

# The Gospels in Harmony

*Written in Stone*

July 8, 2018

*Welcome to where we're learning how to get God to fight our battles!*

**What percent of your week is lived in disobedience?**



Deuteronomy is Moses' last speech before he dies in the wilderness. He had forfeited crossing into the Promised Land by striking a rock that God told him to speak to. (Num 20:11-12)

**One degree off the path is disobedience.**



And they'd wandered in the wilderness 40 years as a consequence of letting their fear of the enemy override their trust of God. But, now **Joshua is going to lead them to cross and confront and conquer the enemy**. And, when Jesus is baptized at this same place, like Joshua, *He* is led up to the wilderness to confront and conquer *ours*. And everything Jesus says in the wilderness is from Moses' swansong.

Bethabara = place of the crossing

Imagine what Moses was thinking. The mistakes. The consequences. The regrets. *And, the coming temptations of ungodly nations. That's the truest test and biggest battle.* It's like driving your kid to college the first time. You want to prepare 'em for what's coming in the *classroom and the dorm room*. And that's what Moses is *doing*, and what Jesus is *quoting*.



Now, Matthew and Luke tell the temptation story, but mix up the order of events. But, when I finally, grudgingly, unhitched Matthew's mountain and moved it away from Luke's (to become a *fourth temptation*), the Word suddenly opened like a secret door!

And, I realized that **it's not enough to have the Truth ... we must really trust the Truth**. After all, a **"Don't Walk" light can't save you if you're unwilling to do what it says**. Again and again Moses reminds God's children to **love** and **serve** and **obey** the Lord with all their **heart** and **soul** and **strength**, so they can **walk in his ways**. (Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20) **Otherwise, we can be fairly certain that we are when we aren't.**





Joshua set twelve stones *from the wilderness, in the Jordan* at the crossing where Jesus is baptized. (Jn 1:28; Mt 3:9; Josh 4:4-9 NKJ) Then he sets up twelve stones *from the Jordan, in the wilderness*. (Deut 27:2-4; Josh 4:4-7) He was led to Mount Ebal (Deut 27:2-4) Next to Mount Gerizim, and in between was Shechem (i.e. *saddle of the shoulders*). Shechem is where Abraham built an altar after the Lord met him here and promised,

“*Unto your seed I will give this land.*” (Gen 12:6-7) Now Joshua builds an altar here, (Deut 27:4-8) *after* he sets up the stones, plasters ‘em white, and writes every word of God on ‘em. It would’ve included the oldest book: Job; and the five Moses just finished: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Six books. 374,049 Hebrew letters. 92 hours (on average). Did you know that Job is the first and oldest book of the Bible?

[Job writes] “Oh, that **my words were written!** [Which Job *obviously does*] Oh, that they were **inscribed in a book!** That they were **engraved on a rock** with an iron pen and lead, forever! [That’s what Joshua does] For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth;” [Who do you think “**inscribes ‘em in a book**”?] – Job 19:23-25 NKJ

[Job also writes] “Oh, that the **Almighty** would answer me, that **my Prosecutor had written a book!** [He *hadn’t yet*] Surely I would carry it on **my shoulder** [shĕkem] ... like a **prince** ...” – Job 31:35b-37a NKJ

[But] Unto us **a Son is given;** [at His baptism, God said: “*This is My Son*” (Mt 3:17)] and the **government** will be upon **His shoulder** [shĕkem]. And **His** name will be called ... **Prince** of Peace. – Isaiah 9:6b NKJ



In 1980 on Mount Ebal **they unearthed Joshua’s altar**. This is where Joshua was led when he crossed the Jordan. And, that’s about how it would’ve looked when Jesus was led up to the wilderness, and fasted for 40 days. *What was He doing all that time?* Scripture says “**King Solomon was greater ... than all the other kings of the earth.**” (1 Kings 10:23) And yet, Jesus said, “**Indeed a greater than Solomon is here.**” (Mt 12:42; Lk 11:31)

Why? Look what Moses warns before *dropping the kids off at college*:

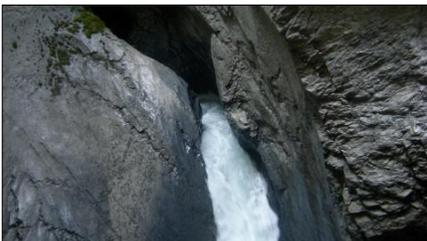
When you come to the land ... and say, ‘I will set a king over me ...’ you shall surely set a **king** over you whom **the Lord your God chooses** ... he shall not multiply horses for himself [like Solomon (1 Kings 4:26, 10:26)], nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses [like Solomon (1 Kings 10:28; 2 Chron 1:16)], ... Neither shall he multiply wives for himself [like Solomon (1 Kings 11:3)], lest his heart turn away [like Solomon (1 Kings 11:3-4)]; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself [like Solomon (1 Kings 10:27; 2 Chron 1:15)]. [God’s King must be greater than the king who was greater than every king – He must be a **King-of-Kings**] Also it shall be, [as the King-of-Kings **first**

