

THE JERICHO EXPERIENCE



STUDIES IN THE HEALING WORD
AND WILL OF GOD SERIES

BIBLE BYTE COMMUNICATIONS

The Jericho Experience

Studies in the Healing Word and Will of God

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Why this eBooklet is free:

We are so glad that you chose to download this eBooklet as our gift to you. Jesus taught us in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and we aspire to follow our Lord's teaching. The Apostle Paul also understood this concept, "What is my reward then {for preaching and giving the gospel away freely}? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge" (I Corinthians 9:18). Paul came to realize that to serve the Word *without charge* was both a blessing to those who received the Word and to himself personally because he understood that God Himself is the reward, "I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1, and see Hebrews 11:6). When you have God in your life as your *exceeding great reward*, then being *with God* you will have everything you need to begin enjoying the more than abundant life. Our prayer for you is that you come to know experientially that "with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

Enjoy, and God Bless You!

The Jericho Experience

Many hypothesize and attempt to answer the following questions: Was it one or two miracles that Jesus performed in Jericho? Were there two blind people, or only one? Were there one or two blind men begging? Were there one or two cities named Jericho, an older and a newer city? Was Jesus entering or leaving, or was he actually in Jericho when he performed the miracle? Studying all of the opinions and debates found in the Christian world of literature can leave one feeling very unsure. In this study we will examine Jesus' visitation to Jericho and discover that in total he actually healed four men with three distinct miracles, at three different times, in three separate locations, and come to experience his healing touch which is affectionately known as "The Jericho Experience!"

The Scripture used throughout this study is quoted from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. Any explanatory insertions by the author in any of the Scripture verses are enclosed in {braces}.

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Introduction

Jesus said in the Gospel of John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by {or *through*} me.” In this research study before us we will be looking at this statement of Jesus’ to discern exactly what he meant when he articulated; *I am the way, the truth, and the life*.

Our aim is to discover the certainty of our *way* to the heavenly Father through Christ, as he promised.

Psalms 119:33:

Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

The Psalmist first implored, *teach me, O LORD*, for the Psalmist knew that without the teachings and instruction in God’s Word, he would wander without spiritual direction throughout his lifetime. He wanted to live his life with the expectation of receiving from the *LORD*, while at the same time having a definable *way* to comprehend His *statutes*. *The way of thy statutes is the way* in which God reveals Himself. It is through knowing our Redeemer that God’s *statutes*, i.e., decrees or ordinances recorded throughout the Word, become clearly understood. The psalmist beseeched the *LORD* to know the *way* of the *statutes*. Why? Because whenever a believer comes to God’s guiding Word with a heart to learn, and he sets his eyes on Christ who is *the way*, and follows the directions that are revealed through the Word, then with clarity of thought he will begin to comprehend the light as it is revealed and made clearly perceptible within the *statutes*. One such discovery is the absolute *way* to the Father and His love that has been waiting in store since the beginning of time and is revealed through Christ when a searching soul develops a thankful recognition that he or she has found his or her new born-again identity in Christ (Romans 6:4, Colossians 3:4, and I Peter 1:23).

When we receive understanding from Jesus by way of a believing heart and begin to appreciate that the Scriptures emanate the very life of God Himself, then the lessons that God teaches through the knowledge of Christ will never be forgotten as they will be a part of you — you, as God’s child, were meant to know this.

Psalms 27:11 reads, "Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain {or *level*} path." *Thy way* is the *way* of the Savior, for he is the *way* to the Father. When we walk in His *way*, then we will be walking on that level *path*, which is grounded and built to sustain man's spiritual life as he walks in the truth. "Teach me thy way, O LORD {because then}; I will walk in thy truth" (Psalms 86:11).

As the Psalmist looked to his Redeemer, he was then able to ask the *LORD* to *teach* him *the way of thy statutes*. Today we also know Jesus Christ who is the clear *way* to the Father, expressed not only through all the Old Testament Prophets, but also through Jesus' life and ministry in the first century and revealed to us from the Gospels.

Teach me means to show conclusively, to cause one to spiritually see, to point out definitive revelations of grace and truth, and all revelations of "grace and truth" come to men and women through knowing the Savior. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17), and not by any other avenue or conception derived out from the mind of man's assumptions, but from Christ.

The Epistle of Ephesians contains a prayer for believers to have the eyes of their spiritual understanding enlightened by knowing what God "wrought in Christ" for you and me, so that we can know the surety of our way to *the way*, who is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:16-20:

-16: Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

-17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

-18: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling {of being the heirs of God and Christ, Romans 8:16-17}, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints {"which is Christ in you, the hope of glory," Colossians 1:27},

-19: And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power {to live in a Christ-like manner, John 14:12; and Philippians 4:13},

-20: Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*.

When we look to God's Word with an expecting heart to find, understand, and have a relationship with our Savior, then we will see the *statutes* of God's true and faithful Word energize our life all through our spiritual senses. This in turn reveals to us the spiritual realities of him who is greater (and wiser) than Solomon (Luke 11:31). The Savior is the true wisdom of God, for in him, "your faith {believing faith} should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2:5). *The power of God* reveals in the hearts of men and women the certainties of our heavenly Father Himself, and the sureties of our eternal destination to His right hand, culminating with an everlasting life enjoyed with our Savior. Every truth you have ever received from the Word of God was spiritual, and thus came to you by the actual *power of God* in manifestation in your life, and as a result was inspired by the wisdom of God who is Jesus Christ.

An interesting light to notice for us in this study was that the Apostle and great Evangelist, Luke referred to Jesus Christ with the expressed title of "The Wisdom of God."

Luke 11:49:

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, {Jesus is "the wisdom of God," See I Corinthians 1:24} I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute:

Luke is writing that Jesus Christ IS *the wisdom of God*, even though many scholars have assumed that the words *the wisdom of God* from Luke 11:49 was a quotation from either the Old Testament or the Apocrypha, but *the wisdom of God* and the following phrase: *therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute* is not recorded anyplace else but here in the Gospels. Matthew 23:34 reads, "Wherefore, behold, I {Jesus *the wisdom of God*} send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city." This is a direct quote from Jesus himself and Luke made the connection that *the wisdom of God* was indeed Jesus, and it is he who sends spiritual profit into our lives (Ephesians 4:11-12).

The Book of Isaiah also has a direct prophecy relating to Jesus the Messiah as being the wisdom of God:

Isaiah 11:1-2:

-1: And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse {the father of King David and thus in the kingly line of Christ}, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots {or *his Branch*}:

-2: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

Jesus appropriately uses these words in Luke 4:18, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” because he is “The Wisdom of God” who had *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear* {respect and reverence} *of the LORD* — therefore, Jesus Christ is exclusively the way to the Father. This is as Jesus taught us in John 12:45, “And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.”

Coming to personally know and understand Jesus Christ through the Scriptures is coming face to face with the express wisdom of God, as is our ultimate goal in this life. For “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

God shows us the *way* with spiritual inspirations (in-spirit-actions) and uplifting directions as He draws us ever closer to Himself through Christ (John 6:44).

Then the Psalmist proclaimed (above), *I shall keep it unto the end*; he will keep God’s Word for eternity, not simply until the end of his life, because God’s Word lives and abides forever (I Peter 1:23). The Word of God is our treasure to cherish for eternity. As Jesus Christ “loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (John 13:1). The meaning here is that Jesus loved us beyond his death because he was resurrected, and he will continue loving us through all of eternity because the end result of his life’s mission was to redeem (buy back and emancipate) humanity on the cross at Golgotha.

Chapter One:

“Be Ye Therefore Perfect”

Psalms 18:30 records, “*As for God, his way is perfect.*” One may think and say that God’s *way* and His Word are full of deficiencies and discrepancies, yet that is not the testimony of the Scriptures. People find so-called imperfections in the Scriptures only when they do not know Christ, for if they truly did, then they would be totally assured by Christ that God’s *way* is *perfect*! When we renew our minds by placing God’s perfect Word in our hearts, our inner hearts will become changed into a creation of God’s making; “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2). God’s statutes testify in our inner hearts that His *will is good, and acceptable, and perfect.*

When we begin to follow and believe in Jesus Christ who is *the way, the way* that God calls *perfect*, then Christ begins revealing heavenly realities of the Father to our minds, and thus the eyes of our understanding become *enlightened*. This is what our life is really all about — it is a thrilling life we have as a Christian with Christ-in-us! And this is why Colossians 3:3 reveals that Christ “*is our life.*” Who gives a hoot what naysayers brood on in the depths of their minds while they are entrenched in the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2), denying or attempting to discredit the eternal truths in the Bible? We are following the Wisdom of God and the Captain of our Salvation all the way to the sanctuary of our heavenly Father’s harbor of love, as we together share in the *way* that He deems to explicitly call *perfect*.

Psalms 18:32:

It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

Our heavenly Father is able to uplift our lives with His *strength* and cause our *way* to be *perfect* before Him, not necessarily before man who is so often imperfect, judgmental, critical, and lacking in the wisdom of God. We should be so humbly thankful for God’s divine teachings that uplifts our souls, and for him who is *the way* to the Father, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who boldly proclaimed: “I am the way. . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me {or rather, *through me*, as the Text actually reads}” (John 14:6).

Matthew 5:6:

Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Have you ever had a question about life or about God and then one day as you were reading your Bible, or perhaps thinking about something spiritual in a quiet moment, or just working along and then all of a sudden your question became answered? You experienced an epiphany of spiritual light surging into your understanding, as something you had been wondering about finally made perfect sense! Once we receive an answer from God through His inspiration, then that *hunger* for the answer becomes eternally *filled* as promised by Jesus (in Matthew 5:6 above).

Oh yes, definitely, God will continue giving understanding to life's questions in specific areas of life that will inspire our way, which as promised can become *perfect*, and God can and will continue stimulating our inner conscience with truth — receiving these spiritual insights become truly precious moments of serenity and completeness that only God through Christ gives to His children. This is what Jesus was referring to when speaking with the woman at the well in the Gospel of John.

John 4:14:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but {or *because*} the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The word *water* is referring to a spiritual refreshing that awakens an inner revival and comes from God's Word through Christ Jesus who is *the way* to our heavenly Father.

Sometimes confusion arises when people are studying aspects of the life of Jesus from the Gospels as they attempt to harmonize his actions by comparing one seemingly identical or similar verse or section from two or more of the Gospels. Some people have poured their entire lifetime into this quest to form one harmonious book from the separate Gospels, and many have written about their studies and failure in not being able to connect all the dots perfectly. Unfortunately, they all too often go on to produce their books in the guise of Bible study aides written in such a way that all the fault of the author not being able to find or prove consistency rests solely upon the Apostles Matthew, Mark, Luke,

and/or John — the writers of the Gospels, thereby casting a shadow of doubt on God’s recorded Word. But, if they found something truly flawed in the Scriptures beyond their own erroneous interpretation and beliefs, then the Word of God would be defective, and because Jesus is the incarnate Word (John 1:14), he himself would seem to be defective and therefore unreliable. If we held to this perception, Jesus would not be worthy of our allegiance, and logically we should not offer our alliance to the words he spoke.

