

**THE MESSIANIC FORERUNNER CONCEPT IN
EARLIEST CHRISTIANITY (Q)**

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I consider the messianic forerunner concept within “Q” (which I take to be a source used by *all three* of the synoptic authors). I argue that at least five units in Q (3:2-3+7-9+16b-17; 3:21-22; 7:18-20+22-23; 7:24-27; 7:28)¹ envisage John as a messianic forerunner to the Messiah Jesus. The messianic forerunner concept is therefore quite pervasive in Q and cannot be said to have originated with the evangelist Mark, as is sometimes supposed.

Q attempts to deal with the historical fact that Jesus had not fulfilled Israel’s messianic expectations. It did this by portraying Jesus as a rejected Messiah whose redemptive mission had been thwarted by Israel’s unbelief. Jesus will ultimately redeem Israel but this will take place at his second coming and that cannot take place until Israel repents.

I consider whether Q’s redactor(s) utilised any earlier sources. I find this not to have been the case in Q’s Prologue (3:2-3+7-9+16b-17) or in Jesus’ Baptism by John (3:21-22). Earlier source material can, however, be detected in 7:18-19+22-23; 7:24-27; and 7:28. I consider whether any of this latter material derives from a rival “Baptist” source and conclude that it does not. The question of whether the messianic forerunner concept had its origins in Judaism prior to Jesus and his new movement can therefore not be established by any of the Q units examined in this thesis.² What can be established, however, is that the concept goes back to some of the earliest traditions of Jesus’ followers.

¹ In this thesis I utilise the standard convention of citing Q references according to their Lukan versification. A distinctively Matthean version of Q texts will be referred to as Q/Matt + Matthean versification.

² I have tried to avoid terms like “Christian(s)” or “Christianity” because they suggest a clear religious differentiation between the followers of Jesus and the rest of Judaism. At the time when Q and its source material were being composed, Jesus’ followers would not have seen themselves as anything other than Jews (unless they were Gentiles, in which case, they might have seen themselves as “God fearers” rather than Jews). I therefore typically use other terms to designate early “Christians” and “Christianity”: e.g. “Jesus’ (early) followers,” “Jesus traditions,” “the Jesus movement,” etc.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

In this chapter I lay out the history of scholarship with regard to the messianic forerunner concept and with regard to various related issues dealing with John the Baptist and Jesus. After that I shall make a few prefatory remarks about Q, discuss my methodology and aims for this thesis, and conclude with some reflections on two key biblical texts relating to the messianic forerunner concept: Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6.

1.1. History of Scholarship

1.1.1. Challenges to the traditional understanding of Elijah's role

Traditionally, Jews have believed that Elijah would act as the Messiah's forerunner, announcing his advent and preparing Israel for it. This belief is certainly attested in the Bavli and later midrashim (e.g. *b. 'Erub.* 43a–b; *Pesiq. R.* 35.4; *PRE* 43). Whether it can be traced back to the first century is more debatable, however. Mark 9:11 is usually thought to attribute the belief to the Jewish scribes and it is expressly attributed to Trypho, the Jewish interlocutor featured in Justin's *Dialogue* (8.4; 49.1).

Until the end of the twentieth century, scholars had generally taken the above-mentioned texts at face value and assumed that the Jewish conception of Elijah as the Messiah's forerunner went back at least to the first century, prior to the writing of Mark's Gospel. It was assumed that this Jewish belief was the whole reason that in the NT Gospels John the Baptist is envisaged as an Elijah-like figure and as a forerunner to Jesus. Among those scholars who held these views about the messianic forerunner concept having its origins in Judaism prior to Jesus and his movement are such impressive scholars as **Jacob Klausner**, **Louis Ginzberg**, **Sigmund Mowinckel**, **George Foot Moore**, and

Joachim Jeremias.³

In more recent decades, however, many scholars have questioned this older consensus. In 1958 **James A. T. Robinson**⁴ wrote a highly influential article suggesting that the messianic forerunner concept originated with Jesus' early followers. Robinson argued that John would have understood Mal 4:5-6—the *locus classicus* for the messianic forerunner concept—to speak of the coming of God, not the Messiah.⁵ Robinson also pointed out that while the statement of the scribes in Mark 9:11 (“Elijah must come first”) is usually taken to mean that Elijah needed to come *before the Messiah* this interpretation is exegetically questionable. He argued that in the context of Mark's Gospel the word “first” (πρῶτον) would most naturally mean “before ‘the rising from the dead’”—that is, from a Jewish perspective, “before the general resurrection at the last day.”⁶ Thus, for Robinson, this key text says nothing about the messianic forerunner concept.

