

The Importance of the Synoptic Problem for Interpreting the Gospels

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Summary *This essay examines the issue of the order of writing of the four Gospels in the New Testament canon. Procedurally, it discusses the emergence of the fourfold Gospel tradition, the Synoptic Problem and how it has been approached in history. The essay argues in favor of the Clementine or Two-Gospel Hypothesis position. An analysis of Matthew 10:5-23 functions as an illustration of the value of this Hypothesis for understanding the text and seeing its value for the life of faith.*

Introduction

As far as we know the four Gospels of the New Testament were originally anonymous writings. The “as far as we know” is important. We do not have the original manuscripts of the Gospels. It is clear from content of later manuscripts that the authors do not wish to insert themselves deliberately into the flow of these biographical narratives on Jesus’ life. Jesus is chief protagonist and hero of the narrative. For the writers of the Gospel accounts he, the living Lord of the church, is the only one who is important.

Nevertheless, careful study of the papyrus fragments of second and third century texts, as well as the other manuscript evidence, indicates that titles were placed on these writings, either at their beginning or end, as early as the first half of the second century (Stanton, 2004, 75-81). These titles would read something like “Gospel [*euangelion*] according to Matthew” or John, Luke, or Mark. That is, the title would imply that the writing connected with the title is an account of the one Gospel as narrated by the particular author named. Just as librarians need to identify and classify works by authorship and title, as soon as there were more than one account of Jesus’ life in circulation considered authoritative enough to

be used in worship, there was a need to identify these works as coming from a particular author. This took place in the second century. The view that the Gospels of the church were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, crucial leaders in the early church, depends on the credibility for the second century Christians accepting these nomenclatures as true (Hengel, 1985, 64-84).

But the acceptance of the fourfold Gospel accounts of Jesus' life as authoritative did not end controversy over these works. Why four Gospels and not just one? Why privilege only four to be read in the worship of the church? And among these four, is one more significant than the others?

These and similar questions were raised frequently by serious inquirers. Already by this time it was clear that the four Gospels did not appear to be in complete agreement with respect to the actual details of Jesus' life. There were differences between John and the other three accounts (Matthew, Mark and Luke) on crucial matters. Examples would be the chronology of Jesus' crucifixion and key events in his ministry such as the cleansing of the temple. Not only that, sometimes it was hard to see that Matthew, Mark and Luke were on the same page with respect to their descriptions of the same event. Thus, in the healing of the blind man (men?) near Jericho, Luke states it took place as Jesus "drew near to Jericho" (Lk 18:35). Matthew attests it happened after Jesus leaves Jericho and there were two blind men healed (Mt 9:27). Mark narrates both the entrance and exit of Jesus from Jericho; and while leaving Jesus encounters and heals blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46). No wonder that as early as the second century some important believers such as the Syrian Tatian saw a problem. He sought to solve the issue of different accounts by harmonizing them into one narrative.¹ Others like Origen explained that the different accounts in the Gospels point to a deeper meaning that can only be gleaned through spiritual interpretation. Thus, from the beginning, the study of the Gospels has been both an exciting and controversial endeavor.

The Synoptic Problem

Despite attempts to circumvent the issue, the fact remains that there are four separate accounts of the life of Jesus that the church draws upon to nourish itself spiritually and doctrinally. This brings us to one of the most puzzling questions of Gospel Studies. On the one hand the extensive parallels in structure and narrative order between Matthew, Mark and Luke make it possible to set their accounts

¹ Tatian called this one account Diatessaron, "through four." His goal was to take four accounts and weave them into the unified "one Gospel." This was the first of many harmonies of the Gospels. Even the great Augustine in his work, produced a unified account. *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, "On the Harmony of the Gospels." Here he set forth in great detail a unified view of the full chronology of the life of Christ.

of Jesus' life alongside one another, often on the same page. This enables one to gain a "synoptic" overview of all three accounts. The term comes from the Greek *sunopsis*, "seeing together." This has led these works to be known as the Synoptic Gospels. On the other hand, as noted, the Gospel of John is considerably different in both its content and its chronology of Jesus' ministry. When the Synoptic Gospels are arranged in a parallel arrangement it is obvious to most interpreters that they stand in a literary relationship with one another. In recent centuries scholars have wondered what that relationship is. This has led to one of the major unsolved issues in Gospel Studies: The Synoptic Problem. We will state the problem succinctly. How can one explain the considerable similarity of three literary works to one another (Matthew, Mark and Luke), and at the same time, how can one account for the differences in spite of the extensive agreements?²

