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MATTHEW, A CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

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II.

CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCES.

I BEGIN by setting forth a series of fifteen evidences, which taken singly are each corroborative of the chronological character of Matthew.

THE LIFE OF JESUS.

We observe that the narrative is occupied primarily with the life of but one person. References and statements having to do with others are quite subsidiary. Viewed broadly, the life with which the document so exclusively concerns itself is presented chronologically. We have the Genealogy and Birth, and then an account of the Infancy. These things are placed at the beginning. At the end, we have, in proper order, the Arrest, Trial, Death and Resurrection. The narrative thus begins and ends in strict accordance with the historical sequence of events. The active, public ministry lies between, and this is chronologically right. Then, the preaching of John the Baptist is set in between the Infancy and the Galilean ministry. And this, too, is chronologically right as may be gathered from Paul's statement in Ac. 13:23-25, and John the Baptist's in Jn. 1:30. The summonses to Simon, Andrew, James, John and Matthew are put early in the narrative (4:18-22; 9:9). In short, numerous large features of the life of Jesus are presented in chronological order.

THE LIFE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Similarly with the life of John the Baptist, his ministry comes first, then the casting into prison (3:1-17; 4:12). Later on in the narrative, John is still in prison but has heard of the works of Christ (11:2-6). The interval necessary between his separation from Jesus and his sending two disciples is sufficiently accounted for by the position of this latter episode. The death of John is placed further along, being narrated at 14:3-11. When

the Matthaean narrative has reached 17:12, John's death is regarded as a past event. All these matters have their place in the text in proper accordance with the historical order of their occurrence. The outstanding references to John (9:14; 11:2-19; 14:2; 16:14; 17:10-13; 21:25-26, 32) all have positions in the narrative consistent with those already noted. In short, the chronological succession of events in the life of John is maintained in the Matthaean account.

THE LAST JOURNEY.

Every year at the Passover season enormous multitudes overwhelmed and spread beyond the little city of Jerusalem. Attendance at the Passover was an obligation laid upon all males not unclean and not on a journey. Females might attend, but this was not compulsory. Naturally, all the roads would be filled for days by the 2,000,000 visitors.* When Jesus and His disciples proceeded to go up to Jerusalem upon the last of all His journeys, the throngs which accompanied Him were doubtless largely drawn from multitudes having the same objective. In the immediate party, however, were many women who had attached themselves in Galilee (Mt. 27:55). See also Lk. 24:6-7.

The Last Journey, accordingly, began back in Galilee, and not in the city of Ephraim (Jn. 11:54). This is the journey, or at least the latter and significant part of it, as to which Jesus warned the disciples shortly before the Transfiguration (Mt. 16:21). In the Matthaean narrative, it proceeds in historical order. There is, first, the assembling in Galilee (17:22).** Then there is the passage out of Galilee into the district beyond Jordan (19:1; Mk. 10:1). At 20:17-18 they are going up to Jerusalem (Μέλλον δὲ ἀναβαίνειν ἢ καὶ ἀναβαίνων).† Then they are

*See Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, VI, 9.

**The American Revised Version has "abode" in its text. There appears to be no substantial reason for this, both the Vatican and the Sinaitic MSS. having *Συστρεφομένων*, and the Alexandrian being defective.

†Conceivably, this could have occurred before what we have at 19:3ff or after the passage through Jericho. The former possibility does not affect the order of the milestones under consideration, but the latter does.

going out of Jericho (20:29) and approaching Jerusalem (21:1). Finally, the actual entrance is made (21:10) and in a few days He is upon the cross (27:35). Except for the uncertainty as to the historical order in connection with the going up to Jerusalem and the departure from Jericho, text and history advance together in respect to the matters mentioned. That is, the Last Journey occurred in the order indicated at 17:22; 19:1; 20:17-18; 20:29; 21:1; 21:10; and 27:35, except that the relative order of 20:17-18 and 29 is as yet undecided.

THE TWELVE.

The Twelve are referred to as a special group nine times in Matthew (10:1, 2, 5; 11:1; 19:28; 20:17; 26:14, 20, 47); eleven times in Mark (3:14, 16; 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43); seven times in Luke (6:13; 8:1; 9:1, 12; 18:31; 22:3, 47); and four times in John (6:67, 70, 71; 20:24).

The Matthaean references are connected with six distinct occasions: The Twelve sent forth (Mt. 10:1, 2, 5; 11:1): What then shall we have? (19:28); Warning on approach to Jerusalem (20:17); Judas offers to betray Jesus (26:14); The Passover supper (26:20); The Betrayal (26:47).