If one could honestly break the Word of God, then we truly have nothing to stand upon, and the Good Book, God’s Word, would not be as good as we thought, and the Good Man, Christ the Lord, would not be as good as we were taught, but let me quote Jesus who spoke for God — *Thy Word is Truth!* God is perfect, His Word is perfect, His Son is perfect, and God can cause our way to also be perfect — this is the teaching of Scripture, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48), and “Howbeit we speak wisdom {God’s Word, i.e., Christ} among them that are perfect” (I Corinthians 2:6). Jesus said, “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one {with the Father}” (John 17:23). The Word cannot be anything but perfect and entire in every detail, and whenever a text appears out of joint, the error is in man’s understanding alone, and with time and a little diligence the truth will shine through so long as we stay in bounds and continue walking with him who is perfectly *the way*.

The controversy that is often seen or read into the Scriptures comes into play and debate when people try and force a harmony between two or more similar events or verses. Yet when we simply separate them and put them back into their proper setting in the Bible and in their separate books, then we can easily dispel ninety-nine percent of the conflicts because then the Word begins flowing smoothly as it was originally designed.

When one demeans the Scriptures by forcing ideas and concepts together that are separate and unrelated (like oil and water), then there is no way that God will give him or her divine understanding, for God through Christ opens up the hearts of the meek and humble who desire to know the way of truth.

One research technique that many scholars and students of the Bible apply when studying the Gospels is to compare other related passages from each of the four Gospel perspectives to hopefully add light on a particular subject. Yet all too often, when they compare one similar verse or topic with another from a different Gospel they find apparent inconsistencies that on the surface do appear to flow against other supporting passages. With these so-called discrepancies and errors

now in the forefront of their surmising, they begin to imagine that the Bible must be filled with inaccuracy on many fronts. Some boast their new findings to anyone who will listen to them as they so often unload their lessons, conclusions, and beliefs into books aimed at an unsuspecting, buying Christian public.

To make a good case about Bible disharmonies, I would like to now introduce you to the healing of the blind at Jericho. This study is NOT about Bible harmonies, to debunk or prove them. But we will be looking at a few of these misrepresented harmonies for you, as their subject does come up on our journey to find, and our search to reveal, Jesus Christ, who is *the way* to the Father .

First and foremost, the Gospels should always be looked at as four separate books as God intended them to be, or He would have had one harmonious document written, and He would have perhaps titled it, The One and Only Gospel Book of Matthew, Mark, Luke OR John. But He did not, so it is the blessed duty of man to discover God's intentions in formulating the four individual, inspiring narratives. As we read the individual Gospels in this light, then we will be more able to notice how they all expressly work together to reveal different aspects of Jesus' life that never contradict one another. When passages line up on the same subject between the different Gospels, then they all will contribute aspects of an identical event or narration to reveal more about the Bible's inherent subject of Christ.

One Gospel, for instance, may be concerned with the time of an event, while another may show where the event occurred, and another may reveal who was there to witness the occasion, and another may be completely silent about that subject and still supply the before and after events that the others do not reveal. The Gospels will ALWAYS work together to reveal Jesus Christ and they NEVER work at cross-purposes to each other or against the truth of the knowledge of Christ; rather, they bring enlightenment to those who "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

II Timothy 3:16-17:

-16: All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

-17: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

The purpose for the Scriptures being written, including the Gospels, are "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31), because the Scriptures came by the will (and inspiration) of God. The words within are parts of God's heart opened to us

(Psalms 33:11) because He is the Word (John 1:1), and the Word reveals Christ because he is the personified Word (John 1:14). II Peter 1:21 records, "For the prophecy {God's Word} came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake {and wrote} *as they were* moved {inspired} by the Holy Ghost."

Chapter Two:

The Jericho Experience

When Jesus walked to, through, and out of Jericho, we find some interesting Scriptures, placed below, from the accounts recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Matthew 20:29-34:

-29: And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

-30: And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

-31: And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

-32: And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

-33: They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

-34: So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

Mark 10:46-52:

-46: And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

-47: And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

-48: And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

-49: And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

-50: And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

-51: And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

-52: And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Luke 18:35-43:

-35: And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

-36: And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

-37: And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

-38: And he cried, saying, Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

-39: And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

-40: And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

-41: Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

-42: And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

-43: And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God.

It is relatively clear that these verses are very similar in their content, but upon a further examination, it is unclear to many Bible students and scholars who question and sometimes argue whether or not Jesus healed one or two men. Many hypothesize and attempt to answer the following questions, was it one or two miracles that Jesus performed? Were there two blind people, or only one? Were there one or two blind men begging? Were there one or two cities named Jericho, an older and a newer city? Was Jesus entering or leaving, or was he actually in Jericho when he performed the miracle? Studying all of the opinions and debates that are out in the Christian world of literature can leave one feeling very unsure.

In The Companion Bible, Dr. E. W. Bullinger (about 100 years ago), regretfully expressed that after studying more than 30 different versions of harmonies, he could barely find 2 of them that agreed together on any 1 point (TCB Page 1304, footnotes). Since that day to the present time, there have been hundreds more harmonies and study aids written and published, and still not much has changed other than the magnification of confusion for the Bible student. For this reason, through this study, even though we will point out for you some of what else is

being taught and accepted in Christian circles, because of all the tons of volumes out there it would not be practical, or even possible, to express all the differences. If we were to attempt to try to use up the space and take the time required to explain all the errors that are out there, then this study would easily be enlarged by a minimum of a hundredfold. We have so many amazing truths to uncover, document, and present to you that we will instead move along this vein of wealth.

Being flooded with an overabundance of contrary concepts can make one feel as though he or she is carrying around a heavy weight that inevitably produces frustration, thus we will only be able to show you portions of relevant information as we begin traveling the road less traveled, yet the spiritual views will become more and more spectacular. Our journey along *the way* of our Savior will lead us into his promised “rest.”

Matthew 11:28-30:

-28: Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

-29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

-30: For my yoke is easy, and my burden *is* light.

Some of the reasons for why there are so many different harmonies loosed on society are because the publishing houses require authors to write only fresher ideas that are distinctly different from what else is readily available in stores to help increase sales, thus, making the circumstances very conducive for producing a never-ending stream of unharmonious harmonies and study aids. We cannot solely blame the authors for this, as this is the accepted norm, and people can only go as far as they have been lead to believe. These days, many editors require their perspective authors to submit a book proposal with detailed proofs stating precisely why their proposed manuscript will be completely different from all the similar books that are currently sitting on bookshelves. While for us, thankfully, truth does not mutate itself into something different with every new manuscript just for the circulation of new books because truth is unchanging as the LORD said, “I change not” (Malachi 3:6).

True — truth can become more insightful as it uplifts the heart, more concise in the mind, and more real in peoples’ lives over the passage of time as they learn and believe in him who is the truth. Truth, as we are studying, is Jesus Christ (who declared, *I am—the truth*), and Hebrews 7:24 reads of him, “But this *man* {Jesus}, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood,” and Hebrews 13:8

underscores that, “Jesus Christ {IS} the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” For us, Jesus continues to be a stable constant rather than a changing element with every alteration of the wind (Ephesians 4:14) and new idea that blows across the changing times of the ages. Jesus Christ is STILL, “able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by {or *through*} him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). Jesus’ ministry of revealing God and interceding for us has not changed one iota from the beginning to the present now, nor will he change in the course of eternity.

Thankfully, the Word of God can be our main reference archive in order to accurately view the life of Jesus and gain spiritual understanding of harmonious documentation about the life of our Savior. With him, we will find an easy passage through the seeming confusion, as the Word itself makes the path straight. John the Baptist said, “Make straight the way of the Lord” (John 1:13) and this we will see as we remember that Jesus is *the way* to the *Father*, and our guiding light along our way through this life.

The Bible harmonies, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, Bible commentaries, and many Bible theologians differ as to what really happened in or around Jericho and are about as different from their counterparts as one can be on almost every biblical point. Some take the time to point out many apparent discrepancies from the Text of Jericho we have read from (above), and often they do this through the entirety of the Bible.

With sincere intention, some offer their own newer ideas and concepts and attempt to shut down the other harmonies and commentators on the premise that the Bible somehow must make better sense with their fresh, new, so-called light on the subject, while simultaneously believing that the Text has errors. More often than not, their own hypothesis still contradict the Scriptures at the same or other places in the Gospels as they attempt to harmonize the Gospels with a give and take theme, and they normally end up choosing one Gospel to be a greater or a more dominant revelation of truth while subordinating the other three as inferior Gospels.

Unfortunately, all these opinions then form an entangled web for the new Bible student to struggle through in a challenge to sort out this mess and form some kind of a logical conclusion that makes sense to them, but as you will soon see; there is no need of any of this confusion!

I cannot help what other people have written and put forth, or what you may have been taught, or what you may have been lead to believe about Jesus and Jericho, but I do have something to offer IF we will allow the truths in the Scriptures to reveal themselves to our minds. Our approach is first and foremost to put forth to you that the Bible is truth and is a divine Revelation and is a perfect narrative, stating precisely what God intended, and that Jesus always did his Father's will. Everything Jesus ever did was perfect and without any discrepancies or contradictions, and we can still find our way into the truth and the life of him who said he was *the way*.

I Timothy 2:4:

Who {God} will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

The *will* of God is that we first become *saved*, and then God's Word further expresses His *will* is that we also *come unto the knowledge of the truth*. I believe that God has watched over His Word through the years and He gives it to the humble and meek. I am certain that when the heart is prepared to receive from Him, then He will begin to enlighten anyone who desires to understand *the knowledge of the truth*.

Keeping this in mind, we will proceed with Jesus' visitation to Jericho in brief:

The truth is that in total, Jesus healed four men with three distinct miracles, at three different times, and in three separate locations. In chronological order we find the first miracle is that Jesus healed one unnamed blind man, "as he {Jesus} was come nigh unto Jericho" (Luke 18:35); this is the record in Luke's Gospel (Luke 18:35-43). The second miracle, "blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus" (Mark 10:46) was healed, "as he {Jesus} went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people" (Mark 10:46), and this is recorded in Mark 10:46-52. The third miracle shows the healing of two unnamed blind men "as they {Jesus and a multitude} departed from Jericho" (Matthew 20:29), and this is recorded in Matthew 20:29-34.

Jesus' Itinerary. . .

Keeping this in mind, we will proceed with Jesus' visitation to Jericho in detail:

To begin, we will take note of Jesus' itinerary before returning to Jerusalem for the Passover and the events leading up to his crucifixion. Jesus leaves the town of

Bethany shortly after raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-54). From Bethany, Jesus travels up to a pictorial city called Ephraim (John 11:54) and abides there with his disciples. Ephraim is about 16 miles northeast of Jerusalem, “and the Jews Passover was nigh at hand” (John 11:55). This was his reason to begin the journey which lead him through Jericho on his way to be in Jerusalem for the Passover as the Law required (Deuteronomy 16:1, 16).

