

# INTERWOVEN GOSPEL PASSAGES

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One of the most familiar features of Old Testament study is the presence, in the historical sections, of narratives that can be resolved into two or more independent versions of the same general subject by assigning alternately successive sections of the biblical account to respective sources. Such sections may be said to be "interwoven." They are always a special source of interest to the student, to some degree because of the ingenuity of the processes that dissect them into their component elements, but chiefly because of the profit to be gained through a comparison of these elements after the literary-critical operations have been completed. In this comparison the narratives have a double importance, partly as authorities for the events recorded and partly as authorities for the interests that prevailed when the descriptions were written.

That certain "interwoven" sections exist in the Gospels has long been known. The extent, however, to which they exist is as yet unsettled and it is the purpose of the present article, after describing the most obvious instances, to call attention to certain cases that have thus far obtained only occasional recognition. Only the speeches of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels will be considered, and it will be assumed as known that the First and Third Gospels made

use of the Second and also of a second document (generally termed Q), which consisted almost entirely of sayings.

The most obvious case is that of Matt. 12:22-32. A comparison of this section with Mark 3:22-30 on the one hand and with Luke 11:14-23; 12:10 on the other shows at once that Matthew here is interwoven. Vss. 22-25*a*, 27-28, 30, 32 were taken from Luke's source, and vss. 25*b*-26, 29, 31 are from Mark, while in vs. 33 the beginning and end are from Mark but the middle is from Q. If the words in Matthew that are found also in Mark and Luke be underscored, it will be found that almost every Matthaean word is accounted for. Mark and Luke, however, have very little in common and obviously represent independent traditions of the same sayings.<sup>1</sup> Of these, Luke's account is distinctly preferable. Mark has rewritten the discourse in his own somewhat verbose style, omitting the verses Luke 11:19*f*. that bring the Jewish exorcists into a certain comparison with Christ. And to the discourse he has added the saying found in Luke 12:10, which (in 3:28*f*.) he has reworded so as to avoid saying that any blasphemy against Christ is pardonable, pointing the moral finally by transferring Luke 11:17*b* to the end. There is, to be sure, no real theological difference between Mark and Q (Luke) here, but Mark's more anxious

<sup>1</sup> Note that the little parable in Luke 11:21*f*. is complete in itself while in Mark 2:27 it has been joined to its context—always a sign of editorial manipulation.

christological temper is obvious. In this instance Matthew has simply blended the two versions, taking generally the fuller form in each, and displays no particular interests of his own.

A second instance of interweaving is more complicated. It is furnished by the so-called Charge to the Twelve in Matt. 9:39—10:1; 10:5—15, with which are to be compared the parallel accounts in Mark 6:7—13; Luke 9:1—6, and the Charge to the Seventy in Luke 10:1—12. This last section, however, is really only a fourth version of the Charge to the Twelve, as is seen by its contents and by a comparison of Luke 10:4 and 22:35. The relations of these four sections are too involved for detailed discussion, but a comparison will show that the accounts in Mark, chap. 6, and Luke, chap. 10, are again practically independent, while Matthew's account has been interwoven from these two, although he has not a little material that is peculiar to himself. The most probable explanation of the phenomena is as follows: The oldest form (Q's) has been reproduced in Luke, chap. 10, with tolerable fidelity. According to what seems to underly it, Christ sent forth certain unspecified disciples, perhaps not limited to the Twelve, on a brief tour through Galilee. As the distances were short, the equipment was reduced to a minimum and, as the missionaries were immature, they were instructed not to risk public preaching, personal interviews being all they were to attempt. Nothing was said to them about any power to exorcise, and that they were successful in exorcisms caused them great surprise (Luke 10:17).