With reference to the six occasions, no one is, in the Matthaean narrative, out of place chronologically with reference to the *Summoning of certain disciples* (Simon, Andrew, James, John) (4:18-22) nor the *Calling of Matthew* (9:9-13). Each and every one is put after the accounts of both of these events. Naturally, all this is confirmatory of the proposition that Matthew is really written in historical order.

The eleven Markan instances add four new connections. I give, in parentheses, the Markan occurrences and also the Matthaean passages with which the Markan incidents are to be identified: Appointment of the Twelve (Mk. 3:14, 16) (Mt. ———); The Sower (Mk. 4:10) (Mt. 13:1-23); Who is greatest? (Mk. 9:35) (Mt. 18:1-6); The Last Week (Mk. 11:11) (Mt. 21:12, etc.).

From the seven Lukan instances, two additional con-

nections may be obtained. Anointing by the sinful woman and the following Journey through city and villages (Lk. 8:1) (Mt. ———); Feeding the five thousand (Lk. 9:12) (Mt. 14:13-21).

The four Johannine instances yield two additional connections: Peter's confession (Jn. 6:67, 70, 71) (Mt. 16:13-20); After the Resurrection (Jn. 20:24) (Mt. 28:1-15).

We thus get, in all, six additional connections that may be associated with incidents in the Matthaean narrative. In no case is such an incident so located in the text as to precede either Mt. 4:18-22 or 9:9-13. Accordingly, we may now list a total of twelve Matthaean passages, everyone of which stands in proper chronological position relative to the incidents of the *Summoning of certain disciples* and the *Calling of Matthew*. I tabulate the twelve Matthaean passages:

- Mt. 10:1-11:1. (The Twelve sent forth.)
- Mt. 13:1-23. (The Sower.)
- Mt. 14:13-21. (Feeding the five thousand.)
- Mt. 16:13-20. (Peter's confession.)
- Mt. 18:1-6. (Who is greatest?)
- Mt. 19:27-29. (What then shall we have?)
- Mt. 20:17-19. (Warning on approach to Jerusalem.)
- Mt. 21:12ff. (The Last Week.)
- Mt. 26:14-16. (Judas offers to betray Jesus.)
- Mt. 26:20-30. (The Passover supper.)
- Mt. 26:47-56. (The Betrayal.)
- Mt. 28:1-15. (After the Resurrection.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF JOHN AND JESUS.

In 3:4 we are told that the food of John the Baptist consisted of locusts and wild honey and in 9:10-13 we learn of the friendliness of Jesus with publicans and sinners. In 11:18 we read that "John came neither eating nor drinking" and in 11:19 we have the saying to the effect that the Son of Man was "a friend of publicans and sinners." That 3:4 and 9:10-13 should precede 11:18-19 is chronologically consistent, to say the least.

THE MIRACLES ON THE SEA.

Both of the incidents recorded in 8:23-27 and 14:22-33 are concerned with miracles wrought on the Sea of Galilee. Both conclude with expressions of astonishment. But these expressions differ in such manner as to indicate the order of the incidents. We could hardly expect that the exclamatory question, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" should follow the confession, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

DEVILS CAST OUT BY DISCIPLES.

In 12:27, Jesus says to His opponents, in connection with the casting out of demons: "— by whom do your sons cast them out?" The first record of the granting of authority to cast out evil spirits is in 10:1, 8. It is certainly probable that the two passages are placed in chronological order.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF JOHN.

In the sixth chapter of the Fourth Gospel, we have the following chronological order disclosed particularly at 1; 5-13; 16-21; 69—Going by sea, feeding the five thousand, walking on the sea, Peter's confession. The Matthaean order for the same events is precisely the same—14:13; 14-21; 22-33; 16:13-20.

HEROD THE TETRARCH.

We have in 14:1 a statement to the effect that at that juncture the report as to the works of Jesus had just reached Herod. The position accords well with the preceding narrative. The contents of 4:12-13:58 supply an adequate basis for such a report as that which Herod received. The time involved might also suit very well.

Further, the interval between 14:1 and the Last Week accords with the implication that it was "a long time." See Lk. 23:8.

It appears then that 14:1 is far enough along in the narrative for the one thing and distant enough from the end for the other matter.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

The narrative context following the Sermon on the Mount and constituting part of its setting states that the people were astonished at the teaching of Jesus because of the authority with which He spoke (7:28-29). This describes an early attitude—one exactly suited to the position of the Sermon at the beginning of the Matthaean account of the Galilean ministry.*

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.