Ephraim was the name of Joseph and Asenath’s second son (Genesis 41:52), born to them when Joseph was in Egypt. Ephraim was born during the seven years of plenty and Joseph named his son Ephraim which means doubly fruitful. When the children of Israel returned from the bondage of Egypt to the Promised Land, they dedicated this bountiful town in Ephraim’s memory. This city of Ephraim has a beautiful and most colorful history through much of the Old Testament histories. I imagine that Jesus would have thought on many of the stories he understood about that city as he looked out on the rolling hills with their very fruitful trees, plants in abundance, and the bountiful flowers that were just now giving off their sweet aromas. The timing of Jesus’ visit to Ephraim with his disciples was in the early spring as a new year was springing back to life after the winter snows. This must have been a joy for Jesus to take in this wonderful experience in his day. Spring was at that time just beginning to bud into bloom as all Israel was preparing to go up to Jerusalem for the upcoming Passover feast in the very soon future.

I can just visualize that Jesus recalled something that the Book of Deuteronomy promised:

Deuteronomy 8:7-9a:

-7: For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

-8: A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and *fig* trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

-9a: A land wherein thou shalt eat bread with out scarceness, thou shalt not lack any *thing* in it. . .

These verses give us a very good definition of the picturesque landscape that was doubly fruitful, the land of Ephraim.

While simultaneously enjoying the backdrop of the beauty and bounty of Ephraim, Jesus also knew that the leaders of Jerusalem had decided to put him to

death as soon as they could get their hands on him (John 11:53). Jesus was very much aware of their intentions and “walked no more openly among the Jews” (John 11:54), therefore he walked in areas other than Judea. So he first went into seclusion for a time at Ephraim, and no doubt, the thought of leaving versus abiding in this tranquil refuge weighed very heavy on his heart as he prepared to leave behind the wonderful land and city of Ephraim.

John 11:54, and 12:1:

-54: Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

-1: Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

In calculating the time between John 11:54 and John 12:1, we should note that the *six days before the Passover*, when Jesus came to Bethany is not six days AFTER arriving at Ephraim, but six days BEFORE a future event — *Passover*. The word, *Then*, in verse 1 is a word to represent that time has passed between verses 54 and 1. There was a lot of activity and passage of time between when Jesus left Ephraim and before he returned to Bethany with his disciples, as we shall see below.

Between verse 54 and verse 1 recorded in John is when all the events of Jesus and Jericho occurred that we quoted above from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, yet John does not mention any of Jesus’ journey that lead him and his disciples up to Jericho other than pointing us in the direction of Ephraim. Nevertheless, the narration in John is the way God wanted the story to flow, because John’s Gospel is perfect as it reads and there are no contradictions. As well, each Gospel should be looked at separately and understood individually before we endeavor to combine them and search for harmonies.

John chapter 11 shows the raising of Lazarus from the dead and the joy this produced in Lazarus’ community, then John 12:1–8 goes directly into an evening meal where Jesus is also anointed for the day of his burying. This sets contrasting points between life, death, and resurrection that we would hardly perceive if the entire Jericho narration were inserted into John’s Gospel. Also, after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead before the eyes of Lazarus’ two sisters, Mary and Martha, they never had a chance to properly thank Jesus because of all the death threats against him (John 11:53, 57), and so he moved on to Ephraim. But God in His infinite wisdom inspired John to move directly into the intimate dinner at

Lazarus' house that was prepared for Jesus and his disciples when they returned from Jericho.

This dinner would have lost most of its intimacy and particular purpose if John were to write all the details of Jesus traveling to Jericho and then write about the dinner. Besides, God had Matthew, Mark, and Luke fill in the particulars of Jericho, so it was not necessary to have John also write the story. On other occasions, John's Gospel fills in information for the other three Gospels when it was more expedient to do so, as all four Gospels work together in this same way.

Now when we first look at each Gospel separately, then expand our view to perceive a larger picture from other related Scriptures, we will begin to notice that without John being written in the explicit way it is written, the Jericho experience has no beginning and no ending. Even with the time lapse in John with the omission of Jesus traveling up to Jericho, the Jericho account fits perfectly within the overall view of all the Gospels.

There are no inconsistencies in God's Word just because John did not write about something, and when we view all the contributing factors from the other Gospels, we will easily recognize that only with the Gospel of John do we have a complete narration from beginning to end. The Gospel of John is the setting, as a precious gem is positioned perfectly in its setting. John exhibits the tempo for us, not only in the opening of our story in Jericho, but John also provides the conclusion of the whole narrative that we will be viewing. Thus, John's Gospel contains the front and back covers to the entire Jericho story with both its introduction and the conclusion. The Gospel of John is perfectly written; it is as perfect as the other three Gospels which revealed to us different aspects of Jesus' visit to Jericho. Each Gospel is written as a completely diverse masterpiece to give us varied observations into Jesus' multifaceted ministry.

John places us in Ephraim (John 11:54), but then Luke's Gospel picks up the journey for us as Jesus and his disciples venture off in the opposite direction of Jericho and Jerusalem. Jesus first walked up in a northerly direction through the regions of Samaria and then even further north into the regions of Galilee, teaching as he went; this can be confirmed from the record in Luke 13:22-18:14, especially noting Luke 17:11. "And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). All the while, Jesus was thinking about going down to Jerusalem, as this was his eventual destination.

Thus, even when he was walking in a direction that we would call the long way around, he was ultimately *journeying toward Jerusalem*, as the Bible delineates.

After leaving the Samaritan region, Jesus went over (or beyond) the Jordan River to an area called Perea. Matthew 19:1–20:28, Mark 10:1–45, and Luke 18:15–34 all detail this part of his journey with each Gospel, adding and augmenting the narrations for us. The Word of God is so grand to share these details with us, and these help us keep our place in the Gospels.

Perea was a region extending from the borders of the river Jordan, eastward for approximately 15 to 20 miles, and running north and south at a length of 60 to 70 miles, between the brook Cherith in the north and down south to about midway on the eastern shores of the Dead Sea.

Jesus “entered and passed through Jericho” . . .

When Jesus leaves the Perea region, his next visit on his way back to Lazarus’ home in Bethany was to the heavily populated city called Jericho, housing upwards of one hundred thousand people (TCB Page 1490). Jericho was a city that accommodated royalty (i.e., the Herod’s) and therefore was a place which could easily support such a large population of people.

Luke 18:35:

And it came to pass, that as he {Jesus} was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

In this verse commences the miracle of the healing of the first blind man who was sitting on the outskirts of the city. Jesus was *nigh* or near to Jericho, but not yet into the city proper. This blind man is unnamed, he was *begging*, and as he heard a multitude passing on by him, “he asked what it meant” (Luke 18:36), and to his question the people informed him, “that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by” (Luke 18:37). Hearing this, “he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me” (Luke 18:38), but those in the crowd who were walking ahead of Jesus “rebuked him, that he should hold his peace” (Luke 18:39). This is so typical, that when people get excited about Jesus and the things of God, the majority usually think that they of the believing minority have something wrong with them. The entire crowd wanted to see Jesus because his fame had spread so widely, but at the same time they were not all that concerned about whether or not *a certain blind man* should be excited like they were, so they basically, retorted – “hold your tongue – you can’t see him anyway” to this one blind beggar.

Thankfully this blind man ignored the crowd and continued crying out, “so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me” (Luke 18:39), and because Jesus heard him through the crowd, he “commanded him to be brought unto him” (Mark 18:40). What a blessing this must have been for the blind man. He was called over to have a face-to-face meeting with Jesus, *the Son of David*, whom he had heard of but never seen. Yet on this blessed day, through the swarms of the crowded highway and through the commotions of all the voices and noises of talking, cheering, and shouting all around them, time, for that moment seemed to pause still, as the two men stood, one offering, and one expecting in anticipation.

Jesus “asked him, Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee” (Luke 18:40–41)? To this amazing offer he replied, “Lord, that I may receive my sight” (Luke 18:41). “And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee” (Luke 18:42). “And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God” (Luke 18:42). This man *followed* Jesus as he continued walking into the city of Jericho, as a great miracle had inspired the rest of the people so that “when they saw it, gave praise unto God” (Luke 18:42), and thus ends the first miracle.

The next record of events are also detailed for us in Luke’s Gospel as Jesus then “entered and passed through Jericho” (Luke 19:1). This phrase is a summary to include all the events that lead up to verse 27 in Luke 19; it is similar to what we would call a chapter heading or subtitle (as I used it for this section), though in Luke 19:1-27 we have the story of Jesus and Zaccheaus, and the time Jesus resided in Jericho. Jesus *entered and passed through Jericho* means Jesus entered from one direction and when he exited, he went out another way at an opposite end of Jericho. Notice that the Bible does not say, “Jesus passed in and out of Jericho” but rather, he *passed through* because if Jesus went in and out of the city, he would have left the same way he had entered, but because he *passed through*, Jesus departed all the way through Jericho by leaving from another, opposite direction.

Following Jesus from the Perea region to Jericho, he would have logically entered at an eastern entrance, and then exited on a southern or westerly direction as Jesus was still working his way down towards Bethany (John 12:1), and then to Jerusalem for the Passover.

This was not a hurried walk through Jericho, because Jesus had a stopover at the house of Zaccheaus (Luke 19:5), and during that day, Jesus teaches the citizens of

Jericho a parable about “A certain nobleman” (Luke 19:11–27) before continuing on his journey that would eventually lead him to Jerusalem (Luke 19:28).

The parable in Luke should not be confused with a similar, but not identical, parable that Jesus later tells to his disciples outside of the temple in Jerusalem about the Kingdom of God and the servants and master (Matthew 25:14–30). The Jericho parable was first and foremost spoken for its citizens’ benefit, while the parable in Matthew was given to different people, and for completely separate reasons than the former (even though many harmonies combine these two separate parables into one, and lose half of the detailed impact of the two different parables).

Now as Jesus is departing out of the city of Jericho we come to the second miracle of healing another blind man named Bartimaeus, but first we should read a passage from Mark 10:46, “And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people.” The words, *And they came to Jericho* is when Jesus performed his first miracle of healing a blind man, then he visited with Zaccheaus, and then he taught the people the parable as Luke’s Gospel discloses, then comes *and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people*.

Only a colon in the text of Mark 10:46 separates all the events that happened in the city of Jericho. This is similar to the summation in Luke 19:1, which stated “And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho,” yet a lot happened between Jesus’ entering and his leaving. Still the Word of God is perfect, and if this is the way God wanted to have Mark and Luke write their respective Gospels and supply only these certain details, then who am I to question God’s intent? Besides, I really do understand what happened, and now so do you, because we recognize that only with all four Gospels will we have the complete fourfold story that God wanted told separately and by four different men — inspired evangelistic Apostles.

In the Gospels, we are following the Golden Thread of Jesus Christ as he “passed through Jericho” (Luke 19:1). We then come to his second miracle of healing another blind man, “and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging” (Mark 10:46). Here we have a man named *Bartimaeus*, whereas in the first miracle the man was unnamed.

Jesus was leaving the city when he came across *Bartimaeus*, whereas in the first miracle Jesus *was come nigh unto Jericho*, yet so many theologians have attempted to combine these completely different stories into one account. "And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out" (Mark 10:47), whereas in the first healing, the blind man asked what was going on, and only when he was answered did he cry out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me" (Luke 18:37). *Bartimaeus* in a similar manner to the first man also cries out for Jesus.

Again, the crowd tried to have him stop yelling out, "And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:48).