In 1981 **Morris M. Faierstein**⁷ reiterated and expanded upon Robinson's earlier article. He again stressed that Mal 4:5-6 mentions nothing about a Messiah: Elijah is envisaged as a forerunner to “the great and terrible day of Yahweh.” He also stressed that two of our oldest sources that are usually thought to teach the messianic forerunner concept—namely, Mark 9:11 and Justin, *Dial.* 8.4; 49.1—are of “Christian”⁸ rather than Jewish provenance. Faierstein insisted that for this reason they should be used to reconstruct first century *Jewish* beliefs. At the same time, he dismissed any unquestionably Jewish texts that envisage Elijah as the Messiah's forerunner because these, he argued, are too late and possibly reflect Christian influence.⁹ Finally, Faierstein

³ E.g. Ginzberg, *Sect.*, 209-56; idem, *Legends*, 4.233-35; Klausner, *Idea*, 451-57; Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*; Moore, *Judaism*, 2.357-58; Jeremias, “Ηλ(ε)ίας,” 931.

⁴ Robinson, “Detection,” 268-70.

⁵ He was not the first. This seems to have now become the most common way of interpreting Mal 4:5-6. See, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 671-2; Nineham, *St. Mark*, 60.

⁶ Robinson, “Detection,” 269.

⁷ Faierstein, “Why,” 75-86, esp. 86.

⁸ Faierstein's term. See n. 2.

⁹ Öhler (“Expectation,” 461-76) adopts similar scepticism. He dismisses *b. Erub.* 43a-b, for example, because it “dates at the earliest from the third century and cannot be used in reconstructing first-century

dismissed a number of earlier Jewish texts that mention Elijah but do not clearly define his role vis-à-vis the Messiah, arguing that these texts possibly envisage the prophet as carrying out other roles besides that of the messianic forerunner.¹⁰ For example, he noted that one very popular expectation was that Elijah would resolve difficult issues of ritual and law.¹¹ Another was that he would restore the three vials containing Aaron's rod, the anointing oil, and water for purifying menstruous women.¹² Still another tradition held that he would resurrect the dead.¹³

If Robinson and Faierstein are correct about the messianic forerunner concept having its origins in the Jesus movement, the implications would be far-reaching:

- One supposedly early and important theological connection between the Jesus movement and Judaism would have to be characterised as the product of apologetics and even disinformation since it would have been knowingly based on a false portrayal of Jewish beliefs.
- Jesus' historical relationship with and his evaluation of John (indeed, Jesus' evaluation of himself) would be called into question.
- The historical reliability of the Gospel of Mark would be called into dispute, at least insofar as it portrays Jewish beliefs.
- The Jesus movement's interaction with and ability to influence later Jewish messianic beliefs would have to be assessed much more positively; for Judaism's theological indebtedness to the Jesus movement, at least with respect to one very important messianic concept, would have to be acknowledged.

ideas" (463-64). He also dismisses other texts since they are even later (464 n. 10; also idem, *Elia*, 27-29). Both Faierstein and Öhler overlook or fail to comment on the important text in *Seder 'Olam Rab.* 17.

¹⁰ See, e.g., 4Q521 2 iii 1-2; 4Q558; the synagogue blessing before the *Haftarah*; *Sop.* 19.9; *b. Šabb.* 118a; *b. Sukkah* 52b; *PRE* 43. If Faierstein had discussed *S. 'Olam Rab.* 17 he would have presumably dealt with it in similar fashion.

¹¹ Ginzberg, *Sect.*, 212 n. 14, cites eighteen references in rabbinic literature which envisage Elijah as coming in the last days to help settle disputes over the law, apparently by virtue of his priestly authority: e.g. *m. B. Meši'a* 1.8; 2.8; 3.4-5; *m. Šeqal.* 2.5; *b. Men.* 45a.

¹² *Mekhilta*, Vayassa 5.172.

