

The Synoptic "Sources"

Early Christian writers commented on why there were three gospels so similar.

Scholars have debated this for generations.

WHY is it something we even talk about?

Like in a court case when you have three eyewitnesses and you are trying to figure EXACTLY What happened?....

You take all three accounts and you try to get the best presentation that makes sense.

Here are some interesting numbers:

Verses:

Matthew – 1,071

Mark – 661

Luke – 1,151

Verses virtually identical to Mark:
in Matthew and Luke:

Matthew - 500+ [~ 50%]

Luke - 380 [~ 33%]

So the theory is that Mark was written first,
then Matthew and Luke had Mark's account in front of them and used Mark as they formed their own account. [Luke actually seems to say this]:

*Many have attempted to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were **handed down to us** by those who from the first were **eyewitnesses and servants** of the word.*

*3 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, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

50% of Matthew = Mark....

33% of Luke = Mark

75% of Mark is found in both.

That is easily explained.

Both Matthew and Luke had a copy of Mark in front of them.

[11 min]

The unique thing is that we find a significant amount of matching material in both Matthew and Luke that is NOT in Mark.

24% of Matthew

23% of Luke

THIS is where scholars struggle.
Matthew and Luke apparently had
another source that is NOT in Mark.

These are mostly sayings of Jesus
and/or teachings.

For example:

- the Sermon on the Mount
- the Lord's Prayer [Our Father]
- the genealogy of Jesus (different)

Where things get a bit more
questionable is WHY there are
obvious differences in similar stories.

To illustrate, we are going to use THE most important story... the empty tomb.

Matthew 28	Mark 16	Luke 24
<p>After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.</p> <p>2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.</p>	<p>When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.</p> <p>2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"</p> <p>4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.</p>	<p>On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women (see v10 below) took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.</p> <p>2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.</p> <p>4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.</p> <p>5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"</p>

1. The names of the women are different [Mary Magdalene is in every account, however].

2. One angel or two angels?

5 **The angel said** to the women, “**Do not be afraid**, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; **he has risen**, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘**He has risen from the dead** and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’”

6 “**Don't be alarmed**,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. **He has risen!** He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

6 He is not here; **he has risen!** Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’”

3. All three versions indicate that the women were afraid.

Now I have told you.”

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, **afraid** yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

9 *Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”*

8 **Trembling and bewildered**, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.]

8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

10 It was **Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James**, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

4. Matthew/Luke has the women telling the men – Mark has them saying nothing because of fear.

Should these inconsistencies bother us? Does it prove that the accounts are wrong?

Here are the things that ALL accounts have in common.

1. There was some kind of supernatural presence (angel)
2. The women were the first on the scene...the first to hear the news "He is Risen"....the first to believe.
3. All three have the women instructed to tell the disciples to go to Galilee.

4. There is an empty tomb in each account – the body of Jesus is NOT there.

[25 min]

Now, I want to cover an interesting fact about Luke's gospel that impacts what we just looked at.

Matthew 28

Mary Magdalene
and the other Mary
went to look at the tomb.

5 The angel said to the women,

8 So the women hurried away
from the tomb,

Mark 16

Mary Magdalene,
Mary the mother of James,
and Salome

bought spices so that they might
go to anoint Jesus' body.

8 Trembling and bewildered, the
women went out and fled from
the tomb.

Luke 24

On the first day of the week, very
early in the morning, the women
(see v10 below)

[10 It was
Mary Magdalene,
Joanna,
Mary the mother of James

Luke 8

1 After this, Jesus traveled about
from one town and village to another, proclaiming
the good news of the kingdom of God.
The Twelve were with him,

2 and also some women
who had been cured
of evil spirits and diseases:
Mary (called Magdalene)...;
3 Joanna the wife of Chuza,
the manager of Herod's household;
Susanna;
and many others.

So we have Joanna appearing in both
the beginning of the gospel...
AND at the empty tomb.

Luke 24

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called
Emmaus...

14 They were talking with each other about everything that had
happened.

18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one
visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have
happened there in these days?"

22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the
tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and
told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.

John 19

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood
his mother [Mary],
his mother's sister,
Mary the wife of Clopas,
and Mary Magdalene.

Now we have Mary, wife of Clopas appearing in a story that is unique to Luke...

This indicates that Clopas [and possibly Mary, his wife, are giving Luke eyewitness testimony.

We learn from Hegessipus, an early second century writer, that Clopas was the brother of Joseph, the father of Jesus.

Luke probably got it mixed up by calling her the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

It was probably her sister-in-law.

It appears that Luke is using eyewitness accounts from women. Joanna, is likely a Gentile.

Luke's gospel...and his account of Paul in *Acts* is more "women friendly" than the other gospels.

One reason this is important is that we have solid evidence that the book of *Acts* was edited towards the end of the second century to be LESS friendly to women.

THAT is part of the MSS evidence
that we might get to in another two
weeks.

We WILL wrap up this topic
ON WEDNESDAY.

QUESTIONS?