

As some of you know, a member of the blog, Evan, recently offered a \$1000 donation to the blog if I would respond to the claims of New Testament scholar, Alan Garrow, that in studying the Synoptic Gospels, a completely compelling case can be made that the author of Matthew knew and used the Gospel of Luke. This is a view that almost no one in the academy holds.

After a bit of back and forth - which I give below - Evan agreed that if I could find another respected expert in the field to respond to Garrow's claims, instead of doing it myself, he would still donate the money.

One of the scholars on the blog happens to be my colleague in New Testament studies at Duke, Mark Goodacre, who has spent the majority of his distinguished scholarly career researching, writing, and teaching on the Synoptic Problem. There is no one better to respond. And as it turns out, he volunteered to write a response without my even asking!

Many thanks to Evan for offering the contribution, and to Mark for taking up the challenge! Below are the comments and emails from Evan and me to set the stage. After that I will give Mark Goodacre's exposition of Garrow's views and an explanation of why they simply don't work. I find Goodacre's argument completely convincing, but would welcome any responses.

Evan's first comment on the Blog:

The British scholar Alan Garrow has compiled an extremely compelling argument that Q never existed. In seven short videos totaling 52 minutes of viewing time he pretty much proves beyond any doubt that Matthew used both Mark and Luke, and what we imagine as the "Q source" was actually Matthew copying and reorganizing Lukan material directly. See these videos here: <https://www.alangarrow.com/mch.html>. It is virtually impossible to believe in the Q theory once you've seen this data. Bart, if you see any holes in his arguments I would be grateful to hear them.

My Response:

I'm afraid I don't know him or his work. The problem is always that it is very hard for someone without advanced training in a field (whether neuro-science, astronomy, evolutionary biology, philosophy, or biblical studies!) to see the holes in an argument that an expert can see pretty quickly. So we'll see if he convinces any scholars! [NOTE: since I wrote this, Alan Garrow contacted me to remind me that in fact we met many years ago at a conference and have had a couple of back-and-forths since then. Many apologies to him: I should have remembered, but hearing his name out of context I didn't!]

Evan:

You are an expert. I will lay a wager that you cannot find any holes in Garrow's argument, and that in fact you will be convinced of his resolution of the Synoptic Problem. If you are not convinced, document whatever holes you see on this page. If you are convinced, post a statement that you believe he may have a viable solution to the Problem. Either way, once

your assessment is posted, I will donate \$1000 to your blog as a thank you for the time you invested to view his presentation and formulate a response.

(WHEN I GOT THIS OFFER< I WAS THINKING TO MYSELF that I couldn't very well pass it up without incurring, in my own mind, a charge of hypocrisy — I keep asking others to give for the blog, why wouldn't I belly up to the bar? On the other hand, it would take me about four or five hours, and I simply don't have the free time. So, a dilemma. But then Mark Goodacre wrote me to volunteer a response! AH! A possible solution, even better than my responding myself. I wrote to Evan to see if it was acceptable, as followsJ)

My Response:

Would you agree to the \$1000 if another internationally known scholar and expert on the Synoptic Problem posted a refutation on the blog?

Evan:

Yes, I have no problem with that, assuming Alan Garrow and/or I may be granted the right of a reply to whatever response is posted by the scholar you have engaged. Ultimately, I would be grateful to hear whether you are persuaded one way or another by the discussion that ensues, although I would not request of you a public statement on the blog as a condition of the agreement.

SO: That's where we are. As I indicated, Mark Goodacre volunteered a response. I will post it tomorrow.

If you belonged to the blog, you could read ALL the posts, including the one tomorrow! If you don't belong yet, why not join? It won't cost much, and all proceeds go to charity!



[Did Matthew Copy Luke? Mark Goodacre's Rebuttal
The Pope and the Lord's Prayer](#)