One should stress that the Synoptic Problem is not just an arcane exercise in literary criticism where one seeks to determine the literary pedigrees of several similar writings. Rather, there are issues here that are vital to the church. For example, if one were able to determine definitively the literary connections and sequence of the Gospels we could begin to establish a standard of measurement allowing us to gauge the stages of growth and development of the traditions about Jesus which circulated in the early church. Indeed, solving the Synoptic Problem could even lead to more precision with respect to understanding the views of the earthly Jesus and the direction of the mission he pursued – not insignificant issues.

The Synoptic Problem in the Ancient Church

The literary evidence of the ancient church on the matter of the sequence of the writing and the circulation of the Synoptic Gospels is somewhat equivocal. In the lists of the manuscript tradition, universally, Matthew is placed first. But, does it earn this placement in the fourfold canonical list on the grounds of chronology or honor? The ancient church (from the second to the fifth centuries) listed the Gospels in many different orders after Matthew. Especially in the Latin manuscripts, the honorific order (Matthew and John as apostles) followed by Luke and Mark (those who knew key apostles) was popular. In general, the historical issue of sequence was not a burning issue for the ancient church. After all, in their

² Note that all three Synoptics have in order the diverse accounts of the healing of the paralytic, eating with sinners, and the question of fasting (Mt 9:1-17; Mk 2:1-22; Lk 5:17-39). It is difficult to see why all three gospels have such diverse stories in the same order if there is no literary connection between them. On the other hand, in some passages the phrasing in Greek of some events is almost word for word the same (Mt 21:23-27; Mk 11:27-33; Lk 20:1-8). Again, this seems to indicate a literary connection.

judgment, all of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life were inspired by the Spirit and thus were fully authoritative.

Yet, when critically evaluated, some general conclusions about the views of ancient writers on the sequence of the gospels may be drawn from these texts. The evidence has been compiled exhaustively (Merkel, 1990; Orchard and Riley, 1987, 109-226). It boils down to the fact that two basic perspectives on the matter of chronological sequence of composition were prominent in the ancient church. Interestingly enough, both took their names from ancient authors.

First, there is the order Matthew – Mark – Luke and John. This is the sequence followed in most Bibles in the West today. We have this order because of the influence of Augustine, and especially Jerome (342-420), who was responsible for a widely influential revision of the ancient Latin texts. This view is usually called the Augustinian Hypothesis. This is because of the support of the influential Augustine of Hippo (354-430) who appears to expound this view in a widely read work *De Consensu Evangelistarum* 1.2.3. This hypothesis had earlier precedents with Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.1.1 and Origen, as recorded in Eusebius' majestic history, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.25.3-6. Notwithstanding, the issue as to whether these references are to the order of dignity/honor or are chronological is central. There is a strong suspicion that it is the former. This is the way the argument goes. The view was widespread in the ancient church that the two Gospels not attributed to apostles (Mark and Luke) both came into the Canon because of a close connection with apostles. Following the principle that the gospel was to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles (Ro 1:16) Mark, often connected with Peter (the apostle to the Jews) would come before Luke who was a close associate of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. This accounts for the popularity of this order. By the fifth century it had mutated in some writers into a chronological order (Gamba, 35).³

If we conclude that the Augustinian order arose as an order of dignity then this opens the way for acceptance of the alternative hypothesis in the ancient church. Some call this the Clementine Hypothesis on the grounds that in Eusebius' Church History Clement of Alexandria (150-215) is quoted as saying in his *Hypotyposesis* 6, "That the gospels with genealogies (Matthew and Luke) were written first." These were followed by the works of Mark and John (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.14.5-7). It can be shown that this position is consistent with both Eusebius' other comments on the gospels in his writings as well as being the position of additional leaders in the ancient church (Orchard and Riley, 1987, 109-226).

³ This probably was the belief in certain circles of the ancient church. However, even with Jerome and Augustine there are indicators that when speaking of the four Gospel writers chronologically they prefer the order, Matthew – Luke – Mark – John. See Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, III-VIII and Augustine, *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, 4.10.11. cf. Peabody, 1983, 37-64.