Mark 10:49:

And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

This verse is totally different from the first miracle, because now the crowd called for *Bartimaeus*, as they encouraged him to be *of good comfort*.

Observe this, the multitude was rebuking *Bartimaeus* to hush up, and then almost in the same breath they turn and say *Be of good comfort* as they sent him off to see Jesus. People are funny sometimes and just blow with the wind of any changing idea that comes their way (See Ephesians 4:14). Jesus could have thought, well I've already got the multitude, who really needs a few blind people anyways. But NO, he didn't think this way, he came to "to preach the gospel to the poor; {Jesus says} he {God} hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18).

Jesus always took the time to reach out to the individual, to those of us who have called out for help, and thank God, Jesus answered, because you also are an individual and you are important to him and his Father. Jesus gives sight (insight and revelation) into the Word of God and an in-depth understanding of your heavenly Father and His unending love for you individually.

The people changed their minds and called *Bartimaeus*, because many of them had previously seen the results when Jesus calls someone blind over to him, they witnessed the first man receive his sight, and now, was it going to happen again for a second time? The crowd must have been excited and hopeful that something wonderful was about to happen before their very eyes.

Bartimaeus then “casting away {*setting aside*} his garment, rose, and came to Jesus” (Mark 10:50). “And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee” (Mark 10:51)? To which he replied the same basic request as the first man, “Lord, that I might receive my sight” (Mark 10:51).

The casting away of his garment was his outer tunic, like we in the West would have perhaps set our coat or jacket to one side and got up to meet the man that was proclaimed to be such a miraculous healer and Prophet of God, whom Bartimaeus called “Jesus, *thou* Son of David” (Mark 10:47).

Mark 10:52:

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.
And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

This concludes the second miracle of healing a blind man. Many of the details are very similar to Luke’s account, but are not identical, and though many assume they are — they are not.

We now come to the third miracle of two men who were healed of blindness. First, let us place them in the setting the Bible sets them. “And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him” (Matthew 20:35). Thus, Jesus and the entourage of *a great multitude* were completely out, *departed* out from the city of Jericho, as Jesus was walking towards the home of Lazarus’ in Bethany, whereas in the second miracle Jesus was just leaving the city, “as he went out of Jericho” (Mark 10:46), but he was not *departed* out of the city, like he is in Matthew’s description.

Matthew 20:30:

And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side {*the way side* is a rural setting, while Bartimaeus was at a *highway*, and thus, at a much larger and better kept roadway nearer to Jericho}, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.

The first note of interest in this verse is that neither of these two blind men were begging or called beggars. Matthew 20:30–34 is the section that so many harmonies attempt to meld into the two previous healings recorded in the Gospels of Luke and Mark. But, “they” (plural) are not the same as the “he” or “him” we read in the other two accounts.

Before you learn the truth of this third miracle of healing, I digress in the next two paragraphs to let you know that many of the harmonies portray that Jesus first was only testing the blind man's faith as Jesus walked on past him and went into the city, but that he did not heal him at that time. Then, as Jesus was leaving Jericho, he then healed that same blind person. Many of the harmonies portray that this poor old blind man referred to in the Gospel of Luke would have had to find (or bump into) the other blind man referred to in the Gospel of Mark, and then finally both get healed as read in Matthew's Gospel if these three miracles were one complete story. But if this were true, then the value of the written language is totally worthless for any printed communication and could not be trusted. Some so-called Bible scholars actually reason out and teach that the writers of the Gospels certainly were misled and could not get their stories straight because none of them are identical. Some critics say that their stories are taken from secondhand and thirdhand accounts and this is their explanation for why there is so much disagreement between the Gospels.

If Jesus only healed one or perhaps two blind men with a very confusing narration, then honestly, we might conclude that the Bible really is full of errors and discrepancies and might conclude that God's Word cannot be perfect, nor can it honestly be completely trusted. We then may deduce that the ever-changing word of man carries more weight and validity than the Word of God, which "supposedly" liveth and abideth forever. The reasoning and subsequent interpretations that have produced these types of discrepancies regarding divine truths are in error because God's Word is perfect, and further, if God's Word was not perfect, then you and I have not a prayer or hope, but gratefully, GOD'S HEALING WORD IS COMPLETELY PERFECT!

Matthew 20:31:

And the multitude rebuked them {plural - not *him* - singular, as we have read in the other accounts}, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.

Again the multitude were trying to quiet the two blind men, and again, like the previous two healings of the blind men, they both cried out even more vigorously to get a hold of Jesus' attention, when all of a sudden "Jesus stood still, and called them" (Matthew 20:32). In the other two previous accounts of healing, Jesus requested that a blind man come out from the crowd, then they in the crowd called each blind man over to Jesus, but here in Matthew, Jesus called them

HIMSELF, and said, “What will ye that I shall do unto you” (Matthew 20:32)? “They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened” (Matthew 20:33).

Matthew 20:34:

So Jesus had compassion on them {plural}, and touched their {plural} eyes: and immediately their {plural} eyes received sight, and they {plural} followed him.

This is the first time Jesus *touched* anyone’s eyes; as well, this is the first time the Bible says that *Jesus had compassion* on them. Again, this is similar, but not identical, to the two previous healings — they both *received sight, and they followed him*. The first thing the four blind men saw was Jesus, and when we finally see him in the perfect Word the same delight of Jesus’ *compassion* will *touch* our inner souls, as our eyes are opened to see the perfection of him who is *the way* to the Father.

Amazingly, the few sections of Scripture that we viewed in this study with the healing of the four once blind men were mere moments in time of one single day in the life of Jesus; the events were crisscrossing back and forth through the different Gospels as they formed a masterful tapestry, perfectly woven by a master weaver. This is as a golden thread that is interlaced in perfect harmony; and what often appears on first blush to be a jumbled mess of confusion, upon closer examination, the details become evidently clear and astonishingly perfect!

Each Gospel sits not only in perfect harmony with the other three, they also are placed in their own separate orbits as they follow their own course and written purpose, revealing to us wonderful facets about the perfect Son of God.

This ends the miraculous healings of four different men on the same day, and in the same area of Jericho, but the story does not end here.

Bartimaeus. . .

Let us first revisit the second man, Bartimaeus because there are some enlightening insights to discover that I like to call the Jericho Experience. I pray that you will have the benefit of your own Jericho Experience through personally discovering the perfection of Jesus’ healing touch that reaches into the deepest recesses of the heart as the Gospels come to life in your understanding, “the words that I {Jesus} speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life” (John 6:63).

The word *begging* in Mark 10:46 in reference to Bartimaeus is omitted in several of the Greek Texts, the Tischendorf, the Alford, and the Wordsworth (IGE Page 124, footnote i). Thus, the word *begging* may have been added when, in 1611, the translators of the King James were copying the Greek Texts into the English Translation, which later became a version (the King James Version). This is understandable because the translators must have figured that because the first man was begging (Luke 18:35), it only stood to reason (their reason), that it must carry through and be true for the seemingly same man, Bartimaeus who is recorded only in Mark's account. Besides Bartimaeus is the only one of the four healed men who had at least one family member; his father, Timaeus (Mark 10:46), who more than likely helped support and care for his son, as most parents would, and therefore he would have no need to beg for handouts to make ends meet.

The harmony and commentary experts simply assumed that both accounts happened at the same place and time, and so to help God and His Text along and flow into a supposed cohesive "harmony," they may have assumed that Bartimaeus was begging. However, many Texts agree that only the first man in Luke's Gospel was begging, but that Bartimaeus as well as the last two blind men in Matthew's Gospel were not begging, rather they were simply faces in the crowd, faces like ours, faces in need of the light of Jesus' life to enter the eyes of our understanding.

When the harmonies combine the two blind men of Mark and Luke as beggars, then it is easier to take this error a step further and infer that the other two blind men of Matthew were also the same begging men. But then the Bible student is left with the word of man rather than the Word of God. When we try to make a harmony by forcing square pegs into round holes, we are left with anything but the harmony of the original God-inspired Word!

As a result of all the error in assumption that all the blind men were beggars, this error has been totally ingrained in our psyche and culture because in novels, movies, and plays, when there is a blind man he is most assuredly holding a cup (or has a monkey with one)! But if you take a moment to think about it, you will realize that most blind people, in real life, do not beg or own monkeys!

Mark 10:52:

And Jesus said unto him {Bartimaeus}, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Do you notice anything unusual about this verse? Jesus says *Go thy way*, but then it says Bartimaeus *followed Jesus*. This is our first clue that something was not translated correctly; we will want to find out what that something is and show it to you, because one cannot go their own way and still be following someone else on another way.

Now Bartimaeus and his father Timaeus must have been well known to Mark because he took the time to tell us their names in his Gospel, while the other three blind men were never named. Another explanation for Bartimaeus being named and perhaps the greatest reason was because he saw and did something that the other three blind men had not seen or experienced. Bartimaeus *followed Jesus in the way* (Mark 10:52), but before we see what this means, let us first notice what the other three healed and now seeing men did.

The first healed man “followed him” (Luke 18:43), and as well the last two healed men “followed him” (Matthew 20:34). This looks the same on the surface for the four men, they all *followed Jesus* on down the road as he was walking toward Bethany, but what is different about Bartimaeus is hidden and revealed to us in the wording: *followed Jesus in the way*. This *way* was not the way that would lead them to Jesus’ next stop on his teaching itinerary which was to Bethany at Lazarus’ house, this is the direction that the other three healed men headed towards because they followed the crowd, but Bartimaeus saw another way, an eternal way, Bartimaeus saw him as *the way*. Bartimaeus followed Jesus in *the way* of truth; he saw with his own eyes that Jesus was *the way* to the Father; Bartimaeus realized that Jesus was the subject of Scriptures with his own heart and now seeing eyes.

Bartimaeus was the only man Jesus encouraged, *Go thy way*; these three words *Go thy way* are the one word in the Greek Text *hupago* and is a command (a verb), which literally means to follow behind, and thus to bring along (with) as disciples would follow, being brought by a master teacher into his care. Jesus literally invited Bartimaeus to follow him; while the other three men who were healed, followed Jesus based entirely on their own accord along with the multitude, but without any personal invitation from Jesus. This word *hupago* is used in the Book of Revelation 14:4, “These are they which follow the Lamb {Jesus} whithersoever

he goeth," the word *goeth* is the Greek word *hupago*. Jesus, three times said, "I go {*hupago*} to my Father" in John 16:10, 16-17, because Jesus is *the way* to the Father, so if one goes with Jesus (in his or her heart); then one is ultimately on *the way* that leads to the Father. Bartimaeus was instructed to join the believing ranks of Jesus' disciples who were personally invited to follow him.

All four blind men were "called" over to Jesus, all four men were healed by Jesus, but only one out of the four, just one blind man was "chosen" to follow Jesus, "for many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). Bartimaeus had the profound privilege to be chosen by Jesus, who personally called him, and then Jesus chose Bartimaeus to also follow him. Jesus said to his Apostles, "Have not I chosen you twelve" (John 6:70), and this same *chosen* invitation we have been offered in grace.