That an early position of the passage containing the cure of Peter's mother-in-law and the healing of many persons (8:14-17) is chronologically right, is indicated by the astonishment disclosed at the authority of Jesus over unclean spirits in Mk. 1:27, the cure of Simon's mother-in-law occurring immediately after the casting out of the unclean spirit, as shown by the first six words of Mk. 1:29.

*It is desirable to clear up, as well as may be, the historical position of the Sermon on the Mount. The Lukan words "his disciples" in the initial verse (6:20) may be viewed as possibly referring to the "great multitude of his disciples" in 6:17, and "the mountain" in 6:12 is doubtless the same mountain as that mentioned in Matthew as the place where the Sermon was preached. These two considerations tend, though not very strongly, to indicate that the *Appointment of the Twelve* occurred just prior to the delivery of the Sermon. In Luke, however, the strength which would elsewhere be associated with such considerations when supported by the order of the text is much reduced by the chronologically questionable juxtapositions in the present form of the Lukan narrative. Examples are to be found at 8:4, 19-21; 9:49, 51; 13:32; 14:25. In the last, the preceding text from the beginning of the chapter appears to refer to the house of the ruler.

Moreover, the composition of the multitude as stated in Mt. 4:25 is different from what we have in Lk. 6:17. Decapolis and Beyond Jordan are not mentioned in the one case nor Tyre and Sidon in the other. The necessity, too, that would be imposed to view a coming down and a standing as events immediately preceding the Sermon (see 6:17) does not help the Lukan situation.

Further, in Mark, the appointment of the Twelve is immediately followed by the words "And he cometh into a house" (3:19).

If the Lukan sequence could be maintained, then it would appear that the call of Matthew (Mt. 9:9), which should precede the appointment of the Twelve, would have to be viewed as having occurred before the Sermon on the Mount. This would require that the Matthaean passage, 9:9-13, should chronologically stand before the section, 5:1-7:29. Apparently, however, there is no substantial reason for maintaining that historically the events of the passage, Lk. 6:12-19, precede those of 6:20ff. The position given in Matthew to the Sermon on the Mount is thus left unaffected.

THE MAN SICK OF THE PALSY.

Similarly, the fairly early position of the incident narrated in 9:2-8 is indicated as probably correct because this same incident is in Mark accompanied by the astonishment of all and by their characterization of what had occurred as something they had never witnessed before (Mk. 2:12).

FREELY YE RECEIVED.

In 10:8, the "freely ye received" rather implies a preceding period of association with Jesus. The present position in the narrative certainly satisfies, chronologically, such a requirement.

THE GALILEAN CITIES.

In 11:20-24, we have references to "the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done," the implication being that a period of Galilean activity must have preceded in which the working of miracles had a large part. This accords with the position of 11:20-24 in the narrative.

THE INSTRUCTED BABES.

Here in 11:25 we have the implication that heavenly matters had already been communicated to disciples. The present position of the passage well suits the requirement that there should have occurred in the preceding time a sufficient opportunity for those around Jesus to have learned of His teaching and His power.

THE NINETEEN BLOCKS AND THE NINE EVIDENCES.

We have in the foregoing reviewed fifteen evidences, each of which has been found to supply corroboration of the thesis that Matthew is a chronological narrative. The final six afford single corroborations; but the first nine are each concerned with two or more items whose order confirms the order of incidents disclosed in Matthew. All this is apart from the series of blocks, each of which is a chronologically arranged group of events.

It is now proposed to consider the nineteen blocks in connection with the nine evidences which speak of the

order of two or more events. When these nine were being developed, attention was called from time to time to the point that the groups of items which spoke of order corroborated the chronological character of Matthew. For example, the evidence concerning the Life of John yielded notable corroborations of this character. No less than five items were disclosed whose historical order was capable of being discerned. And the narrative presents the five items in precisely this order. Here we have a broad corroboration of the thesis that the book as a whole is a chronological writing. Nine evidences in all give us corroboration of this sort—some a modest amount, others a very considerable amount.

We now go a step further and consider each of the nine evidences in connection with the nineteen blocks. The individual items in an evidence occur within blocks, and so give historical position to these groups of incidents. This gives us opportunity to verify the order in which the blocks occur in Matthew.

In all cases, the textual order of the series of blocks is corroborated. The importance here centers largely upon the fact that in this way we secure evidence that the omission of time expressions defining the sequences of the blocks is not to be interpreted as due to ignorance upon the part of the author. Of the nineteen blocks, the Matthaean order is corroborated in respect to a total of nine. Despite the fact that time expressions are wanting, these nine are nevertheless in their true historical order.

