

INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE GOSPELS

I. Importance of Genre Identification

- A. Readers expectations
- B. Example
- C. The point is:

II. The Scholars Task

A. Two tasks

- *To describe*
- *To explain*

B. Four basic factors

III. A Forty-year gap from Jesus to the Gospels

1. The Gospels not written by Jesus
2. The writing of the Gospels were delayed

IV. Translation from Aramaic to Greek

1. Jesus taught in Aramaic, but the Gospels were written in Greek.
2. All translation involves interpretation.
3. The point is:

V. Gospel Writers Used the Same Material¹

1. Use same material.
2. Synoptic.

¹ See Robert Stein, *The Synoptic Problem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) chapter 1.

3. The Synoptic Gospels differ in size²

Matthew	28 chapters	1068 verses	18,293 words
Mark	16 chapters	661 verses	11,025 words
Luke	24 chapters	1149 verses	19, 376 words

Of the 18,293 words in Matthew, 7,392 (40.4%) have no parallel in Mark
 Of the 19,376 words in Luke, 10,259 (52%) have no parallel in Mark.

4. Evidence of borrowing (interdependence).

V. Evidence of borrowing (interdependence)

A. Exact verbal parallel

T§2: John the Baptist	
Matt 3:7-10	Luke 3:7-9
3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “ <u>You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?</u> 3:8 <u>Bear fruit that befits repentance.</u> 3:9 <u>and do not presume (dokeō) to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.</u> 3:10 <u>Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”</u>	3:7 He said therefore to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, “ <u>You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?</u> 3:8 <u>Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin (archō) to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.</u> 3:9 <u>Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”</u>

B. Similarity in Wording

1. Example: T§12: Jesus in the Synagogue at Capernaum

Matt 7:28-29	Mark 1:21-28	Luke 4:31-37
7:28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 7:29 for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.	1:21 And they went into <u>Capernaum</u> ; and immediately <u>on the sabbath</u> he entered the synagogue and <u>taught</u> . 1:22 <u>And they were astonished at his teaching, for</u> he taught them as one who had <u>authority</u> , and not as the scribes. 1:23 <u>And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit;</u> 1:24 <u>and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you</u>	4:31 And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And <u>he was teaching</u> them on <u>the sabbath</u> ; 4:32 <u>and they were astonished at his teaching,</u> for his word was with <u>authority</u> . 4:33 <u>And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon; and he cried out with a loud voice, 4:34 “Ah! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who</u>

² Robert Stein, *The Synoptic Problem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 48.

Matt 7:28-29	Mark 1:21-28	Luke 4:31-37
	<p><u>come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."</u> 1:25 <u>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!"</u> 1:26 <u>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.</u> 1:27 <u>And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."</u> 1:28 <u>And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.</u></p>	<p><u>you are, the Holy One of God."</u> 4:35 <u>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!"</u> <u>And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm.</u> 4:36 <u>And they were all amazed and said to one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."</u> 4:37 <u>And reports of him went out into every place in the surrounding region.</u></p>

2. T§188: Jesus blesses the children
3. T§207: Question about the resurrection
4. T§214: Signs of the End of the Age

C. Similarity in Order³

1. First example

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
a. Jesus' teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum		1:21-22	4:31-32
b. Jesus' healing of the demoniac in Capernaum		1:23-28	4:33-37
c. Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39
d. Jesus' healing in the evening	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41
e. Jesus leaves Capernaum		1:35-38	4:42-43
f. Jesus' preaching in Galilee—a summary	4:23	1:39	4:44
g. The miraculous catch of fish			5:1-11
h. Jesus' healing of the leper	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16
i. Jesus' healing of the paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26
j. The calling of Levi	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32
k. Controversy over fasting	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-39
l. Controversy over plucking grain	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5
m. Controversy over healing on the sabbath	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11
n. Healing by the sea—a summary	4:24-25	3:7-12	6:17-19
	12:15-16		
o. The choosing of the Twelve	10:1-4	3:13-19	6:12-16

³The following tables are from Robert Stein, *Synoptic Problem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 35-6.

