

- The evidences we have been considering may seem very small and insignificant. Indeed, if we only had a few of these, they not be taken very seriously and easily be dismissed as coincidences, lucky guesses, or anomalies. But we do not have just a few. We have many dozens if not hundreds of these evidences, which together mount up to make a compelling case for taking the gospels seriously as eye-witness testimony.

Undesigned Coincidences (in the Feeding of the 5000)



- "a notable connection between two or more accounts or texts that doesn't seem to have been planned by the person or people giving the accounts. Despite their apparent independence, the items fit together like pieces of a puzzle."
- Although, as we have shown, the gospels show literary dependence (shared material), it is still the case that each gospel offers not just unique events and teaching, but unique details in the common material. For example, Mark will often have fuller details of accounts, despite sharing these accounts with Matthew and Luke. The same is true of Matthew and Luke.
- If someone copied the stories (like Matthew copying Mark) without knowing the real story (being an eyewitness), then these extra details would just be fanciful embellishments, and we would not expect them to form undesigned coincidences with details elsewhere.

Where did the miracle take place?



- Matthew 11:20
 - Jesus condemns Bethsaida for rejecting the "mighty works" which he performed there (this rebuke does not appear in Mark)
 - Bethsaida is not mentioned anywhere else in the gospel. What works is Jesus referring to?
- Mark 8:22-26
 - A blind man is healed in a curious way in Bethsaida (This miracle is unique to Mark)
 - But the man is told not to "enter the village". Why does Jesus not want the man to be a witness to the place, as he does elsewhere?
 - This snub of Bethsaida is a coincidence with Matthew 11:20
- Luke 9:10
 - Despite being recorded in all four gospels, only Luke tells us that the miracle occurred near Bethsaida.
 - We now have a detail which explains the animosity to Bethsaida recorded in Matthew and Mark. Another coincidence.
 - Interestingly, Luke, who is thought to follow the chronological order more often than Matthew, includes the condemnation of Bethsaida after the feeding of the 5000 (Luke 10:13-15)

Why ask Philip?



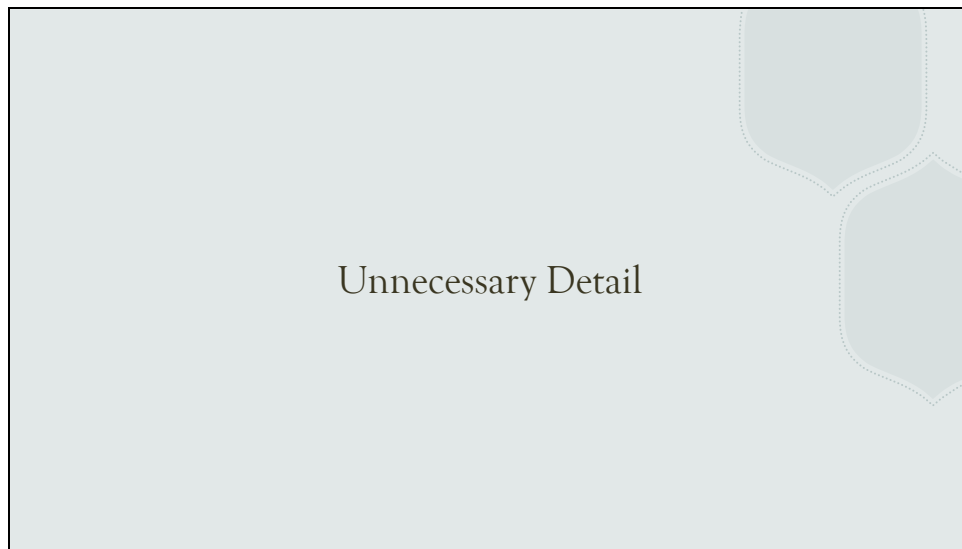
- John 6:5
 - Jesus asks Philip where to buy bread.
 - We read very little about Philip in the gospels. Why would someone filling in the story pick this little known apostle to speak?
- John 12:21
 - Philip is from Bethsaida (cf. 1:44)
 - Suddenly the reason why Philip would be asked makes sense. He was a local.
 - John does not mention the location of the feeding. Luke does not mention Philip. But these seemingly independent details fit together neatly. They form an undesigned coincidence.

Unexplained Allusions



- Sometimes, the gospel writers add extra detail which seem to serve no obvious purpose to the story. This is consistent with people recounting events from memory - often, details can stick in our minds that aren't the main point. This can lead to unexplained allusions.
- This is not as typical of fiction writers, who are more conscious not to leave details hanging and to "wrap things up".
- Mark 3:17
 - James and John are called the sons of thunder, but we are not told why.
 - It might be related to them calling down fire from heaven in Luke 9:51-56, but this is much later chronologically and not mentioned in Mark
- Luke 13:1-5
 - Two very specific events are mentioned. No further explanation is given.
 - Pilate mingling the blood of the Galileans (specific).
 - Tower in Siloam kills 18 (specific).
- John 1:46
 - Why does Nazareth have such a bad name? No explanation given.
- John 2:12
 - Why provide the details of Jesus stay in Capernaum. What does this add to the narrative?
- John 3:25-26
 - What is this dispute over purification all about? Why is it relevant?

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- Specific details in the narrative which serve no special reason, but are reported simply because they are true. A mark of eyewitness testimony.
- John 1:39.
 - "it was about the tenth hour"
- John 6:19
 - "they had rowed about 25 or 30 stadia"
- John 21:11
 - The net was filled with fish, "153 of them. "
- Mark 4:38
 - Jesus was asleep "In the stern", "on the cushion"
- Mark 11:4
 - A colt tied "at a door outside in the street"