

hardly be true. Probably, he was not aware of it, as it seems that Luke and Matthew had their own source about it, with Matthew's source being the more detailed. Of more significance is the context in which the prayer is given. In Matthew it is given as part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as an example of how to live. However, in Luke it is presented in response to the disciples' request about how they should pray. This example serves to emphasise the different theological purposes of the authors.



3. A good example of how differences between the Gospels can be understood in terms of theological perspectives is the Sermon on the Mount passages. Matthew (ch.5-7) has grouped material together to present Jesus as a new lawgiver, re-creating the Sinai event, all of relevance to his Jewish readers. However, Luke (ch.6) has no such concerns and, ironically, presents much of the same material being given on the **plains** around Tyre and Sidon.

4. Many of the differences in narrative can be readily explained in terms of theological objectives. Thus, Luke's placement (ch.4) of Jesus' rejection in the synagogue of Nazareth at **the outset** of his ministry avoids an excuse being available for the Jews to reject Jesus once his ministry is underway, which is probably why both Matthew and Mark place this event **midway through** Jesus' ministry. But, many other differences in narrative can not be easily explained. If Matthew and Luke used Mark's Gospel as a basic source why do they both describe the calling of the first 4 disciples **after** Jesus begins his preaching in Capernaum, when Mark places it **before**? Also, what could the significance be of Luke (ch.4) illogically placing the cure of Simon's mother-in-law **before** the calling of the first 4 disciples when Mark (ch.1) places it **after**. Similarly, why does Matthew (ch.8) describe it as taking place even later?

These and other such issues demonstrate the complexity behind the formation of the Synoptic Gospels and their subtly different aims.

Jesus in the Gospels

2. Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels



Questions For Reflection

1. Why are the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke so similar in content?
2. Who do you think Matthew's Gospel was primarily written for?
3. Why is it that the same event is sometimes reported differently in these Gospels?