2. Second example

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
a. Peter's confession of Christ	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21
b. First passion prediction	16:21-23	8:31-33	9:22
c. Teachings on discipleship	16:24-28	8:34-9:1	9:23-27
d. The transfiguration	17:1-9	9:2-10	9:28-36
e. Concerning the return of Elijah	17:10-13	9:11-13	
f. Jesus' healing of the demon-possessed boy	17:14-21	9:14-29	9:37-43a
g. Second passion prediction	17:22-23	9:30-32	9:43b-45
h. The temple tax	17:24-27		
i. Teachings on true greatness	18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48
j. Concerning the use of Jesus' name		9:38-41	9:49-50
k. Teachings on temptations	18:6-9	9:42-50	17:1-2 14:34-35
l. Parable of the lost sheep	18:10-14		15:3-7
m. Teachings on reproving a brother	18:15-18		
n. Teachings on the presence of Jesus	18:19-20		
o. Teachings on reconciliation with a brother	18:21-22		17:4
p. Parable of the unforgiving servant	18:23-35		
q. Departure to Judea	19:1-2	10:1	9:51
<i>Largest block of Lukan teaching material</i>			(9:51-18:14)
r. Teachings on divorce	19:3-12	10:2-12	
s. Jesus blesses the children	19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17
t. The rich young man	19:16-22	10:17-22	18:18-23
u. Teachings on the dangers of riches	19:23-30	10:23-31	18:24-30
v. Parable of the laborers in the vineyard	20:1-16		
w. Third passion prediction	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34
x. The request of the sons of Zebedee	20:20-28	10:35-45	
y. The healing of the blind man	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43

3. Third example

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
a. The mother and brothers of Jesus	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21
b. Parable of the sower	13:1-9	4:1-9	8:4-8
c. Why Jesus taught in parables	13:10-17	4:10-12	8:9-10
d. The interpretation of the parable of the sower	13:18-23	4:13-20	8:11-15
e. Parables of lamp on a stand and "measure upon measure"		4:21-25	8:16-18
f. Parable of the growing seed		4:26-29	
g. Parable of the weeds	13:24-30		
h. Parable of the mustard seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19
i. Parable of the leaven	13:33		13:20-21
j. Jesus' use of parables	13:34-35	4:33-34	
k. The interpretation of the parable of the weeds	13:36-43		
l. Parables of hidden treasure and pearl	13:44-46		
m. Parable of the net	13:47-50		
n. Parable of the householder	13:51-52		
o. Jesus stills the storm	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25
p. Jesus heals the Gerasene demoniac	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39
q. Jesus heals Jairus' daughter	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56
r. Jesus rejected at Nazareth	13:53-58	6:1-6a	(4:16-30)

D. Similarity in Parenthetical Material

1. Example: “Let the reader understand” in **T§216**: The Desolating Sacrilege
2. Example: “Then he said to the paralytic” in **T§52**: The Healing of the Paralytic

E. Similarity in Biblical Quotations

1. Example: The quotation from Isaiah in **T§1**: John the Baptist

Matt 3:3	Mark 1:2-3	Luke 3:4
<p>This is the one of whom the <u>prophet Isaiah</u> spoke when he said, “<u>The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'</u>” (NRSV)</p> <p>οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ῥηθεὶς διὰ Ἰσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ.</p>	<p>As it is written in the <u>prophet Isaiah</u>, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, <u>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'</u>” (NRSV).</p> <p>Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἰσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ· ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου· φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ,</p>	<p>As it is written in the book of the words of the <u>prophet Isaiah</u>, “<u>The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'</u>” (NRSV)</p> <p>ὡς γέγραπται ἐν βίβλῳ λόγων Ἰσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου· φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ·</p>

<p>Isa. 40:3</p>
<p>NRSV: <u>A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.</u> (NRSV)</p>
<p>LXX: φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν</p>
<p>Hebrew: קוֹל קוֹרֵא בַּמִּדְבָּר פָּנוּ דֶרֶךְ יְהוָה יִשְׂרוּ בְעֵרְבָה מַסְלָה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ <small>our God a highway the desert make the LORD the way clear the wilderness is calling a voice</small></p>

2. Example: Mark 7:7. “[As Isaiah said] ...7:7 in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.” (See parallel in Matt 15:9).