To sum up, in this connection, while the sequence of the fourfold Gospel accounts is subject to considerable variation in the ancient manuscript listings, some things are clear: Matthew, overwhelmingly is given the priority as first; Mark never heads the list; and the most specific quotation on the issue of sequence, coming from Clement of Alexandria, identifies the chronological sequence as Matthew, Luke, Mark and John.

The Question of Sequence in the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment Setting. Until the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries in Europe almost everyone in Christendom considered that the historical accounts found in the Bible and their referential meaning were exactly the same thing. Whether the Bible spoke about Adam or Jesus, they existed; and their actual activities were in much the same way as the Bible describes. But with the coming of the *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment) in Europe (circa 1660-1802) this synthesis began to fall apart. The growth of the sciences (both natural and social) caused people to doubt the received history that came down from the ancient world. It was reckoned that only those things coming from antiquity which passed the test of critical reason would be regarded as true. In historical study this meant that one must critically study the sources in order to evaluate the claims of any writing.

The Griesbach Hypothesis. Nowhere was this project carried out so ruthlessly than with the study of the Gospels. Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812) was a typical figure of the Enlightenment. He accepted the inheritance from antiquity that the Gospels were written in the order, Matthew, Luke, Mark and John. He constructed a famous *Synopsis* of the Gospels and did monumental critical studies of the text to support that position. His view of the order of the Gospels prevailed as the primary perspective in Germany until the mid-nineteenth century.

At the same time there were strong undercurrents that began to cause difficulties for what was then popularly known as the Griesbach Hypothesis. Among many causes, a major reason for questioning the chronological primacy of Matthew was that unique to it were several accounts highlighting bizarre elements of the miraculous in Jesus' ministry. This did not sit well in the Age of Reason. These accounts were Peter's Walking on the Water (Mt 14:28-31), The Coin in the Mouth of the Fish (Mt 17:24-27), The Dream of Pilate's Wife (Mt 27:19), and The Dead Ones Coming Forth from the Graves (Mt 27:51b-53). Some, like the Tübingen school in Germany, centering around the work of F. C. Baur and D. F. Strauss, used such materials to launch a strong critical attack against the veracity of the Gospels. In response, those who were interested in nourishing faith in

Jesus conceded that this aspect of Matthean priority (whether it be Griesbach or the Augustinian position) presented a real problem. In their view, such accounts as noted above, implied that Matthew was historically suspect and must have come from a post-eye witness period and were dependent upon earlier sources (Farmer, 1964, 37).

The Two-Source Hypothesis. By the mid-nineteenth century, especially in Germany, there was a massive search underway for a basic source or *Gundschrift* behind the Canonical Gospels that would enable believers to stand on firm ground with respect to understanding the life of the earthly Jesus. In this connection, the work of H. J. Holtzmann (1832-1910) is central. Holtzmann believed that Mark was primitive in composition and language and thus must be early. Yet, he still posited a source behind that document (*Ur-Marcus* or proto-Mark). He called this document A. In addition, he concluded that there was another major source on Jesus' life consisting of Jesus material in its most original form in Luke, but common to Matthew and Luke. He called this source *Lambda*. Later, Holtzmann questioned the existence of *Ur-Marcus* as a separate source. This process moved to another level with the work of B. H. Streeter (1874-1937). His major treatise, *The Four Gospels*, 1924, posited something that he called "The Fundamental Solution" of the Synoptic Problem (Streeter, 149-198). In essence, Streeter took Holtzmann's work to its logical conclusion. He dropped *Ur-Marcus* and, in effect, argued, because of its primitive style, that Mark was the basic *Grundschrift* of the Gospel Tradition and thus was the first of our four Gospels. An earlier writing that he called Q (the first letter of the German word *quelle* = source) consisting of material common to Matthew and Luke, not drawn from Mark, took the place of Holtzmann's *Lambda*. Streeter's solution became known as the Two-Source Hypothesis.⁴