Ephesians 1:4:

According as he hath chosen us {CHOSEN US!} in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

II Thessalonians 2:13:

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you {CHOSEN YOU!} to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Chapter Three:

A Day's Journey

In Acts 20:33, the Apostle Paul said, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." The reason for mentioning *silver*, and *gold*, and *apparel* was because in Bible times, this is how wealth was described (for a few examples, See Genesis 24:53, 45:22, and II Kings 5:5, 7:8). Not only was *gold* and *silver* valuable but clothing was as well. Clothing was often given as payment for services and as rewards, for there were no clothing stores, so all clothes were hand made, sewn, and stitched together with precision and care, and worth a great deal.

This is why the Roman soldiers made bets (casting lots) and gambled for the 4 pieces of Jesus' clothing (John 19:23), while he hung — dying before them on the cross (Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, and John 19:23-24). Thus, they fulfilled Psalms 22:18, "They part my garments among them." Oh, and by the way, these passages from the four Gospels display a perfect harmony, revealing utter, selfish greed as they were robbing our dying Savior before his dimming eyes.

Recall Bartimaeus "casting away {*setting aside*} his garment, rose, and came to Jesus" (Mark 10:50). Consider this scene for a moment, a blind man actually leaves behind his garment, an extremely valuable possession of his, and just walks away from it, as it is now just discarded there somewhere on a crowded avenue amongst thousands of people. How will he ever find it again? Remember, at this moment in time he could not see! Well, he actively believed that he was going to see and that he would be able to walk back to his possession, pick it up, and put it back on before heading off to Bethany with Jesus and the rest of the Apostles and disciples.

Blind people have learned by experience to never leave their things just lying around in public areas, because they have spent hours looking for the stuff they have set somewhere out of place in their own homes. Jesus himself saw something amazing, he saw the blind man Bartimaeus' great believing when he had set his garment aside, as believing is a verb, which takes action to motivate and unlock its true potential.

You see, Bartimaeus believed unto wholeness, complete and total wholeness, spiritually, mentally, and yes, physically this man became a whole person through

Christ, as Bartimaeus was released from his blindness, and he received the fruit of his inner quest to find his way to him who is *the way*.

Jesus recognized his total commitment to *the way*, and Jesus is *the way*. To Bartimaeus' absolute delight, he not only saw his Savior, but his Savior requested him to continue on the journey that would take him along with Jesus and his Apostles and disciples because Bartimaeus truly recognized him who is *the way*!

The Jericho account is now much more accurate, exciting, and informative than simply to blur all the miracles into one confusing and overlapping narration that leads to no particular place. How much better it is to just finally follow the awesomeness of the finely detailed Word and to see it fit without the errors and discrepancies! This is so much more fulfilling than hearing and reading about those who spin their yarns and take cheap shots at the wonderful precision that is revealed in the Word of God which displays the awesome details of the life of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ!

We have seen that each miracle of the Jericho Experience is unique and totally independent of each other, and thus, they are not the same identical narrations, nor will they ever truly make sense when combined, and those who have tried have failed — miserably.

The actual chances that Jesus reached out and healed every blind man around the Jericho area is very slim, but most certainly, four blind men were healed that day.

Do you know the account of the lame man in Acts Chapters 3 and 4? This man was lame from birth and he was laid before the gate of the Temple for years and years and he requested, pleaded, and begged for help from all the people who passed by him as the worshippers were heading in and out of the Temple through the gate that was named Beautiful (Acts 3:2). This lame man was over forty years old (Acts 4:22). Do you know what this means? This means that Jesus, just two months before Peter and John ministered healing to him in Acts chapter 3, had to have walked on by him. Perhaps most of Jesus' life, he had to have seen this man that was nearly 10 years older than Jesus. This lame man must have seen Jesus as he was passing and heard of his fame and teachings — live. Perhaps their eyes met before, many a time, but Jesus never stopped and offered him help.

Why did Jesus not stop and offer his help and heal him all those years he passed on by him? Well, not everyone will believe and accept healing and the blessings of God at every moment in time, and honestly, the lame man was only hoping for a hand-out as he was, “expecting to receive something of them” (Acts 3:5), like

“silver and gold” (Acts 3:6). Did you also know that in the Gospel of Matthew 13:58 we read that Jesus “did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” So there is more to receiving healing and blessings than just showing up or being in the place Jesus will pass, because believing is the key to all receiving, while *unbelief* (the route of all doubt) locks the doors of true deliverance and receiving.

Yet one day, one glorious day as Peter and John were walking into the Temple, that man’s time came when he would finally believe to receive his deliverance, and he was made whole (Acts 4:9), and he received mobility and with elation he was “walking, and leaping, and praising God” (Acts 3:8). In this same way, Bartimaeus received wholeness; he was hoping and waiting for the day when the prophesied *Son of David* {would, as he believed}, *have mercy on me*, and that he *might receive his sight*.

Bartimaeus received something bountifully more than just the use of his eyes. He saw, perceiving in the inner heart of his mind’s eye, him who was *the way* to the Father, as Bartimaeus *followed Jesus in the way*, and was called and chosen to do so; and most assuredly he went back to get his coat. Bartimaeus *followed Jesus in the way* (Mark 10:52). The preposition *in* (in Mark 10:52) means to remain within something with long-term continuance. Bartimaeus knew that his Savior was the lifelong anchor of his soul and the hope of his future life into eternity. As Jesus said, “And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know” (John 14:4). Bartimaeus knew *the way* because he knew Jesus was *the way*.

Followers of Jesus Christ in the first century were so named “Followers of that way” or “Followers of the Way.” Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way.” In Bible times Jesus was known as The Way and this is confirmed for us through the Book of Acts (See Acts 19:9, 23, and 24:22).

At Journeys End . . .

As this final journey of Jesus’ comes to its close, he travels still closer to Jerusalem, from Jericho back to the small village of Bethany; this is about two miles southeast of the Holy City. In Bethany, Jesus visits the home where Lazarus and his sisters resided and Jesus enjoys a meal with some of his disciples, and no doubt Bartimaeus was present, while Martha, Lazarus’ sister, served (John 12:1–2). Thus, the Gospel of John completes the circle of Jesus and his travels from Bethany that lead him through Jericho and back to where the story began, back to the thankful

family of Lazarus in familiar surroundings, even though threats on his life brought about his quick departure.

This fellowship and supper in Bethany at Lazarus' home was precisely six days before the Passover. Six short days from this day, the most perfect man to ever walk on this earth and bless people with his miraculous life would be dead — slain, as a new chapter in the life of the Son of God, who only went about “doing good” (Acts 10:38) would die in an excruciating way for the sin of the whole world. This (his death) was his ultimate gift to you and me who have never seen him, who never walked with him, who never felt his healing touch, until we, like the blind men, followed him through the Word of God.

By the grace of God, we have felt and heard him in our hearts; we have seen, believed, and received in the reality of our own personal Jericho Experience — that he lives and walks with us individually.

John 15:12-16:

-12: This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

-13: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

-14: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you {which is to love one another}.

-15: Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

-16: Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you {Yes, you are CALLED and CHOSEN}, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Jesus was known as the one who, “teachest the way of God truly” (Luke 20:21), as Bartimaeus had discovered outside of Jericho on the roadside that lead him to his Savior's love, for it is always through Jesus Christ that men and women find their Savior's loving touch.

In the post resurrection period, Jesus talked with two men who were walking home from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-34). Jesus taught them how the Old Testament was a complete testimony of himself, to which they admitted to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way {or

about the way}, and while he opened to us the scriptures” (Luke 24:32)? The words *by the way* are the same words that are used in the Greek Text when in Mark 10:52 Bartimaeus “received his sight, and followed Jesus “in the way” {or *remained in the way*}, which is to remain with him, being a true believer and follower of Jesus Christ who is *the way*. Once *the way* is found, *the way* will cause the human heart to burn with energized delight because one will actually begin walking with Jesus in his heart.

In the phrase, *Did not our heart burn within us*, notice that the word *heart* is used in the singular to describe both of the disciples’ hearts. It is because they were with Jesus *in the way*, and thus, they became one with him, as we are one with him. “And the multitude of them that believed {on Jesus} were of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 4:32), in other words, they were in unity with Jesus, and this was the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20–23 for believers to be *one* with him. The whole prayer is so wonderful to read and study that I have added it below from my Red Letter Edition for your reading enjoyment.

John 17:1–26:

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, **Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:**

2: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3: And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

4: I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6: I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7: Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8: For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10: And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in

them.

11: And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

12: While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13: And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14: I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15: I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16: They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17: Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18: As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19: And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20: Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22: And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24: Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25: O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26: And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

When Christ becomes introduced, known, and understood in our own heart, we become *one* with him as he leads us through to our heavenly Father's love that has been laid up for us from before the foundation of the world. Just as God "gave

him {Saul} another heart" (I Samuel 10:9, 26) through the prophesied knowledge of Christ, which knowledge "touched" his heart, God will also give us an inspired heart to know Him intimately as our heavenly Father through Christ. Jeremiah 32:39 reads, "And I will give them {believers} one heart, and one way {i.e., Jesus Christ is that *one way* to God, John 14:6}, that they may fear {respect} me for ever." As God gave to Saul *another heart* so that he could enjoy likeminded fellowship with those "whose hearts God had touched" (I Samuel 10:26), we also can have this *one heart* that God has *touched* that becomes inspirationally felt through the knowledge of Christ.

Ezekiel 11:19, and 36:26:

-19: And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart {hard-hearted} out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh {a sensitive heart that becomes responsive to the loving inspirations of Christ in you}:

-26: A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

John 17:11:

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*. {By the way, everything Jesus prayed for - he received or will receive - so we are in!}

In the Gospels, many people like Bartimaeus literally walked with Jesus Christ, but today he is in you, in your heart, according to Colossians 1:27, and Galatians 3:28 reveals, "for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." We still have the same privilege to know Jesus, and be healed of spiritual blindness, and to spiritually be able to see, just as the two men walking home from Emmaus saw the living, resurrected Christ. "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him" (Luke 24:31); these men were not physically blind, but spiritually blind until they, in their heart, followed Jesus in *the way*, just as we may, for when "the heart turns to the Lord," then a "veil" will be "taken away" (II Corinthians 3:12-18).

You may have noticed that through this study of Jericho, we have NOT attempted to prove any harmonies as we have followed Jesus on his journey (other than when the Roman soldiers gambled for Jesus' clothing). We could say that what we have seen was completely harmonious because we have seen no contradictions,

but if we tried to force a harmony into the Jericho story, all we would have shown you is a fairy tale that would have taken us nowhere godly, and consequently, no Jericho Experience could have been savored within our heart.

Each Gospel told a different aspect of one larger narration.

Matthew — he had no need to explain what Mark, Luke, or John made clear.

Mark — he had no reason to detail what Matthew, Luke, or John made obvious.

Luke — he found it unnecessary to expound upon what Matthew, Mark, or John made so very plain.

John — he had no cause to clarify what Matthew, Mark, or Luke made evident.

Others may follow a different way, a way that imitates and simulates the truth or emanates some of the goodness of religion but falls short of the true godliness of Christianity. With Jesus as our guide, we find that the Bible is not full of errors but rather opens up our spiritual understanding.