VI. Gospel Writers were Editors

A. Same units, different combinations

Matthew's Sermon on the Mount		Luke	Mark
1 The Beatitudes	5:3-12	6:20b-23	—
2 Parable of Salt	5:13	14:34-35	9:49-50
3 Parable of Light	5:14-16	8:16	4:21
4 The Law and the Prophets	5:17-20	16:16-17	—
5 On Murder	5:21-26	12:57-59	—
6 On Adultery	5:27-30	—	—
7 On Divorce	5:31-32	16:18	10:11-12
8 On Oaths	5:33-37	—	—
9 On Retaliation	5:38-42	6:29-30	—
10 On Love for One's Enemies	5:43-48	6:27-28, 32-36	—
11 On Almsgiving	6:1-4	—	—
12 On Prayer	6:5-8	—	—
13 The Lord's Prayer	6:9-15	11:1-4	—
14 On Fasting	6:16-18	—	—
15 On Treasures in Heaven	6:19-21	12:33-34	—
16 Good Eyes	6:22-23	11:34-36	—
17 On Serving Two Masters	6:24	16:13	—
18 On Anxiety	6:25-34	12:22-32	—
19 On Judging Others	7:1-5	6:37-42	4:24-25
20 On Profaning the Holy	7:6	—	—
21 On Answers to Prayer	7:7-11	11:9-13	—
22 The Golden Rule	7:12	6:31	—
23 The Narrow Gate	7:13-14	13:23-24	—
24 Parable of the Tree and its Fruit	7:15-20	6:43-45	—
25 Sayings, "Lord, Lord"	7:21-23	6:46; 13:25-27	—
18 The Wise and Foolish Builders	7:24-27	6:47-49	—
19 End of the Sermon	7:28-29	—	—

Observations: What do we observe? Describe objectively what you see.

Explanations: How can we explain this?

B. Same account, different lengths

1. Example: **T§106** The Gerasens Demoniac

How many verses?

- Mark =
- Matthew =
- Luke =

2. Example: **T§107** Jairus' Daughter and a Woman's Faith

How many verses?

- Mark =
- Matthew =
- Luke =

C. Same account, different emphases

T §46: The Centurion's Servant	
Matt 8:5-13	Luke 7:1-10
<p>8:5 As <u>he entered Caper'na-um, a centurion</u> came forward to him, beseeching him 8:6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." 8:7 And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." 8:8 But <u>the centurion</u> answered him, "Lord, <u>I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.</u> 8:9 <u>For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, Go,' and he goes, and to another, Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, Do this,' and he does it."</u> 8:10 <u>When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said</u> to those <u>who followed him</u>, "Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith (<i>pistis</i>). 8:11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 8:12 while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." 8:13 And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; be it done for you as you have believed (<i>pisteō</i>)" And the servant was healed at that very moment.</p>	<p>7:1 After he had ended all his sayings in the hearing of the people <u>he entered Caper'na-um.</u> 7:2 Now <u>a centurion</u> had a slave who was dear to him, who was sick and at the point of death. 7:3 When he heard of Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his slave. 7:4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, 7:5 for he loves our nation, and he built us our synagogue." 7:6 And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, <u>the centurion sent friends to him</u>, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for <u>I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; 7:7 therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed.</u> 7:8 <u>For I am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, Go,' and he goes; and to another, Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, Do this,' and he does it."</u> 7:9 <u>When Jesus heard this he marveled</u> at him, and turned <u>and said</u> to the multitude <u>that followed him</u>, "<u>I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.</u>" 7:10 And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave well.</p>

Observations: Is the core of each story the same story? If so, what are some major differences between the two accounts?

Explanations:

What inferences can we draw?

What would say is the *central message* of both accounts?

Why do you suppose the evangelists told the story differently?

What are the different theological emphases?

- **Matthew** seems to emphasize what?
- **Luke** seems to emphasize what?

