

**THE DAVIS PARALLEL  
GOSPELS, BEING THE THREE  
SYNOPTIC GOSPELS AND  
SOME PORTIONS OF JOHN**

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The Davis Parallel Gospels, Being the Three Synoptic Gospels and Some Portions of John by E. D. Davis

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*Bible. N.T. Gospels. English Harmonies. 1902*

THE  
DAVIS PARALLEL GOSPELS

BEING THE  
THREE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

AND SOME PORTIONS OF

JOHN

ARRANGED IN PARALLEL COLUMNS, WITH LETTERS IN THE MARGINS TO  
AID THE EYE IN FINDING PARALLEL PASSAGES.

*TOGETHER WITH A SHORT COMMENTARY*

AIMING TO SHOW THAT THE BOOKS WERE NOT WRITTEN, AS THEY ARE, BY MEN  
WHO HAD PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS; THAT THEY HAD A COMMON ORIGIN  
IN OLDER WORKS OF VARIOUS DATES AND AUTHORSHIP; AND THAT THE AC-  
COUNTS OF THE MIRACLES, AND THE PASSAGES CONTAINING MENTION OF THE  
DISCIPLES, ARE OF LATER DATE THAN THE MOST OF THE BALANCE OF THE  
BOOKS, AND ARE OF QUESTIONABLE AUTHENTICITY.

BY

E. D. DAVIS.

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## PREFACE

WHEN I first thought of publishing the three synoptic Gospels, as they are here arranged, I had under consideration the advisability of publishing only the books themselves, without note or comment, feeling that the best commentary upon them was the arrangement I had given them. I thought that in that shape they might possibly reach a class of readers who otherwise would never see them. But as I thought of the matter, I deemed that it would be better to call attention while passing along to many peculiarities about parallel passages which seemed of more than passing importance; peculiarities towards which, strange as it may appear, my attention had never been directed though I had hunted through some of the best libraries in the West. This led me to the question as to how much I ought to say and how much I ought to leave to the reader to study out for himself. I finally settled upon the plan to just fill in the pages on the right with such comments as were necessary to bring before the reader the most important passages, and with such as were necessary for a full explanation of the character and significance of the relation which the Gospels bear to one another.

I have confined myself almost exclusively to the showing that such a commentary would make. I have not had the time or the opportunity to prepare a more extended treatise on the Gospels. Had I been sure that such a work would have proven a financial success, I might have taken the time and made the opportunity; but the financial result of most literary ventures is questionable. In the next place, to compile a work of that character needs some years of preparatory labor. The works of the early Christian writers would have to be examined, and the genuineness of many passages in them carefully studied. The quotations from the "memoirs of the apostles" in the writings of Justin Martyr would need consideration. And the contents in detail of the MSS. now extant of the New Testament and Gospels would have to be gone over. Not that a vast amount of this labor has not already been performed, but the results of it need sifting and classifying and bringing out. So far as I have examined into these subjects, they corroborate the views I have brought out in these pages. Many critics have attacked the authenticity of certain parts of the Gospels; and it seems to me that, taken in connection with the internal evidence as shown by the relation which they bear to one another, their arguments are well based. Particularly has the genuineness of much of the book of Luke been assailed, probably because it has proven the most vulnerable of the three. Conclusions drawn from these arguments need only be carried another step and the theory herein set forth will be complete.

Richard, 270 E. 34th St. N.Y.C.

I wish to say a few words in regard to the composition and arrangement of the reading matter on the right hand pages of this book. It is difficult, as every one knows who has had experience, to prepare matter for publication with the end in view of just filling up a certain amount of available space. Newspaper composers resort to the patching out of pages with odds and ends of news, advertisements, etc., and their composition is much varied in character. I realized the objections to an attempt to carry out a scheme of this kind, but did not think the idea impracticable. I went on and mapped out, as best I could, about what I desired to say, confining myself to remarks for which I thought there would be space, and treating subjects about in the order in which they turned up rather than in the order in which I might have treated them had I selected them of my own free will. I found myself sometimes confronted with a subject the position of which brought it up rather earlier in the programme than I liked, and I was compelled to deal with it then and there or leave it for a time. I thought the first alternative the best even though sometimes something further along had an important bearing upon it.

When it came to the setting of the type it was found, as was expected, that I had too much MS. for some places and too little for others. I had made provision for this which I thought ample, but was compelled to go further than I had anticipated and make some unlooked for revisions. It became necessary to go back and remodel some of the pages, and fill up some gaps. I fear that the plan has not been conducive of the best results possible; and it may have been the cause of what may appear to the reader as carelessness in composition and revision. I have not thought the matter of sufficient importance to make any radical changes, but thought best to ask forbearance of criticism in the matter.