Mark took this section to refer only to the Twelve, who in his Gospel represent the disciples rather too exclusively. He was influenced also, not unnaturally, by the needs of the missionaries of his own day. Consequently he omitted from Q all that applied only to the local conditions of the first experiment, allowed the use of the staff and of the sandals, both of which were indispensable for a long journey, and added a note (vs. 12) that represented the Twelve as preaching in public. He also added the commission to exorcise.<sup>1</sup>

Luke had both Mark and Q in his hands, and Mark's changes led him to think that the two versions must have been delivered to two different bodies of men. The charge that gave the greater responsibility he referred to the Twelve, following Mark. The other, he thought, evidently must have been the commission to disciples of less dignity, while the words at the beginning of it (Luke 10:2) suggested that these disciples considerably outnumbered the Twelve. Hence the "70" or, as certain manuscripts read, "72," i.e., 6×12. Most scholars compare here the number of nations in the table of Genesis, chap. 10 (70 in the Hebrew, 72 in the Greek version), and think that Luke conceived this mission to prefigure somehow the later mission to the Gentiles. This may or may not be the case; Luke's "two and two" tells rather against it. Luke's alterations in Mark's wording here do not concern the present discussion, but it should be noted that the wording of the Q-version has affected

<sup>1</sup> In vs. 13 he has also introduced the use of oil. This, a common medicament in ancient times, had evidently developed into a semi-sacramental rite in Mark's entourage (at least). Cf. Jas. 5:14.

the reproduction of the Markan account,<sup>1</sup> although not vice versa.

Matthew likewise had the two accounts and has interwoven them, probably because he recognized their identity. But to Matthew the Charge to the Twelve became the charge to all Christian missionaries of his own day. Mark's public preaching has been still further elaborated (Matt. 10:6) and the power to exorcise has been expanded into power to perform even the most extraordinary miracles (10:8). The disciples have become more important persons and need to be warned against carrying gold and silver as well as copper (10:9), and against making their miraculous gifts a paying profession (10:8). Indeed, in the section (10:17-42) that Matthew has appended to the mission charge the first work of the Twelve is entirely forgotten and is merged into the wide missionary experience of the church. It is interesting to observe that two of Matthew's verses (10:5 f.) contradict this wider conception. The explanation is that these are Q verses which the Gentile Luke has omitted, while Matthew has faithfully reproduced them, not noticing or caring that they form a discrepant element.

In the foregoing two instances both of the interwoven sources are given at length in our Gospels. In Luke 19:11-28 is an instance where we have only one of the sources used. On comparing this section with Matt. 25:14-30 it will be seen that the same parable forms the basis of the two sections, although it is told in such different wording as to sug-

gest different traditions of a common original. In addition, however, it will be seen that Luke has certain features that are not paralleled at all in Matthew and that are awkward as they stand. They are found in vss. 12, 14, 15a, 27 and collected they read as follows:

"A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. But his citizens hated him, and sent an embassy after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us. And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded, These mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." This narrative is based on the fact that rulers in Palestine received their power only by decrees from Rome that were made for each individual case separately. A journey to Rome was generally necessary and hostile embassages of the citizens occurred occasionally, in one case (that of Archeläus) with successful results. The narrative consequently is parabolic. But it is not completely recoverable, for it evidently contained something about the "ten servants," of whom seven disappear in the sequel; doubtless these were the guardians of the nobleman's interests as opposed to the "citizens." Now the parable in Matt., chap. 25, dealt also with a wealthy proprietor who went on a journey and left certain servants in a responsible position. As both parables (to Luke's mind, at least) were concerned with the period between the

<sup>1</sup> Note the prohibition of the staff in Luke 9:3 which, as is shown by the agreement with Matt. 10:10 against Mark 6:8, must have been taken from Q. In Luke, chap. 10, however, where Q is quoted directly, this prohibition is omitted, doubtless in order not to repeat it.

ascension of Christ and the Parousia, an interwoven version that would teach all the lessons of both was easily suggested.

An instance of interweaving that is detectable from only a single document occurs in Mark, chap. 13. If vss. 7-8, 14-20, 24-27 be read together, they will be seen to form a continuous account of the phenomena preceding and accompanying the end of the world, described without relation to the hearers and in the third person. Scholars term this account the "Little Apocalypse."<sup>1</sup> The remaining verses deal with concrete directions to the disciples and are entirely in the second person. It is evident here that Mark has interwoven the Little Apocalypse with sayings he deemed appropriate to the various stages, although vss. 21-23 are a mere repetition of what is contained in vss. 5-6, while the question in vs. 4 applies only to the Apocalypse.

The following examples of interweaving have not had the same general acceptance by scholars as those cited above. But they seem quite certain to the present writer.

