

Scriptures and Doctrine :: need help on the gospels

need help on the gospels, on: 2009/11/11 14:21

Well as most know i have been going through a stage of hardening and doubts for some time now and i even had stopped reading the gospels because i was seeing differences between them and satan just kept on badgering me with doubts about them, but last night i began to read the end of matthew when jesus was getting crucified and it said that both robbers were reviling him and i know luke i believe had said one of them asked for forgiveness, yes i know its possible that it happened after the earthquake and maybe he was convicted. But then i tried to look for answer and just seeing other differences on these sites from other scriptures in the gospels just frustrated me so much again that i am disbelieving the reliability again, it just upsets me, why could not God make them more clear and not have this happen, i mean i want to just settle down and say i believe but why the differences. I never questioned them before but now i do. Two things i need prayer for this but also can somebody give me a site that goes indepth answering these objections really good, because i am doubting again about the reliability, i think we have all run into this but it seems it is the gospels which have the most of these problems in them, yes it shows that they were not copying from one another. John

Re: need help on the gospels - posted by live4jc, on: 2009/11/11 15:07

Hi John,

We as humans have a desire to understand things, and to some extent there's nothing wrong with this. Remember though, that 'faith is the evidence of things not seen'. We do not see God (though some day we will-Praise God). For now, we will always, as Paul said, "See through a veiled glass darkly".

If you think that finding the answers to all the areas that are complicated and confusing will bring peace- it will not. You know that, right ? As soon as you get the answer to one thing, another perplexing question will rise up.

What you must do, is choose to surrender your understanding and choose to love God even when the way seems dark, and you do not fully understand His ways. Choose to praise him even when it seems not to make sense, given your circumstances. Pray those verses from Psalms, where David is going through what you are going through. God is faithful. He is righteous. Read Ephesians 6:10-18 and remember...having done all 'to stand'.

Below is something someone shared with me once, when I was going through a dark time.

Your brother in Christ,
John

"And the Lord turned the captivity of Job." Beloved brother in Christ, you have had a long captivity in affliction. God has sold you into the hand of your adversaries, and you have wept by the waters of Babylon, hanging your harp upon the willows. Despair not ! He who turned the captivity of Job can turn yours as the streams in the south. He shall make your vineyard to blossom and your field to yield her fruit again. You shall again come forth with those who rejoice, and once more shall the song of gladness be on your lips. Let not despair rivet its cruel fetters about your soul. Hope yet, for there is hope. Trust thou still for there is ground of confidence. He shall bring you up from the land of your captivity, and you shall say of Him, Thou has turned for me my mourning into dancing" (Psalm 30:11)

(This is from a book called, ' The Power of Prayer in a Believer's life' by C.H. Spurgeon)

Re: , on: 2009/11/11 15:56

thank you maybe i will just let it go.

Re: need help on the gospels - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/11/11 16:10

Dear John,

Quote:
-----it just upsets me, why could not God make them more clear and not have this happen, i mean i want to just settle down and say i believe but why the differences

It is true that the bible is not easy to understand. I believe God meant it to be that way so that only those who truly seek Him with all their heart (those willing to exert the effort and those willing to be guided by the Spirit) will find Him. Don't give up. Keep praying, persevere in reading the Word, and God will honor your faith with understanding. True faith will always lead one to Christ (the Word made flesh), and knowledge of Christ is in the Word. Keep on seeking Him - don't give up. Above all, never doubt God. True love always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Re: - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2009/11/11 16:10

What you don't understand; leave to GOD'S wisdom!

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2009/11/11 16:20

Hi John,

That sounds like a good idea, my friend :-). Maybe if you were to do this type of study at a time when you're not battling troubling thoughts, that would be best.

By the way, if you could pray for me, I would really appreciate it. I have been facing a physical trial (TMJ or jaw joint problems) for a number of years. This has been a challenge in itself, but now some new circumstances have developed at work, which seem to be putting the successful operation of the company I work for, in jeopardy.

God bless ya,
John

Re: need help on the gospels - posted by Laviver, on: 2009/11/11 17:28

Brother get a solid commentary on the harmony of the gospels if that will ease your conscience. Many have been in your position and seen apparent errors or discrepancies in the 4 accounts only due to insufficient or incorrect study.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/11/11 18:24

Brother,

Let me just say after having been through Bible college and having spent some time studying in seminary, and having been an avid student of the Scriptures for a decade, you'll never find a fully satisfactory answer to every issue that arises with the so-called "Synoptic Problem."