Recent Developments on the Synoptic Problem. For most of the twentieth century the "Fundamental Solution" of Streeter has held sway as the preferred paradigm for solving the Synoptic Problem among most scholars in the West. However, as the years go by, problems have arisen. The so-called argument from order or arrangement (when Matthew departs from the sequence of Mark, Luke is usually found supporting Mark's order and vice versa) has been found to be reversible (Neville, 39-54; 190-237). The "minor agreements," the numerous words or phrases not in Mark but are identical in Matthew and Luke – even though they

⁴ Actually this is a misnomer. Besides Mark and Q, Streeter also posited some other major sources; M for unique Matthean material, and L for some unique Lukan material. It is more accurate to say Streeter has a Four-Source Hypothesis. In addition, Streeter considered that Luke did not draw directly on Q and L, but these two traditions were utilized by Luke through an intermediate source called proto-Luke. Today, the latter is often bypassed by devotees of the Two-Source Theory.

appear in contexts when the theory alleges Matthew and Luke independently copied Mark – has proved to be an almost impossible body of evidence for advocates of the Two-Source Hypothesis to answer (Goulder, 1996, 667-681; Ennulat, 1994, 417-430). It is now widely recognized that if Matthew and Luke were copying Mark, they would have to be utilizing a text that is different from the one that appears in our received printed texts of Mark. Thus, advocates of Markan priority are forced back to Holtzmann. Then it was recognized that Matthew and Luke used either an earlier copy of Mark (proto-Mark) or a later copy (deutero-Mark) than our canonical text. The several recent hypotheses that still seek to maintain a version of Markan priority regularly reflect this awareness.⁵

Re-Emergence of the Clementine Position. Commencing with the groundbreaking book of William Farmer in 1964 on the Synoptic Problem, a number of scholars have actively engaged in returning to the hypothesis of Clement of Alexandria in the Patristic era (cf. McNicol, *et al*, 1996; Peabody *et al*, 2002; Black and Bleek, 2001, 97-135). In its modern form it is known as the Two-Gospel Hypothesis. The title is important. Not only does it echo directly Clement of Alexandria by arguing that the first two Gospels written were Matthew and Luke, but it also functions as a basic criterion of works associated closely with Peter (Matthew) and Paul (Luke) reminding us of what is foundational for Christian Faith. It is common for many to refer to adherents of the Two-Gospel Hypothesis as those who accept Matthean priority. Technically, this is misleading. Although, on this hypothesis Luke draws on Matthew as a major source, Luke also used another major source, especially featuring a body of parables such as the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son (Farmer, 1967, 101-126). There is a strong possibility that the latter source tradition may have been prior to Matthew. Consequently, advocates of the Two-Gospel Hypothesis would prefer to leave the matter where Clement left it. There are two foundational Gospels for the church; Matthew and Luke. The former is focused primarily toward the Christian-Jewish community; the latter served both Christian-Jewish converts in the Diaspora as well as the Gentiles.

⁵ Chief among these are Multiple-Source Hypothesis that are widespread in the French-speaking world. The Farrer-Goulder hypothesis that argues the sequence of Mark-Matthew-Luke may be an exception to this trend.

Understanding Matthew 10:5-23 on the Two-Gospel Hypothesis

Overview

A reader who is struggling in the Christian way may well ask whether an analysis of this type helps with discipleship. An appropriate answer is that we cannot reverse the modern era. A proper understanding of the use of sources by a particular Gospel writer deepens our appreciation for what the text is saying. We will put this claim to the test through a brief exposition of Matthew 10:5-23.

Matthew 10:5-23 represents the first half of Jesus' famous discourse to the disciples on mission (Mt 10:5-42). Universally, commentators note that Matthew 10:24-25 is a hinge between the first and second halves of the Discourse. It brings out a key theological point critical to the whole argument of the unit: "the fate of the disciple is no different than the teacher." Or to put it in a broader context of mission, the circumstances and consequences of Christian mission will be no different for the disciples than for Jesus. Ironically, through the curious mixture of acceptance, rejection and persecution in mission, we learn that the disciples will bond more closely with the Master by sharing a similar fate. Compositionally this is shown in Matthew – in at least two ways. First, toward the end of Matthew's mission discourse an important correlative principle is asserted, "The one receiving you receives me," (Mt 10:40; see Mt 25:40-45). Second, although the discourse is given to the Twelve (10:1, 5, 11:1), it is clear that, even here, Matthew interchanges the Twelve with his more general understanding of a disciple as anyone committed fully to the way of Jesus (Mt 9:37; 10:24; 10:42). Thus, in Matthew 10:5-23, Jesus' instructions for engaging in mission, supplemented by instructions on what to expect as a response, is an abridgment of the outcome of Jesus' whole life given in Matthew. It serves as a basic reminder that the disciple should not expect a reception any different than his teacher. This is an insightful word for the follower of Jesus today.