In Luke 21:20-28, vss. 21*a*, 23*a*, 26*b*, 27 are identical with matter in Mark, chap. 13, while the remainder of this Lukan section has hardly a word in common with the Markan parallel. Now if this remaining material be printed continuously it reads:

"But when ye see Jerusalem being compassed<sup>2</sup> with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. Let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled, for there shall be great distress upon the Land,<sup>3</sup> and wrath unto this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive among all the Gentiles;<sup>4</sup> and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of Gentiles, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows;<sup>5</sup> men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh."

This is obviously a continuous narrative and gives no evidence that matter has been omitted from Luke to obtain it. Indeed, as a matter of fact, the omitted (Markan) material simply confuses a perfectly plain account. Vs. 21*a* makes the inhabitants of *Judea* postpone their flight until the siege of *Jerusalem* is beginning—much too late a moment. Vs. 23*a* is clear enough as Mark 13:17, where it stands in conjunction with directions for a flight so hurried that

<sup>1</sup> A special study of this Little Apocalypse was contributed by the present writer to the *Biblical World* of August, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek form used here denotes action in progress.

<sup>3</sup> Palestine.

<sup>4</sup> In vss. 24 f. the English versions translate the same Greek word twice by "nations" and twice by "Gentiles." The rendering has been made uniform in the above.

<sup>5</sup> Probably this means that among the other terrors of the end the sea leaves its appointed bounds.

these poor women will be incapable of taking part in it, but no such haste is urged in Luke. Similarly vss. 26*b*–27 spoil the contrast between the despairing “men” of vs. 26*a* and the hopeful faithful of vs. 28. And “these things beginning to come to pass” in vs. 28 is extremely confusing after “then shall they see the Son of man” in vs. 27. The proof of interweaving here would seem to be complete.

In other words, Luke in this place has a “Little Apocalypse” of his own that is roughly parallel to Mark’s, and into his own version Luke has inserted the characteristic features of the Markan, in a conscientious effort to preserve all the essentials of both. The only characteristic differences between the two narratives are that Luke’s is centered particularly around Jerusalem, and that between the fall of the city and the Parousia, it interposes an interval which is not mentioned (although perhaps not excluded) by Mark. This latter feature has led many scholars to believe that the Lukan verses must have been written after 70 A.D., but such a conclusion is by no means necessary. To predict a Roman war in which Jerusalem would be overthrown would have required no great prophetic ability at any period in the generation prior to the event, and Luke’s descriptive language is drawn simply from the Old Testament (cf., e.g., Zech. 12:3; Isa. 63:18; Dan. 11:31 ff.). In any case, the outlook is strictly Palestinian and represents a point of view that had no direct interest in the gentile mission; Luke may have anticipated many moderns in understanding “the times of the Gentiles” as “their opportunity

for salvation,” but in the original it certainly meant simply “the time of their barbarous rule.” Indeed, either apocalypse might have been written by a Jewish author who had never heard of Christianity except for the unpatriotic warning, which they both contain, against taking part in the defense of Palestine or Jerusalem. This warning is specifically Christian and nothing is less impossible than that it goes back to Christ himself. Independent expansions of this warning in terms of the current apocalyptic phraseology may very well be the eventual explanation of Mark’s and Luke’s variations.

Another example of interweaving is furnished by the verses immediately preceding the above-mentioned section in Luke, i.e., Luke 21:12–19. Here vss. 16*b*–17 have exact Markan equivalents, while vss. 12*b*, 16*a* correspond in substance to the Markan parallels. Omitting these passages gives the following result:

“Before all these things, they shall lay their hands upon you, and shall persecute you; it shall turn out unto you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or to gainsay. And not a hair of your head shall perish; in your patience you shall win your lives.”

