing "**One WORD**", which is the harmonizing of the Gospels *without guesswork.*

And then, I plan on writing a very necessary companion/explanation book, using the material we've been covering this summer.

Meanwhile, on Sunday mornings we're going to pick up right where we left off, following Jesus' ministry, *chronologically*, to the cross.

We have the truth, the proof, and a Rock-solid way to share how the Gospels are divinely inspired and perfectly reasonable.

When it comes to the infallibility of Scripture, we've been giving ground to our enemy for *far too long.* **It's time for us preachers to take that ground back ... and then some!**

You just need to have your reason.