

## Questions About Luke A/B/C

Paul Foster  
University of Edinburgh  
(4 March 2014)

EDITORS' NOTE: These questions on Brooks **Acts-Luke** ("Luke A/B/C") were predistributed, with responses from the A/B/C side, for the Alpha Christianity Seminar at the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society meeting on 28 Mar 2014. With the respondent's permission, that exchange is revised for this volume of *Alpha*.

**PF.** How different is Luke A from what I would term Q?

**ABC.** Luke A is the entire original text of Luke; Q is a conjectural text including only a small set of passages common to Matthew and Luke.

**PF.** Or does it look like "Proto-Luke" postulated by Streeter, Taylor, and others?

**ABC.** No. Streeter and Taylor envisioned an early Luke based on Q, to which Markan passages were later added. The only similarity is that Taylor's Proto-Luke begins with Lk 3:1, and thus, like Luke A, lacks a Birth Narrative.

Luke A/B/C is not a rehash of Taylor or any other previous proposal. For what it may be worth, it is something new on the Synoptic scene.

**PF.** Where does Mark fit into this? Is it integrated at the Luke A, B, or C stage?

**ABC.** Mark precedes all; this is the only Synoptic model that fully acknowledges Markan Priority (many Q supporters regard Q as earlier than Mark). The picture is:

Mark > Luke A original > Matthew > Luke B and Acts I > Luke C and Acts II

**PF.** How were these various stages of Luke and Matthew in circulation?

**ABC.** A text compiled, or known, at one church can have had a penumbra of acquaintance in nearby churches, through overlapping membership or personal contact, previous to systematic publication for the Empire audience.

### Individual Passages

**PF.** Mt 16:13-20 [The Confession at Caesarea Philippi]. Triple tradition passage. Why does Luke not know Matthew's addition in Mt 16:16-19?

**ABC.** The ecclesiastical extension in Mt 16:17-19, making Peter the head of the future church, is probably a later addition, meant to identify Matthew more strongly with Peter and thus secure canonical approval for Matthew as a fully Apostolic text.<sup>1</sup> Then it was not present for Luke B, and the question of his ignoring it does not arise.

<sup>1</sup>Matthew otherwise merges Peter with the Twelve (Mt 19:28 > Luke B as Lk 22:28-30). Similar Petrine appendages are Jn 21 ("feed my sheep"), in an otherwise anti-Petrine Gospel, and (with Perdelwitz) 1 Pet 1:12 and 4:12-5:14. Paul was the other acceptably Apostolic figure, and Heb 13:22-25, following a similar strategy of canonical qualification, turns the otherwise anonymous Hebrews into a specifically Pauline epistle. See Brooks **Apostolic**.

Cases where Luke ignores something in Matthew refute the image of Luke as a passive copyist; he is an author with his own agenda and theology. He makes his own choices. This recognition affects considerations of what Luke is likely to do or not do (omit, repeat, vary, expand, condense, relocate) at any given place in his text.

There are places at which Luke B *does* take note of Matthew’s additions to Mark. To the description of John (Mk 1:2-6 || Mt 3:1-6 || Lk A 3:1-6, all virtually identical), Matthew added the Preaching of John (Mt 3:7-10, a denunciation of the Pharisees). This Luke B copied with only slight changes, at Lk 3:7-9. But Luke, gentle as always, added a further extension, in which John *preaches salvation to the multitude*:

**Lk 3:10.** And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? [11] And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath food, let him to likewise. [12] And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do? [13] And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. [14] And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse wrongfully, and be content with your wages.

That comes straight out of Luke A’s core theology, as laid out in the Sermon on the Plain. It does not denounce (as Matthew loves to do). It guides. It saves. It shows the way to justice and compassion in this world, and to eternal life in the next. Does John here sound like Jesus elsewhere in Luke? Yes, he does; the two are close in Luke (“Wisdom is justified by *all* her children,” Lk 7:35). It is a trait of that Gospel.

**PF.** Mt 5:3-12 || Lk 6:20b-23. Why are Luke’s Beatitudes so much shorter?

**ABC.** It has been suggested that the First Beatitude is primary in Luke (“the poor”) and altered by addition in Matthew (“poor *in spirit*”), so we might instead ask, Why are Matthew’s Beatitudes so much more numerous? A general answer is that Matthew often enough expands Mark, and we need not be surprised if he sometimes expands Luke A. Specifically, we may note that though the Lukan Four Beatitudes echo Isaiah, the Matthean Extras are largely based on the Psalms. Here is the detail:

Matthew	OT	Luke
5:3 poor <i>in spirit</i>	Isa 61:1 >	6:20b poor
5:4 that mourn	Isa 61:2 >	6:21b weep
5:5 meek	< Ps 37:11	
5:6 hunger and thirst <i>after righteousness</i>	Isa 55:1-3 >	6:21a hunger
5:7 merciful	< Ps 18:26	
5:8 pure in heart	< Ps 24:3-5	
5:9 peacemakers	< Ps 34:14	
5:10 persecuted	< Ps 24:3-4	
5:11 reproach	Isa 51:71	6:22 reproach

Doesn’t everybody find the Matthean extensions somewhat repetitious? What new information about conduct do “merciful” and “peacemakers” add to “meek?” For that matter, isn’t the nub of Matthew’s “persecuted” already implicit in Luke’s “reproach?” It thus seems possible to see Matthew’s Beatitudes as an economic upgrade of Luke’s (attenuating genuine poverty into suburban angst), plus some repetitive extensions which are not well distinguished from each other. This tactic of soft upgrade is one origin of the Nice Jesus picture which Matthew and Luke B together present.