Again a consistent narrative is found. It was formulated, evidently, at a time when persecution existed but when there was practically no danger of martyrdom—a state of affairs that describes Palestine fairly accurately until about 60 A.D. (with the exception of the brief reign of

Agrippa I). At that period Jewish Christians, no doubt, had to face persecution, but they were tolerably sure of their lives, with the result that the passages Luke 12:7; 9:24 (evidently used in forming the foregoing paragraph) came to be taken with undue literalness. Luke blended this saying-group with that in Mark 13:9-13, which regarded martyrdom as quite possible, and endeavored to effect some sort of a compromise by his "some of you" in vs. 16*b*; but the contrast between vs. 16*b* and vs. 18 has always been a sore perplexity to commentators. To be noted here particularly is the contrast between Mark 9*b*-10 and Luke 21:12*b*-13. Luke was a Gentile, writing for Gentiles; under the hypothesis that he was here basing his narrative on Mark why did he omit this testimony to the Gentiles of the whole earth? The only answer is that the hypothesis is wrong. Luke is here based on a non-Markan source which he has enlarged by sentences from Mark. As is easily tested, an insertion of Mark's testimony to the Gentiles into this source would have produced an intensely awkward effect.<sup>1</sup>

A final instance of interweaving is found in Luke 11:37-41, which is paralleled (not very closely) in Matt. 23:25-26. If the words in Luke that are found also in Matthew are italicized, the Lukan passage reads as follows:

"Now as he spake, a Pharisee asketh him to dine with him; and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the

Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first bathed himself before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now ye the *Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter,*<sup>2</sup> but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. Ye foolish ones, did not he that made the outside make the inside also? But give for alms *those things which are within,*<sup>3</sup> and behold, all things are clean unto you."

Now, as the passage stands, it is simply incomprehensible. The question begins about the cleanness of hands, i.e., about the outside of a *man*. But Christ's words begin with the outside of a *cup* which is then contrasted with the inside of a *man* and then the Pharisee is told to give alms from the inside of the *cup*. To make the confusion still worse, vs. 40, as it stands after vs. 39, states that God made the outside of the cup, which is precisely what man made and not God. It is small wonder that all kinds of attempts have been made to emend the text of this passage or to explain it as due to a bad translation from the original Aramaic. The explanation, however, is perfectly simple, for the passage is interwoven. In Luke's special source, Christ's words were approximately: "Now ye Pharisees cleanse the outside but your inward part is full of wickedness. Ye foolish ones, did not he that made the outside make the inside also? But give alms; and, behold, all things are clean unto you." Luke also had Q, where the words ran as in Matthew: "Ye cleanse the outside

<sup>1</sup> The special matter in Luke's Gospel generally betrays no interest in gentile Christianity, despite a common opinion to the contrary.

<sup>2</sup> Not the same Greek word in Matthew and Luke, but the variation is very slight.

<sup>3</sup> In the Greek text Luke's "the things that are within" and Matthew's "the inside" are practically identical.

of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. . . . Cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also." These two versions Luke has worked together with the same conscientious thoroughness that he has displayed in the in-

stances cited above but, unfortunately, with a result that is even more confusing than in those cases.

The two sources used here by Luke hardly seem like parallel versions of the same original saying and are probably to be appraised as two really distinct sayings of Christ.

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## THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING AND SIN. III

### LIGHT FROM CHRIST

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We have seen in the previous articles that there are some important initial reasons for faith in the final solution of our problem, and that such a faith is not precluded by the fact of animal suffering. The inevitable prerequisites of a moral world, too, were seen to be such as to require the possibility of sin and of suffering—a weighty and far-reaching consideration. We should have only a play-world otherwise. We might therefore anticipate exactly such difficulties as we do find. The deeper common reactions of the race upon our problem, moreover, were felt to bring real help. The necessary smallness of our human view, the bearing of the race's faith in immortality, the further light from the trend of evolution, and the four common views of suffering, all alike have light to give. Much suffering is indubitably due to the

sin of the sufferer himself. Other suffering is as probably due to conditions required for our full discipline in living. Particularly is it deeply true, that reward must not follow too closely or too surely upon the righteous act—that the good must often suffer and the wicked prosper—if genuinely unselfish character is to be produced. We come even to be thankful, from this point of view, that we have a problem of evil. And no doubt ultimately we must fall back upon the thought of the majesty of God. Any adequate vision of God makes us feel anew the smallness of our view, and the wisdom and necessity, after our best attempts to understand God's ways, of leaving the whole problem in his hands, with faith in a solution we cannot fully see. Now, has the peculiarly Christian view any further answer to our