There are indeed some tensions and apparent contradictions one will discover if one reads all three gospel accounts side by side. To date, though many valiant attempts have been made, there has yet to be anybody to fully solve the issues that arise over the gospels. There probably never will be. There are many good explanations generally speaking that many evangelical scholars offer as very viable solutions to these problems. There are also some good explanations in some of the more academic commentaries that address these issues as they arise with each unique passage.

But overall, while one needs to truly study these issues out and be satisfied in their own mind, let me attempt to spare you from trying to rectify all these issues, otherwise they will drive you mad. I take rest in the fact that there is very strong evidence that the gospel writers used a source common to them all to write their gospel accounts, and these authors apparently saw nothing in their writings that they thought to be irreconcilable with the other writings.

For example, most scholars agree that Mark was the first gospel to be written. And 80% of Mark can be found, word for

word, in Matthew and Luke. Likewise, Matthew and Luke have stories that are not in Mark, but appear in both of their gospels, likewise, word for word. However, each gospel has its own unique material, even though they have so much in common.

Why is this? Because each gospel author had a unique perspective he wanted to share, based on what he felt the needs of his audience were. Thus, sometimes he includes details in his story that we don't hear in another story. Many tensions and alleged contradictions can be resolved simply by taking things like this into account. Others, however, are not so simple.

This sort of thinking might be hard for many of you to hear. But ultimately, facts are facts, and these are issues any serious student of God's word must ultimately wrestle with. Some lose their faith as a result of being hasty to draw conclusions that they should not draw. But for others like me, I find my faith strengthened.

Re: need help on the gospels - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/11/11 18:33

John,

May I suggest you get the books by Josh McDowell that deal with these issues. They are titled "Evidence that Demands a Verdict". They should help you answer your questions.

Blessings,
ginnyrose

Re: , on: 2009/11/11 18:56

yes brother i will pray for your jaw. Ginnyrose i actually have that book but did not read much of it yet, duh, maybe i should now. I would like to say that on biblequery.com they made a good point about the gospels and the writers paraphrasing the verses maybe not giving the exact word for word but at least in their own way. There are so many issues that i saw it is disturbing and actually hurts me a lot. I really just want to believe, so i hope the lord will destroy these arguments for me.

Re: - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2009/11/11 21:03

GOD is truth; and HE desires for us to come to the knowledge of the truth. JESUS promises if you seek the truth with all your heart and keep HIS word, the truth will set you free. Let HIS Word speak. GOD will steer you straight and lead you right!!

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/11/11 21:03

Brother,

May I suggest you share your questions here? Someone should be able to answer them for you. There are a lot of good minds here on SI. I also have the books I mentioned, vol. 1 & 2.

If you are preaching you need to be settled in your mind because inevitably someone will come along and will challenge you on the authenticity of the WORD.

This is just a suggestion...

Blessings
ginnyrose

Re: - posted by IWantaAnguish (), on: 2009/11/11 23:22

It is important to study each Gospel in light of how the author wanted to portray Jesus and the good news...

Matthew: The King of the Jews
Mark: The Servant of all

Luke: The Son of Man
John: The Son of God

Once you get what each writer was trying to emphasize, a lot of the questions are answered.

Each writer had a target audience, and a specific view of Jesus Christ they wanted to get across.

Re: , on: 2009/11/12 3:41

Well ginnyrose lets see what has bothered me the most when i read the scriptures in the gospels and you can have a jump at it. First what exactly is paraphrasing and how does it relate and how has it been used by the gospel writers? First off on the cross they had the writings above Jesus in 4 different writings, i understand their were 3 different languages written on it, so was three of them reading from the different language and whatever you know would be fine. Also in Matthew and Mark it says the robbers mocked or reviled Jesus while Luke says he asked for forgiveness, i understand he could have changed his mind later. I mean their our a lot but if this paraphrasing thing was used by the writers then it wasn't necessary for them to be verbatim but to just get it out their for the people to know and the meaning out. I mean the main issues in the gospels is not that it doesn't all fit as a story saying the same things and coming to the same conclusion but that their our small things like naming one person and the others naming more, or one saying one thing while the other saying something different. I began to read Josh McDowell's book today, wow is all i can say very good. But tonight i have made a decision actually before i even posted this, i am going to believe on Christ and the scriptures and fully surrender all to Christ and let God work in me, he is my only hope, its funny everytime i tell God i give up on him and am leaving him like i almost did yesterday i am completely restrained and i cannot do it because i will be lost without him and i desire and am happy by being dedicated to him, everything else is just fruitless and vanity and i know it. I just always come back, within about 10 minutes i came right back to him because i couldn't stand not seeking after him. Praise his name, pray that i could rest in Christ.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/11/12 9:17

Quote:
-----i am going to believe on Christ and the scriptures and fully surrender all to Christ and let God work in me, he is my only hope,

This is the wisest decision you will ever make. God bless you.