**PF.** Mt 23:15-36 || Lk 20:45-47 [Beware the scribes]. Same problem as above. Both are double tradition passages.

**ABC.** Yes and no. We need to consider the larger context. Mk 12:37-40 is a warning of Jesus (“Beware of the scribes”); Luke A, in 20:45-47, includes all of it. Then Matthew, in Mt 23:1-36, enormously expands it. *From that expansion*, Luke B has taken a few passages, which he locates in Lk 11 (again, in the Travel Narrative). The two processes are separate in time; thus:

Mark	Luke A	Matthew	Luke B adopts
12:37f He said	20:45 he said	23:1 Then said	
		23:2f Moses’ seat	
		23:4 heavy burdens	11:46 burdens
12:38b robes	20:46 robes	23:5f phylacteries	
		23:13 shut	11:52 key
12:30 widows	20:47 widows	[23:14 widows] <sup>2</sup>	
		23:15 proselyte	
		23:16f swears	
		23:23f tithe mint	11:42 tithe mint
		23:25f outside	11:39 outside
		23:27f tombs	11:44 graves
		23:29f prophets	
		23:32f will kill	11:49 will kill
		23:35f generation	11:50f generation

In other words, Luke A 20:45-47 counterparts virtually all of Mk 12:37-40. From Matthew’s long vituperative (“child of hell”) extension of the Mark passage, Luke B takes some of the least offensive paragraphs, and rearranges them in a Pharisee story of his own, which may be read consecutively in Lk 11:37-12:1. There, a Pharisee invites Jesus to dine with him, and the accusations (“woes”) of Jesus then follow.

But Luke also has a quite separate Pharisee story, in Lk 14:1-24. It begins, “One Sabbath when he went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisees.” In *this* dinner scene, Jesus meets the usual objections to Sabbath healing (not in fact spoken by anyone), and heals a man with dropsy. “And they could not reply to him.” His rebuke to those who “chose the places of honor” is again received silently. Jesus proceeds to state a theory of gift and repayment which exactly mirrors the core idea of Luke’s Sermon on the Plain. It is received with enthusiasm, “When one of those who sat at table with him heard this, he said to him, Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!” Jesus follows with a warning against confidence in the Kingdom: the Parable of the Feast. This has a Matthean counterpart, and it is easily shown that the Lukan version is prior.<sup>3</sup> The directionality is Lk > Mt, and we must assign the Lk 14 dinner to Luke A. And what author in his right mind really needs two Dinners with Pharisees stories? The local directionalities and the literary probabilities together suggest that Luke A has followed Mk 12:37-40, and that Luke B (in 11:37f) later added material from Matthew’s extensions to Mark.

<sup>2</sup>Mt 23:14 is missing in the best texts.

<sup>3</sup>See Brooks **Acts-Luke** 152.

But why? What is sensitive Luke doing with this hell-and-damnation stuff from Matthew? Perhaps it is a matter of market share. Matthew's Gospel followed Luke's (that is, Luke A) at a very short interval, and quickly gained widespread acceptance.<sup>4</sup> Luke's adjustments, most conspicuously his addition of a Birth Narrative in Lk 1-2,<sup>5</sup> seem to have been meant to make his own Gospel more appealing to an audience which had proved receptive to the stronger medicine that Matthew was offering them.

**PF.** Mt 20:1-16. [The Wages of the Laborers in the Vineyard]. Single tradition. Why has Luke the lover of parables not used this congenial Matthean parable?

**ABC.** The Matthean parable asks: Why do they who converted late get the same reward (eternal life) as we who came early? The mathematical answer is that you cannot divide infinity. Luke A had treated that problem (the rejoicing over latecomers) in his Parables of Lost Things (Lk 15:3-7, 8-10, 11:32). Luke B, coming on Matthew's monetized and thus not at all congenial parable, feels no need to be taught by Matthew on this already-covered subject, and passes it by.

Was Matthew instead instructed by Luke? Gundry has shown<sup>6</sup> that Matthew's Parable of the Two Sons is a Matthean transform of Luke's Parable of the Lost Son (minus the abject poverty of Luke's original, which probably offended his high-budget sensibilities). Matthew more directly counterparts another of Luke A's three "Lost" parables: Mt 18:12-14 || Lk 15:3-7. He seems to omit the other "Lost" parable, the Woman with the Lost Coin (Lk 15:8-10), perhaps because he has less interest in women characters than egalitarian Luke. But is it not possible that the woman's coin and the laborer's denarius may have something to do with each other? And that work on a great estate (the scene of his Vineyard and Two Sons parables) may be Matthew's preferred setting for transferred lessons of this kind? If so, then Matthew has made use of all three of Luke A's "Lost" parables.

However that may be, we end by suggesting that if the Luke A/B/C model is correct, it will no longer be enough to ask why "Luke" did or didn't do something. We must say, of the three now available, which "Luke" we mean. We have here tried to suggest that making that distinction can help clarify some otherwise puzzling questions – questions which any reader of Luke must somehow solve.

### *Works Cited*

- E Bruce Brooks. Acts-Luke. Alpha v1 (2017) 143-157  
 E Bruce Brooks. Apostolic Alignments. Alpha v1 (2017) 204-205.  
 Robert H Gundry. Matthew. Eerdmans 1982  
 Robert H Gundry. Matthew's Parable of the Two Sons. Alpha v1 (2017) 133-135  
 Édouard Massaux. The Influence of the Gospel of Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus. 1950; 3v Mercer 1990-1993

<sup>4</sup>For the date of Matthew, see the extended discussion in Gundry **Matthew** 599-609; for its popularity, see Massaux **Influence**.

<sup>5</sup>For the secondarity of Lk 1-2, see Brooks **Acts-Luke** 130, citing Fitzmyer.

<sup>6</sup>Gundry **Matthew** 421-424 or Gundry **Sons**.