These statements may perhaps be more easily apprehended by attending to the table entitled, "The Nineteen Chronological Blocks."

On the left, the blocks are arranged in a vertical column in the textual order. Nine columns succeed this one, each headed by the title of an evidence which contains two or more items whose historical sequence is susceptible of probable or certain determination. Numbers stand for the individual items belonging to an evidence, the rank of a number indicating the chronological rank of the item. The numbers are placed opposite to the blocks within which the several items are mentioned.

THE NINETEEN CHRONOLOGICAL BLOCKS.

Blocks	Life of Jesus	Life of John	The Last Journey	The Twelve	Characteristics of John and Jesus	Miracles on the Sea	Devils Cast Out by Disciples	Sixth Chapter of John	Herod the Tetrarch
1:1-4:11	1	1			1				
4:12-17	2	2							
4:18-22	2			1					
4:23-8:13 (8:2-4)...	2								
8:14-17	2								
8:18-9:1 (8:19-22)..	2					1			
9:2-33 [34]	2			1	1				
9:35	2								
9:36-11:1	2			2			1		
11:2-13:53	2	3		2	2		2		
13:54-15:29	2	4		2		2		1	1
15:30-16:12	2								
16:13-17:23	2	5	1	2				2	
17:24-19:2	2		2	2					
19:3-20:16	2			2					
20:17-28	2		3	2					
20:29-34	2		3	2					
21:1-23:39	2		4	2					
24:1-28:20	3		5	2					2

Thus, to the evidence having the title, "Life of John," there are five items—ministry (3:1-17), imprisonment (4:12), messengers (11:2-6), death (14:3-11), death in retrospect (17:12). These items are indicated by the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, respectively, the rank of the several numbers corresponding to the chronological rank of the respective items. The number 1, representing the item which is historically first—the ministry—is set down under the heading, "Life of John," at a point opposite to the block 1:1-4:11, in which the item of the ministry is recounted. And so on with the remaining numerals.

When this has been done, it will be seen that, reading from above down, the numerals succeed one another in their natural order. This means that the corresponding blocks, or groups of incidents, occur in Matthew in historical sequence. Accordingly, few learn not merely that the five *items* in the life of John the Baptist are set down in Matthew in their true chronological order. We had that much when this evidence was being considered *supra*. We learn now that the following *blocks* have positions in Matthew in accordance with the order of their actual occurrence:

1:1-4:11.
 4:12-17.
 11:2-13:53.
 13:54-15:29.
 16:13-17:23.

That is to say, the omission of time expressions connecting the nineteen blocks cannot be assumed to be due to ignorance on the part of the Matthaean author. Here are five blocks in proper order despite such omission.

And so we may consider each of the nine evidences, obtaining more or less corroboration from each that the textual order of the blocks is conformable with the actual history, even though time expressions are wanting at the points of division.

By combining the information as to order obtainable from the columns headed "Life of John," "The Last Journey" and "Devils cast out by disciples," we obtain a total

of nine blocks whose historical order is confirmed. These nine are:

1:1-4:11.
 4:12-17.
 9:36-11:1.
 11:2-13:53.
 13:54-15:29.
 16:13-17:23.
 17:24-19:2.
 21:1-23:39.
 24:1-28:20.

CONCLUSIONS.

Apparently, there are in the Matthaean narrative no known departures from chronological order that can be referred to the original writer. The misplacement, at 26:6-13, and the probable interchange, at 26:59-66 and 26:69-27:1, may both be explained as due to mechanical causes. Divergences of the Markan order are similarly explicable. The position now occupied in Luke by the Sermon on the Mount cannot be cited against Matthew because of the considerable probability that in Luke the preceding context refers to a different occasion. The non-Galilean activities recounted in Jn. 7:1-11:54 seem reconcilable with the First Gospel.

The Matthaean text is full of chronological indications. There are, moreover, fifteen evidences consisting each of from one to five or more items whose proper historical sequences and places corroborate the Matthaean account in respect to chronology.

The narrative may be connected up historically from beginning to end, and shown to be in proper order by means of the circumstances, by assertions in the text and by the assistance of other data—that is, it may all be shown as in historical order except at about eighteen points of transition. And it has been brought out that of the nineteen resulting chronological blocks the textual sequence of nine is corroborated. It would seem then that in Matthew sequence in textual presentation means sequence in occurrence.

In view of the foregoing considerations, it would appear quite reasonable to claim that the progress of the Matthaean narrative reflects the order in which the incidents actually followed one another.