It may seem, particularly in the first few pages of this book, that some of my remarks are unnecessarily brief (I hope no one will be so unkind as to wish they were briefer), and that I have not been as explicit in some cases as I might have been. Sometimes the amount of available space has not left me quite as free handed as I could have wished; and as I said at the beginning of this preface, the best commentary on the Gospels is the Gospels themselves when laid properly before the reader. And it is desirable to impress upon the reader the necessity of studying the parallel passages as they are given rather than to merely read what I have said about them carelessly for pleasure or pastime. It is only by turning to the passages mentioned, as one reads, and studying them carefully that the most information about them will be obtained.

The Gospels are the most important books ever published; and if I have added anything to the knowledge current of them, I shall feel many times repaid for the labor I have expended upon them. I fear that they are, considering their importance, too little known, especially amongst the rank and file of humanity.

Another thought comes to me. Perhaps I ought to set forth clearly in this preface just what I aim to show in this book, and just how I aim to show it. In the first place, I have tried to show that the Gospels were copied from some common pre-existing source or sources, not so much by what I have said about them as by the arrangement I have given them. Let the reader turn through this book, confining his attention to the left hand pages, and take a general bird's-eye view of the relation which they bear to one another. The letters in the margins of the columns will aid his eye in finding parallel passages. Let him notice how, sentence after sentence, verse after verse, paragraph

after paragraph, chapter after chapter, is in each of the three Gospels alike, not always occupying the same position in each, but generally, nor not quite word for word in each, but very near to it.

In the next place, I have tried to show that the Gospels, as we have them, were made up from some ten or a dozen different manuscripts, or books as they might be termed, of different dates and authorship, united into one. That the books, in fact, are but collections of these older works. That copies of some of these old manuscripts are in but one of the Gospels; copies of others are in two of them; copies of still others are in all three of the three synoptic Gospels; and a copy of one very important one, the account of the Crucifixion, is in all four of them. This will be brought out as we proceed.

Again, I have tried to show by pointing out certain phrases in the Gospels, how they are but collections of incidents put forward as history of Jesus by men who knew nothing of him. These phrases, in many instances, betray the grossest ignorance on the part of the Gospel writers, sometimes even more than ignorance. They are of such a character that they weigh against the authenticity of the stories of which they form a part. For instance: the book of Matthew contains a sermon said to have been delivered by Jesus "upon a mountain." Now, if we study the sermon carefully, and the passage just preceding it, and compare the whole with the other two Gospels (see page 9), we will find that the phrase about Jesus being up on a mountain was the tail end of the preceding story, not the beginning of this one. Luke's sermon, another copy of the same one, says nothing about a mountain. Luke, strangely enough, contains this same phrase about Jesus being up on a mountain, but he has stupidly gotten it into another story, like Mark. It has been shifted around from one story into another, by those who copied the originals, by re-arranging accounts, by taking some out, by putting some in, there is no telling just how, but certainly somehow, till the whole has become—well, a complete muddle. This condition of the books reflects upon the credibility of the man who wrote at the end of the sermon, "And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him." For if he was not upon a mountain how could he have come down; and the question at once arises, Did great multitudes follow him?

There are many such phrases in the Gospels, and their significance is, that the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke could not have been written by eyewitnesses, or by followers or disciples of Jesus; and they lose their claim of inspiration and authenticity. As to the statements made by Irenæus and Papias that Matthew published a Gospel in Hebrew, they may be true; I have no particular reason for doubting them. But that that Gospel was what is now known as, The Gospel of Matthew, I can never believe. It may have been one of the books, or manuscripts, copies of which now form a part of each of the three synoptic Gospels. I can well believe that it may have been the original of one of the sections into which the Gospels have been divided in this book, such a one, for instance, as that designated as, *F*. It is composed of what might be termed, "our Lord's sayings and doings." There is nothing in it to conflict with the opinion that it was written by some one who knew something of Jesus. It contains little of the miraculous or supernatural, no mention of any disciples, and but little to show that he was beset or, followed by multitudes. It contains a statement that John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus to enquire of him, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" This reflects upon the truthfulness of another section of the Gospels,



designated as, *I*, and which I believe could not have been written by one who knew anything of Jesus' early life, and which contains the story of John preaching in the wilderness, and represents him as having come on purpose to testify of him. This last mentioned section is full of the miraculous and supernatural. When the reader comes to these sections, he will see how different they are from each other, and how possible, even how probable, that they are the works of different authors.

I have also aimed to show that the accounts of the miracles in the Gospels are of later date than the greater part of the balance of the books. They are either confined largely to certain sections well toward the beginnings of the books, or stand as apparent interpolations when the Gospels are compared with one another, and assuming that they were copied from some common source.

