JESUS,
KING OF ISRAEL

Toward a Final Quest for the Historical Jesus

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Chapter Eight

On the Non-Existence of Q

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ON THE NON-EXISTENCE OF Q

Most scholars believe that the material that Matthew and Luke share that did not come from the Gospel of Mark was drawn from another missing source document that consisted mostly of sayings of Jesus. This hypothetical missing source is commonly referred to as "Q." The objective of this chapter is to illustrate that the Q theory is logically problematic and internally self-contradictory. A more comprehensive explanation for the material that Matthew and Luke share in common is that the author of Matthew drew it from the Gospel of Luke directly.

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It is almost universally agreed among NT scholars that the authors of Matthew and Luke each used the earlier *Gospel of Mark* in some form as a primary source. However, there are 230+ verses that appear in both Matthew and Luke that do not exist in Mark. Collectively, the material that appears in both Matthew and Luke but not Mark is referred to as the *double tradition*. Most of this double tradition material consists of sayings as opposed to narrative, but there is some narrative content as well. Many of the double tradition sayings appear in the same order in the two gospels, and often there is high verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke as if one had copied directly from the other. An example:

Table 8.1: The Preaching of John the Baptist

Luke 3.7–9	**Matt 3.7–10**
7 **He said therefore to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him,** "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not **begin** 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. 9 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."	**7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism**, he said to them,"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit that befits repentance, and do not **presume** 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. 10 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."

How might one account for the high verbatim reproduction in these two gospels? Of course, the simplest explanation would be that the later of Matthew or Luke simply copied from the earlier gospel. However, most scholars reject this as a possibility. One reason is that Matthew and Luke have radically different infancy narratives and genealogies at the beginning of their gospels, and incompatible resurrection accounts at the end—their stories diverge dramatically at the point their Markan source ends at 16.8. So as the theory goes, neither of these two authors could have been aware of the other's work, for if the later author had known the earlier work, he surely would not have incorporated such disparate and even contradictory traditions into the gospel record.

Now, if it is true that the authors of Matthew and Luke did not know each other's work, how may we account for the 230+ non-Markan verses they share in common, as well as their high verbatim agreements? In 1838, Christian Hermann Weisse floated the theory that Matthew and Luke may each have had access to a primitive collection of sayings that subsequently disappeared from the historical record. If both authors had copied sayings from this early collection, this would have made it appear as if one had copied from the other. And with that the academy, inspired by the potential discovery of a lost text, began to reconstruct this lost sayings source by isolating the non-Markan material that Matthew and Luke had in common. They referred to this newly "discovered" hypothetical document as "Q" (for the German *quelle*, meaning *source*). And with the successful "reconstruction" of Q, we appeared to gain insight into rhetoric that was being attributed to Jesus at an early period of the movement's development. So Q is often regarded as a unique window into the historical Jesus. Since Matthew and Luke are each imagined to have used both the *Gospel of Mark* and the hypothetical Q as their two primary source documents, the Q theory is known more formally to scholars as the "Two-Document Hypothesis," or 2DH. For simplicity's sake, I will continue to refer to it here simply as the Q theory.

I suspect that the Q theory will soon become recognized as another unfortunate error in NT scholarship. For the premise that the Q theory is erected upon is questionable and likely false, and its corollary implications are in practical terms somewhat absurd. The fundamental premise—that the later of the two authors would not have introduced contradictory material into the gospel tradition had they known the earlier work—is easily demonstrated to be fallacious as will be illustrated below. However, it is essential to note

an implication of the findings in the previous chapter—that the original *Gospel of Luke* commenced at 3.1. Once Luke is interpreted as a work that commenced at the same point in the narrative as the *Gospel of Mark*, and the authorship of Luke 3–24 has been dissociated from Luke 1–2 and Acts, it looks like a much earlier composition than it does in its canonical form. There is no reason to date Luke 3–24 beyond about 80 CE.

Thus, one might start with the obvious: When Luke 3–24 is compared to the *Gospel of Matthew*, it is Matthew which stands out clearly as the more sophisticated and refined of the two. As compared to Luke, Matthew has a more polished and formalized Great Sermon format, a far more robust rendition of the Beatitudes, and a more extensive collection of moral sayings that are in practical terms a superset of the moral sayings found in Luke. Matthew also presents a more developed theory of the intimate fatherhood of God, a more extreme and expanded vision of end times and judgment, a more mature rendering of the Lord's Prayer, and a more liturgically refined Great Commission. Across the board, Luke appears to contain earlier, more adolescent versions of all these features and categories of thought. Therefore, Matthew appears to be the later of the two gospels simply on the grounds that some time must have been required for all of these elements to have evolved into their more sophisticated Matthean forms. In addition, Matthew contains three references to the church (ekklēsia in 16.18, 18.17a,b) which reflect the author's awareness of the church as a formalized institution. This term appears frequently in Acts but never in Luke. Thus, an assumption that Matthew was composed in the 85–100 timeframe would allow time for the development of the more evolved and sophisticated renderings in Matthew vis a vis Luke 3–24, if we suppose the latter appeared by about 80 CE.

Accordingly, if we are to imagine a direct dependence of one author upon the other, we should at least consider the possibility that Matthew was the later of the two, and that he was using/responding to Luke 3–24. Under these circumstances, let us return to the premise upon which the Q theory is founded: Is it fair to presume that the author of Matthew would not have introduced contradictory infancy, genealogy, and resurrection traditions into the gospel record had he known Luke? With respect to infancy narratives, since Matthew would have been using a copy of Luke that opened at 3.1 without the infancy narrative, his infancy narrative would not have been in conflict with Luke; rather, he would simply have been the first to expand the narrative scope of the gospel genre to include an infancy tale.

Second, since Matthew and Luke do indeed record incompatible genealogies, may we presume that Matthew would not have introduced a conflicting genealogy had he known Luke's? Here we touch upon one of the constitutional disagreements between Matthew and Luke. Luke 3–24 imagines the history of Israel and the fathers as being largely irrelevant to the Jesus story. In Luke's genealogy, Abraham is buried deep in the list of 77 generations going from Jesus all the way back to the first man Adam. Abraham's presence in the lineage is of no consequence at all. In stark contrast, Matthew represents the history of Israel as foundational to the Jesus story—he views Jesus as the inevitable fulfillment of the hope and destiny of Israel. Accordingly, Matthew's genealogy opens by featuring Jesus as a direct descendent of Abraham who is named in the preamble and called out as the first in the line of descent: *"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob… (Matt 1.1–2).* These two genealogies could not be more disparate in their ideological orientation, each reflecting the theological dispositions of the gospels in which they reside. It is likely that Matthew would have found Luke's genealogy at least irrelevant if not distasteful in its disregard for the fathers and the history of Israel, so there is no surprise that he has offered what he would have regarded as a more appropriate genealogy. As I will argue below, this was the first step in Matthew's aggressive wholesale correction of Luke on the relevance of Israel as well several other issues. Since the centrality of Israel in the Jesus tradition represents a constitutional disagreement between the authors of Matthew and Luke, there are no grounds upon which to argue that the author of Matthew would have used Luke's genealogy had he been aware of it.

What may we then say concerning their divergent post-resurrection accounts? First, the *Gospel of Mark* twice predicts that Jesus will have his first post-resurrection reunion with his disciples in Galilee (Mk 14.28, 16.7). Luke rejects Mark's claim that the first reunion will occur in Galilee and he omits both of Mark's predictions. He then presents an extensive tale about a cloaked and mysterious figure of Jesus meeting Cleopas on the road to Emmaus (24.13ff.). Now, few would bother to argue that Luke must not have known Mark due to this contradictory post-resurrection account—Luke gives us concrete evidence that the gospel writers had no difficulty contradicting one another. But if Matthew was using both Mark and Luke, this would have presented Matthew with a decision to make—should he follow Mark or Luke? He cannot follow both. In general, it is evident that Matthew has more

respect for Mark as a source than he does Luke; Matthew reproduces over 90% of the material in Mark, while Luke takes over only 55% or so. Matthew knows that Mark is the earlier gospel and perhaps the more authoritative record. So the fact that Matthew elects to follow Mark, replicating both of Mark's predictions and showing them fulfilled in ch. 28, is unremarkable. So nothing can be assumed concerning Matthew's awareness of Luke based on his decision to follow Mark instead of Luke the post-resurrection accounts.

Therefore, the original foundational premise of the Q theory, that gross incompatibility of major traditions at both ends of Matthew and Luke suggest that the authors could not have known one another, is logically tenuous. Yet it is the absurdity of the corollary implications that makes the case even worse. For the Q theory rests upon the following propositions:

> 1. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke were produced out of two different Jesus communities that each embraced the *Gospel of Mark* and Q as two primary documents of faith. Yet despite common beliefs and common world mission objectives, there was so little communication between these communities that the production of the earlier of Matthew or Luke in one remained unknown to the other.
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> 2. Two separate authors, one in each community, independently undertook the same task of producing a grand gospel synthesis by combining their two primary documents of faith, Mark and Q, with a genealogy, a Lord's Prayer, post-resurrection appearances, and a Great Commission. They also both independently created a Great Sermon format beginning with Beatitudes. They each did this without knowing that another author in their sister community was doing precisely the same thing.
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> 3. This must have occurred almost simultaneously, for the production of either Matthew or Luke in one community could not have remained hidden from the sister community for long. Yet despite contemporaneous authorship and reliance upon the same two primary sources of Mark and Q, Matthew managed to produce a more sophisticated gospel with a much larger array of moral sayings, a more refined interpretation of the intimate fatherhood of God, a more elaborate and morally enhanced collection of Beatitudes, a more formalized Great Sermon, a more developed Lord's Prayer, and a more liturgically perfected Great Commission, all of which appear as if they should have taken time to evolve and mature in comparison to Luke.

Collectively the foundational premises upon which the Q theory have been erected do not make intuitive sense. But for icing on the cake, we may add that once Matthew and Luke were done copying from their respective copies of "Q," all evidence of the existence of the Q document evaporated from the historical record. There has never been any manuscript of Q discovered, and there was never any discussion in the patristic tradition about the existence of a document that could be identified as Q. So according to Q scholars, after heavy reliance upon Q by both Matthew and Luke, all historical evidence of its existence as a discrete source disappeared from the earth.

Despite these dubious presuppositions, there was a time back in the 1990s when the Q theory had gained almost universal acceptance among scholars. NT professors would tend to react with a mix of disgust and exasperation at students who dared to question the existence of Q. Since then, academic support for Q has eroded to some degree, but it appears that a majority of scholars still hold to the Q theory in some form, albeit with less confidence. One of the reasons for its persistence is that it is often assumed that the most probable alternative to the Q theory is the **Farrer Hypothesis (FH)** which holds that Mark was the first of the three Synoptics, Matthew was second, and Luke was third and used both Mark and Matthew as sources. Most scholars view the Farrer hypothesis as more problematic than the Q theory due to the eccentric (one might venture to say ludicrous) editing behavior one must attribute to the author of Luke in this scenario. Therefore, in a duel between the Q theory and the FH, the Q theory often wins by default as the least logically offensive of the two.

That Matthew may have been the last of the three Synoptics and directly reliant upon both Mark and Luke was proposed by Christian Gottlob Wilke, also in 1838 (quite a remarkable year in Synoptic studies). Historically this solution was never given serious consideration because Matthew's Jewish orientation made it appear more provincial and therefore earlier than the more "worldly" Luke. And the common assumption that "Luke-Acts" is a combined volume makes Luke, as an integral part of the Luke-Acts corpus, appear to be part of a later tradition. There was also some discomfort with the notion that Matthew, the gospel that had always been promoted as the first by the church, was actually the last of the Synoptics.

However, Wilke's thesis has been gaining support over the last several decades. Today it is promoted as the **Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis (MPH)** by its enthusiastic advocates. I count myself among them, for as I hope to illustrate here, the MPH is (by far) the simplest, most comprehen-

sive, and least problematic solution to the Synoptic Problem. Though many scholars today have come to view the Synoptic Problem as an impossible enigma that will never be resolved, I will argue that these scholars have not given due consideration to the formidable resolving power of the MPH.

Statistical Deployment of Traditions in the Synoptic Gospels

A first step toward a solution to the Synoptic Problem is to consider the distinctive pattern in which a variety of Jesus traditions are distributed in the Synoptics. Unrelated categories of tradition such as the moral sayings of Jesus, the eschatological material, the development of the Fatherhood of God, and the supernatural events in the mission of Jesus all follow the same trajectory: They find their most primitive expression in Mark, they appear to reflect an intermediate stage of development in Luke, and they find their most evolved expression in Matthew. Any solution to the Synoptic Problem must explain this phenomenon.

Moral Sayings in the Synoptics

Let us consider first the moral teachings of Jesus—those that bear specifically upon right conduct, expression, and state of mind. There are twelve such sayings in Mark, 22 in Luke, and 35 in Matthew. However, note the manner in which these sayings are distributed in each of the three Synoptics in Table 8.2 on the following page.

Of Mark's twelve moral sayings, eleven are reproduced by Luke. The only saying in Mark that Luke omits is the triplet "*if your hand/foot/eye causes you to sin, cut it off*." It is perhaps not surprising that an author would have found this one admonition uniquely troublesome. That all of Mark's moral sayings except this one were reproduced by Luke is consistent with the inference that Luke was using Mark as a source. Meanwhile, Matthew replicates all twelve moral sayings from Mark which is consistent with the theory that he was using Mark as well.

Table 8.2: Distribution of Jesus' Moral/Ethical Admonitions

Moral Sayings:	**Mark**	**Luke**	**Matt**
Healing on Sabbath	X	X	X
Admonitions to forgive	X	X	X
Blaspheming against Holy Spirit	X	X	X
On Fasting	X	X	X
On Divorce	X	X	X
When you pray, forgive	X	X	X
Measure you give/measure you get	X	X	X
He who would be first must serve all	X	X	X
Great Command, Love God/neighbor	X	X	X
Render to Caesar things that are Caesar's	X	X	X
If your hand/foot/eye causes sin, cut it off	X		X
What comes out of one's heart defiles him	X	X	X
Do not lay up treasures on earth		X	X
Make friends quickly with accuser		X	X
Love your enemies		X	X
Turn other cheek		X	X
Give to those who beg of you		X	X
Cannot serve God and mammon		X	X
Take speck out of your own eye		X	X
Judge not, that you be not judged		X	X
As you wish men do to you, do so to them		X	X
He who exalts himself will be humbled		X	X
Parable of Good Samaritan		X	
Blessed are poor in spirit			X
Blessed who thirst for righteousness			X
Blessed are the meek			X
Blessed are merciful			X
Blessed are peacemakers			X
Blessed are pure in heart			X
Do not look lustfully upon woman			X
Do not be angry with brother			X
Do not swear either by heaven or earth			X
He who takes sword dies by sword			X
Give alms in secret			X
Pray in secret			X
Fast in secret			X
TOTAL:	12	22	35

Luke documents eleven additional moral sayings that he did not draw from Mark, for a total of 22. Of these eleven, ten appear in Matthew as well. In this case, the omitted unit is the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Now, there is no surprise that Matthew would have rejected this parable whether he had seen it in Q or in Luke directly, for it operates on the premise that Samaritans may be morally superior to Jews. Since Matthew does not appear to care for Samaritans (Mt 10.5), his omission of this particular parable is not unexpected editorial behavior.

Thus, Matthew copies all moral sayings from Mark and all but the Samaritan parable in Luke, for a total of 22. To these Matthew adds 13 more sayings that do not appear in either Mark or Luke. So Matthew is aware of all of the moral admonitions in Mark and all of the moral admonitions in Luke that do not appear in Mark, having omitted just the one that offends him. The simplest explanation for these data is that Matthew is aware of and drawing material from both Mark and Luke. But if we are to reject this as an option, what are the alternatives?

According to the Q theory, Luke drew eleven sayings from Mark and another eleven from Q that were not in Mark. Independently, Matthew also copied over all twelve of Mark's sayings and ten of the eleven in Q that Luke had also found in Q. But somehow, Matthew had access to an additional thirteen moral sayings that Luke did not know, including three "morally improved" renderings of similar Beatitudes which will be discussed below. Conversely, Luke had no knowledge of any sayings that Matthew did not already know, with the lone exception of the Good Samaritan that Matthew would not have cared for anyway. So the essential question is this: If these were two independent authors in different communities drawing from a variety of sources that included Mark, Q, and miscellaneous collections of separate materials from which they drew their special M and L content,[1] how is it that Luke was unable to find even one saying in his L sources that Matthew did not know except for the Samaritan? If Matthew was able to find ten sayings that he did not draw from either Mark or Luke, and an additional three Beatitudes that appear to be morally corrected versions of material in Luke, why could Luke not find a complementary array of sayings in his sources that neither Mark or Matthew knew? Since this seems unlikely, the

[1] Synoptic material that appears exclusively in either Matthew or Luke alone is typically designated special "M" and "L". Scholars typically assume that this material came from sources other than Mark and Q that each author had independent exclusive access to.

direct dependence of Matthew upon Luke is the simpler way to resolve this set of data.

The Farrer theory is also problematic in terms of its ability to address the distribution of moral sayings. Under the FH we assume that the author of Luke knew both Matthew and Mark. We see that he copies all moral sayings from Mark except the advice to *cut off the hand/foot/eye,* an understandable omission. But he only copies over 10 of the 23 sayings that he finds in Matthew. Furthermore, though the FH requires us to view Luke as the later gospel, he has been able to find no complementary array of sayings that Matthew does not already know, with the lone exception of the Samaritan.

Table 8.3: The Beatitudes

Luke 6.20–22	**Matt 5.1–11**
	1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.	3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
21b "Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh.	4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
	5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
21a "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.	6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
	7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
	8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
	9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
	10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
22 "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man!	11 "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Yet the FH carries with it extra load of improbable baggage that even the Q theory does not. For under the FH, Luke finds eight moral Beatitudes

in Matthew 5.3–10, and he immediately omits five of the eight outright, including *blessed are the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake*. Of the remaining three he edits two of them to eliminate the moral dimension of the saying. Matthew's "*Blessed are the poor in spirit*" (those who cultivate a humble state of mind) is altered by Luke to read *"blessed are the poor."* Matthew's *blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,* is edited by Luke to read simply *blessed are you that hunger*. In both cases the Beatitude as edited by Luke is no longer focused on a moral state of mind, but rather economic hardship. In the third instance, Matthew writes, *blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*. Comforting those who mourn has a moral aspect to it. Luke edits this to read *blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh,* which states nothing more than grief will come to an end; Matthew's expectation that those who grieve will be comforted is gone.

Thus, under the FH, we must infer that the author of Luke has, with willful intent, thoroughly gutted Matthew's Beatitudes, stripping them entirely of their moral content by omitting five of them and editing the remaining three to focus them just on the issue of economic status and misfortune. The notion that one must pursue a righteous state of mind has been eliminated entirely. Now, it is not impossible to imagine that Luke would have done this. The author of Luke looks favorably upon the poor and disadvantaged, while having little regard for the rich, as is evident in Jesus' mission proclamation in 4.18–19 and in parables such as the *Rich Man and Lazarus* (16.19–31) and *The Great Banquet* (14.12–24). That his Beatitude in 6.2 indicates explicitly that *"you poor will inherit the kingdom of God"* is consistent with the gospel's general outlook. The puzzle is, why would Luke have been motivated to strip the Matthean Beatitudes of all admonitions to cultivate a humble and pure state of mind, and replace them with the crude notion that simply being poor nets one the keys to the kingdom of God?

Ideological Conflict in the Beatitudes

The polarized extremes between the Beatitudes as they appear in Luke and Matthew are highly instructive. For they reveal a constitutional difference of opinion between the authors of Matthew and Luke related to the believer's access to the kingdom of God. Luke claims that one's low economic status or misfortune is the key to salvation, while Matthew insists

that humility, purity of heart, and the desire to pursue a righteous state of mind are most essential. It is apparent that one of these authors has aggressively edited the Beatitudes to alter their original meaning. Under the MPH it would be Matthew who has objected to Luke's preoccupation with economic disadvantage and decided to correct it by altering Luke's language to incorporate a moral/spiritual dimension into each of the sayings. Thus, Matthew sees *blessed are you poor* in Luke and pointedly rewrites it as *blessed are the poor in spirit*; in like manner, he sees *blessed are you that hunger now* in Luke and corrects it to read *blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*. In addition to these corrections, Matthew adds several more sayings that continue to underscore the need to cultivate a humble, spiritual state of mind reflecting meekness, mercifulness, purity of heart, and an instinct toward peacemaking. By adding these new Beatitudes, Matthew amplifies the message that the pursuit of a righteous state of mind is of paramount importance.

The editorial transformation of the Beatitudes is so extreme in either direction that one must imagine the editing author had taken offense at the material as it existed in its original form. And surely, disagreement over whether economic status or a spiritual state of mind would determine the fate of the believer is a point of theological contention that would have stirred heated controversy. Moreover, whether the rich are condemned due to their wealth is a closely related issue that would also provoke understandable discord. Luke clearly has little regard for the wealthy: *Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation* (Lk 6.24). Conversely, Matthew welcomes the rich. He opens with an infancy narrative that features wealthy foreigners who travel a great distance to bestow expensive gifts on the baby Jesus. At the end of the gospel, Matthew promotes Joseph explicitly as a *rich disciple of Jesus* who offers his own new tomb. As the rich Joseph provides Jesus an honorable burial, Matthew illustrates that not only can disciples of Jesus be rich, but the church may benefit from their largesse.

It is rare to find a literary unit that appears in both Mark and Luke that has been omitted by Matthew. However, the story of the poor widow's contribution is one of them:

> 12.41 And he sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury. **Many rich people put in large sums**. 42 And a poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, which make a penny. 43 And he called his disciples to him, and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, **this poor widow has put in more than all those who are**

> **contributing to the treasury. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance**; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living."

Matthew declines to copy over this unit for some reason, one may suspect out of concern that it appears to be dismissive of the contributions of the wealthy. Matthew does not wish to denigrate the rich as Luke does. So this appears to be a significant point of contention between Matthew and Luke.

This is the second fundamental point of ideological discord between Matthew and Luke that we have noticed thus far, the first being (from Matthew's perspective) the degree to which Luke fails to recognize the relevance of Israel in the redemption story. The opposing genealogies bring this dispute into sharp focus. Luke has little regard for Israel, while Matthew views Israel as foundational to redemption history, and Jesus as a fulfillment of that history. Given that a substantial disagreement between Matthew and Luke on both issues is quite visible, we should clarify an underlying assumption with regard to the MPH: If the author of Matthew is using both Mark and Luke as sources, he does not view them with equal respect. Though he holds Mark in reasonably high regard, he appears to view Luke as a flawed gospel in need of correction. Under this scenario, one of his motives in writing the *Gospel of Matthew* would have been to produce an enhanced and ideologically corrected version of Luke that he most likely hoped would supersede Luke. Thus, he copies over all of Luke's moral sayings (excepting the Samaritan), then he thoroughly rewrites Luke's Beatitudes, and ultimately adds 13 more moral admonitions to offer a far more refined and enhanced account of Jesus' moral vision than that offered by Luke.

Further Evidence of Matthew's Methodical Correction of Luke

Among the well-recognized textual phenomena in the double tradition is that sayings material which appears in both Matthew and Luke often appears in different contexts in Matthew and Luke, but nevertheless in the same order. A striking example of this is found in a section of Jesus' instructive discourse to his disciples in Matthew 10.24–39:

Sequential Parallels in Luke	**Matt 10.24–39**
6.40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher.	24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; 25 it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.
12.2 Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.	26 "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known 27 What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered proclaim upon the housetops.
12.4 I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him!	28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
12:6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is **forgotten before God**. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.	29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without **your Father's** will. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.
12.8 And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge **before the angels of God**; 9 but he who denies me before men will be denied **before the angels of God**.	32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before **my Father who is in heaven**; 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before **my Father who is in heaven**.
12.51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; 52 for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."	34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and a man's foes will be those of his own household.
14.26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.	37 He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
17:33 Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.	39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.

In Matt 10.24–39 there are eight sayings in sequence that are presented as part of an integrated single discourse. Each of these eight sayings has a parallel in Luke, but in Luke they are scattered throughout the gospel in chs. 6, 12, 14, and 17. Nevertheless, *they appear in the same order* in Luke as they appear in Matthew 10. If one is to assume direct literary dependence between these gospels, there are two possible explanations for this. One is that Matthew used Luke as a source and scanned it sequentially in order to collect sayings that fit the occasion of Jesus' discourse to his disciples. The other possibility is that Luke was using Matthew and decided to deconstruct the discourse in Matthew 10 with the intent of using these sayings in different contexts throughout his gospel. Note that breaking this collection of sayings apart would have given Luke the option to redeploy them in any order, or to use some but not all of them. Nevertheless, he created new random contexts for all eight sayings in a manner that nevertheless preserved all of them the order in which he had found them in Matthew.

The Q theory is also theoretically capable of resolving these data. One might assume these eight sayings appeared in sequence in Q, they were copied in order by Matthew from Q, and that Luke sees them in Q and breaks them apart to disburse them, albeit in order, throughout his gospel. Alternatively, one might suppose they were scattered throughout Q, Luke reproduced them in order as they appeared in Q, and that Matthew scanned Q to assemble them in order into a discrete discourse. These scenarios are more complicated but not impossible. Nevertheless, Matthew's sequential scanning of Luke for the purpose of assembling this monologue is the simplest explanation for the common order of these eight sayings.

However, there is more to this puzzle—Matthew appears to have been looking for sayings in Luke *that were in specific need of correction*. The first of them, Mt 10.24–25//Lk 6.40, consists of an apparently preserved Semitic parallelism in Matthew that has been rendered in free prose by Luke. This is a special case which will be discussed below. Meanwhile, all seven of the remaining sayings in this group bear marks of editing by Matthew for moral or theological correction, or grammatical efficiency.

The first of these is Lk 12.2–3 // Mt 10.26–27. In Luke's version, Jesus appears to be telling the disciples that whatever they may have been discussing quietly among themselves is to be proclaimed from the rooftops.

Luke 12.2–3	**Matthew 10.26–27**
12.2 Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore **whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light**, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.	26 "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known 27 **What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light;** and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops.

The notion that Jesus would have given them such direction is puzzling as they might have been discussing virtually anything. In Matthew, it is no longer "what you have said in the dark." The language is corrected—they are to proclaim what Jesus has told them in private–*"What I tell you in the dark."* Matthew's correction of Luke on this point is understandable. On the other hand, on the FH, we must presume Luke is editing Matthew, so we must infer that Luke either intentionally or accidentally omits the fact that the teaching to be proclaimed comes from Jesus. As it stands, the saying in Luke makes little sense. It is difficult to imagine why he would have rendered it in this manner after having read the text in Matthew.

The next set of parallel sayings is Lk 12.4–5 // Mt 10.28. Notice that Luke's version is verbose and redundant, while Matthew says the same thing with elegance and precision:

Luke 12.4–5	**Matthew 10.28**
12.4 I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him!	28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

This is another sign of classic Matthean editing. When one reads Matthew and Mark side by side, it becomes obvious that Matthew routinely edits for precision, eliminating redundant or verbose constructs and attempting to tell the story in the most concise manner possible. His evident objective is to pack as much content into the space he has available by eliminating superfluous language. This is precisely what we see in Mt 10.28. Conversely, under the FH, it is almost humorous to imagine the author of Luke reading Mt 10.28 and electing to paraphrase it in such a sloppy manner.

The next saying that reflects corrective editing to improve content is that of the *sparrows* (Lk 12.6–7 // Mt 10.29–31):

Luke 12.6–7	**Matthew 10.29–31**
12:6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is **forgotten before God**. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.	29 **Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?** And not one of them will fall to the ground without **your Father's** will. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

This saying contains two alterations which are consistent with Matthean editing. As just noted, Matthew is always seeking the most efficient use of language. Here, the notion that five sparrows are sold for two cents is cumbersome and unnecessary, so Matthew's reduction to a simple two-for-one is typical of Matthean editing. But more to the point, the citation of the price of sparrows indicates that they are being sold for some reason. They may be being purchased to be consumed as food, or they may be sacrificial offerings in the temple. Under either scenario, to claim that God does not forget dead or sacrificed sparrows is an oddly unsettling way to characterize God. Meanwhile, as we shall examine below, Matthew's highlighting of the intimate, nurturing, loving nature of the *Father* is a central theme in his gospel. Matthew routinely inserts *Father* into sayings in Mark and the double tradition where it does not exist in Mark or Luke. This is one example of it. Here, the sentiment of the "nurturing Father" is prominent in Matthew's saying but absent in Luke's version, while the troublesome notion that God does not forget dead sparrows is erased. For these reasons, Matthew's version of this saying is easily interpreted as a theological correction of Luke.

The sayings that follow next are Luke 12.8-9 and Matthew 10:32-33:

Luke 12.8–9	**Matthew 10.32–33**
12.8 And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge **before the angels of God**; 9 but he who denies me before men will be denied **before the angels of God**.	32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before **my Father who is in heaven**; 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before **my Father who is in heaven**.

Here Luke's saying is jarring and somewhat bizarre. He implies that the *angels of God* will act as judges over humankind, and that for some reason Jesus has been relegated to a role of mediator between humans and angels. Matthew understandably edits this to indicate that Jesus intercedes on behalf of the faithful directly with the Father in heaven, not the angels. This is another example of Matthew's insertion of *Father* into a double tradition saying which did not originally contain it. The implausibility of Farrer is

revealed here, as it is difficult to imagine that Luke read Mt 10.32–33 and elected to render it as Lk 12.8–9.

The next saying in this sequence is Mt 10:34–36 and its parallel in Luke 12.51–53. It opens with the puzzling saying that Jesus has not come to bring peace on earth but a sword, and Luke's version with a similar sentiment.

Luke 12.51–53	**Matthew 10.34–36**
12.51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; 52 for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."	34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and a man's foes will be those of his own household.

The primary indication that Matthew has edited Luke is that the frivolous redundancy in Luke's version has been substantially compressed in Matthew. This is another example of Matthew's tendency to discard superfluous language, as if he is determined to pack as much relevant content as possible into the space available on a scroll. Conversely, it is difficult to imagine why Luke, after reading Matthew's concise rendering, would have thought it necessary to expand it in such a strange manner, adding redundant verbiage with no incremental substance.

The seventh saying in Matthew's sequence is Matt 10:37–38. This comparison reveals the author of Matthew applying both a moral correction *and* edits to compress the saying at the same time:

Luke 14.26–27	**Matthew 10.37–38**
26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.	37 He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

By any measure, Luke 14.26 is among the most offensive of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the gospels. One might suspect that Luke did not intend for this to be taken literally, but rather that he is pushing the boundaries of good taste to make a theological point. Nevertheless, by placing this saying on the lips of Jesus, Luke makes Jesus appear to be sanctioning the expression

of hatred toward one's family as a condition of discipleship. Matthew's desire to render this sentiment in less emotionally charged rhetoric is understandable. Notice also that the consequence is diminished; according to Matthew if one fails to love Jesus more than his family he is declared to be unworthy but discipleship is not precluded. In NT theology, no one is actually 'worthy' under any circumstances, so Matthew's alteration on this point appears to leave open the door to discipleship even for those who do have an abiding love for their families. The overall effect is to soften the saying in a manner that makes it less overtly offensive.

The final saying in this sequence of eight contains another apparent correction of Luke by Matthew:

Luke 17.33	**Matthew 10.39**
33 Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.	39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life **on account of me** will find it.

Here, Matthew's version contains a qualifier that does not exist in Luke—according to Matthew, simply losing one's life does not mean it will be preserved as implied by Luke, but he who loses his life *for Jesus's sake* ('*on account of me*') is the one who will find it. This is a vital modification to the saying. One can understand why Matthew would insert this into Luke for the purpose of clarifying. Conversely it is difficult to understand why Luke, had he been using Matthew, would alter this saying to omit the essential words '*on account of me*,' a phrase that is the essence of the saying's meaning as it exists in Matthew.

Let us return to the initial saying in the sequence of eight in this discourse. Matthew's version in 10.24–25 is in the form of a parallelism:

Luke 6.40	**Matthew 10.24–25**
6.40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher.	24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; 25 it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.

Matthew is unique among the three Synoptics in that he records Semitic parallelisms which do not appear in parallel form in Luke. More robust examples include *The House Built Upon the Rock*, *Treasure in Heaven*, and *The Narrow Gate*:

The House Built Upon the Rock

Luke 6.47–49	**Matt. 7.24–27**
47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like; he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon the rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.	**24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock;** *25 and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.* **26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand;** *27 and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell,and great was the fall of it.*

Treasure in Heaven

Luke 12:33–34	**Matt. 6.19–21**
Sell your possessions and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.	**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,** *Where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal,* **But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven,** *Where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.* For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The Narrow Gate

Luke 13.23–24	**Matt. 7.13–14**
And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.	Enter by the narrow gate; **for the gate is wide and the way is easy**, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. **For the gate is narrow and the way is hard**, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

The parallel structure of these sayings in Matthew is thought by scholars to have originated in oral tradition because the repetitive structure

would have served as an aid to memory and thus would facilitate more accurate and reliable oral transmission. Accordingly, the parallel forms in Matthew are presumed to be the more primitive renderings. Meanwhile, Luke has paraphrased them in free prose, as is his typical style when he draws from Mark. The author of Luke prefers to paraphrase Mark, making changes to Mark that appear to be for no other purpose than to tell the same story in different words. So his paraphrasing and consequent obliteration of the poetic forms of the parallelisms appear to be later renderings.

The parallelisms in Matthew are an indication that the author had a collection of earlier logia among the sources that he was relying upon. Whenever Matthew sees a saying in Luke that he recognizes as a paraphrase of an earlier and (presumably) more authentic parallelism, he opts to reproduce the earlier form and forego Luke's prose interpretation of it. This is what we find in the first set of parallel sayings in Matthew 10.24–25 // Luke 6.40. This represents an exception to the general rule that Matthew edits for the most efficient use of language since the parallelisms are by design and definition redundant.

To summarize, the eight sayings in Matt 10.24–39 each have parallels in Luke, but they share one distinctive attribute in common: they each appear to be edited/improved or corrected versions of their Lukan counterparts. It appears that they were assembled together sequentially into a single discourse by Matthew as he scanned Luke and copied sayings in the order that he found them. But it also appears that Matthew had collected and rewritten these sayings *precisely because* they required ideological correction or could benefit from a more precise grammatical rendering. The changes he makes to Luke include condensing the grammar, inserting the *Father*, correcting moral content, correcting theological error, and improving logical coherence. This editing is fully consistent with Matthew's observable editorial behavior as he draws from Mark.

If there were any independent evidence of Q's existence, one could argue that this phenomenon could have been the result of Luke and Matthew independently using Q as a source. The eight sayings are alleged to have existed in Q, Luke is typically imagined to have reproduced Q most faithfully in its original form, while Matthew scanned Q sequentially to assemble his discourse. There is nothing to say that this could not have happened other than to note that, given the improbable premises upon which the Q theory is erected, it is simpler to imagine that Matthew scanned and edited Luke directly to achieve the same result.

On the other hand, the Farrer Hypothesis suffers shipwreck with these data. If Luke was using Matthew, one must suppose that he not only deconstructed the discourse in Matt. 10.24–39, then scattered all eight sayings in several groups throughout his gospel, placing them in different contexts while retaining their same order, but he did so while going out of his way to apply sloppy or ill-advised edits to each of them in the process. In so doing, he created a fascinating phenomenon: When Matthew's sayings are compared to their parallels allegedly edited by Luke, the author of Luke has accidentally made it appear as if Matthew was applying his typical editorial proclivities to each. Indeed, under Farrer, the author's ability to frequently replicate this illusion is uncanny. For as noted earlier, if the author of Luke has erased 13 of Matthew's 35 moral sayings and stripped the Matthean Beatitudes of their moral content, he has accidentally *made it appear* as if the author of Matthew must have been enhancing and refining the moral vision of Jesus as it existed in the *Gospel of Luke*.

The Fatherhood of God in the Synoptics

In addition to moral content, another noteworthy feature of the Synoptics is their distinctive visualizations of God as "*Father*." The use of the term *Father* draws attention to an intimate, loving, and nurturing aspect of the character of God that the terms *God* and *Lord* do not connote to the same degree. Of particular interest in the Synoptic Problem is that there is a radically different deployment of *Father* in the three Synoptics.

In the *Gospel of Mark*, the term *Father* as an alternative for God or Lord is exceedingly rare. It occurs four times in the canonical text, but two of them are located in the apocalyptic interpolations 8.38 and 13.32. The only two instances where it appears to have been used in proto-Mark are in the root tradition behind the Lord's Prayer (11.25), and Jesus' prayer in Gethsemene (14.36). The former reads as follows:

> 11.25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your **Father who is in the heavens** might forgive you your trespasses.

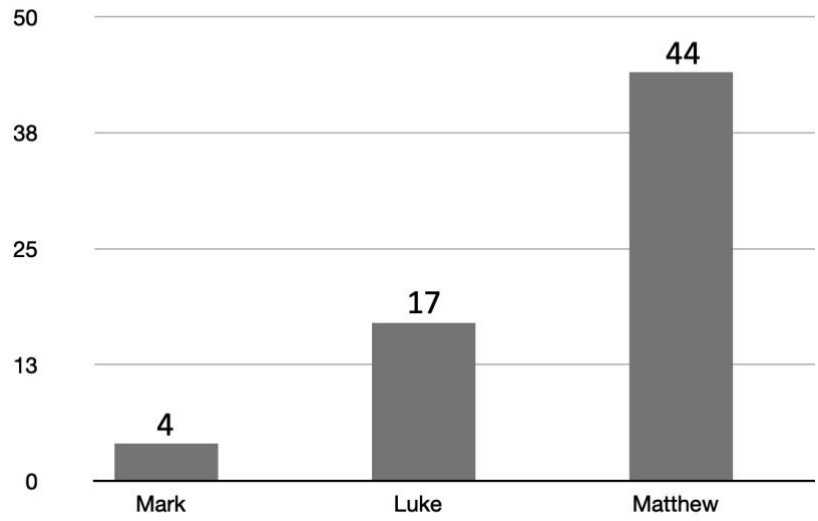
The phrasing in this verse that associates the Father with his dwelling place as "one who is in the heavens" (*ho en tois ouranois*) is rare in Mark and Luke, occurring just once in Mark 11.25, and not at all in Luke. However, Luke does have one grammatical variant *Father from heaven* (*ex ouranou*, 11.13).

The only other *Father* in proto-Mark occurs in the intimate prayer of Jesus in Gethsemene:

> 14.36 And he was saying, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; take away this cup from me; but not what I will, but what you."

It is striking that in this instance the Aramaic term for father, *Abba*, is retained in the Greek, then translated Father (Patēr). This is arguably the most intimate prayer of Jesus in the *Gospel of Mark*, so the rare use of the term Father to underscore the intimacy of the relationship between Jesus and the Father is particularly appropriate. In the prior use in 11.25, the term appears as an appeal for forgiveness from a (hopefully) sympathetic and loving Father, so its usage is contextually intimate here as well. Conversely, there is no similar appeal to intimacy in the two interpolated uses in 8.38 and 13.32, both of which simply allude to the Father's role in the coming judgment.

Synoptic References to God as "Father"



In contrast to Mark in which the use of *Father* is rare, there are 17 uses of *Father* in the *Gospel of Luke* and 44 in Matthew. So the statistical distribution pattern is similar to that of the moral sayings. As Matthew contains the most expansive collection of Jesus' moral sayings, he develops the concept of the Fatherhood of God in the same manner. Furthermore, he commonly uses grammar that does not exist in Luke which emphasizes the

Father's dwelling place in heaven. On fifteen occasions Matthew refers to the *Father who is in the heavens (ho en tois ouranois)*. In addition, in seven instances he uses the phrase *heavenly Father (Pater ho ouranios)*. Thus, 22 of Matthew's 44 uses of *Father* explicitly associate the Father with his dwelling place in heaven. This is highly distinctive usage since the "Father-in-heaven" combination is rare in Mark and Luke. As noted, *Father who is in the heavens* is found only in Mark 11.25, and other than the one odd variant *ex ouranou* in Lk 11.13, the phrases that appears collectively 22 times in Matthew do not appear even once in Luke.

Therefore, we detect a similar pattern of development in the *Father* tradition that parallels the moral sayings—not only does Matthew present the Fatherhood of God in increased statistical frequency, but he again introduces a qualitative embellishment of the concept that is rare in Mark and Luke. In addition, the specific deployment of the term *Father* in Matthew is of keen interest. Since Matthew displays the most enthusiastic tendency to represent God as *Father*, one would expect him to have copied over all four instances of its use in Mark, and he does so (Mark 8.38, 11.25, 13.32, 14.36 and pars). However, we would also not be surprised to find that Matthew, as he was taking over material from Mark, was inserting *Father* into Markan verses in which *Father* did not exist. This indeed occurs five times:

> Mark 3.35 Whoever does the **will of God** is my brother, and sister, and mother."
>
> Matt 12.50 For whoever does the **will of my Father in heaven** is my brother, and sister, and mother."
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> Mark 10.40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."
>
> Matt 20.23 but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared **by my Father**."
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>
> Mark 13.11 for it is not you who speak, but the **Holy Spirit**.
>
> Matt 10.20 for it is not you who speak, but the **Spirit of your Father** speaking through you.
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>
> Mark 14.25 Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new **in the kingdom of God**."

> Matt 26.29 I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you **in my Father's kingdom**."
>
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>
> Mark 14.39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.
>
> Matt 26.42 Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "**My Father,** if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done."

So the next question would be, is Matthew's editorial behavior with Mark also visible in the double tradition? And yes, it is. There are ten uses of *Father* in Luke's double tradition material (Luke 6.36, 10.21a, 10.21b, 10.22a, 10.22b, 10.22c, 11.2, 11.13, 12.30, 12.32). Of these, the first nine are reproduced in Matthew's parallels. The tenth one in Luke 12.32 is dropped by Matthew because he omits the verse entirely and moves on with a separate aphorism as illustrated below. If Matthew is editing Luke directly in this passage, his insertion of the phrase *and his righteousness* in 6.33 parallels his enhancement of the Beatitudes, and his omission of Luke 12.32 is understandable since he might well have viewed it as inappropriate or redundant:

> **Luke 12.29** And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. 30 For all the nations of the world seek these things; and **your Father** knows that you need them. 31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well. 32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is **your Father's** good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
>
> **Matt 6.31** Therefore do not be anxious, saying, `What shall we eat?' or `What shall we drink?' or `What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek all these things; and **your heavenly Father** knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first his kingdom *and his righteousness*, and all these things shall be yours as well. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

In short, Matthew reproduces all four Fathers in Mark and nine of the ten in Luke, a pattern virtually identical to his reproduction of all twelve moral sayings in Mark and ten of the eleven in Luke that do not appear in Mark.

Now, we may then ask, since Matthew inserts *Father* into material he was drawing from Mark where it did not exist in Mark, does Matthew also insert *Father* into double tradition material where it does not exist in Luke? Yes, in fact this occurs seven times:

Luke 6.35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be **sons of the Most High**; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish.

Matt 5.44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be **sons of your Father who is in heaven**; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

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Luke 6.46 "Why do you call me `Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?

Matt 7.21 "Not everyone who says to me, `Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of **my Father who is in heaven**.

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Luke 12.6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before **God**.

Matt 10.29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without **your Father's** will.

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Luke 12.8 "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the **angels of God**; 9 but he who denies me before men will be denied before the **angels of God**.

Matt 10.32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before **my Father who is in heaven**; 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before **my Father who is in heaven**.

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Luke 12.24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and **yet God feeds them**. Of how much more value are you than the birds!

Matt 6.26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and **yet your heavenly Father feeds them**.

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Luke 15.7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Matt 18.13 And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14 So it is not the will of **my Father who is in heaven** that one of these little ones should perish.

The fact that Matthew appears to be inserting *Father* into Luke's double tradition material[2] just as he does Mark shows consistent editorial behavior indicating that Matthew is either editing Q just as he does Mark, or that he is editing Luke directly just as he does Mark. This pattern is problematic for the FH, for Farrer requires us to imagine that the author of Luke had deliberately removed seven of the 17 uses of *Father* in the double tradition, and thereby (once again) accidentally created the illusion that Matthew was editing Mark and Luke in a consistent manner.

The remaining uses of *Father* in Matthew and Luke occur in their special L and M material. There are 19 uses of *Father* in M and five in L. We might surmise that Matthew was inserting *Father* into his special sources where it did not exist, just as he was doing with Mark and the double tradition. Of the five in Luke, the first one occurs in the interpolated material (2.49) where the young Jesus asks his parents "did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" The remaining four unique uses of *Father* in Luke are concentrated at the end of the gospel (22.29, 23.34, 23.46, 24.49). These include "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and "I send the promise of my Father upon you." Thus, though Luke uses *Father* with far less frequency that does Matthew, he uses it in material with great intimate significance.

The Synoptic Solutions and the Fatherhood Material

As with the distribution of the moral sayings, the distribution of *Father* in the Synoptics is most easily explained by the MPH, where Matthew is editing Mark and Luke directly and in a consistent manner, inserting *Father* into both Markan and Lukan sayings. This accounts for the fact that Matthew reproduces all four of the Fathers in Mark, and nine of the ten in Luke's double tradition, with the tenth one being dropped for a coherent reason. Matthew evidently had a strong desire to emphasize the nurturing, loving nature of God as well to underscore the believers' opportunity to cultivate an intimate relationship with the *Father in heaven*.

The Q theory is capable of accounting for this data as well, but in a more complicated fashion. There are 17 double tradition sayings we would suppose were copied from Q that contain *Father* in Matthew's version of the

[2] To clarify, the insertions of Matt 7.21 and 18.14 are not strictly "double tradition" but rather Matthew's extensions to Luke's double tradition. This material is not presumed to have existed in Q.

saying. Ten of these also contain *Father* in Luke's version and seven do not. Accordingly, we would imagine that Q contained a mix of sayings that did and did not feature *Father*, that Luke copied them all faithfully as they were, while Matthew (a) reproduced the same ten Q sayings that contained *Father* that Luke did, and (b) edited an additional seven Q sayings to incorporate *Father* when it did not appear in the Q version, in the same manner that he edited Mark. This process would have produced the current double tradition in which 17 of Matthew's sayings use *Father*, as do ten of the 17 in Luke. It is a longer way around the barn than assuming that Matthew had simply drawn the 17 sayings from Luke directly, but it is a conceivable alternative.

The FH is again the most problematic. Recall that with regard to the moral sayings, if Luke was using Matthew, we would assume he copied over ten of the 23 non-Markan sayings from Matthew, omitted 13 of them, and in the process he stripped the moral/spiritual components out of Matthew's Beatitudes. Here we must imagine that he was deliberately stripping *Father* out of sayings he found in Matthew. Though Luke appears to favor the use of *Father* in the most intimate moments of Jesus' life, he chooses to remove *Father* on seven occasions while retaining it in ten. Furthermore, Luke sees references to the *Father who is in the heavens*, or the *heavenly Father* a total of 22 times in Matthew and he eliminates ALL of them, with the one glaring exception that he alters one of Matthew's uses of *Father who is in the heavens* to read *Father from heaven* (11.13).

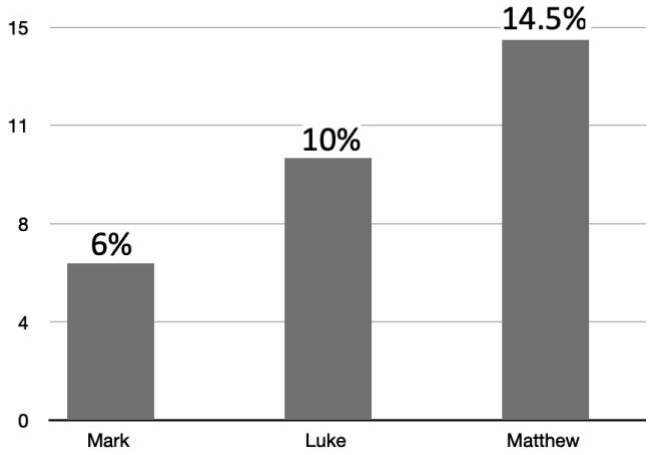
In addition, Luke's alleged edits under the FH sometimes make no intuitive sense, as discussed previously, as in Mt 10.32 // Lk 12.8 where he substitutes the Father in heaven for the angels of God and makes Jesus appear as if he is a mediator between humans and angels. Collectively, the fact that Matthew is otherwise fully committed to emphasizing the intimate Father-hood of God throughout his gospel suggests that these verses reflect Matthew's editing of the *Gospel of Luke* rather than the reverse.

Eschatological Content in the Synoptic Gospels

Just as content related to the moral vision of Jesus and the Fatherhood of God varies in the Synoptics, so does the distribution of eschatological content. At the outset, we may note the degree to which each author is preoccupied with eschatological issues. This can be quantified in one respect simply by calculating the percentage of the total text in each gospel that is dedicated to eschatological matter. This reveals that about 6% of the text of

canonical Mark, 10% of Luke, and 14.5% of Matthew addresses eschatological issues.[3] These calculations will vary to some minor degree based on debate over whether particular units should be interpreted as eschatological in nature. But even with such variances considered, the author of Matthew was clearly more preoccupied with this aspect of Jesus tradition than were Mark or Luke, if we judge simply in terms of the percentage of total text allocated to the subject:

Percent of Text Allocated to Eschatological Content



However, these eschatological materials can also be examined qualitatively. All three gospels contain references to the termination of the present age, the second coming of Jesus, and violence/persecution as the end nears. However, Matthew and Luke both contain ideas that do not exist in Mark, including the destruction of the world at Jesus' coming and concern over the delay of Jesus' return. In addition, Matthew contains unique elements that do not appear in either Mark or Luke—the distinctive phrases 'day of judgment' and 'close of the age' each appear four times in Matthew but not at all in Mark or Luke. Matthew also uniquely envisions the damnation of unbelievers to eternal fire, and he alone offers the vision of the Last Judgment in ch. 25 wherein the saved and the damned are sent to their respective destinies. In short, not only does Matthew allocate a larger percent-

[3] In Chapter 4, I presented evidence that the original *Gospel of Mark* contained no explicit apocalyptic material, including 8.38-9.1, ch. 13, and an edited 14.62. This material would most likely have been added around 70 or soon thereafter. Since Matthew and Luke both used copies of Mark that contained these units, the canonical text of Mark will be used in this chapter for comparative purposes.

age of his text to eschatological concerns, but his interpretation of the end times is tangibly more extreme than that found in Luke, and Luke's interpretation in turn is more intense and developed than that in Mark.

Distribution of Eschatological Content in the Synoptics

	Mark	Luke	Matthew
The Last Judgment			X
Eternal fire			X
"day of judgment"			X
"close of the age"			X
Concern over delay of Jesus' return		X	X
Destruction of world upon Jesus' return		X	X
Violence/persecution as the end nears	X	X	X
Second coming of Jesus	X	X	X
Last day/termination of present age	X	X	X

Therefore, the distinctive trajectory of development that is visible within the moral tradition and the Fatherhood of God manifests itself in the same way in the eschatological content. This calls the Q theory into doubt, for it is not likely that two independent authors would use the same two primary sources, Mark and Q, in approximately similar timeframes, with the result that one would continue to present a far more developed set of traditions than the other. The Q theory lacks the logical presuppositional apparatus to either predict or account for such a result. And yet as we shall see, this pattern continues to replicate itself in the supernatural traditions.

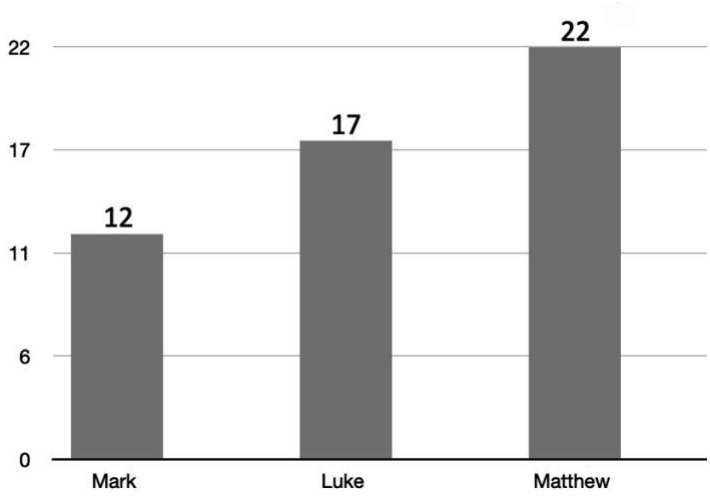
Supernatural Events in the Synoptic Gospels

The Synoptic authors viewed the ministry of Jesus as being acted out upon an earthly stage that is subject to intervention from the divine realm. The natural world is being observed by beings from the spirit world (God, Satan, angels, demons) who occasionally break through into the natural space-time continuum to influence or disrupt the course of events on earth. These manifestations consist of angelic appearances, voices from heaven, demonic possessions, timely earthquakes, and so on. They are categorically independent of the miracle working activity of Jesus himself. The supernatural events in the Synoptics serve to depict human life on earth as subordinate to an interactive struggle between good and evil forces in the

spirit world. As such they are interpretative mythical elements which are used to expand both the drama and cosmic meaning of the Jesus story.

The charts below offer a summary of the supernatural events in the Synoptics. We find twelve such events in Mark, seventeen in canonical Luke (including chs. 1–2), and twenty-two in Matthew. And here, the interpolation of Luke 1–2 is germane, for there are three angelic appearances, an appearance of the multitude of heavenly hosts, and a virginal conception reported in these two chapters. So five of the 17 in canonical Luke reside in this material. If these are omitted and just the supernatural events in Luke 3–24 are accounted for, there are twelve each in Mark and Luke 3–24, and 22 in Matthew. The much higher concentration of supernatural events in Matthew is consistent with the trajectories in the other unrelated categories of tradition. And once again, paralleling the trends in the moral and eschatological material, almost all of the events in Luke are replicated in some form in Matthew, while Matthew contains many that are not found in either Mark or Luke 3–24.

Supernatural Events of the Synoptic Gospels
(excluding miracles performed by Jesus)



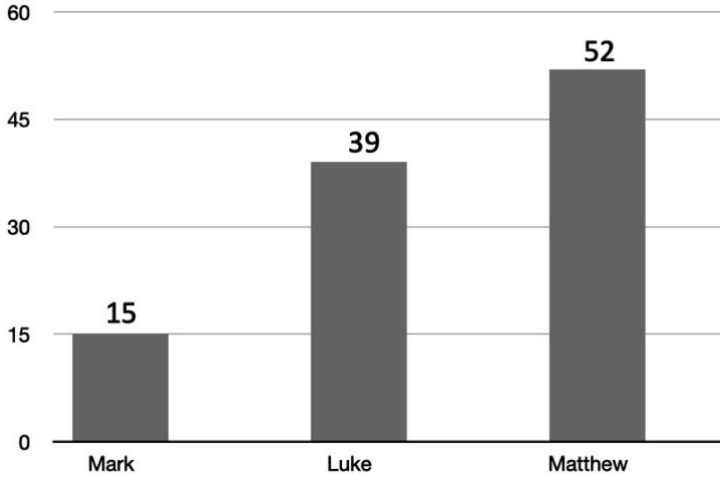
Event	**Mark**	**Luke***	**Matthew**
Virginal conception		1	1
Star of Bethlehem			1
Warnings in Dreams			2
Angelic appearances		4	4
Multitude of heavenly hosts		1	
Heavens open on Jesus' baptism	1	1	1
Spirit descends like a dove	1	1	1
Voice from heaven	1	1	1
Temptation by Satan	1	1	1
Conversations with Satan		1	1
Angels minister to Jesus in wilderness	1		1
Conversations with demons	3	3	1
Transfiguration/Moses, Elijah appear	1	1	1
Voice from cloud during Transfig.	1	1	1
Sky darkens on Jesus' death	1	1	1
Timely tearing of temple curtain	1		1
Earthquake upon Jesus' death			1
Earthquake at tomb Easter morning			1
Saints resurrected/appear in Jerusalem			1
Total Supernatural Events	**12**	**17***	**22**

*Canonical Luke contains 17 events. However, there are three angelic appearances, one virginal conception, and one appearance of the multitude of heavenly hosts in the interpolated Luke 1–2. If these are discounted, there are 12 events in Luke 3–24.

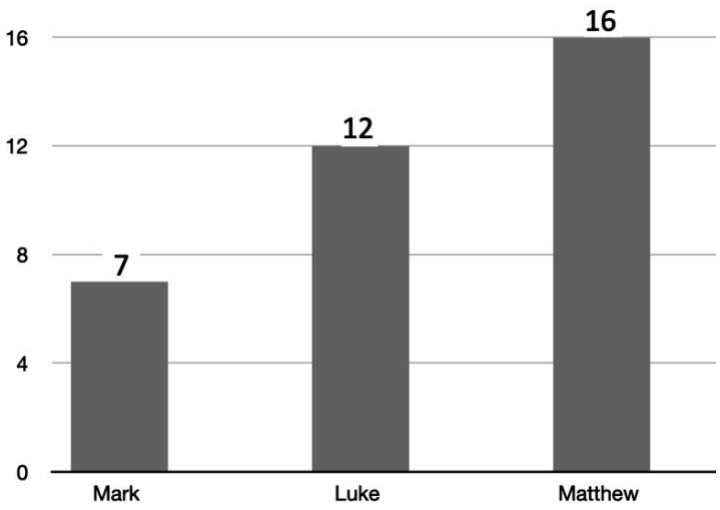
Key Terms/Phrases in the Synoptics

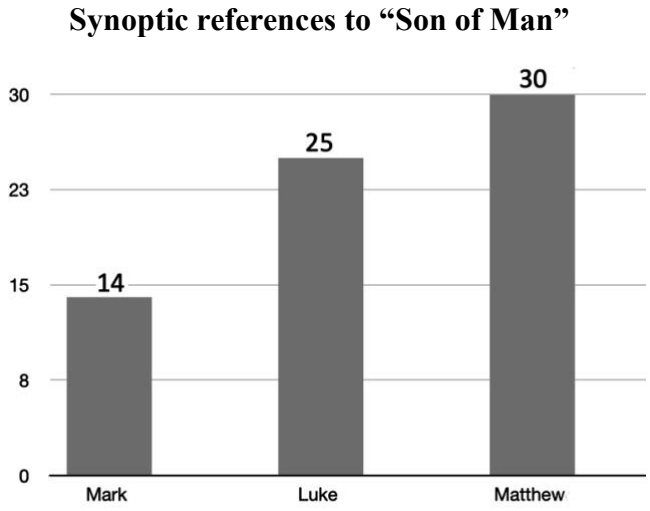
The familiar Mark > Luke > Matthew pattern that appears in the moral sayings, the eschatological content, the Fatherhood of God, and the supernatural events continues to replicate itself in the frequency of key terms and phrases including *kingdom of God/heaven*, *Son of Man*, and Jesus as *the Christ*:

Synoptic references to "Kingdom of God/Heaven"



Synoptic references to Jesus as "the Christ"





In short, then, there is overwhelming evidence of a statistical trajectory of ideological development in the Synoptic Gospels. Routinely, content appears in its most primitive and undeveloped form in Mark, it evolves to an intermediate stage of development in Luke, and achieves its most developed and expansive form in Matthew. The fact that Mark is the shortest of the gospels surely accounts for some of this pattern, but Luke 3–24 is 17,448 words, which is only 5% shorter than Matthew at 18,345. Matthew is able to pack a great deal more content into a gospel that is just slightly longer due to his tendency to edit for concision.

This pattern of evolution is also visible in key traditions such as the Lord's Prayer and the Great Sermons, which have nothing to do with text length of the gospels. With respect to the Lord's Prayer, we find a precursor to the Prayer in Mark 11.25, which appears to be the seed from which the more formal Prayer itself developed. The Prayer appears to reflect an intermediate stage of development in Luke. It is then rendered in a more refined liturgical form in Matthew:

The Lord's Prayer

Mark 11.25	**Luke 11.2–4**	**Matthew 6.9–13**
25 "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."	2 "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread; 4 and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation."	9 Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.11 Give us this day our daily bread; 12 And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors; 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The tradition of the Great Sermon shows a similar trajectory of development. There are rudimentary forms of the Great Sermon concept in Mark, as with the apparent Sermon by the Sea in Mark 4:

> 1 Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. 2 And he taught them many things in parables…

In Mark 4, though it indicates that Jesus taught the assembled crowd many things (4.2), the speech consists of just one parable and no moral aphorisms. So the concept of a sermon to the masses is present but unlike Luke and Matthew, the author does not use it as an occasion to feature an array of the teachings of Jesus.

Conversely, that Jesus would preach to large crowds is presented in Luke in what appears to be an intermediate stage of development of the "great sermon" format, the "Sermon on the Plain" (Luke 6.17-49). This sequence opens with Jesus addressing a great multitude who have come to hear him. He begins to preach with Luke's version of the Beatitudes followed by a series of moral admonitions and aphorisms that continues for about thirty verses. Yet by comparison, this "sermon" in Luke appears to be a rudimentary form of the more expansive and refined Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7. Like the Lukan discourse, Matthew's Sermon on the Mount opens with his more developed and expanded version of the Beatitudes, but it then continues for three chapters (over 100 verses), a far more extensive presentation

of Jesus' moral vision and exhortation, including many sayings that do not exist in either Mark or Luke.

Accordingly, the literary evolution of the "Great Sermon" in the Synoptics follows the same developmental trajectory as do the Lord's Prayer and the other categories of content noted previously. These patterns of development are so consistently observable across so many different types of content that they represent a defining structural feature of the Synoptic Gospels. Any successful solution to the Synoptic Problem must be able to explain why Matthew so frequently appears to be the most evolved of the three Synoptics. The MPH accounts for this easily as it assumes Matthew to be the last of the three. The Q theory is a difficult but conceivable alternative explanation. Conversely, the Farrer Hypothesis requires us to imagine that the author of Luke composed with an intent to deconstruct Matthew and dilute its content across the board.

Statistical Proof of the Existence of Q?

There have been attempts to strengthen the case for Q's existence through statistical analyses of the texts. In particular, the noteworthy work done by Charles Carlston and Dennis Norlin has been cited as important data pointing to the existence of Q. The following chart appears in two of John Kloppenborg's significant works, *The Formation of Q*[4] and *Excavating Q*[5]*:*

Carlston and Norlin's Comparative Data

	Triple Tradition			**Double Tradition**		
Type	**Matt**	**Luke**	**Avg.**	**Matt**	**Luke**	**Avg.**
Narrative	50.2	46.9	48.5	55.7	51.8	53.7
Sayings	63.5	68.3	65.9	69.5	73.6	71.5
Misc.	56.7	60.6	58.5	87.5	80.9	84.1
Average	56.0	56.0	56.0	69.8	72.2	71.0

This chart indicates the percentage of wording agreement between Matthew and Luke in both the triple tradition and double tradition material by type of content. Kloppenborg notes that the definition of "wording agreement" used

[4] Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, p. 44
[5] Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, p. 58

was "*the use of approximately the same words in both Matthew and Luke ... expressed as a percentage of the total words used by each author.*"

Carlston and Norlin drew the following conclusion from their data:

> [Our samplings] are surely large enough to establish beyond reasonable doubt that Matthew and Luke used Q, as far as the wording of their material is concerned, at least as conservatively as they used Mark. There seems to us to be no reasonable explanation for this phenomenon except a second written source for Matthew and Luke.[6]

Is Carlston & Norlin's inference from their data justified? The logical difficulty here is that they presuppose the existence of Q in order to sustain the conclusion. For the data that they have compiled *do not* suggest or require the assumption of a Q behind the double tradition. To the contrary, these data are more compatible with the assumption of a *direct literary dependence* between Matthew and Luke.

Certainly, the bottom line averages in the chart indicate something was quite different in the way the triple tradition vs. the double tradition were compiled. The composite average wording agreement between Matthew and Luke in the triple tradition is 56%, whereas it is 71% in the double tradition. This significant deviation requires an explanation. The traditional explanation proposed by Q advocates has been that the double tradition is recorded with higher fidelity by both authors because it consists primarily of *sayings* of Jesus and John. And at a first glance this makes intuitive sense. The data do indeed indicate that Matthew and Luke each recorded the words of Jesus and John (the sayings material) in Mark with higher fidelity than they did non-sayings narrative material in Mark. The assumption that they would have done the same with Q seems to be, at first glance, well-founded.

Yet there are counterintuitive aspects of these data. One must infer from the chart that both Matthew and Luke have elected to reproduce *sayings material in Q* with higher fidelity than they do *sayings material in Mark*. Having already made the decision to replicate sayings in Mark more faithfully than narrative in Mark, what accounts for the additional fidelity in their reproduction of Q sayings compared to Markan sayings? Even more puzzling is their treatment of narrative. Both Matthew and Luke have decided to draw upon Mark for narrative elements and structure. Yet they both appear to

[6] Carlston and Norlin, *Statistics and Q*, pp. 59-78

record *narrative material in Q* with higher fidelity than *narrative material in Mark*. In fact, the data imply that both authors have increased their faithfulness in reproducing all three categories of material in Q compared to their use of Mark. How do we account for this?

When viewing these data we recognize that Matthew and Luke have each used Mark in the triple tradition, and that the wording agreements or lack thereof between Matthew and Luke are the result of their independent use of Mark. It is therefore natural to assume that the increased level of agreement in the double tradition must exist due to a similar reliance by both authors upon a separate underlying source—a source that they have each treated with incrementally greater respect, resulting in higher verbal agreement across all content types.

However, these assumptions are not justified. It should be obvious that we would get precisely the same statistical results if one author had treated his Mark and Q sources identically, drawing upon both with equal fidelity, while the other substantially increased his faithfulness in the reproduction of Q. This would also generate a higher rate of agreement in the double tradition. Taking this to an extreme, let us assume that Luke perfectly reproduced Q without change, with 100% fidelity, while Matthew recorded Q with 70% fidelity. In that event, comparing the double tradition agreements, we would see an approximate 70% rate of agreement between Matthew and Luke. Moreover, we would see slight differences in the statistical rate of agreement between Matthew and Luke since the divisor, the number of total words used by each author, varies between the two. This is essentially what is reflected in the chart above.

It is a small step to realize that if Matthew had used Luke directly, this would be the equivalent of "Luke reproducing Q with 100% fidelity." Of course, the opposite holds as well; if Luke was the later writer using Matthew directly, it would be as if Matthew had reproduced Q with 100% fidelity. So the Carlston and Norlin data are fully compatible with the observation that a direct literary dependence existed.

Let us consider the circumstances under which wording agreement comes to exist. At a statistical minimum, two monkeys using the same source with the ability to randomly retain or alter each word would agree in wording 25% of the time, since either monkey could choose to retain each given word or to vary it. If both monkeys choose to vary a word, or if either one of them does, a word match does not occur. Only when both monkeys choose to retain a given word does an agreement occur. So a 25% word match is minimum

predictable monkey performance when they are independently drawing from a common source. However, practically speaking, when two rational authors independently use a given source their verbal agreement will be much higher than 25% because (a) they have both decided to use the source for the value of its content, and (b) there will always be keywords that both authors would tend to reproduce in common. It would be difficult for two different authors to reproduce or edit a saying about a camel and an eye of a needle without using the words *camel* and *needle*.

However, returning to our monkey scenario, if one monkey is copying a source directly and choosing either to retain or vary each word, on random probability it will end up achieving a 50% statistical wording match with the source since the monkey has the binary choice of either to retain or alter each given word in the text. Again, if an intelligent author is copying directly from a given document, his/her practical rate of agreement would be higher than 50% due to the keyword factor and the implied value of the source being used. *But the minimum theoretical rate of word matches increases from 25% to 50% when we introduce direct literary dependence.* The reason is that whatever editing or paraphrasing the earlier author might have done with his sources is eliminated as a variable in the equation. Due to this phenomenon, we should *always* expect to see higher verbatim agreement when we compare a source text with an edited version of it produced by a single author rather than when we compare the texts produced by two independent authors who have each edited a common source. Carlston and Norlin's data reflect precisely this—they reflect a statistically higher agreement across *all three types* of content in the double tradition than the triple tradition. Since this is the expected result if one author is drawing from the other directly, the data *do not* require us to imagine that both authors not only used Q but considered it to be a uniquely precious source that warranted more accurate verbatim reproduction than did Mark.

Yet there is another important phenomenon in these data that is not immediately obvious. This requires a bit of a dive into the statistical weeds, but the results are significant and worth the diversion. Notice that in the triple tradition, 50.2% of Matthew's narrative wording matches that of Luke, and 63.5% of his wording in sayings material matches that of Luke. The ratio of these two, 50.2 / 63.5, is 0.79. Turning to the double tradition, we see that Matthew's wording in narrative material matches Luke 55.7% of the time, while he achieves a 69.5% wording match with Luke in sayings material. The ratio of these two figures is 55.7 / 69.5, or 0.80. The difference between 0.79

and 0.80 is insignificant and can be disregarded as attributable to rounding errors. Practically speaking, the ratios are identical. They indicate that Matthew shows an *identical increase* in his tendency to achieve a wording match with Luke's double tradition and Luke's triple tradition. This is not what we would expect from two independent authors using Mark and Q with no awareness of the other, each with their own instincts and biases with respect to the relative value of the two sources, and the relative value of narrative vs. sayings material.

Furthermore, precisely the same pattern exists in Luke's statistics. In the triple tradition, 46.9% of Luke's narrative wording matches that of Matthew, and 68.3% of his sayings material matches Matthew. The ratio of these two, 46.9 / 68.3, is 0.69. Turning to the double tradition, Luke's wording in narrative material matches Matthew 51.8% of the time, while he achieves a 73.6% wording match with Matthew in sayings material. The ratio of these two figures is 51.8 / 73.6, or 0.70. Again, the difference between 0.69 and 0.70 is insignificant and we have another set of virtually identical ratios. So if we are to imagine both authors were independently using Mark and Q, it is astounding that they appear to have achieved perfect parity in their respective uses of Mark and Q, insofar as their ability to match the other's increase in wording fidelity in both narrative and sayings is concerned.

Though it is almost impossible that two authors would have achieved these results independently, *these data are a mandatory byproduct of one author editing the other directly*. Mathematically, it cannot be otherwise. For if Matthew is editing Luke, in each incremental instance in which he reproduces another keyword, it not only increases Matthew's wording match relative to Luke, but it also by definition increases Luke's wording match vis a vis Matthew. Both ratios, of necessity, must rise in tandem. Therefore, rather than suggesting a common use of Q by Matthew and Luke, Carlston and Norlin's data point more decisively toward a direct literary dependence between Matthew and Luke.

In short, Carlston and Norlin's data do not support an inference that Matthew and Luke independently used Q. To the contrary, the statistical increase in fidelity in the double tradition across *all three content types* is precisely what one would anticipate if one author was editing the other's work directly. Accordingly, the data are more consistent with direct dependence than a mutual use of a common source by two different authors.

Carlston and Norlin's data, once they are viewed through non-Q colored lenses, tilt the probability needle rather significantly toward direct dependence. This should be no surprise since the Q theory rests upon logically tenuous presuppositions. With the possible reliance of two authors on a hypothetical Q called into doubt by Carlston and Norlin's data, the allegedly inscrutable enigma of the Synoptic Problem is reduced to a simple question: did the author of Luke use and edit Matthew, or did the author of Matthew use and edit Luke? In light of the evident uniform trajectories of content development from Mark to Luke to Matthew discussed thus far, common sense dictates the latter.

So Where is the Evidence for Q's Existence?

Since the fundamental premises upon which the Q theory have been erected are at best improbable, to make a viable case for the existence of Q one needs to establish two simple propositions beyond a reasonable doubt:

1. The author of Luke could not have known Matthew
2. The author of Matthew could not have known Luke.

These two propositions are unrelated and must be established independently, for if either one fails, the Q hypothesis collapses. Since the mid-20th century academic focus has been primarily on the improbability of Luke's awareness of Matthew because the Farrer Hypothesis was the most vocal challenger to the Q theory. There was an implicit assumption that since no commensurate school of support for Matthean Posteriority had developed, it could be safely ignored as a plausible alternative. So proponents of the Q theory have traditionally been preoccupied with the improbability of Luke's use of Matthew. And for the most part, the Q theory has continued to enjoy more academic support than Farrer due primarily to the strange and somewhat nonsensical editorial behavior one must assume of the author of Luke had he been using Matthew. When the Q theory and Farrer are compared, it is not surprising that most scholars default to the Q theory as the less logically encumbered of the two just based on the plausibility of the implied editorial behavior.

However, in addition to the strange Lukan editing implied by the FH, there is an astounding amount of material to which the author of Luke manages to remain oblivious had he used Matthew. Luke is not aware of *any* of the modifications and expansions that Matthew makes to his Markan

source. He knows none of the 13 moral sayings in Matthew that do not appear in Mark. He is unaware of Jesus' attempt to justify his willingness to submit to a baptism for the forgiveness of sins by John. (Matthew recognized this as a theological problem; why would Luke disregard this if he was using Matthew as a source?) Despite Luke's enthusiastic representation of Jesus as a friend of tax collectors, he has remained unaware of Matthew's dramatic claim that one of the twelve apostles was a tax collector. Why would this have not gotten Luke's attention? He does not know of Jesus' proclamation to make Peter the rock upon which he will build his church. Indeed, Luke does not know the term *ekklēsia*. He has no awareness of the Beatitudes as a collection of moral admonitions. He is oblivious to Matthew's frequent references to the *Father who is in the heavens* or *heavenly Father*. He has no awareness of Matthew's references to a *day of judgment* or a *close of the age*, or the casting of unbelievers into eternal fire. He does not know the expanded form of the Lord's Prayer or the liturgical form of the Great Commission. He does not know that Judas hanged himself in remorse for the betrayal. He is unaware of the sealing or guarding of the tomb, or of the stolen body thesis. He has no idea that Joseph *owned* the tomb in which the body of Jesus was placed. At some point, between the absurd editorial behavior implied by the Farrer thesis and the vast array of substantive material to which the author of Luke remains inexplicably oblivious, the notion that he was using the *Gospel of Matthew* must be seen as exceeding the bounds of all credibility.

Matthean Posteriority vs. the Q Theory

Once we are able to set aside Farrer as a viable solution to the Synoptic Problem, we are reduced to two options for resolving the phenomenon of the double tradition: either Matthew copied from Luke directly, or they both drew from Q. The essential question would then be, are there legitimate grounds to dismiss the possibility that Matthew used Luke, and if so, are they as compelling as the arguments against Luke's use of Matthew? And the question of plausible editorial behavior is key—do we see a similar pattern of improbable editorial behavior on the part of Matthew when assuming he used Mark and Luke? In fact, we do not. As we read the Synoptics in parallel under the assumption that Matthew is drawing from and editing both Mark and Luke, a profile of consistent and rational editorial behavior comes into view. This profile may be summarized as follows:

1. Matthew writes with an intent to correct the moral or theological deficiencies that he perceives in his sources. Several instances of this have already been noted.

2. Matthew rearranges material to improve logical coherence when it is lacking in his sources.

3. Matthew routinely eliminates verbiage in his sources that is redundant or otherwise irrelevant. He strives for grammatical efficiency, attempting to pack as much substance as possible into the scroll/codex space available.

4. Matthew eliminates cumbersome grammatical constructs. An example is Mark's frequent combining of *began* with a present tense verb (*began to say*, *began to drive*, etc.) which occurs 26 times in Mark. Matthew typically rewrites these in simple past tense ("they *began to say* to him" in Mark becomes "they *said* to him" in Matthew). Of the 26 occurrences of this cumbersome feature in Mark, Matthew corrects or omits 22 of them and copies over just four in which the usage is contextually appropriate. Matthew's sensitivity to inappropriate uses of *begin* is also visible in the double tradition. Where Luke writes in 3.8 "do not *begin to say* to yourselves," Matthew alters this to read "do not *presume to say* to yourselves" (Mt 3.9).

5. Matthew tends to copy his sources verbatim *unless* corrections are required to improve grammatical coherence, logical sequencing, to eliminate irrelevant material, or to correct moral/theological defects. He does not paraphrase his sources simply to tell the story in different words as Luke typically does.

6. Matthew occasionally conflates materials that he finds in Mark and Luke, creating individual phrases and pericopes that consist of combined elements drawn from Mark and Luke. When he does this, he always uses the Markan unit first, followed by the Lukan unit. An example is Mt 3.5: *Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan.* This is a conflation of "there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the

people of Jerusalem" from Mark 1.5, and "all the region about the Jordan" from Luke 3.3. This is easily understood as a conflation under the MPH, but it is difficult to explain under the FH, where we must infer that Luke examined Mt 3.5 and copied *only* the portion of it that did not have a parallel in Mark. Another example of this phenomenon is found in Mt 9:35 "*and Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching* ... (drawn from Mark) *and preaching"* (drawn from Luke). Also, the *Beelzebul Controversy* (12.22–32), and the *Mustard Seed* (Mt 13.31–32) contain conflations of elements drawn from Mark and Luke, and in each case the Markan element appears first, followed by the Lukan element. It is essential to note that there are *no corresponding conflations* of elements drawn from Mark and Matthew to be found in the *Gospel of Luke*, which one would expect to find if the author of Luke had been using both Mark and Matthew.

7. Matthew reproduces Semitic parallelisms intact when he is aware of them. Examples include *Treasure in Heaven* (6.19–21), *Narrow Gate* (7.13–14), *House Built on Rock* (7.24–27), *Disciple/ Teacher* (10.24–25). Since parallelisms are by definition redundant, this constitutes an exception to his normal penchant for grammatical efficiency. For Matthew, retaining the poetic integrity and apparent early authenticity of a parallelism supersedes the objective of removing redundant language. One may infer that Matthew most likely had among his source materials a collection of logia that included these older parallelisms.

In these regards, Matthew's editorial behavior is quite distinct from that of Luke. Luke is not bothered by redundant language and he can err toward the verbose. He will document several parables that all make the same point, such as the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son. Though Luke will copy some sayings material reasonably close to verbatim, he does not do so to the extent that Matthew does. Luke prefers to paraphrase his sources simply to tell the same story in different words; often in so doing he adds a bit of flair or color. Luke routinely destroys parallelisms by rendering them in free prose. Luke never creates phrases or pericopes by combining elements found in Matthew and Mark. To the contrary, under Farrer, when Luke is presumed to be using Matthew and Mark he appears to create texts that

consist of Matthean material from which elements that have Markan parallels have been deliberately removed. Therefore, Luke's editorial behavior is in many respects the polar opposite that of Matthew.

Is there evidence that Matthew did not know Luke?

The credibility of the Q theory is utterly and wholly dependent on a compelling demonstration that Matthew could not have known Luke. What arguments might be advanced to support this conclusion? One obvious line of reasoning might be as follows: If Matthew was using Luke, why did he ignore Luke's major parables? Why would he pass up the parables of the Rich Man and Lazarus, or the Prodigal Son, or the Great Banquet? Why would he have ignored the Pharisee and the Tax Collector which it seems would have been particularly appealing to him? And why omit Luke's 4.16–30 extension to the synagogue scene in Mark 6, as it claims a fulfillment of an Isaiah prophecy that should have had obvious appeal to Matthew? Collectively, do not these omissions suggest Matthew's unawareness of Luke?

Why indeed? At first glance it seems as though Matthew would have found these parables compelling since we tend to view them with positive sentiment in the modern age. However, upon closer examination it appears that Matthew made conscious and rational decisions to pass on them for ideological reasons. In essence, Matthew is writing, in part, to correct what he sees as severe ideological deficiencies in Luke. His omission of these parables is related to a critical issue at dispute between the two—that of the relevance of one's economic status as a key factor determining access to the kingdom. For Luke, the poor have access to heaven as a result of their poverty while the rich are blocked due to their wealth in this life; for Matthew, economic status is irrelevant, and it is the *pursuit of righteousness* that is essential. Much of the material cited as material that Matthew would have likely embraced had he been aware of it is related to the economic status of the believer.

Recall that Matthew has also omitted Mark's pericope of the poor widow's contribution, a story that demeans the contributions of the wealthy (Mark 12.41-44). This operates on the same tendency to honor the poor and denigrate the rich that is present in many of Luke's parables. But as noted previously, Matthew welcomes the rich with an infancy narrative featuring wealthy foreigners who travel a great distance to bestow expensive gifts on the baby Jesus, and depicting Joseph explicitly as a *rich disciple of Jesus* who

offers his own new tomb in order to provide an honorable burial. So Matthew does not wish to denigrate the rich as Luke does. Furthermore, once we assume Matthew is using Luke, this impression is confirmed with his extensive reworking of the Beatitudes that erases Luke's preoccupation with economic class distinctions and substitutes spiritual state of mind as the essential key to the kingdom. Luke's notion that the poor had a fast track to heaven while the rich did not may have been offensive to Matthew himself personally, or he may have anticipated that these ideas would be offensive to wealthy patrons who might have been underwriting his project or supporting his community. But for whatever reason, once we interpret Matthew as a critic of Luke, it becomes clear that he actively sweeps Luke's condemnation of the rich and the exclusive salvation of the poor under the rug.

With this as background, it is little wonder that Matthew would reject the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19–31). This parable operates exclusively on the premise that the rich man has been condemned due to his wealth in this life; he has already received his good things and he shall receive no more. Meanwhile the poor and afflicted Lazarus is to enjoy tranquility in the next life as recompense for his suffering in the present.

This same conflict is also visible in the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14.16–24). Here a man gives a great banquet. After being shunned by his friends he commands his servants to go to the streets and bring in the "*poor and maimed and blind and lame*." So the banquet is offered first to the economically and physically disadvantaged. Matthew rejects this parable but offers a variation, the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matt 22.1-14). In this story it is not a man throwing a feast, but a king who is celebrating the marriage of his son. Here the king sends his servants to the streets to invite "as many as they find, both bad and good." In Matthew's parable, everyone is invited regardless of status. Poverty and physical disadvantage are eliminated as factors that determine who gets invited to the feast.

Following this logic, it appears that Matthew rejects Luke 4.16-30 as an extension to Mark 6 for the same reason. Here Luke uses the quote from Isaiah to declare that Jesus' mission is to save the economically and physically distressed: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed*" (4.18). Matthew does indeed have a brief parallel to this in Matt 11.5 but there is a qualitative difference. Matthew does not mind acknowledging that the blind and lame are healed, lepers are cleansed, the

deaf hear, the dead are raised, and (lastly) the poor have good news preached to them, all as beneficial consequences of Jesus' mission. What Matthew objects to is the notion that Jesus was sent exclusively to redeem the economically disadvantaged, which is what is declared in Luke 4.18. Matthew's rejection of this text is consistent with his larger objective to rebut Luke's notion that the poor and disabled are uniquely favored in salvation.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15.11-32) also reflects the rich/poor dichotomy that Matthew finds objectionable. An irresponsible son squanders the family fortune on loose living and ends up destitute. Yet upon his return he is celebrated and honored, suffering no repercussions for his wayward behavior. The parable also casts an unattractive light on the elder, more responsible son who has presumably retained his portion of the inheritance. This parable echoes the familiar Lukan premise that the destitute have an inherent advantage in salvation. Given Matthew's vigorous opposition to the idea that the poor are uniquely favored while the wealthy are by definition morally compromised, it is not difficult to see why this parable might not have resonated particularly well with him.

There is also a practical consideration. The Prodigal Son is the longest parable in Luke. Matthew is attempting to pack as much theological content as possible into the space available to him, so he routinely eliminates verbose and redundant language. In this instance, Luke has offered three parables in sequence with the same meaning—the Lost Sheep (15.3–7), the Lost Coin (15.8–10), and the Prodigal Son (15.11–32). Matthew elects to reproduce the Lost Sheep in somewhat condensed form (Mt 18.12–14), then passes on the other two as ideologically redundant. This is rational and consistent editorial behavior.

Now, with respect to the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18.9-14), why would Matthew have passed on this one? Unlike the others, it does not address issues related to the poor. In this parable the hypocrisy of the Pharisee is juxtaposed with the honest repentance of the tax collector. It surely seems this would have been attractive to Matthew. Yet we should note that if he had copied this over, it would have been the only overtly sympathetic interpretation of a tax collector in his gospel. We typically suppose that since Matthew identified one of the twelve as a tax collector that he must have been positively disposed toward tax collectors. However, Matthew routinely casts them in derogatory terms and associates them with other classes of people for whom he has little regard, including sinners, harlots, and Gentiles:

> 5.46. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?
>
> 9.11-12. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.
>
> 11.19 the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, `Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'
>
> 18.17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.
>
> 21:31-32 "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him"

Not only does Matthew routinely refer to tax collectors in derogatory terms, but there are no stories in Matthew similar to Luke's endearing Zacchaeus episode wherein Jesus enthusiastically engages with a tax collector. And in Luke, when Levi is called from his tax office he "leaves everything" and out of gratitude or enthusiasm, makes a great feast for Jesus and his disciples. Conversely, in Matthew's account, the disciple Matthew is called from his tax office and follows Jesus without further comment. No feast is prepared for Jesus by him. The account is suspiciously terse. Other than the two words *ho telones* (the tax collector) in the list of the twelve (10:3), and the subtle substitution of Matthew for Levi at the tax office, the entire *Gospel of Matthew* maintains silence on this astounding new claim that one of Jesus' twelve disciples had been a tax collector.

This tradition exists only in Matthew. One must imagine that the gospel writer's decision to represent one of the twelve as a tax collector would have been controversial and subject to debate, and possibly related to the decision to promote this work as the *Gospel of Matthew*. It does not seem likely that any independent writer would have had the authority to declare on behalf of the church that one of the twelve had been a tax collector, nor does it seem likely that this particular writer would have created the story of his own volition. For Matthew's treatment of tax collectors is not at all complimentary. One may wonder whether the author inserted these references at the

directive of church authorities, or whether they were perhaps interpolated after the fact. In any event, if Matthew had rejected Luke's parable that sympathetically humanizes a tax collector, it would be consistent with his denigration of them as a whole.

This parable also condemns a hypocritical Pharisee which is certainly in harmony with Matthew's denigration of this group as well. Yet the tirade against the Pharisees in Matt. 23 is far more extensive and extreme than that in Luke's parable. Copying this parable over would have added nothing to what Matthew has otherwise addressed and would have created redundant material, which Matthew routinely avoids. It appears that Matthew has taken the one noteworthy aphorism that concludes Luke's parable, "*whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted*," and folded it into his own more extreme condemnation of the Pharisees in 23.12. This renders the balance of Luke's parable superfluous.

In short, the suggestion that the author of Matthew's avoidance of well-known Lukan parables is a sign of his unawareness of Luke presupposes that he must have held Luke in high regard, and that he would have enthusiastically embraced the stories in Luke that appear attractive to us today. The evidence is to the contrary—Matthew is editing Luke to correct what he believes are Luke's theologically problematic representations, including specifically the notion that the poor are favored and the rich dismissed simply on the grounds of their economic status. Since Matthew's rejection of Luke's popular parables is coherent and consistent editorial behavior, there are no grounds to suppose that the absence of this material in Matthew is a sign that the author was unaware of Luke.

In the end, the search for a compelling argument that the author of Matthew could not have known Luke is futile, for the evidence points inexorably toward the conclusion that he did. The fact that Matthew contains units that are conflations of material in Mark and Luke is easily understood as an expected result of Matthean posteriority (e.g., the Beelzebul Controversy and the Mustard Seed are prime examples). Conversely, that Luke *never* has a unit that is a conflation of material in Mark and Matthew should be viewed as a red flag for the Farrer theory. So also the fact that Luke is never aware of any modifications or expansions to Mark made by Matthew is a problem for Farrer.

With regard to the Q theory in particular, one of the primary textual phenomena that it attempts to resolve is the high verbatim reproduction of

material in the double tradition. As noted, Q theorists allege that this is to be accounted for by the fact that Q is primary a collection of sayings, and that Matthew and Luke each had a propensity to reproduce sayings material more faithfully than narrative. And for some reason (per Carlston and Norlin's data), these two authors both elected to reproduce *sayings material in Q* more faithfully than they did *sayings material in Mark,* allegedly out of their mutual deeper respect for the authority and authenticity of Q.

However, the problem is this: the parallelisms of *The House Built on Rock* and *Treasure in Heaven* are universally regarded as the earlier versions of these sayings. Q scholars typically assume that Q contained them in their parallel forms. If so, we have concrete evidence that Luke had no desire at all to reproduce Q sayings verbatim out of respect for the integrity of his Q source, as he radically and liberally paraphrases both of them, utterly demolishing their original poetic forms. This internal self-contradiction is a serious problem for the Q theory, for there is no way to account for the higher verbatim replication in the double tradition if one author is demonstrably and enthusiastically paraphrasing his Q source.

We may then return to the opening observations in this chapter, that the Q theory is erected upon dubious proposition that one author would not have introduced contradictory infancy narratives or genealogies or resurrection accounts into the gospel record if he had known the other gospel. To the contrary, Matthew was writing specifically to correct what he regarded as significant theological defects in Luke 3–24, with the objective of producing a grander, more elegant, and more refined gospel that he most likely imagined would supersede Luke 3–24.

Burton Mack once made an intriguing observation:

> If one were to ask which of the narrative gospels most nearly represents an ethos toward which the community of Q may have tended, it would be the *Gospel of Matthew.* [7]

Under the Q theory, that one might a detect a unique ideological affinity between Q and the *Gospel of Matthew* is nothing more than a curious coincidence. But it is a predictable outcome of the Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis. Under the MPH, Luke assembled an array of sayings and other traditions and combined them with portions of Mark to produce his own

[7] Mack, Burton, *A Myth of Innocence*, p. 173

gospel. Then the author of Matthew followed, using Mark as the foundational narrative structure, and Luke as a secondary source from which to draw a variety of sayings and a few other traditions that did not exist in Mark. Matthew applied his own editorial filter to the materials, selectively drawing and editing many sayings from Luke while rejecting others. In so doing, Matthew's editorial decisions *defined the scope and content* of what we recognize today as the double tradition. Matthew was, in effect, the *author* of what Q scholars have come to imagine was the hypothetical Q. So the "ethos" toward the *Gospel of Matthew* that Burton Mack observes in what he imagined to have been the "community of Q" is no accident—it is an expected and predictable byproduct of Matthean posteriority.

The study of the Synoptic Problem has traditionally consisted of debate over which of two significantly flawed hypotheses, the Q theory or Farrer, is the least logically offensive. With a steadfast confidence that the truth will eventually win out, I believe it is just a matter of time before scholars come to realize that neither the Q theory nor the Farrer Hypothesis are, in any practical sense, probable solutions. Eventually, the comparative simplicity and formidable resolving power of the Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis will become widely recognized, and the academy will be able to declare the Synoptic Problem solved.