Ephesians 1:17-19:

-17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

-18: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

-19: And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

We refute the ways and means that boast that the Bible is full of errors and inconsistencies. Some people can say this even with a Bible in hand, as II Peter 2:2 reports, “many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of which the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” The *way of truth* is the way of our Savior and we do not appreciate it when he is *evil spoken of* even in the pretense of religious enlightenment.

Recall at the beginning of this study that the Psalmist prayed, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end” (Psalms 119:33). We have seen that Jesus is that way, *the way* that gives spiritual sight to those who will

believe to receive the truth that leads men and women into a life of godliness and eternity.

The Favor, Gratitude, and Blessing of our Savior and our Heavenly Father. . .

To truly discover Jesus who is *the way*, our primary source for spiritual enlightenment, and to find the how of enjoying a life of harmony with him, our focus is always to look for the perfection of Jesus Christ in the Bible. If Jesus healed somebody on a certain day in one Gospel, and in another Gospel, he heals someone again who had the same or a similar affliction, this does not necessarily mean that Jesus healed the same person unless the Bible emphatically says so. Neither is there a contradiction in those two accounts just because someone will offer a confusing narrative to harmonize these two separate passages. The closest we can get to accuracy would be to honestly admit, “Jesus healed someone again,” because this will harmonize both separate events with the entire Bible — and thankfully, when we do this, we will have the favor, gratitude, and blessing of our Savior and our heavenly Father.

II Corinthians 2:17 reads, “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God”; this verse informs us that there were *many* people even in the first century who were producing *corrupt* inharmonious interpretations and versions of the truth that were spreading in the guise of biblical enlightenment.

Today, not much has changed; the Christian world is increasingly being inundated with studies about God’s Word with escalating regularity. Still, we sincerely believe that in the minority, there are some very good books, studies, and wonderfully inspired men and women of God out there in the Christian world in almost every community that help minister and lead us to Christ, yet II Corinthians 2:17 pointed out that there *are not as many*. We have viewed various details about what actually happened in and around Jericho as the Gospels opened them up to us. You have read a very different story than what *many* other resources and people have put forth, but what is paramount is that believers keep their spiritual eyes fixed on the perfection of Jesus Christ’s life, for he is *the way*.

This study is not written to spotlight negatives with any malice or animosity in our hearts towards others. I have never named names or cited other written works with the ill intent to shame or condemn those who hold to and write different beliefs, and I will not provide lists of books that I suspect are inaccurate Bible studies. Still, it would not be honest or upfront before our God if I did not at least mention some of the misguided concepts that have been portrayed in His Holy

name, and help you differentiate the difference between truth and error. With Christ in our hearts and through having a good foundation of Scripture we will be able to easily separate the truth from error and become amply equipped to see the light and enjoy the blessings contained therein as we advance with him into “the way of peace.”

The “way of peace” far surpasses all errors that ultimately cause confusion, discord, and pandemonium, just as light always dispels darkness in all its forms and instills in the believer’s heart a winsome peace, a spiritual order, and a lovely calmness.

Zacharias prophesied that *the way* was, “To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79). We have so many wonderful things to view through God’s wonderful Word that we really do not have the time or space to view all the sides of what others have preached or produced or published. But in a careful balancing act I inspire to give you at least enough to see the difference through the eyes of our Savior, seeing that the eyes of our understanding are open to heavenly light (Ephesians 1:17-23), as Jesus said, “blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matthew 13:16).

In Proverbs 10:17 we read from the Amplified Bible*, “He who heeds instruction *and* correction {from within the Word, See II Timothy 3:16-17} is [not only himself] in the way of life [but also] is a way of life for others.” We (all) have the God-given right and blessed privilege to speak or write the truth and help *others* come to *the way of life* that is revealed to us in God’s Holy Word. We want to be able to separate out the difference between the light and darkness and between the truth and error, which is difficult to do without having at least a basic knowledge of the disputing sides of a biblical argument or debate. This is why I have shown you some of the various concepts of what others have produced.

Jeremiah 21:8 reads, “Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.” When the *way of life* and *death* were made known and shown side by side, then and only then could the people see enough to choose God’s *way of life* who is literally Jesus Christ. Jesus, *the way of life*, came to deliver us from the thief (the Devil) whose purposes are “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. . .” (i.e., this is *the way of death*, See John 10:10a). On the other side of the spectrum, Jesus in this same verse (John 10:10b) also adds; However, “. . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

Jesus himself guides *our feet into the way of peace* wherein the more abundant life awaits and is given to all those who follow Jesus Christ in the Word.

John 10:27, and 12:26:

-27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

-26: If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

Moses wrote and said, in Deuteronomy 30:19, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life." He gave the people both sides of the argument so that they could acknowledge and discern what was out there and they could *choose* the correct way to follow which would bring the greatest blessing into their lives. All the Prophets, Apostles, and Jesus followed Moses' same example so that the believers would have the best opportunity to *choose* the pathway that Jesus said leads to life. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). Jesus is *the way*, he leads to *life*, the same *life* Moses wanted the believers to *choose*, that same *life* Jesus wants us to *choose*; we want to be in that number of the *few there be that find it!*

Many people cannot overcome the notion that Jesus could never have said or done anything more than once; holding to this belief is one of the main reasons why they envision that the Gospels must harmonize out into one single rendering of Jesus' life and ministry. We know, for instance that there are more than two blind people in almost every community, and dozens of sick folks who are dealing with the same or very similar infirmities. Honestly, we know darn well that the same situations are prevalent everywhere, but when it comes to Jesus, we are often led to believe that he could not have seen or done or said more than one of anything in his entire lifetime.

This notion is almost too silly for serious contemplation, and yet Christendom has been flooded with this type of punctuated foolery! When books are generated to make harmonies in an endeavor to form a synchronization of all of Jesus' life into one simplistic narration, all too often this is done at the utter expense and deprecation of Holy Writ, not to mention that they have never been able to incorporate John's Gospel into their narratives. I am confident that if God wanted one complete harmony written and to be a part of the Bible, He would have used all of the information that is in all four of the Gospels.

Nonetheless, and contrary to popular belief, the Gospel of John will always give details and fit every single time when the other three Gospels do not supply the details. It is a perfect document, and even though John's Gospel appears out of place or character for all too many biblical interpreters and scholars, John is actually a precision timepiece for filling in so many of the (so called) missing blanks that appear to be absent in the other three Gospels. John's Gospel detailed Jesus as the Son of God, and in this view John indeed stands out from the other three Gospels. All believers are also the sons and daughters of God (John 1:12, Romans 8:14, 19, and I John 3:1-2) and stand out from the norm, for they have Christ in them, and they can become one heart with each other and with him, and these blessings cause them to be unique sons and daughters of God in His eyes. The words *sons of God* in the Bible are all-inclusive to include men and women, young and old.

In John 14:11 Jesus said, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." The *very works sake* is what is at stake when the commentaries combine several *works* into one event, for this impinges on one's ability to believe in ALL of the *very works*. How can one believe in all the *works*, if one cannot see them? Many of these harmonies and other various study aids inevitably will show inconsistencies between the separate books, they dispute the ebb and flow of Jesus' life and many inevitably will produce discord and conflict within and between other similar but unrelated Scriptures.

One awesome benefit that we can receive by simply allowing the individual Gospels to state their true narration is that the Gospels will instantly enlarge by two- or three- and sometimes fourfold (John 20:25), and the *very works* to which Jesus had referred to will become much more visible and believable.

What we have read and learned in the Jericho experience was a harmony of a perfect confluence of several events that enhance the overall narration. We can definitely find true harmonies of identical events, as we will see in the next bonus chapter. We must first learn to separate each Gospel and follow them individually and allow them to stand alone and express their inherent story — then, if there is true harmony within one or more of the Gospels, it will reveal itself on its own merits and simultaneously continue to reveal Jesus as *the way*.

A Free Bonus Chapter:

A Night's Journey

A great example of a biblical harmony can be seen when we compare the storm(s) Jesus and his disciples went through on the Sea of Galilee, as are recorded in gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and we will look at the three accounts separately, starting in Matthew.

Matthew 8:23–27:

-23: And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

-24: And, behold, there arose {or *there became*} a great tempest in {or *within*}, the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

-25: And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

-26: And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

-27: But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

To help us distinguish the timing of this event from another related one that we will look at momentarily, let us first notice that the placement of these verses above were before Jesus had called the Twelve Apostles. They were first disciples, i.e., disciplined and committed followers; and then they were chosen as Apostles commencing from Matthew 10:1–2, onward, and so the disciples in the verses above were not yet the Apostles. Let us further note that Matthew was not with Jesus and the other disciples until Matthew 9:9, which was after the crossing and storm that we just quoted above from Matthew 8:23–27.

“And, behold, there arose a great tempest in {*within*}, the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves” (Matthew 8:24). The word *tempest* is the Greek word *seismos* and means a shaking; we get our English word seismic from this word. Unlike a storm that is caused from approaching winds and rains of a formidable weather system and intensifying as it approaches, a *seismos* is an earth-shattering commotion that emanates up from underground or from beneath the sea floor and is caused from the vibrating and shifting to and fro of the earth’s

crust along its fault planes. In fact, everywhere this word *seismos* is used in the entire Bible it is always translated as an “earthquake” except here in Matthew 8:24 (See Matthew 24:7; 27:54; and 28:2). Almost certainly, the translators of Matthew were trying to help clarify the harmonies of another storm in Mark and Luke by translating this Greek word *seismos* into the English word *tempest*, when it is obviously clear that *seismos* should have been translated into the word, earthquake, just as it was translated properly twelve other times in the Bible.

This particular earthquake, or *seismos*, recorded in Matthew was significantly amplified by the use of the word *great*!

Now the phrase *insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves* is interesting because it shows us that Jesus was not in a hollowed out or an opened-decked ship filling up with water, but in the hold below (downstairs) safe from all the goings on above on deck and fast asleep during this earthquake, whereupon his disciples rushed into him, “and awoke *him*, saying, Lord, save us: we perish” (Matthew 8:25). They asked Jesus for help because their faith was literally shaken at that moment. “And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose” (Matthew 8:26).

Jesus first responds by questioning the fears of his disciples, and stating they combined have *little faith*, which, mind you, is some *faith*, but it is not a whole lot of *faith*. Then after this discussion on *little faith* Jesus *arose*, “and {then, he} rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm” (Matthew 8:26).

I can just picture the stillness over the sea now peaceful and tranquil, and not only the environment was calm, but also the hearts and nervous systems of the disciples because the Physician of the heart was present and ministering to their immediate needs and fears, just as he is with us. So awesome must have been the contrast between the noise of the earthquake and swaying waters and then the complete silence of the sea that “the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him” (Matthew 8:27). The answer to *What manner of man is this*, is that he is perfect, and he is our personal friend and Savior!

When Jesus *rebuked the winds and the sea*, he worked two separate miracles. The calming of the *sea* that the earthquake stirred up into raging, topsy-turvy seas, Jesus *rebuked* as the first miracle. Miracle number two was the stilling of the *wind*. Of note is that the wind was not a windstorm of any kind; rather, the wind was whatever wind that happened to be blowing that night — ceased.

The earthquake was over before Jesus actually woke up, but the aftermath of the tumultuousness still caused *the ship* to be *covered with the waves* and when Jesus ceased the *wind* and the *sea*, the night's frights were over.