Of much the same character, are all references to the disciples, and particularly to the "twelve," and to Andrew and James and John by name. I do not believe that Jesus had twelve disciples, and I believe that the Gospels themselves show it. If the books were copied, or translated, from some common pre-existing source or sources, those older accounts did not mention the twelve or the favored "four;" and I doubt if the oldest of them mentioned any disciples at all.

Let me impress upon the reader once more the necessity of studying the Gospels in this book as he reads it, rather than to merely read what I have said about them. They are their own best commentary. I have endeavored oftentimes to do little more than point out certain peculiarities about them, leaving it for the reader to draw his own conclusions. Perhaps I ought not to have done this; but if I have sometimes simply called attention to some phrase, or sentence, or verse, how it appears in one account in one of the books, and in another in one of the others, I have thought the reader could weigh the significance of that fact as well as though I had in each case tried to show just what it meant. These passages can have but one general signification, and that is that the Gospels are but collections of accounts of unknown origin and uncertain authenticity put forward as true history by men who knew nothing of Jesus.

THE AUTHOR.

# THE THREE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

## A SHORT INTRODUCTION

SHOWING THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF MATTHEW  
AND THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF LUKE  
SIDE BY SIDE UPON THE SAME PAGE.

OUTSIDE of scholars and those who have given the matter special attention, few are aware of the relation which the first three books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark and Luke, bear to each other. Most people know that there is more or less close verbal agreement between different versions of an account as it appears in more than one of the books; and yet do not know just how far, or to what extent, taking the books as a whole, this verbal agreement goes. There are, in fact, few passages of any extent in either one of the three but what are in one or both of the others; and generally they are of about equal length, one seldom being as much as twice as long as its parallel passage. And, too, the parallel phrases and sentences are usually arranged in pretty much the same order, not only in two of the books where an account is given in two of them, but in all three wherever one appears in the three, and most of them do.

There is a considerable part of the book of Luke, extending from about the ninth chapter to the eighteenth, no portion of which is in Mark, with the exception of a few scattering verses, and only a part of which is in Matthew. This is in contrast to the balance of the books. But in still more striking contrast are the first two chapters of Matthew and the first two of Luke. The parallelism existing between the three books begins with the third chapter of Matthew, the first chapter of Mark and the third chapter of Luke. There is nothing in the first or second chapter of Matthew that is in either Mark or Luke. The genealogy in the first chapter is not an exception, for Luke's genealogy is quite different from it. And there is nothing in the first two chapters of Luke that is to be found in either of the other books.

This is a remarkable fact when we come to think that elsewhere Matthew and Luke tell the same stories through and through, corresponding in almost every detail. Why Luke fails to mention such important events as the coming from the east of the three wise men with their rich and costly presents, the slaying of the children in Bethlehem by Herod, or the journey into Egypt, is not easily explained. And the same may be said of Matthew. He repeats most of the accounts found in Luke after the beginning of the third chapter, the important and the unimportant. Why does he fail to say anything of Zacharias, or Elizabeth, or John? or the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem? or of the shepherds? or of Jesus being born in a manger?

It is claimed by many critics that the first three Gospels were copied either from each other or from some common source. The reader, when he has examined the following pages, will see for himself on what grounds the claim is made. But, be that as it may, there is no evidence that Matthew or Luke had access to the same source of information for anything they said in their two opening chapters. There is not a phrase or sentence in either of them that has the slightest appearance of having been copied from anything previously in existence and common to them. On the other hand, there are many contradictions seeming to point to the conclusion that their sources of information were so widely different as to cast a suspicion upon the authenticity of one story or the other; and the authenticity of the first two chapters of both Matthew and Luke has been questioned, as well as the section of Luke above referred to: chapter 9 verse 51 to chapter 18 verse 14.

There is another noticeable difference, in each of these books, between the accounts in the two opening chapters and those of the chapters following; particularly is it true of Luke; and that is a disposition to be more elaborate in detail. There is nothing in any other part of the synoptic Gospels so marked in this respect as Luke's story of the birth of Jesus, and the circumstances surrounding his meeting, in his infancy, with Simeon, and Anna the prophetess. Luke does not dwell upon any other incident in the life of Jesus, not even upon the story of the crucifixion, as he does upon these events.

Other noteworthy peculiarities of the chapters are apparent. Prophetic utterances and quotations are conspicuous for their number and length. And there are some evidences that they were not originally written in Greek.

The four pages following (3, 4, 5 and 6, containing the first two chapters of Matthew and the first two of Luke) are not given here with any special purpose in view. This book contains the three synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, complete. The main purpose in giving them is that no portions of the books be omitted. The reader will do well to turn on to page 7 and let these chapters go; they have no particular significance at this time. If he becomes interested enough, let him turn back later on and see how different they are from the balance of the books. Let him then ask himself the question, Is it any wonder that critics have attacked their authenticity?