

MARKAN PRIORITY

I. Explaining the Gospel similarities — The Synoptic Problem

A. How much overlap is there? ¹

Mark 661 verses (11,025 words)

Luke 1149 verses (19,376 words)

Matthew 1068 verses (18,293 words)

Matthew reproduces 606 (92%) of Mark's 661 verses, but he compresses Mark's 606 verses into 500 verses.

Luke reproduces about 584 (88%) of Mark's 661 verses, but he compresses Mark's 584 verses into about 350 verses.

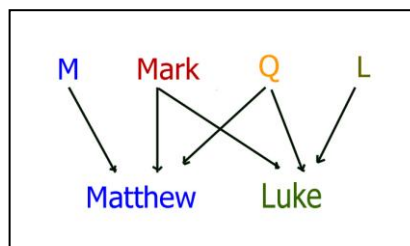
Mark has material not reproduced in either Matthew or Luke, but only 132 words.

B. Why the similarities?

1. Holy Spirit?
2. Narrate same event?
3. Common oral sources?
4. Common written sources?

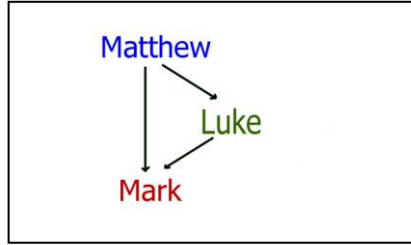
C. Synoptic theories and hypotheses

1. Four Source Hypothesis — Streeter (1924) and most scholars today

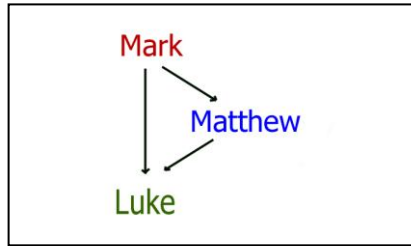


¹The following statistics are based on William Barclay, *Introduction To The First Three Gospels* (Revised Edition, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 86, and from Stein, *The Synoptic Problem*, 48. Barclay's and Stein's statistics do not agree completely, particularly regarding how much of Mark is reproduced in Luke.

2. Two Gospel Hypothesis — Griesbach (1783) and Farmer (1964)



3. Farrer Hypothesis — Farrer (1955) and Mark Goodacre (2000)



II. The Priority of Mark²

A. First: Length

Fact:

Assumption:

1st Problem:

2nd Problem:

B. Second: Grammar and style

Fact:

Assumption:

Evidence:

1. Corrected subject-verb disagreement

T#105: The Stilling of the Storm		
Matt 8:18, 23-27	Mark 4:35-41	Luke 8:22-25
8:27 They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea [plural subject] obey [plural verb] him?"	4:41. And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea [plural subject] obey	8:25 He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds

² The following arguments are from Stein, *The Synoptic Problem*, 48-88.

T#105: The Stilling of the Storm		
Matt 8:18, 23-27	Mark 4:35-41	Luke 8:22-25
	[singular verb] him?"	and the water [plural subject], and they obey [plural verb] him?"

2. Eliminated Aramaic expressions

Examples of Matthew and Luke eliminating Mark's Aramaic expressions:

- Mk 3:17 James and John are called *Boanerges* (sons of thunder); not in Mt or Lk
- Mk 5:41 Jesus says "*Talitha cumi*" (little girl arise); not in Mt or Lk
- Mk 7:11 Jesus uses term *Corban* (given to God); not in Mt
- Mk 7:34 Jesus says *Ephaphatha* (be opened); not in Mt
- Mk 14:36 Jesus prays *Abba*; not in Mt or Lk
- Mk 15:22 Jesus crucified at *Golgotha* (place of skull); in Mt, but not Lk
- Mk 15:24 Jesus says *Eloi, Eloi* (my God, my God); in Mt

3. Eliminated Mark's redundancies

a. Example: **T§14: The Sick Healed at Evening**

Mark 1:32: "that evening, at sundown ..."
 Matt 8:16: "that evening"
 Luke 4:40: "at sundown"

b. Example: **T§45: The Healing of a Leper**

Mark 1:42: "And immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed"
 Matt 8:3b: "Immediately his leprosy was cleansed."
 Luke 5:13c: "Immediately the leprosy left him."

4. Eliminates Mark's stylistic annoyances

Mark uses the term "immediately" (*euthus*) 41 times to join passages, but Matthew reduces the uses *euthus* to 5 times, Luke once. Matthew and Luke stylistically clean up Mark. For example, see the eleven times Mark uses "immediately" in Mk 1:10-43.