Having said all this, your brain will not stop working. It is fine to ask questions but not with an attitude of finding fault. The godly questions lead to an answer but if none is forthcoming immediately, that will be ok, it will come in God's own time. This is called 'trust'.

Quote:
-----Also in Matthew and Mark it says the robbers mocked or reviled Jesus while Luke says he asked for forgiveness, i understand he could have changed his mind later.

I never noticed this before but after checking it out, I think your understanding is correct. It is in comparing Gospel with Gospel that you will gain a broader picture of what happened. Some folks strive for detail, others for a general overall picture. The Gospels illustrate this beautifully. People are like that today as well. Some folks, in telling a story, are very particular in describing the details and others will say, "just tell me what happened!"

Quote:

-----First off on the cross they had the writings above Jesus in 4 different writings, i understand their were 3 different languages written on it, so was three of them reading from the different language and whatever you know would be fine.

In looking at this issue, they all identified this person as the "the King of the Jews". The fact some do not say his name could simply be a way of telling a story, just like some today relate a story: some will share details that others do not find essential to the story.

Josh McDowell makes a lot of this fact. And this is what give the Gospels more credibility is the way in which these stories were told. Some have more details then others. Yes, read these writings by Josh McDowell and you will be blessed.

If I recall, Josh McDowell was a skeptic before he came to the LORD. If there was anyone who wanted to fault the scriptures it was him.

Hope this helps a little...

Blessings,
ginnyrose

Re: need help on the gospels, on: 2009/11/12 10:24

Hi John,

I'd like to comment that the question you could be asking (yourself), should be more about whether the gospel writers would want to mislead you by lying about what actually happened?

Maybe if you have lied sometimes, you feel you don't trust yourself to tell the truth, and thus it seems easy to suspect others of not telling the truth either.

As I see the question of reliability, it's not so much whether the 'writings' are 'reliable', but whether the **writers** are reliable witnesses. A witness is someone who tells what they have seen with their own eyes, honestly. (They may not have noticed every detail. Try asking two people independently, to describe the same view from a window. You'll be surprised by the things which each individual feels important to mention - or leave out.

You also have to ask yourself why anyone would testify to seeing something they *didn't* see, (why they would lie), when that specific testimony is going to get them put to death?

This matter of whether the writers are reliable, runs right across the whole Bible, and I think you only have to read Hebrews 11 to realise their testimony was not received by 'the world' because the world was unwilling to come to the light. There is also Peter's claim: 2 Pet 1:16.

I ask you, what would it have been like to look into the eyes of the Ancient of Days Himself, the eternal I AM, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? You think they might have lied? You don't think that spending more than three years with God Incarnate was a transforming experience?

If you read the gospels closely, you'll see that by the last supper, they have given up their own wisdom. They know that Jesus knows **everything**.

Now, you said this, and it is very revealing. (Luke 6:45; Matt 12:34)

Quote:
-----Also in matthew and mark it says the robbers mocked or reviled Jesus while luke says he asked for forgiveness, **i understand he could have changed his mind later**.

When might that have been?

Think about it.

Jesus died (gave up the ghost) at the time of the evening sacrifice (3pm), and the thieves had their legs broken to kill them before dusk (6pmish I believe).

That man was on a cross the whole time from what Jesus said to him, until he died. Heb 9:27. Why would that thief decide he didn't want to go to Paradise with Jesus? What better option did he have? Seriously?

Isn't this question - about whether the thief could have changed his mind, really just a reflection of your own ambivalence about whether to mortify the flesh, or carry on sinning? It isn't anything to do with the *reliability of the gospels* at all... or if it is, it is not about whether they are true or not, but about whether you are going to stake your life on them being true, like so few others have done before you.

Matt 7:13 (strait gate = Door of sheepfold)

God wants us to grapple with Him, and to need to **know** Him more than we need to get our own way - Gen 32:24, 25, 26 ; Isa 45:11, 12, 13.

Re: - posted by Laviver, on: 2009/11/12 10:41

Deepthinker are you saying there are contradictions then? Your post seems to go back and forth and then alludes to improper exegesis.

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/11/12 11:33

Dear John,

Quote:
-----But tonight i have made a decision actually before i even posted this, i am going to believe on Christ and the scriptures and fully surrender all to Christ and let God work in me, he is my only hope

Praise God! To believe in Christ, the Word of Life, is to reject any doubts that the enemy may plant in your mind regarding Scripture.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Faith does not seek or require proof. It is simply being sure and certain, and therefore free of doubt. True, unshakeable faith will lead to blessings...

Ps 25:8-15 "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant. For the sake of your name, O LORD, forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him. He will spend his days in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare."