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There are a great many similarities to be found in the Synoptic Gospels. In fact, over 97% of Mark's Gospel is found in the work of Matthew and Luke has given rise to the belief in
Similarities and Differences of the Synoptic Gospels
                                                                                                                                    There is early support suggesting that Matthew, the tax collector, originally wrote in Aramaic which provides important testimony to the priority of Matthew[1]. To say that the priority of Matthew is settled
Markan priority rather than Matthew having been written first. For now, a brief overview of each of the Synoptic Gospels is on order.
would certainly be incorrect. Matthew likely had a Jewish audience in mind when writing his Gospel. Some suppose his heavy use of Old Testament quotations was intended to teach Christians how to read their Bibles[2]. While this may or may not be true, Matthew's appreciation of the links between the old covenants and new cannot be
understated. Matthew's Gospel adopts a decidedly christological view of the Old Testament.
                                                                                             It is believed that Mark was the interpreter for the Apostle Peter. Mark's gospel is action oriented shifting from one scene to the next rather quickly[3]. Mark focuses on Jesus' passion, the cost of discipleship, and service. Mark carefully balances his
Christology and discipleship with suffering. Mark also reminds Christians that their salvation depends on the death and resurrection of Christ and tying the Christian faith to the reality of the historical events[4].
                                                                                                                                                                                                             Luke's Gospel is the longest single book of the New Testament[5]. As the author of his Gospel and Acts, Luke made the largest
contribution to the New Testament. Luke provides a lengthy presentation of Jesus' birth and early life. Luke's Gospel is unique in that it shows Jesus' interest in the outcasts of Jewish society including the Gentiles (2:32), moral outcasts (7:36-50), and the economically deprived (14:12-14). Also noteworthy is Luke's focus on the Holy Spirit. The
following table from Carson and Moo provides an excellent illustration of some of the similarities and differences in the Synoptics (Note: Bold type indicates that the incident does not appear in the gospel.)
Jesus' Mother and Brothers Interpretation of the Seed Growing Secretly Parable of the Weeds Parable of the Weeds Parable of the Storm Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac Raising of Jairus's Daughter/Healing of a Woman
Beheading John the Baptist Feeding of the Five Thousand [1] Enns, Paul P.: The Moody Handbook of Theology. (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1997, c1989) [2] Carson, D A, and Douglas J Moo. An Introduction To The New Testament. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, pp. 77-284). [5] Lea, Thomas D., and David Alan Black. The New Testament: It's
Background And Message (2nd ed). Nashville: Broadman & Hollman Publishers, 2003. [6] IBID. See also Figure One. The four gospels, neatly nestled in the beginning pages of the New Testament, are treasure troves of instruction regarding the person of Jesus Christ. Within these four individual accounts, the reader meets Jesus as the fulfillment of
the Old Testament prophecies, an authoritative teacher, and our redeemer. We are provided with the narrative for his life and ministry, his death and resurrection. As our salvation depends upon the truth of the gospel message found within these four books, and our life is to be patterned after that of Jesus, the reliability and interpretation of the
gospels is imperative to our faith. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, or the Synoptic Gospels, differ from John in that they closely mirror one another in their accounts. In these three gospels, we find similar wording, chronology, and Old Testament referencing. While we should expect consistent narratives amongst all the gospels, the similarities amongst the
Synoptics seem to suggest that they were written in reliance upon one another or an outside source. Even amidst the similarities discredit the authority of their writings? Can we trust the Synoptic Gospels? Consider these questions as we seek to
understand the authority of the gospels. Who wrote the Synoptic Gospels? The Gospel of Matthew, one of two gospels written by a disciple, tailored its account for a Jewish audience. Matthew wrote to identify Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies so that the Jews would recognize Jesus as the Messiah they had long awaited. In
contrast, the Gospel of Mark is written with a Gentile audience in mind. The shortest of the four gospels, early Church history tells us that Mark had a close connection to the apostle Peter. Mark weaves a narrative that identifies Jesus as the Son of God (Mark 1:1) and demonstrates the veracity of the cross. The Gospel of Luke is written to a specific
person, Theophilus, and mounts a defense of the gospel message as revealed in the life of Christ. Though not an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, Luke wrote as a historian who had access to multiple accounts and brought them together in one narrative. The Gospel of John, the second of the gospels written by a disciple, was transcribed later than the
others and has a more universal audience in mind. John's Gospel clarifies many theological truths in broadening the reach of the Synoptics. Why is there more than one gospel? While each of the gospels are united in their purpose to record the life of Jesus and the corresponding gospel message, each author takes a slightly different tack. Matthew,
Mark, Luke, and John each had a different audience in mind and customize their writing for that group. Each man had a different perspective and shares the gospel message from his vantage point. Even in light of their differences, we do know that each considered their message to be of the utmost importance. They understood that they bore a great
responsibility to accurately record historical events and impart to their audience corresponding theological truths. They were not just writing to reform the lifestyle of their audience. Their job was far bigger and longer than that which affects an ordinary lifespan. The gospel writers communicated eternal truths to people who had eternal value. When
we consider the gospel writers' need to be accurate, it makes sense that they may use another account as a roadmap for their own. If there was already an authoritative account in circulation, that document would be consulted in future writing about the same events and truths. Many theories exist today to explain what has become known as the
Synoptic Problem, or the remarkable similarities between the Synoptic Gospels. A dominant theory, Markan Priority, suggests that Mark was written first, followed by the Matthew and Luke sought to provide theological
clarification and build thematically upon Mark. Other theories suggest that there may have been another source document for all three Synoptics that is thus far unidentified. The Synoptic Gospels were written, there is evidence to
suggest that they were written only 20-30 years after the death of Jesus, as outlined in "The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown." John's Gospel (John 21:24). The Gospel of John had a wider audience in mind than the previous three
gospels, and therefore a broader theological reach, because the Gospel message had spread and new clarifications to the Synoptics? While wading through solutions to the
Synoptic Problem may seem heady and laborious, the discussion is valuable for the scholar and the layman alike. When we survey our options and scrutinize the differences and similarities between the gospels, we begin to piece together a more comprehensive understanding of the theology communicated between all four. We see a stronger
relationship between content and audience. We see that the gospels build upon one another, confirming and clarifying the documented life of Jesus and the corresponding theological truths he taught. In laying out the similarities and differences side by side, it is as if there is a highlighter going across the pages of our Bibles drawing attention to
details we may have otherwise missed. The comparison of the Gospel accounts also leaves us in awe of their consistency and confirm the account of the others. We have four different authors with different relationships to the events they record, each writing for
different audiences, and yet they all point to the same Jesus. How should we answer when people say the gospels contradict themselves? While we understand that the gospels share a cohesive story about Jesus, we also see that there are variances. This should be expected when we consider that each gospel was indeed written by a different source
and was purposed for a different audience. Like a garment that comes in various sizes though all the same design, differences amongst the gospel accounts often tell us about the intended recipient. We also need to be responsible in our interpretation. When a contradiction appears at the surface, such as Jesus explaining his role as a judge in John
8:15-16 and John 8:26, we need to be ready to study the underlying meaning and intention of the text, says Peter J. Williams in his article. Perhaps the author intends to surprise us and goad us on to think more deeply about what we have just read. Some will argue that there are discrepancies in chronology, details, and names amongst the four
gospels, such as the number of demon-possessed men in Matthew 8:28 and Mark 5:2. In both accounts, we still see a consistent story that does not threaten the integrity of the miracle itself. Minor discrepancies also show us that while the gospel writers may have used one another's account in writing their own, they did not collude with one another
in making sure their accounts were identical, as explained in this ZA Blog post. Such discrepancies confirm their account rather than call it into questions raised
may at first seem daunting, but abundant joy in the truth of God's Word awaits the one willing to persevere and be diligent in her search and study. With a heart for teaching, Madison Hetzler is passionate about edifying fellow believers to be strong, confident, and knowledgeable in the Word of God. Madison graduated from Liberty University's School
of Divinity and now instructs Bible courses for Grace Christian University. She cherishes any opportunity to build community around cups of coffee and platters of homemade food. Photo credit: Unsplash/James Coleman When reading over the materials found in the first three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), you may have noticed that the authors
have included several similar stories in their narratives - these are called the Synoptic Gospels." In essence, the word synoptic conveys a harmonious or similar feel. Here we encounter a "Synoptic Problem." For instance, Matthew, Mark,
and Luke all include Christ calming the storm (Matthew 8:18-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). The article linked shows other ways we see a common thread in all three of these books. Did these three writers have an issue with plagiarism? Did they have the same source material (such as notes taken during Jesus' ministry) that they all referred to? Or
did divine intervention play a role in all of their texts? And why is John's gospel so different from the three of these? We'll dive into these questions. Did Matthew, Mark, and Luke Copy Each Other? This is the crux of the Synoptic Problem. Why do we have such similarities between these three books? Some scholars have suggested that they all used
material from something known as the Q Source. The Q Source is a hypothetical document full of oral tradition, etc. that could have given non-eyewitness gospel writers, such as Luke, some firsthand accounts of Jesus' ministry. Of course, this theory is not without its problems. Synoptic Gospels Theories We do run into some problems with this
theory. First, we have no evidence of a Q source. What may have happened is Mark or Matthew (depending on which scholar you asked) wrote their gospel first, and the other two had access to it. We can point to the verse in Luke that mentions that others had written accounts of Jesus (Luke 1:1). Second, we do have enough differences between the
three gospels that the authors didn't copy each other word for word. Even if they did use some Q source, which we have no evidence to back up that theory, they were either eyewitnesses (Matthew) or spent a great deal of time compiling eyewitness accounts to provide an accurate gospel narrative (Luke 1:2). Third, we also see some
seemingly conflicting details in these accounts. For example, the women who witness the resurrection go immediately to tell the disciples in Matthew 28:8, but they don't seem to tell anyone in Mark 16:8. The article linked above shows how these aren't contradictions, but each writer gave different details about the events. Hence, showing how the
gospel writers did not copy each other word for word. Fourth, we can't altogether rule out divine intervention if Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not have access to each other's gospels. For instance, let's take a look at the most famous translated the Hebrew
Bible into Greek. Although these 70 scholars worked independently of each other, they provided identical translation process. How much more did he have a hand in the compilation of the gospel narratives? Why Is John's Gospel So Different? If we don't necessarily have a problem with the Synoptic
Gospels, then why is John's so different? If these writers truly worked independently of each other, then why does John produce information about Jesus' ministry that we don't see in the other three accounts? To figure out this, I suggest we look at when the gospels were written. Although some scholars try to push the dates as far back as AD 90,
(there are entire books dedicated to why this is likely not the case), I'm going to argue for the earlier dates. Some scholars debate as to whether Matthew, to align with this article and this one. Matthew or Mark was written first. We'll go with Matthew, to align with this article and this one. Matthew or Mark was written first. We'll go with Matthew, to align with this article and this one. Matthew or Mark was written first. We'll go with Matthew, to align with this article and this one. Matthew or Mark was written first.
that each author has a different literary flair. Luke was meticulous and wanted to get his research right. We can think of Luke's gospel as more of a work for the layman audience of the day. Why Does This Matter? Often skeptics of
Christianity will point out that the similarities of the first three gospels show that the authors just simply copied each other to push an agenda. We know there are enough differences between the three that show personal eyewitness accounts. And that even if a Q source does exist, we can't rule out divine intervention. After all, it is the Word of
God. Sistock/Getty Images Plus/jeabHope Bolinger is an acquisitions editor at End Game Press, book editor for hire, and the author of almost 30 books. More than 1500 of her works have been featured in various publications. Check out her editing
profile at Reedsy.com to find out about hiring her for your next book project. WARNING: Google have made things so difficult with their email service that not even Microsoft Windows Live Mail works with Gmail anymore. And older email service that not even Microsoft Windows Live Mail works with Gmail anymore.
missing emails. And this includes me, so please do not use a Gmail address or I will not receive your email. I have no intention of changing this just because they want to make things so hard. I suggest using a different service as Google is no longer a reliable service. Also, please ensure that your email address is valid as an auto response is sent,
which will also result in your email being rejected if it is incorrect. We appreciate your feedback and are happy to discuss subjects with those whose only intention is to try and force their viewpoint or criticize. We also regret that there is no point in us
responding to those who would just insist the Ten Commandments of God are gone. Please feel free to give us your thoughts or ask any questions. We would also be grateful for any bug reports and grammatical errors. We would also be grateful for any bug reports and grammatical errors.
people as possible. No email addresses are collected so privacy is assured. Thank you. Use the Tell a Friend link to share this information with others. Please Note: Due to the impact these websites are having on the world, the satanic attacks have this family struggling without a wife and mother that we love and miss dearly and insufficient funds.
This is also due to an ongoing infection of Lyme disease since 2007 that had me bed ridden for the first year with a 57lb (26kg) weight loss. There are 130 domains with a total yearly count of over 3,000,000 visits. Fighting Lyme is expensive as is the cost of maintaining these sites. We desperately require prayer and support to keep this family
together and Lyme from winning. Any assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your prayers and support this week: $0.00 To prevent automated Bots from form spamming, please enter the anti-spam characters in the image into the input box. Please ensure that your browser supports and accepts cookies or the code cannot be
verified correctly. The Bible's four gospels paint four portraits of Jesus. While each gospel follows him on the same journey, they recount it a little differently. They had their own methods, styles, purposes, audiences, and (probably) sources—making each portrait of Jesus uniquely valuable. Despite their unique qualities, the first three gospels—
Matthew, Mark, and Luke—share many of the same accounts of Christ, often shared in the same wording. Because of their similar perspectives on Jesus' ministry, together they're known as the synoptic gospels. (The word "synoptic" comes from the Greek word synoptic gospels. (The word "synoptic" comes from the Greek word synoptic gospels.
differences between the gospels can be a challenge for us, these similarities can be problematic, too. The parallel passages between the synoptic gospels have left scholars with pressing questions about their origins. If Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote about Jesus' life and ministry from different perspectives, why are they so similar? If four people
witnessed a car accident or a parade, they'd probably have loosely similar timelines, but significant variations in how they remember dialogue, what details they recall or omit, and how they describe it all. Yet these three gospels are remarkably similar. How did that happen? The uncertain relationship between the synoptic gospels is known as "the
synoptic problem." The synoptic problem Looking at parallel passages, it's hard to imagine that Matthew, Mark, and Luke don't share a source or source for the others. For example, take a look at these passages where Jesus interacts with little children:
Matthew 19:13-14 Mark 10:13-14 Luke 18:15-16 "Then little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' " "People were bringing
little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, but the disciples saw this, the
rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.' "The quote from Jesus is identical in all three passages, and the text leading up to the quote has slightly different wording, but basically says the same thing. Matthew adds that
people wanted Jesus to pray for the children. And the gospels are full of passages like these. So how do we know what's happening here? By submitting your email address, you understand that you will receive email communications from HarperCollins Christian Publishing (501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214 USA) providing information about
products and services of HCCP and its affiliates. You may unsubscribe from these email communications at any time. If you have any questions we need to answer The gospels don't come with a "works cited" page. We don't have a detailed list of
sources to cross-examine. To answer the synoptic problem, scholars mostly have to work from the gospels themselves. While that means solutions to the synoptic problem rely heavily on speculation, there's a lot we can deduce from the information we have, and many brilliant people have arrived at the same handful of conclusions. There are two
questions the synoptic problem challenges us to answer: 1. Did the synoptic gospel writers use each other as sources? There's a clear overlap in material, but the gospels could have shared another source—some combination of written and oral—to produce such similar writings. If we decide that one or more of the gospels was a source for the others
this leads us to a more complicated question: 2. If so, which synoptic gospel was written first and which depended on the others? Without the gospels' original manuscripts, we can't just look at the dates to determine which came first. We have to use literary clues to identify which gospel (or gospels) seem to exert the greatest influence on the others
5 signs the synoptic gospel writers used each other as sources While some scholars believe each of the gospels was written completely independently of the others, several highly unlikely coincidences make that pretty hard to accept. Here's why most scholars believe one or more of the gospel writers used the others as sources: 1. So much common
material The Gospel of John isn't one of the synoptic gospels because it was clearly written independently. Over 90% of the Book of John is unique, that is, the book's material is not found in any of the synoptic gospels were written independently, we'd expect a significant portion of those gospels to be unique as well.
However, over 90% of Mark appears in either Matthew or Luke, and in many cases the wording is unchanged or barely different. 2. So much verbal agreement While it's completely possible that the disciples memorized the exact words of Jesus, quotes alone can't account for the similar wording in the synoptic gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke
contain entire sentences that are the same word for word, even in narrative material. These numerous instances of exact matches seems to suggest that the writers worked from the same world have all preserved these accounts of Christ verbatim. 3.
So much agreement in order It's not just the precise wording of parallel passages that raises eyebrows. While some of these passages appear to occur at different times in different gospels, there are numerous instances where the gospel writers presented accounts of Jesus in the same order—even when they don't appear to be recording the
chronological order of events. Towards the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the gospels all present the following events in the same order: Jesus heals the paralyzed man (Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:13-17, Luke 5:27-32) Jesus is questioned about fasting (Matthew 9:14-12).
17, Mark 2:18-22, Luke 5:33-39) Jesus heals on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-14, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 6:1-11) Paying taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22:23-33, Mark 12:18-27, Luke 20:27-40) Whose son is the messiah? (Matthew 22:41-46, Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44)
 Warning against the teachers of the Law (Matthew 23:1-12, Mark 12:38-40, Luke 20:45-47) While you'll find some unique accounts in between, these passages are never rearranged in any of the same order. The gospel writers certainly aren'
copying everything from each other, but these similarities suggest that each gospel writer is drawing from your own perspective, what are the chances you'd both choose the same moment to provide commentary? The writers of the synoptic
gospels frequently follow the same patterns in their narratives, pausing for parenthetical statements in the same places. Take a look at where the writer breaks up Jesus' quote (which happens to be a word-for-word quotation): Matthew 9:6 Mark 2:10-11 Luke 5:24 "'But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive
sins....' Then he said to the paralytic, 'Get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' " " 'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take you may know that the said to the pa
man, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' "Even when the wording isn't exactly the same, the writers choose the same opportunities to add narrative asides. You can see this in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14, Mark 5:8 and Luke 8:29, and Matthew 27:18 and Mark 15:10. So is this a coincidence? Not likely. If a writer has details to add to
the story, they could choose any number of places to add that information. The chances that all three writers would happen to choose the same details—without using one of the other writers as a model—are pretty small. Add that to the fact that many of these same events are recorded with the same (or similar) wording in
the same order, and you've got a pretty good case for one of these three gospels influencing the other two. Now here's the kicker: 5. Identical alterations of the m quote Isaiah 40:3 from the Septuagint, which includes the phrase "make straight
paths for our God." All three synoptic gospels make the exact same alteration to that phrase, changing it to "make straight paths for him." '" "It is written in
Isaiah the prophet: '... a voice of one calling in the desert, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him." ' " It's pretty hard to argue that all three writers made the same
changes to the same Old Testament quote in the same context completely independently. At some point you have to ask, how many coincidences does it take to equal proof? When the same altered quotes, most scholars agree: one of these gospels
was a source for the others—so which is it? The first solution to the synoptic problem was proposed more than a millennium ago, when St. Augustine of Hippo first noticed the signs suggesting the gospels weren't written independently. Learn more about the Gospels Augustine's solution: Mark and Luke borrow from Matthew Despite all the writings
we have from the early church fathers, we don't have an extensive exploration of the synoptic problem. In fact, what we do have seems to suggest that the early church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all. The second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers didn't see a problem at all second-century church fathers did
"the oracles"—of Jesus, meaning a collection of his sayings (which may or may not have been the Gospel of Matthew). It seems that Augustine first and that Mark took Matthew's account and abbreviated it. Luke then wrote his gospel
using both Matthew and Mark's gospels as sources. In the video at the top of this post, Dr. Mark Strauss suggests "[Augustine] probably drew this conclusion based on their canonical order: that Matthew was first, Mark was second, and Luke was third." Since Augustine's first keen observations, scholars have found other reasons to support the
notion that Matthew wrote first. Are the synoptic gospels actually based on Matthew came first. Unlike Augustine, modern proponents of Matthew as a source, and then Mark used both, abbreviating
them throughout his own gospel. This is known as the Griesbach hypothesis, since it claims Matthew and Luke were the source for Mark. There are three main reasons many Bible scholars hold this view: 1. Church tradition supports a Matthew-first
view. Early Christians were closest to the original sources, and until the nineteenth century the church largely assumed that Matthew and Luke occasionally agree against Mark. The strongest argument for Matthean priority is that there are instances in which Matthew and
Luke agree, and Mark does not. This view assumes that Mark's departure from Matthew and Luke is due to Mark abridging the two longer gospels. 3. There is no physical evidence for additional sources, despite no physical
evidence that such sources exist. The difference between this theory and Augustine's solution is simply a matter of who wrote second (Mark or Luke), and who wrote second (Mark or Luke), and who wrote second (Mark or Luke), and who wrote third, using the other two as sources. Both of these Matthean priority theories solve the synoptic problem with this argument is that
Matthew and Luke both contain unique material we don't see in any of the other synoptic gospels. That material had to come from somewhere, and while an additional source currently only exists in theory, it's one of the main reasons most scholars find the
Matthean priority argument less convincing than the evidence for Markan priority: the idea that Mark came first. There are several significant reasons to support this view: 1. Most of Mark is included in Matthew and Luke. About 93% of the material in Mark is in found in either Matthew or Luke. So did Mark take material from both, or did Matthew
and Luke take material from Mark? While some have argued that Mark is an abridged version of the demon-possessed man in Mark 5:1-20 has 325 words Whereas the parallel passages appears to suggest otherwise. For example: The account of the demon-possessed man in Mark 5:1-20 has 325 words Whereas the parallel passage in Matthew 8:28-34 only has
135 words. If Mark is using Matthew as his main source for this story, why does he have significantly more detail? If anything, it seems more likely that Matthew and Luke are providing abbreviated versions of the words from Jesus' native tongue, Aramaic
 —such as talitha koum in Mark 5:41 and abba in Mark 14:36—Matthew and Luke consistently provide the Greek and back into Jesus' native tongue? Furthermore, Mark's Greek isn't polished in some areas, and Matthew and Luke both appear to
smooth over Jesus' language when there is shared material. It seems likely that Matthew and Luke would have encountered Aramaic words in Mark's gospel and translated them into Greek, knowing the words would be unfamiliar to their audiences. 2. If Mark is copying Luke or Matthew, why does he leave so much out? While there's a lot of overlap
in the stories and accounts found in the Synoptics, Mark is missing some great materials found in Matthew and Luke. If he were working from their material, why would he leave out the Synoptics appear in the same
order in all three gospels. But when Matthew presents events in a different order than Mark, Luke follows Mark's order. It appears that the deviations
occur when Matthew and Luke choose to follow another source besides Mark. Mark may not be the only source of the other writers get important teachings of Jesus,
like the Sermon on the Mount? And we're not just talking about accounts that are unique to each gospel—Matthew and Luke share material not found in Mark, sometimes with nearly the same wording, such as in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13. Mark alone can't account for all of the material in the synoptic gospels, so in order for Markan priority to
hold water, scholars had to propose additional sources. As we discussed earlier, there's no physical evidence of an additional source beyond the three exts, most scholars believe that there was at least one other major source that the gospel writers relied on
This is why scholars have expanded on Markan priority with the two-source theory. The synoptics borrow from Mark & "Q" Since no additional text has been discovered, scholars dubbed the unknown text source "Q" (probably an abbreviation of quelle, the German word for "source"). It's also referred
to as the "Synoptic Sayings Source." Since most of the material exclusive to Matthew and Luke is sayings of Jesus with a few narratives, the two-source theory suggests that one additional source is enough to account for the differences between the Synoptics. At this point, you may be thinking, "wait—what is this 'Q'?" If one of the most widely-
accepted solutions to the synoptic problem hinges on a source that only exists in theory, how do scholars explain this source? Q could be a figment of scholarly imagination Scholars who don't support Markan priority argue that "Q" isn't necessary. To them, the overlap between Matthew and Luke is simply the material Luke borrowed from Matthew
However, this doesn't explain the material unique to Luke, such as the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son. Q could be a single written source, written and oral To some scholars, the exact nature of "Q" is less important—it could be a body of literature or a variety of oral accounts of Christ not recorded anywhere else. Q could be a single written source
Since Matthew and Luke frequently use the exact same language to describe events or teachings not recorded in Mark, and they often present them in the same order, many scholars believe that "Q" goes beyond a single written source, and
that it actually represents the core beliefs of a specific group of Christians with their own theology. While the four main views of "Q" are all theories, this one reaches farthest beyond the available evidence. But Q may not be enough Some scholars have a problem with the two-source theory: there's material that appears exclusively in Matthew, and
other material that appears exclusively in Luke. It's possible that each writer simply omitted some of the second source that the other included, and visa versa. Or maybe two sources aren't enough to account for the unique material in
Matthew and unique material in Luke must have come from additional sources, dubbed M (Matthew's other source) and L (Luke's other source). While other source theory. Despite the lack of physical evidence, the literary evidence in the texts
themselves makes a strong case that the gospel writers had additional sources, either text-based or oral. Doesn't divine inspiration solve the problem? You might be wondering in all of this, "What about the Holy Spirit?" Couldn't God give certain insights to each writer? Why does the synoptic problem have to be answered with evidence, not just
inspiration? Answering the synoptic problem with the Holy Spirit actually forces us to ignore some of the evidence for interdependent gospels—evidence that God included in His divinely-inspired Word. For example, Luke explicitly tells us he used sources (Luke 1:1-4). Acknowledging and investigating this doesn't undermine the Bible's divine
authority and inspiration. It helps us trace the path of God's inspiration. We need to ask, "What did the Holy Spirit use to inspire the gospel writers?" The origin of the synoptic groblem. While the majority
of scholars rally behind some version of Markan priority, the debate can only deal in the realm of theory. This isn't to say that we can simply shrug at the similarities and differences between the gospels. There's textual evidence that supports the existence of "Q," even if we never find physical, written documents. Ancient cultures placed a lot of
weight on oral tradition, sometimes considering a personal account passed on through word-of-mouth to be more accurate than written sources. The early church father Papias once said, "For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice." The closest we may ever get to the origins of
the synoptic gospels may very well be the opening lines of Luke: "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the
beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught." —Luke 1:1-4 (emphasis added) Learn more about the Bible Get started with a free online course. Plus, you'll get occasional updates about new courses, free videos, and other valuable
resources. This post is adapted from material found in Four Portraits, One Jesus, an online course on Jesus and the Gospels taught by Mark Strauss. Save Why do the Synoptic Gospels-Matthew, Mark, and Luke-are often grouped together because they share a
large amount of overlapping content and present a strikingly parallel account of many events in the life of Jesus. Each was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16), yet each author retains a unique perspective and distinct literary style. Below is a comprehensive exploration of why these three Gospels resemble one another so
closely.1. Similar Purpose and Historical ContextThese Gospel writers sought to record factual, reliable testimonies of Jesus Christ's ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection. All three wrote within a first-century timeframe, with Mark commonly thought to be among the earliest, and Matthew and Luke following shortly thereafter. • Mark's Gospel is
closely associated with the preaching of the apostle Peter. Matthew writes from the standpoint of a disciple and eyewitness, focusing on Jewish themes. Luke presents a carefully investigated historical account (Luke 1:1-4: "...it seemed good also to me...to write an orderly account for you...so that you may know the certainty of the things you have
been taught."). Writing within a similar historical context meant the authors drew from the same environment of oral reports, eyewitness testimonials (cf. John 21:24), and the early church's teaching. Coral Tradition and Early Church Teaching events of Jesus' life
through oral tradition. In Jewish culture, oral transmission was a reliable method of preserving genealogies, and recounting historical events. Since the material being recounted was of profound importance and repeated publicly in gatherings and worship, a high degree of uniformity developed. Consequently, each Synoptic
author, while independent in final composition, drew from a shared pool of traditions. Eyewitness Accounts Because Matthew himself was one of the Twelve and Mark is intimately connected many of the same events. Luke, after interviewin
eyewitnesses (Luke 1:2), incorporated these accounts into his structured narrative.3. Literary Interdependence and Source TheoriesScholars often discuss how Matthew, Mark, and Luke may have used one another's texts or additional written sources, sometimes referred to as "Q" (from the German Quelle, meaning "source"). While the exact literary
relationship can be debated, a few broad points remain consistent: There is general agreement that Mark's Gospel often provides a foundational material that Mark does not, suggesting they had access to sources Mark
did not preserve or that they remembered teachings not recorded in Mark's text. From a manuscript evidence vantage point, the earliest existing manuscripts of these Gospels demonstrate consistency, indicating the accounts were faithfully transmitted. Despite differences in details or arrangement, they align to a remarkable degree in substance.4.
Shared Outline of EventsThe core outline of Jesus' life and ministry in all three Synoptic Gospels includes: The preparatory ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:1-20). Jesus' baptism and temptation (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:1-21; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:1-20).
demons, and teaching about the kingdom of God. The transfiguration event (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). The final journey to Jerusalem, culminating in the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. These consistent structural similarities point to a coherent witness testifying to actual historical events and the same central theological
truths.5. Distinct Emphases Within the Shared ContentWhile much of the content overlaps, each Gospel writer adapts the narrative to address different target audiences and highlight certain theological perspectives: Matthew 5:17: "Do
not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."). Mark's Gospel is concise and action-oriented, frequently using immediate transitions (e.g., "at once," "immediately"), appealing to a broad Gentile audience and conveying the authority of Jesus' works quickly. Luke's Gospel has a
more historiographical style, often detailing historical and chronological markers (Luke 2:1-2), and highlighting Jesus' compassion toward marginalized communities. 6. Consistency with Old Testament Prophecy concerning the Messiah (cf. Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7; Micah 5:2), they share
many of the same passages that demonstrate Jesus' fulfillment of these messianic predictions. They also recount prophetic actions, such as Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40), which aligns with Zechariah 9:9. This unity underscores the singular message of God's redemptive plan throughout
Scripture.7. Purposeful Unity and Divine InspirationThe similarity in the Gospels is undergirded by the conviction that Scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Holy Spirit moved men to record the words necessary for faith and practice (2 Peter 1:20-21). Although the human authors retained their personalities, cultural backgrounds, and
linquistic styles, the end result is a harmonious account of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.8. Addressing Alleged Contradictions and Complementary Perspectives Apparent variations between the Gospels often arise from differences in emphasis, the author's intended purpose, or the selective reporting of events. These distinctions function more
like multiple angles of the same scene rather than contradictions. Archaeological and historical findings-such as details from first-century Palestine, topographical references in the Gospels matching known locations, and the supporting testimony of early church fathers-reaffirm the authenticity and reliability of these narratives. Events recorded across
multiple Gospels only strengthen the case for the historical reality of Jesus' ministry.9. The Central Proclamation: Christ's Death and Resurrection. Mark 16:6 records the angel proclaiming, "He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid
Him." Luke 24:5-6 says, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!" Matthew 28:5-6 repeats a similar statement, pointing to the same miraculous event. This unanimity bears witness to the core truth that the Gospel proclaims, Conclusion The remarkable similarities between Matthew, Mark, and Luke stem from their
shared historical setting, reliance on credible and overlapping eyewitness traditions, literary interdependence, Old Testament fulfillments, and the guiding work of the Holy Spirit. Rather than undermining their individual authenticity, these similarities highlight a unified testimony about the person and work of Jesus Christ. The consistent message of
His life, miracles, teachings, sacrificial death, and resurrection underscores a singular truth preserved faithfully across the centuries by the power of God and the diligence of the early church. Mark, Matthew, and Luke make up what is known as the Synoptic Gospels. They are called synoptic because it can be easy to see the parallels between them.
For that reason, scholars study them to identify the similar task, and will look at passages from Matthew, Mark, and Luke that deal with the baptism of Jesus. The following passages that will be looked at are:
Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, and Luke 3: 21-22. In this paper, I will discuss the similarities and differences of the gospels, and the relationship that they build. Within these three passages from Mathew, Mark, and Luke, there are points where ... show more content... Furthermore, the writing in Mark does read being simplistic compared to Matthew
and Luke who have taken what Mark has wrote and edited it in order for it have a better flow. As a result, the similar stories are used among the three gospels that a similar source may have been used among the writers, or that one of
the three gospels may be the original one. Considering that Mark's writing depictions of the events are rather simple compared to Matthew and Luke read Mark, and made added upon and made various changes to improve the readability of Mark, as well as to have the
events fit into their views. Overall, the similarities suggest that a common source was used, and the differences are present, the passages are about the same event—the baptism of Jesus. For this reason, it proposes the idea that all three believed the baptism of Jesus
to be an important event, worthy of being included. Although the passages are about the baptism, each gospel has its own distinct elements. As previously stated, they include differing introductions. Mark provided a simpler one by establishing where Jesus came from and to where and whom he would be
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