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Goodacre, Mark S.
Goulder and the Gospels: An Examination of a New Paradigm

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Justifiably, this book argues that serious consideration be given to the work of a scholar, Michael Goulder, whose brilliance and panache have earned widespread admiration in the NT guild but whose theories have often received little more than a wave of the hand for their perceived extremity. Not that the author, Goodacre, swallows those theories whole. On the contrary, he not only sets them out with admirable clarity, he also subjects them to detailed, searching, and often clever criticism. Goulder himself, who writes an appreciative foreword, remarks Goodacre's "enviable ability to think up tests for hypotheses" and to discover counterexamples as well as examples that he, Goulder, "missed." Though Goodacre trims Goulder's theories, in the end they stand at least as worthy challenges to prevalent points of view.

And what are those theories? Limited by the book title to ones dealing with the Gospels (and almost exclusively the Synoptics), they are that neither Q, M, nor L ever existed; that Matthew drew chiefly on Mark and, with some additional help from Paul and the OT but not from oral tradition, himself made up the material usually assigned to Q and M; that Luke drew chiefly on Mark and Matthew with some additional help from Paul and the OT but not from oral tradition, so that material usually assigned to L had its genesis in Lucan redaction, not in pre-Lucan special tradition; that John used Mark, Matthew, and Luke; and that all the evangelists wrote their Gospels for liturgical reading in connection with major Jewish festivals and fasts, observed also by Christians.

Goodacre shows that the so-called double tradition contains specially Lucan vocabulary in roughly equal proportion to specially Matthean vocabulary. Thus, Goulder's claim that the vocabulary of Q looks no different from that of Matthew totters, and along with it the argument for Q-material as consisting of nothing more than what Luke copied from Matthew and what Matthew made up in addition to Mark. Despite a couple of Lucanisms in minor agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark, however, a larger number of Mattheanisms among those agreements are found to favor, though not to prove, Luke's

use of Matthew. Without declaring himself, Goodacre leaves the impression of inclining slightly toward a subsidiary rather than main use of Matthew by Luke.

Very much space goes to the theory that Luke created the L-material with "no substantial sources apart from Mark and Matthew." Goodacre divides into two categories the evidence cited by Goulder for this theory: (1) Lucan features contrasting with Matthew and Mark; (2) Luke's compositional techniques. To take the latter first, the compositional techniques have Luke creating new material by drawing inferences from old material, by combining elements drawn from different sources, by splitting up elements that appear together in those sources, and by transferring elements from one pericope in a source to a different context. Pursuant to these compositional techniques, Luke also and often creates inconsistencies in the storyline--an activity that Goulder calls "muddling" and that we might describe as a failure of compositional technique. The trouble is, as Goodacre points out, Luke does these same things in somewhat less measure outside L-material, too, as does Matthew on the presupposition that he used Mark. Therefore, even though Goulder has correctly identified Luke's habits of composition in L-material, they are not so distinctive as to demand the enormous amount of creativity that Goulder's theory requires of Luke in Luke's nearly exclusive use of Mark and Matthew. More likely, suggests Goodacre, L-material represents special oral traditions which, because of their orality, Luke has subjected to a larger than usual amount of redaction.

The present limitation of space allows only a sampling of Lucan features contrasting with Mark and Matthew: soliloquy in parables, parties, doubled visions, conversation in parables, lower-class heroes, middle-class settings, fives and tens, foil questions of a "cloying piety," and colorful details. Some of such features seem distinctive to Luke because only he exhibits them in the triple and double traditions as well as in L-material. Other features seem characteristic of but not distinctive to Luke, because one finds them also in Mark and Matthew. And a few of the features seem to be not even characteristic, much less distinctive, of Luke. Once again, then, Goodacre judges Goulder acute in his perceptiveness of textual phenomena, but his theorizing overblown, and suggests heavy Lucan redaction of oral tradition instead of extravagantly creative redaction of Mark and Matthew.

Goodacre holds Goulder's lectionary theory in less high regard and notes that in more recent years Goulder himself has scaled down this theory. Even in its diminished form, however, it draws some severe criticisms. Particularly problematic are Justin's statement that in their meetings, Christians read the Scriptures "as long as time permits" (*1 Apol.* 67), the lack of contemporary evidence for anybody's writing a book for lectionary purposes, the further lack of evidence in Acts for a prebaptismal catechesis such as Goulder posits for liturgical background behind Mark and Luke, and the oddity that Luke but not Acts should have been written as a lectionary.

Sometimes, on the other hand, correspondence between hypothesized lections and festal occasions strikes Goodacre as reasonably strong. Not me. For example, the notation of the third, sixth, and ninth hours of Jesus' crucifixion (Mark 15:25, 33, 34) is supposed to reflect a Christian vigil divided into three-hourly units, but that notation seems to me more easily explained by Mark's desire to emphasize how short a time Jesus hung on a cross ("and Pilate wondered whether he had died *already*"--Mark 15:44). At least such an explanation fits the context and needs no extraneous purpose. To take another example, does not the sixth hour of Jesus' crucifixion in John 19:14 relate more easily to the sixth hour of Jesus' thirst and offer of living water in 4:6 (cf. "I thirst" and the outflow of water as well as blood in 19:28, 34) than to an extraneous liturgy?

Since Goodacre weakens Goulder's arguments for dispensing with Q, I would like to have seen Goodacre go further by way of exploring the possibility that Luke more closely represents non-Marcan tradition that Matthew elaborates freely, in which case what Goulder regards as Lucan would be traditional and, miracle of miracles, Luke's liveliness must turn into Jesus' liveliness. Goulder thinks, for example, that Luke created the Prodigal Son out of Matthew's Two Sons, one obedient and the other disobedient. Why not the reverse: with help from the Laborers in the Vineyard, Matthew created the Two Sons out of the Prodigal Son and his Elder Brother? Or why not Matthew's creating the Unmerciful Servant out of Luke's Two Debtors rather than vice versa? All in all, though, Goodacre does an expert job on a deserving scholar.