Mark 1:10-43 (NASB)
¹⁰ And <u>immediately</u> (<i>euthus</i>) coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him;
¹² And <u>immediately</u> (<i>euthus</i>) the Spirit impelled Him <i>to go</i> out into the wilderness.
¹⁸ And they <u>immediately</u> (<i>euthus</i>) left the nets and followed Him.
²⁰ And <u>immediately</u> (<i>euthus</i>) He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.
²¹ And they went into Capernaum; and <u>immediately</u> (<i>euthus</i>) on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and <i>began</i> to teach.

²³ And just then [immediately] (*euthus*) there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

²⁸ And immediately (*euthus*) the news about Him went out everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

²⁹ And immediately (*euthus*) after they had come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately (*euthus*) they spoke to Him about her.

⁴² And immediately (*euthus*) the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

⁴³ And He sternly warned him and immediately (*euthus*) sent him away (NASB)

C. Third: Difficult readings

Fact:

Assumption:

Evidence:

1. Negative statements about Jesus

T §14: The Sick Healed at Evening		
Matt 8:16-17	Mark 1:32-34	Luke 4:40-41
<p>¹⁶ That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. ¹⁷ This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."</p>	<p>³² That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴ And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.</p>	<p>⁴⁰ As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them. ⁴¹ Demons also came out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah.</p>

2. Negative statements about disciples eliminated

a. Example: T§93: The Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower		
Matt 13:18-23	Mark 4:13-20	Luke 8:11-15
<p>13:18 Here then the parable of the sower. 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is</p>	<p>4:13 And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables?" 4:14 The sower sows the word....</p>	<p>8:11 Now the parable is this....</p>

a. Example: T§93: The Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower		
Matt 13:18-23	Mark 4:13-20	Luke 8:11-15
sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path ...		

b. Example **T§113**: Walking on Water

c. Example: **T§188**: Jesus Blesses the Children

d. Example: **T§70**: Healing the Man with the Withered Hand

D. Fourth: Verbal agreement and order

Claim: *Matthew did not know Luke, nor vice versa, but both know Mark.*

Assumption: *If person A and B are independently copying from person C, person A and B will follow B, but on occasion change B's order, but in different ways.*

Evidence:

E. Fifth: Redactions

Claim:

Assumption:

Evidence:

1. Corrections

T#69: Plucking Heads of Grain on the Sabbath		
Matt 12:1-8	Mark 2:23-28	Luke 6:1-5
12:1 At that time Jesus went <u>through the grainfields</u> on the sabbath; <u>his disciples</u> were hungry, and they <u>began to pluck heads of grain</u> and to eat. 12:2 But when <u>the Pharisees</u> saw it, they <u>said to him</u> , "Look, your disciples are <u>doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath</u> ." 12:3 <u>He said to them</u> , "Have you not read what David <u>did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him</u> : 12:4 <u>how he entered the house of God</u>	2:23 One <u>sabbath he was going through the grainfields</u> ; and as they made their way <u>his disciples began to pluck heads of grain</u> . 2:24 And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they <u>doing what is not lawful on the sabbath</u> ?" 2:25 And he said to them, " <u>Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him</u> : 2:26 <u>how he entered the house of God, when Abi'athar was high priest</u> , and ate	6:1 On a <u>sabbath</u> , while <u>he was going through the grainfields</u> , <u>his disciples</u> plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 6:2 But some of <u>the Pharisees</u> said, " <u>Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath</u> ?" 6:3 And Jesus answered, " <u>Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him</u> : 6:4 <u>how he entered the house of God, and took and ate</u>

<p><u>and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?</u> 12:5 Or have you not read in the law how on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? 12:6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. 12:7 And if you had known what this means, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. 12:8 <u>For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath.</u>"</p>	<p><u>the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?"</u> 2:27 <u>And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath;</u> 2:28 so <u>the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.</u>"</p>	<p><u>the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?"</u> 6:5 <u>And he said to them, "The Son of man is lord of the sabbath."</u></p>
---	--	---

2. Matthew's Theological additions

- Matthew uses the title "Son of David" eleven times,³ but only four have parallels in Mark and Luke.⁴
- Matt 12:9 gives Jesus the title, "Son of David," but Mark and Luke omit it.
- If Matthew was prior, why would Mark or Luke omit the phrase "Son of David"? It is more likely that Matthew added it to his Markan source.

F. Sixth: Primitive theology

Claim:

Assumption:

Evidence:

G. Conclusion

³Matthew 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, 45.

⁴Mark 10:47, 48; 12:35, 37; Lk 18:38, 39; 20:41, 44.