Let us now move over into the Gospel of Mark and look at a similar, though not identical event, as we just read in Matthew's Gospel:

Mark 4:36-41:

-36: And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

-37: And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

-38: And he {Jesus} was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

-39: And he arose, rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

-40: And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

-41: And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Only with a hurried reading of these verses can one imagine this is the same story as we just looked at in Matthew's Gospel, and the "harminators" (to coin a word), must be hoping that you will believe the two accounts are harmonized or their books will appear practically worthless. Although honestly they are not valueless, I use harmonies now and then to help me locate and study similar events that those books have produced and claimed to be identical. I should tell you that I have never seen a harmony that is completely accurate, but so long as we learn to separate truth from error, then those types of books do have something of value to offer. Often they are edited with great precision and care, and reveal inspiring details that we would perhaps miss on our own, and without a doubt, they contain valuable insights. However, the Word of God is our primary source to finding him who is *the way*, as the Scriptures are already synchronized to the nature and heart of our wonderful Savior.

"And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships" (Mark 4:36). They never *sent away the multitude* in Matthew's Gospel as they did here in Mark. They *took*

him (Jesus) into the ship, meaning the Apostles brought Jesus with them, while in Matthew's Gospel, "his disciples followed him" into the ship (Matthew 8:23). Again, this is a difference in the order of events, plus here in Mark, *there were also with him other little ships*, but in Matthew's account we read about one ship — only.

"And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full" (Mark 4:37). The Greek word for *storm* is *laliaps* meaning a squall, a tempest of wind and rain, a whirlwind or hurricane, but not a *seismos*, an earthquake, as we read in Matthew chapter 8. Now when someone attempts to make both the stormy tempest of wind and the earthquake into one and the same event, we are savvy and able to know the truthful and honest findings of the two separate passages at hand. Simply separating them brings clarity of thought.

To imply that the account in Matthew's Gospel was an airborne storm just to synchronize it with Mark is only accepting someone's hot air (Ephesians 2:2, 4:14), but it is not believing in the fresh air that is detailed in "Every Scripture is God-breathed" (II Timothy 3:16, The Amplified Bible **), of God's perfect Word.

"And he {Jesus} was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?" (Mark 4:38). Here the Apostles did not ask Jesus for any help whatsoever; as they had asked before in Matthew 8:25 pleading, *Lord, save us!* Rather, in this circumstance they accused Jesus, saying in essence, "Don't you care that we are about to die" — *perish*. This is so typical of many people, they read that God is their refuge from the storms of life (Isaiah 25:4), they say it, they admit it to all their friends, shout it out to their neighbors, and preach it from teaching pulpits. But when they really need spiritual strength, help, and guidance, they all too often fall apart, confessing that they have been let down — abandoned or punished by God, when neither are true as wrong thinking and believing is what manifest such thoughts that bring such fears into fruition. It is truth that makes you free, not error, "(For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee" (Deuteronomy 4:31).

Hebrews 13:5:

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

James 1:13:

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

“And he arose, rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?” (Mark 4: 39–40). Notice in Mark that Jesus first *arose* while in Matthew’s account Jesus confronted the disciples unbelief before he *arose* (Matthew 8:26). The reason that Jesus first arose, rebuked the wind, and silenced the sea’s fury was because they were in much more dire need and in real jeopardy of sinking into the depths of the Sea of Galilee. Remember they were in an uncovered ship, and that ship was now full of water, and as well, the storm was still bearing its fury down upon them, and so the circumstances were much more calamitous.

In Mark, Jesus first rebukes the wind and calms the sea, and THEN he questions, *Why are ye so fearful?* Whereas in Matthew Jesus FIRST questions, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” (Matthew 8:26). But in Mark, Jesus questions, *how is it that ye have no faith?*

In Matthew 8:26 Jesus points out that they have “little faith,” and there is a difference between having “no faith” and having a “little faith,” because with just a “little faith” one can believe (Matthew 6:30).

Jesus said, “If ye have faith as {small as} a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20). But without *faith*, we can find no biblical promises to call to our aid in times of trouble and need.

In Mark, there was no *faith* – whatsoever – none to be seen, and thus, they had no *faith* to draw on in a moment of great terror.

Two Old Testament passage from the Amplified Bible come to mind:

Psalms 107:27–30 (The Amplified Bible): *

-27: They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man and are at their wits’ end [all their wisdom has come to nothing].

-28: Then they cry {i.e., prayed} to the Lord in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses.

-29: He hushes the storm to a calm *and* to a gentle whisper, so that the waves of the sea are still.

-30: Then the men are glad because of the calm, and He brings them to their desired haven.

Proverbs 3:25–26 (The Amplified Bible): *

25: Be not afraid of sudden terror and panic, nor of the stormy blast or the storm and ruin of the wicked when it comes [for you will be guiltless],

26: For the Lord shall be your confidence, firm and strong, and shall keep your foot from being caught [in a trap or some hidden danger].

Unbelief and fear is the very reason why they accused Jesus of not caring about their immediate plight in Mark's Gospel. Also, this is the reason they "feared exceedingly" (Mark 4:41), but in Matthew 8:27 they "marveled"; these are totally opposing emotions.

Now we will look at a comparable situation to Matthew and Mark in the Gospel of Luke to see if this third accounting lines up with either of the first two accounts, or if this Gospel reveals a third crossing.

We are still looking for Jesus who is *the way* and the more harmony that we can glean, the greater we will be able to recognize the perfection of both the Word of God and of His Son (John 1:14).

Luke 8:22–25:

-22: Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

-23: But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

-24: And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

-25: And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

The Gospel of Luke, even on the surface appears to be a record of the same night's epic as we just read in Mark. If so, then combining the two recordings can only help supplement as well as harmonize the two accounts, adding supportive information to balance the twofold story God wanted us to understand. Plus, if the two recordings are about the same crossing, then this will help set apart Matthew's detailed account to being one of a separate voyage altogether.

Now if Mark and Luke are truly about the same occurrence, the identical time, and the precise place — then this would be a true, biblical harmony that combines at least two Gospel accounts together, unlike the Jericho story, which was a continuing event seen from the Gospels.

In Luke 6:13 we read, "And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." This verse in Luke is chronologically set before the verses above on the lake and the storm from Luke 8:22–25, so that when Jesus was on that ship, his Apostles were with him. Plus, Luke 6:15 showed the Apostle Matthew present, whereas during the earthquake Matthew was unknown to Jesus and not present. Recall in Matthew's Gospel, the earthquake happened before Jesus' disciples were called to be his Apostles, further cementing the truth that there are at least two separate crossings on the Sea of Galilee from two different passages of Scripture and two unrelated times and events.

Now in Luke, we do not read "And there were also with him other little ships" like we read in Mark 4:36, but we also do not read anything that would dispute this addition, so if this is the same account, then Mark just reveals a detail that will perfectly fit without disputing anything Luke would reveal. "But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy" (Luke 8:23). In Matthew, the earthquake came up from the sea floor, but this storm *came down*. The Greek word for *storm* is *laliaps*, the same Greek word we read in Mark, and even though Mark does not say the storm *came down* as Luke does, Mark brought our attention to the rising seas, saying, "And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship (Mark 4:37), thus filling the ship up with water as it was an uncovered ship without a hold beneath as we read the Gospel of Matthew. Is not the Word of God so precisely exhilarating when we observe how identical stories can augment and add to one another?

“But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy” (Luke 8:23). This flows with Mark’s account, but Luke also adds the word *jeopardy* to express the urgency of the sinking situation the Apostles were in, as this story still agrees with Mark without any contradictions.

“And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish” (Luke 8:24). Again, they do not ask Jesus for any help, as Mark also showed. “Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm” (Luke 8:24). This also coincides with Mark, that Jesus first arose and rebuked both the wind and the sea, making two miracles as Jesus did in Matthew’s Gospel, and thus Luke adds the words *and they ceased* (though we should note that in all we now have four miracles on the sea of Galilee and two separate voyages).

“And he said unto them, Where is your faith? (Luke 8:25). This is further testimony that these are the identical account that Mark reported, because the Apostles not only did not have any *faith*, but Jesus had to ask, where did it go, *Where is your faith?* It was blown away, gone out to sea, and dissipated out into the four winds. “And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him” (Luke 8:25). Here Luke adds the Apostles *being afraid wondered*, Mark includes they “feared exceedingly” (Mark 4:41), wonder and exceeding fear, what a mix of emotions to go through, what a relief it must have been to finally pass through this unharmed.

We can easily follow along with the two accounts of Mark and Luke as they continue to expand in the support of each other. Each additional verse contributes more colorful details while allowing the account to become vibrant and without error, as they help open up our understanding of what happened on that terrifying, blustery night.

This story is not over, there is so much more that we can learn from them, but let us read down a little further in the two identical accounts from Luke and Mark and see where they went, and what happened, and then we will go back to Matthew and bring out a few more details for you that are enlightening.

Their Arrivals. . .

Luke 8:26 reads, “And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes which is over against Galilee.” The *country of the Gadarenes* is located at the southeastern borders of the Sea of Galilee, and extending over to a geographical area approximately six miles southeast from the Sea of Galilee (inland to the city of Gradara), and directly east of where the Jordan River exits down to the Dead Sea. Mark 5:1 also reads, “And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.” In both of these accounts, Jesus heals one possessed man, and both descriptions divulge the same story, each adding separate details that combined make a complete narrative (See Mark 5:1-17, and Luke 8:27-37).

Now in Matthew 8:28, we will read about a different story and landing, “And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes {notice the place we read in Mark and Luke was the Gadarenes, not the Gergesenes} there met him two possessed with devils.” The Gergesenes and Gadarenes are similar looking words with nearly the same number of syllables, but they are not identical words or the same place, and there were *two possessed* men in Matthew, but only one possessed man is seen in both Mark and Luke. The reason for this difference is (again) because this is a completely separate story and place altogether than the ones we read about in Mark and Luke.

Gergesenes is not a town but an area of small towns or seaside hamlets and villages located midway along the eastern banks of the Sea of Galilee north of the *country of the Gadarenes*, while the country of the Gadarenes is further south and east.

The Gergesenes is the reading of the vast amount of Manuscripts left to us (TCB Page 1325), while there has been a longtime movement to merge the words Gergesenes and Gadarenes for the simple purpose of forcing the harmony of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Some scholars combine both places to read, “Gadarenes-Gerasenes” as though Matthew, Mark, and Luke actually meant both places (ZEB Vol. 2. Page 623), but this attempt only leads away from him who is *the way*, and further away from the great truth of Jesus’ life and the two separate miracles as we learn of the *very works sake*, with the two separate crossings we have conclusively observed.

We have some similar-sounding towns in Maine such as Nobleboro and Waldoboro that are in close proximity to each other, but no one would even

consider combining these towns into one! And, anyone living in the midcoast region can find Waldo! Just as true, the writers of the Gospels also knew the difference between Gergesenes and Gadarenes. Even with the stretch of our imaginations, we cannot honestly meld both regions into one or both separate stories into one, because they do not add up to the identical occurrence or place, so let us just allow them to be the way that coincides with the written truth – and – then, believe what is written in the Word.

