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Expanding Mark: How Matthew and Luke Arranged Their Gospels

The Gospel of Mark tells the story of Jesus in two major phases:

1. the story of Jesus's adult life and ministry (1:1–10:52)
2. the story of Jesus's passion—the events leading up to and including his arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection (11:1–16:8)

According to the Two-Source Hypothesis, Matthew and Luke both had copies of Mark's Gospel and when they produced their Gospels they added material from Q and other sources (material that we call M when it was used by Matthew, and L when it was used by Luke).

But as these two evangelists went about expanding Mark, each of them had to ask, "Where should I put the additional material?"

Some decisions were obvious:

- genealogies and birth stories are added to the beginning (Matt. 1–2; Luke 1–2)
- resurrection stories are added at the end (Matt. 28:11–20; Luke 24:13–52).

All of that material would come from M and L.

But according to the Two-Source Hypothesis, Matthew and Luke also had copies of Q, which reported the teaching of Jesus, and they

also had other traditions regarding things that Jesus had said or done.

They probably did not know the chronology for any of this material—*when* Jesus had said or done these things—so there was no obvious place where the material should go.

- Matthew decided to break up the story of Jesus’s ministry by having him deliver five long speeches or sermons (chaps. 5–7; 10; 13; 18; 24–25).
- Luke decided to put most of the extra material into a new portion of the narrative, a mid-section that relates a long journey of Jesus to Jerusalem (9:51–19:44).

One consequence of these organizing techniques is that the teaching of Jesus is set in different contexts in these two Gospels.

- In Matthew’s Gospel, the teaching of Jesus occurs in a somewhat academic context akin to a *classroom*: Jesus is the rabbi, instructing his disciples in thematic lessons.
- In Luke’s Gospel, discipleship seems more like an immersion experience, or learning “on the job.” Jesus takes his disciples with him on a trip, and they learn from what he says and does along the way.