Source Traditions of the Mission Discourse

When one comes to look at the explanation of this passage on the basis of the Two-Source Theory one runs into some puzzling difficulties. Those who follow this theory presume that Matthew used two major source traditions on the Mission Discourse: Mark and Q. In composing the charge (Mk 6:8-11), Mark utilized his own source material. Supposedly Luke, who on this theory seldom conflates, utilizes Mark for his charge to the Twelve (9:3-5) and Q for his account of the sending out of the 72 as a precursor to the Gentile Mission (Lk 10:1-15). But it is precisely here that deep difficulties emerge. It is impossible to claim that Luke 9 is

blending in some version of Q as well as using Mark. One is faced with the stark reality that both Matthew (who supposedly is using similar sources to Luke) represents a blend of Mark and apparently different versions of Q. No wonder that Davies and Allison, composers of one of the most prestigious commentaries on Matthew, and devout followers of the Two-Source Hypothesis state:

Mt 10:5-25 is one of the many reasons the synoptic problem is in fact a problem. ...Once the priority of Mark and Q is accepted, the non-Markan parallels between Mt 10 and Lk 10 demand that Q had a mission discourse of its own. Unfortunately, it cannot now be reconstructed exactly (Davies and Allison II, 163-164).

On the other hand, the Two-Gospel Hypothesis is very straightforward. Matthew received from tradition a source on Jesus' mission (Paul also echoes this tradition in 1 Corinthians 9:14). Matthew 10:5-25 essentially reproduces the source (Wenham, 1984, 243-246; Dungan, 1971, 41-75). Luke utilizes Matthew for the composition of Luke 9:3-5 and 10:3-15. Mark composes for his own theological purposes on the basis of Matthew and Luke. This eliminates the need for the mysterious Q.

Analysis of the Mission Discourse

Given this source analysis we notice that the first half of the Mission discourse rests within a massive inclusio (10:5-6, 23). This inclusio focuses on the mission to Israel. The disciples are not to go to the Gentile or Samaritan cities. The mission to Israel is to continue until the coming of the Son of Man (10:23). Specifically, the unit itself falls into two parts (10:5-16; 10:17-23). In 10:5-16 we have the instructions for the mission. In turn this is placed also within the inclusio featuring the Greek word *apostellein* "to send" (Mt 10:5, 16). Although the instructions are rigorous there is nothing inherent in them to indicate that they are incompatible with the early Christian decision of Galatians 2:9. Here, the mission to Israel, presumably an extension of what took place in Jesus' ministry, is affirmed. It does not escape notice that in Matthew the disciples are commissioned to go out (10:5) but go nowhere. There is no return because they did not go out. After the speech it is Jesus who continues to teach and preach (Mt 11:1). (Although Jesus' commission to the disciples to preach and heal is coterminous with his ministry, in Matthew, the disciples can only teach after Jesus the Teacher departs.) Then mission will be ongoing until the end of the age (Mt 10:23). Echoing Matthew 4:23; 9:35 and 10:1 the disciples are to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and cast out demons in total continuity with what Jesus accomplished in Matthew 8-9. Through this earlier mission of preaching and healing, a leper, a tax collector, a woman with a flow of blood – the lost sheep of the house of Israel – are restored

(Mt 9:36; 10:6). Supplemented by teaching (Mt 28:16-20) this becomes the ongoing mission of all disciples to which, technically, there is no beginning or end (Senior, 1998, 118).

In the instructions for the equipping, given in the terminology of the day, Jesus demands that one not do this for one's financial benefit (Mt 10:9-14). Indeed engaging in living the way of the kingdom, not being dependent upon possessions for sustenance or well-being, probably comes close to Matthew's ideal of perfection (Mt 19:21; see Luz, 2005, 79).