Comment:

D. Same account with corrections

T§108: Jesus' Rejection at Nazareth	
Matt 13:53-58	Mark 6:1-6a
<p>13:53 And when Jesus had finished these parables, <u>he went away from there</u>, 13:54 <u>and coming to his own country he taught them in their synagogue</u>, so that <u>they were astonished, and said</u>, "<u>Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?</u>" 13:55 <u>Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?</u> 13:56 <u>And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?"</u> 13:57 <u>And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them</u>, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." 13:58 <u>And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.</u></p>	<p>6:1 <u>He went away from there and came to his own country</u>; and his disciples followed him. 6:2 And on the sabbath <u>he began to teach in the synagogue</u>; and many who heard him <u>were astonished</u>, saying, "<u>Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands!</u>" 6:3 <u>Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.</u> 6:4 <u>And Jesus said to them</u>, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own kin, <u>and in his own house.</u>" 6:5 <u>And he could do no mighty work there</u>, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them. 6:6 And he marveled <u>because of their unbelief.</u></p>

Observations: Is this the same account? If so, what are some of the significant differences you see?

- Carpenter
- Mary
- Jesus' wisdom and works
- Mighty works

Explanation: If Matthew was copying from Mark, how do you explain the differences?

- Carpenter
- Mary
- Jesus' wisdom and works
- Mighty works

Comments:

E. Same tradition, different versions

T §30: The Lord's Prayer	
Matt 6:9-15	Luke 11:2-4
6:9 Pray then like this: Our <u>Father</u> who art in heaven, <u>Hallowed be thy name</u> . 6:10 <u>Thy kingdom come</u> . Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 6:11 <u>Give us this day our daily bread</u> ; 6:12 <u>And forgive us our debts</u> [<i>opheilēmata</i>], As <u>we</u> also have <u>forgiven</u> our <u>debtors</u> ; 6:13 <u>And lead us not into temptation</u> , But deliver us from evil. 6:14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; 6:15 but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.	11:2 And he said to them, "When you pray, say: " <u>Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come</u> . 11:3 <u>Give us each day our daily bread</u> ; 11:4 <u>and forgive us our sins</u> [<i>hamartias</i>], for <u>we</u> ourselves <u>forgive</u> every one who is <u>indebted</u> to us; <u>and lead us not into temptation</u> ."

Observation: Are there enough similarities to say we dealing with the same prayer? If so, what differences do you see?

Explanation: How can we explain the differences?

VII. Conclusions

A. Luke 1:1-4

T§E: Luke's Prologue to the Gospel
<p>Luke 1:1-4. ¹ Since <u>many have undertaken to set down an orderly account</u> of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³ <u>I too decided</u>, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, <u>to write an orderly account</u> for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. (NRSV)</p>

B. Conclusions and Implications

First, to understand the nature of the Gospels, we make meticulous and disciplined *observations* and then we offer *explanations* of what we see.

Second, we observe that the Synoptic Gospels show literary *interdependence*. That is, the agreements in wording, order, parenthetical comments, and biblical quotations suggest that Matthew, Mark, and Luke used a common written source as a basis for their Gospels.

Third, the Gospel writers were editors. That is, they use the same units, but organized them in different combinations, added and subtracted material, provided corrections, and gave different versions. In this way, each writer shaped their Gospel to emphasis different things. As editors or redactors, each writer has something unique to tell us. For this reason, for example, we

should “let Matthew be Matthew” and not force Matthew to fit Mark or Luke’s agenda. Furthermore, we should not force the Gospels into some an artificial one Gospel harmony.

Fourth, the differences in the order of material suggest the Gospels do not reveal the exact historical chronology of Jesus’ life. At best, the Gospels give a rough chronology of Jesus’ life. The Gospels move from birth & baptism to crucifixion & resurrection. They move from a Galilean ministry to a Judean ministry.

Fifth, the Gospels seem to be organized by subject matter or topic, not by exact historical chronology. For example:

- Mark puts five miracles together in Mk 1:23 - 2:12.
- Mark puts five controversy stories in Mk 2:13 - 3:6.
- Matthew puts parables together in chapter 13
- Matthew alternates between collections of narratives and sayings:
 - Narratives 1-4
 - Sayings 5-7
 - Narratives 8-9
 - Sayings 10
 - Narratives 11-12
 - Sayings 13
 - Narratives 14-17
 - Sayings 18
 - Narratives 19-22
 - Sayings 23-25
 - Narratives 26-28

Sixth, the Gospels are human products. Their origin and development can be understood and explained in the same way as other literary pieces. This does not eliminate God from superintending the process. What it does mean is the Gospels can be understood and appreciated by using ordinary literary and historical analysis that we use on other pieces of human literature.