**official act**] when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, [i.e. *takes authority*; as Jesus did at His baptism] that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, [By then, Jesus' Bible had 2,337,568 Hebrew letters; at the average adult pace of 68 letters per minute, it would've taken 541 hours. That's 13.5 hours a day for 40 days] ... And it shall be with him, and [unlike Solomon] he shall read it all the days of his life, [What did you think He was doing when He went away to pray?] that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and [unlike Solomon] be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, [“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God **and men**” (Lk 2:52)] that **his heart** may not be lifted above his brethren [“Both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb 2:11)] ... – Deut 17:14-20a NKJ

Moses fasted 40 days on a mountain in the wilderness while copying down the Law of God. (Ex 34:28) And the Lord fasted 40 days on a mountain in the wilderness while copying the Law of Moses. **What if God made us handwrite His Word and read it every day?** From Mount Ebal, Joshua could see all the ungodly nations. **God wants us to see how overwhelming the enemy really is.** It was just him, twelve men, and God's Word against the world.

The devil led [Jesus] up to a high place and showed **him** in an instant **all the kingdoms of the world**. [oikoumenē: *inhabited land*; used in Jesus' day for the Roman Empire (Lk 2:1)] And he said to him, “I will give you all **their** authority and splendor, for **it has been given to me**, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered, “It is written: **Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.**” – Luke 4:5-8 NIV

Fear the Lord your God, serve him only **and** [then Moses adds] ... Do not follow other gods, the gods of **the peoples around you** ... **Do not test the Lord your God** ... – Deuteronomy 6:13-16a NIV



Then the devil took [Jesus] to Jerusalem the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written (Ps 91:11-12): ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you carefully; and they will lift you up in their hands, **so that you will not strike [i.e. kick] your foot against a stone.**’ Jesus answered him, “It is also written [in that same passage that we just read]: **‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’**” – Matthew 4:5-7 NIV

What's the test? This is the devil, so you can bet it's *tricky!* You see, **we must allow God to fight our battles for us**. But, **He uses the Sword of His Word and Spirit**. So, **if we don't know His Word, He can't fight our battles**. That's why **the devil's ultimate weapon is twisting Scripture**.

In Moses' big finish, he warns that God's children will **“grow fat and kick ... and reject the Rock their Savior”**. (Deut 32:15) Psalm 91 is a promise to those who love and dwell with God, to keep them on track **lest they kick the Rock (as Moses warned)**. But the devil used it to try and get Jesus to jump to His death. Jesus says, **“Don't put the Lord your God to the test,”** and Moses adds: **“as you did at Massah,”** (Deut 6:16) where God had Moses *strike* the rock for water.

## The Psalmist sees the rebellious kicking at it to get what they want.

[God] split the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink in abundance ... But they sinned even more against Him ... And they **tested** God **in their heart** by **asking for the food of their fancy**. ... They said, "**Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?** Behold, **He struck the rock**, so that the waters gushed out ... **Can He give bread also?** [You know, "**Turn these stones into bread**"] ... they did not **believe in** God, [they used Him] and did not **trust in His** salvation. ... [but] When He **slew** them, **then** ... they **returned** and **sought earnestly** for God. **Then** they **remembered** that **God was their rock**, and the Most High God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they **flattered Him with their mouth**, and they **lied to Him with their tongue**; [with songs and praise that contradicted the choices they were making throughout the week] for their **heart** was not **steadfast** ... – Psalm 78:15-35 NKJ

And so, **they were left unequipped for the battle we can't escape**. Whatever you do, **just don't wait to be slayed to earnestly seek**. After some initial success with the enemy, God led Joshua **back** to Mount Ebal along with all the nations of Israel. (Josh 8:30-35)

[And] There, **in the presence of the children of Israel**, he [again] wrote on the stones a **copy** of the law of Moses, which he **had written** [in the presence of the **pagan nations**].  
– Joshua 8:32 NKJ

They **return**, they **review**, they **renew their covenant** with God, they **recommit**, and they **remind themselves of the stakes** by reciting the blessings from Mount Gerizim and the curses from Mount Ebal. And Joshua reads **every Word** from the Rock to the nations. (Deut 27:12-13; Josh 8:33-34)

**Again**, the devil took [Jesus] to a very high mountain and showed **him all the kingdoms of the world** [kosmos: government (like the one on His shoulders); adornment of the heavens] **and their splendor**. [Notice he doesn't say *these* had been given to him] "**All this I will give you**," he said, [since, as Jesus well knows, they'll reject the Rock of their **own free will**] "**if you will bow down and worship me**." Jesus said to him, "**Away from me, Satan!** For [again] it is written: **'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'**" – Matthew 4:8-10 NIV

**Again and again we need to return, review, renew, and recommit**. Your choice: **a mountain of blessings or a mountain of curses**. And, if you're here this morning, and you're feeling like you haven't got a chance against the enemy ... *that's a good thing*. **You're ready to stop kicking the Rock**. And **to start really trusting the Truth**. And **to do what it takes to let Him to fight your battles His way**. After Joshua had first established God's Word in the wilderness, he was returning to camp, when he bumped into a new old friend:

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "**Are You for us or for our adversaries?**" [Because, with the Lord, **sometimes it's hard to tell**] So He said, "**No**, [Classic Jesus!] but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "**What does my Lord say to His servant?**" – Joshua 5:13-14 NKJ

A better question was never asked.