Our reading has led us to the conclusion that Matthew 10 is Jesus' commission to the church for mission. With the exception of this extension of the mission to incorporate the Gentiles (Mt 28:16-20) it has never been abrogated. What does this say to a wealthy European and North American church? Is the current lack of conviction and power in the Western church a direct result of the fact that its life is no longer a direct expression of Jesus' ministry and instructions for mission? Critical analysis of the text has confronted us with this vital question that Jesus confronts would-be disciples.

Turning to Matthew 10:17-23 we are given a description of the destiny of the disciples during the mission. The whole passage is suffused with a sense of urgency (Mt 10:23). There is not very much time left. The workers are few (Mt 9:37). But this is not an excuse for resignation. Rather, it is a stimulus to continue without surrendering to despair (Brown, 1978, 86). Once again the reminder that the disciple should not expect any different treatment than his teacher is germane. Both teacher and student must expect persecution. But the faithful proclamation of the kingdom is a *marturion* "witness" (Mt 10:16) that will not pass without notice. The response to the mission to Israel will be the same among the Gentiles. Matthew 10:17-22 is repeated almost verbatim in Jesus' Last Discourse. Only here it anticipates the mission to the Gentiles (Mt 24:9-14; 28:16-20); and it is worthwhile noting that after Jesus' faithful witness on the cross Gentiles confess him as the Son of God (Mt 27:54). As it was for the teacher, so it will be for the student. Thus, carefully interpreted, Matthew 10:5-23 is a salient word not only for the Twelve, but also for the mission of all followers of Jesus, even to this day.

Although we have not the space to analyze the versions of the Mission Discourse in Luke and Mark, it should be noted that their distinct emphases are clearly understandable on the Two-Gospel Hypothesis. Luke-Acts delineates the ministry of Jesus, the founding of the church in Jerusalem with its attendant mission to restore Israel, and ultimately the subsequent Gentile mission. For Luke the Twelve are the twelve apostles who are the basis of the restored people of God in Israel (Ac 1:2-8; 12-26). In Luke 9:1-6 we have an anticipation of that role with the commission of the Twelve. Luke 10:1-16, with its charge to the seventy or seventy-two, echoing the numbers of all peoples in Genesis 10, anticipates Jesus' mission as being of universal consequence. On the other hand, on our hypothesis, Mark

writes towards the end of the first century. For him, the mission to Israel more and more is an event in the past. Thus, Mark stresses the sending out of the twelve disciples (Mk 6:7-12) and their return (Mk 6:30). After the Feeding of the Five Thousand that is set within Jewish territory (Mk 6:31-44) there is a confrontation between Jesus and the leaders of Israel (Mk 7:1-23). This is followed by a tour of Jesus through Gentile areas culminating with a second Feeding account (Mk 8:1-10) in Gentile territory (Maloney, 1990, 26). Mark is saying that the mission to Israel is an event of the past. In Mark's world, more and more, the restored people of God will be predominantly Gentiles. Thus Mark tracks closely the situation of the church at the end of the time of the writing of the Synoptic Gospels.

Conclusion

In this essay we have attempted both to give an overview of the Synoptic Problem and show why it is important for the church to consider. In arguing that the ancient Clementine or Two-Gospel Hypothesis on the order of the Gospels furnishes a viable explanation of the evidence for interpretation we focused on Matthew 10:5-23.

Studying this text leads to a troubling conclusion for the church. Far too frequently a wealthy Western church has sought to determine faithfulness by adherence to specific beliefs and doctrines. For Matthew the touchstone of faithfulness is found in the practice of being a disciple. The course and outcome of our discipleship should be no different than our Master. He himself said, "You will know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16, 20).

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Važnost sinoptičkog problema za tumačenje Evandjelja

Ovaj esej razmatra pitanje o redoslijedu pisanja četiri evanđelja u kanonu Novoga zavjeta. U njemu se proceduralno raspravlja o pojavi tradicije četverostrukog Evanđelja, o sinoptičkom problemu i kako mu se pristupalo kroz povijest. Esaj podupire stajalište Klementove hipoteze ili hipoteze o dva evanđelja. Analiza Mateja 10,5-23 služi kao ilustracija vrijednosti te hipoteze za razumijevanje teksta i za spoznaju njezine vrijednosti za život vjere.