Years ago, I was visiting a good friend of mine who lived on Staten Island in New York, and as I was leaving the city on my trip back up to the Portland, Maine area, I had planned on traveling as far up as Massachusetts before stopping for gas. It seemed to me that the night's drive through New York went on for a very long time. The same scenery appeared to go on for miles and miles without changing as my gas gauge began running lower, so I stopped for some more fuel, and I asked the attendant, "How many more miles before I am out of New York?" and he started laughing. "What is so funny?" I questioned, and he replied "Well, you are almost in New Hampshire; this is the last stop before you leave Massachusetts."

Perhaps I was just impatient and wanted to get home as quick as I could and I never bothered to read any of the road signs. On the road that night from New York, I could not tell when one city stopped and the next one began because I never saw a break in all the night lights and I felt a little silly when the attendant chuckled, but at least I was almost home. At the time, all I was concerned about is making sure that I stayed on Route One, which would lead me right home and to my front door. This is like the Word of God which confirms the truth; if the searcher will only look at all the road signs clearly marked throughout the Bible, they will see the very distinct path that leads directly to Jesus Christ, and further up to our future home in heaven.

Many of the harmonies and other Bible study aids and helps out there often do not delineate the signposts that distinguish the differences between Gergesenes and Gadarenes; they are all too hurried to follow through with the minute details. Thus, they do not take the time to notice if there is any difference between one or two crossings, or one or two blind men at Jericho, let alone four blind men, so they simply overlap them with jargon that confuses the subject for many a Bible student. Still, they trudge on through the divine narration and integrate the places, the towns, the people, and the separate events into unclear harmonies, and that at the expense of biblical illumination.

Have you seen the game that is shown on children's television shows, or written in children's puzzle books that you often find in doctor's or dentist's waiting rooms, where we see three or four objects or cartoons of people and one of them is different in one way or another? They then ask, sometimes in songs, "one of these is not the same; can you find the different one?" And you know the kids find the different one right away; they see, for instance, the puppet with only one eye, while the others have two eyes. They see the character that is wearing a blue and red striped sweater, when the others have on a solid red one. When they look even closer, they see that the one in the striped sweater also has only one eyebrow, only one shoe, only one button, etcetera. But when children grow up and go into the ministry, for some unknown reason they forget the lessons they learned as children. When it comes to the Bible, they forget what they learned in kindergarten and cannot see the one that is different, as if their common sense along with the rules of language and structure vanish from their heart's foundation.

Matthew 18:4, and 19:14:

-4: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

-14: But Jesus said, Suffer {allow} little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

I am certain that when Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote (for God, II Peter 1:20-21), they were certain about the places that wrote about, and as well, I do not believe they were trying to confuse the harminators or anyone else for that matter. You know, to me it often appears that sometimes people are more concerned with getting the minutest details correct when studying the confusing scrolls and writings and ramblings of the imaginations we have from such false prophets as Mohammad or Nostradamus, than when they are studying the true prophecy of all eternity. Jesus warned us about such false prophets: Matthew 24:23-26 reads, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ {a messiah}, or there {he is}; believe *it* not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before {John 16:1-4}. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, *he is* in the desert {i.e., Mecca in Saudi Arabia, etc.}; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers {"store chamber" where blessings and rewards (from God) are given out (See Mathew 6:6 — BUT}; believe *it* not."

Luke 11:42:

But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint {sweet scents, used in biblical times to spread on the floors of synagogues, and in their homes} and rue {plants} and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment {justice} and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

There is a similar verse to this one in Matthew 23:23 and guess what? The harmonies combine the two verses, although this one in Luke is addressed to only the *Pharisees*, while Matthew's is addressed to both Scribes and Pharisees, and was delivered at a different time, and is not an identical verse, or spoken for the same reasons. When Jesus used the word *Pharisees*, he literally was referring to people who conduct themselves in a strict manner and are bogged down in details that confuse them (II Timothy 3:7), and unfortunately, they are missing the true light that is trying to shine through.

Jesus, in Luke 11:42, was teaching how to receive the greatest blessings in life, and that people need a balance in their lives so as not to go so far overboard and forget the simplest matters of life like true spiritual justice. These biblical truths come to us when we simply walk in love and enjoy the wonderful details discovered in the Word.

In Matthew 7:14 Jesus said "strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." *The way* is Jesus Christ and he leads the *few* to an enjoyable life and the fullness of God.

The Bible never instructs believers to make harmonies out of the Gospels, but to see and acknowledge *the way* and then walk with him who walks with God.

Why are many of the events in the Gospels so similar? That is a very good question and I do NOT have all the answers. I would like to point out though that they only appear alike until one's heart opens up in a sincere search to know his or her Lord and Savior, and then they become very different subjects that are detailed in meticulous ways that thrill and uplift the believing heart for guidance and daily inspiration. For then God in Christ begins pouring understanding into those hearts, and fills them with the warm light of the fullness of God.

God could have inspired a thousand Gospels or more that would be so completely different that no one would ever be able to confuse any one of them with another. After all, God has made no two snowflakes alike and no two people are the same, so our heavenly Father knows how to make things different. You may have

noticed the countless variations of the color green in a forest; it is a most amazing array that He provided for our blessing. Have you seen how the morning or evening skies change into an infinite number of pastel colors ever so slightly with every moment and with every blink of our eyes? Still there are no two sunrises or sunsets alike. These are because our God is multifaceted, and so is the detailed life of Jesus that we are able to discover from the Gospels.

God certainly had enough material to work with to make many more Gospels, as John points out to us in his Gospel. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

I say, let us begin by being thankful that God supplied us with only four short Gospels, and that you and I are some of the fortunate few who now know about the two separate lake crossings and how many blind men Jesus actually healed in his travels in the region of Jericho.

John 20:30-31:

-30: And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

-31: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Jesus did so much more in *the presence of his disciples* that is not recorded; he had done many more *signs* than what is *written* for us in the four Gospels, and still I propose that it would take more time than there is left in this world to actually see and understand all Jesus had done from what God revealed for us in those four little Gospels. For the Scriptures are alive, "*they are spirit and they are life*" (John 6:63), and they are ever rejuvenating and growing in the believer's heart. What is revealed to us is as the Apostle wrote, *written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

Faith's Window into the Promises of God. . .

Hebrews 4:2 records, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." One can spend a lifetime, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7). When folks do not add their believing *faith* with what is written in the Word of God, then it is absolutely

possible to imagine almost anything under the sun, but heavenly truth will remain veiled to them (See I Corinthians 1:18–31; and II Corinthians 3:12–17).

When we supply our own believing *faith*, we effortlessly will be “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2), and then Jesus helps perfect our *faith*, for Jesus completes our believing *faith*.

“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17), but when it is heard out of concert, read distorted from books, and preached inaccurately, then the Word cannot bring understanding, and the inherent *profit* is hindered from giving rest unto one’s soul, “For we which have believed {the Word} do enter into rest” (Hebrews 4:3).

In John 5:38 Jesus said, “And ye have not his {God’s} word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.” Believing in God’s Word — is believing in Jesus Christ, and therefore, believing in Jesus Christ is believing in God’s Word, this is how the preached Word becomes *mixed with faith* and then effortlessly the living *profit* in the Word springs to life in one’s inner soul.

Matthew 11:27–30:

-27: All things {Jesus said} are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

-28: Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

-29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

-30: For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus “saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed (John 20:29).

Today, we do not literally see Jesus; we have not walked and talked with him on the road to Emmaus or heard his teachings — live.

We have not seen his miracles, but with our believing *faith* we have traveled with him, we have sailed across the Sea of Galilee twice, and we have seen him open the eyes of the blind on the waysides and highway of Jericho, and we have experienced these by our believing *faith* that Jesus performed such amazing miracles. Therefore, we certainly are *blessed*, because *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!*

We, as well as those in the Gospels, have been confronted with our *faith* to believe the Word. Jesus questions, where is your faith? This is still being asked, and is still a challenge from God's living Word to us in grace. Jesus said *learn of me*, and have we? Have we found the promised *rest* unto our *souls* through Christ? Is our *faith* lost in the fog, carried away out into the storm and shaken up by the skepticism of the crowds, or is our believing *faith* being inspired to grow in the knowledge of the author and finisher of our faith, and are we walking with him who is *the way* as we enjoy the peaceful *rest* that Jesus gives to our *soul*?

The Bible is figuratively our burning bush, like Moses who saw the bush and heard the Word of God – the Bible is our evidence of spiritual matters – it is the connection point between that which is physical and that which is truly spiritual.

I Corinthians 2:9–10 records, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep {the spiritual depths of the true} things of God.” Through following Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, we are lead to *the way* that directs our hearts into the realities of our heavenly Father.

I Corinthians 1:18:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

The preaching of the cross is to preach the details of all that the cross of Christ made available to us, and is plainly seen in the Gospels as we continue learning more and more about our risen Savior and our faith is our window into the promises of God.

The word *perish* in I Corinthians 1:18 relates to those who have yet to be saved (but does not mean they never will be saved), as many unsaved people do think that the Bible is nothing but a bunch of *foolishness* or a book of condemnation; nevertheless, to those who are *saved*, they have begun to grasp the wonderfulness contained in the depths of Word of God.

Whenever we believers begin understanding the Scriptures, it is because the spiritual *power of God* is at work in our inner hearts, and because Christ is enlightening and is inspiring within, “Christ {is} the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (I Corinthians 1:24).

Most assuredly, we have been drawn in closer to our Lord and Savior's love through acquiring an understanding of the Gospels, and we are, as Jesus said to Thomas, *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

II Corinthians 9:15 cheers, "Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift." The essence of the words *unspeakable gift* is that knowing and walking with God is beyond words, still faith is our connection to him, and we certainly may be thankful to have been able to spiritually see Jesus in the Word of life.

I Peter 1:8:

Whom {Jesus Christ} having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Hebrews 4:12 informs us "the word of God *is* quick, and powerful" and this can be translated as, "The Word of God is living energy." The Amplified Bible** renders this to read as follows, "For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]."

Whenever there is a true harmony between different sections within the books of the Bible, they will never run at cross purposes or subtract from each other, but rather will highlight as well as supplement the details of divine light. They always will bring one closer to the Bible's intrinsic subject — Jesus Christ, who is not only *the way*, but also the complete tapestry of *the truth*.

God Bless You!

Benediction:

Critics so often see wasted space in three repetitive Gospels and one out of place; however, we notice a multiplicity of exciting details. The skeptics see imperfect documents; nevertheless, we perceive the perfection of beauty in every word. The cynics see unbelievable legends and myths; though, we witness authentic revelations of the Son of God who is *the way*. The agnostics see in the spirit of blindness and carelessness – inconsistency, “their eyes were holden that they should not know him” (Luke 24:16); nonetheless, we observe glimpses and revelations from the spirit of truth that opens the joy and rejoicing of our hearts, “And their eyes were opened, and they knew him” (Luke 24:31). The pessimists see incomplete thoughts and sentences; conversely, we discern what our faith has afforded us, wholeness, and with our spiritual understanding we delightfully walk with Jesus by *the way* and say, “one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures” (Luke 24:32).

Matthew 13:14-17:

-14: And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

-15: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and *their* eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

-16: But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

-17: For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

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