¹³ *m. Sotah* 9:15

Despite these and perhaps other far-reaching implications of Fairstein's article, the responses to it have been surprisingly few, brief, and tepid. **Dale C. Allison**¹⁴ responded that "the great and terrible day of Yahweh" in Mal 4:5-6 was likely associated with the Messiah's advent and that because of this interpreters were able to infer that "Elijah the prophet," who was expected to arrive before that "day," would act as a forerunner to the Messiah.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer¹⁵ responded to Allison by complaining, somewhat pedantically, that he had not produced any texts in which the phrase "the day of Yahweh" is used in connection with an explicit reference to the Messiah's advent. Fitzmyer also reiterated Robinson's earlier exegesis of Mark 9:11, claiming that the text has nothing to say about the messianic forerunner concept.

Also responding to Robinson and Fairstein, and building on some of Allison's suggestions, was **Chaim Milikowski**.¹⁶ He noted that in rabbinic literature the messianic future (what would eventually become known as *ימות המשיח*, "the days of the Messiah") is generally seen as a period distinct from *אחרית הימים*, "the latter/end of days." He also noted, however, that this schematisation appears to have been a later theological development. Earlier writings often correlate the Messiah's advent with "the latter/end of days" (cf. Gen 49:1+10; Num 24:14+17).¹⁷ In light of this fact, Milikowski proposed that Mal 4:5-6 had originally been taken to mean that Elijah would come prior to this period. Since the Messiah's coming was correlated with this period interpreters would have naturally inferred from Mal 4:5-6 that Elijah would act as a forerunner to the Messiah.

Thus far, Milikowski was essentially reiterating Allison's earlier argument. But Milikowski's article took the argument further by observing that as Jewish eschatology

¹⁴ Allison, "Elijah," 256-58.

¹⁵ Fitzmyer, "More About Elijah," 295-96.

¹⁶ Milikowski, "Eliyahu," 491-96; idem, "Trajectories," 265-280.

¹⁷ In support of this point Milikowski ("Trajectories," 268 n. 11, 274) cites *I En.* 90.16-38; *T. Judah* 24-25; *Pss. Sol.* 17.21-46; *b. Hag.* 14a; *b. Sukk.* 52a; *b. Šabb.* 118a. To his list one could add CD 6:11; 19:10a-13+8:1b-3; 1QS 9:9-11; 1QSb 5:20-29; *I En.* 45.3-6; *4 Ezra* 12.32-34; 4QFlor.

developed the Messiah's reign was assigned its own distinct time period. It would no longer be coeval with "the latter/end of days" but would be a prelude to this period.

Milikowski argued that in *Seder Olam Rabbah* 17 one can still see indications of both the earlier and later conceptions about when the Messiah's advent would occur:

In the second year of Ahaziah (King of Israel) Elijah was hidden away and is not seen until the messiah comes. In the days of the messiah he will be seen and hidden away a second time and will not be seen until Gog will arrive.¹⁸

Elijah in this text is expected to appear twice—once at the time of the Messiah and again at the battle of Gog. According to Milikowski, this two-fold advent is an attempt at harmonising two originally disparate eschatological beliefs. Since older tradition equated "the end of days" with the Messiah's reign Elijah is envisioned here as having to appear before the battle of Gog (cf. Ezek 38:16 where the phrase אַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים is used). But since later tradition expected the Messiah to appear *prior to* "the end of days" Elijah is envisioned as having to appear at an earlier period as well.

Many other scholars have chimed in to this debate about the origins of the messianic forerunner concept, often by agreeing, at least tacitly, with Robinson, Fairstein and Fitzmyer.¹⁹ But few have added anything new to the debate. There are three exceptions, however. **John C. Poirier**²⁰ proposed that the much-disputed text in the *Rule of the Community* (1QS) 9:11, which speaks of a "Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel," referred, respectively, to the Moses-like prophet of Deut 18, Elijah, and the Davidic Messiah. On this interpretation, Elijah is not a forerunner to the Messiah but a (priestly) Messiah in his own right. Poirier's view would be difficult to explain if the Qumran community had been formed as a reaction to the Hasmonean establishment of a priestly kingdom, especially since the Hasmoneans kings seem to have been associated

¹⁸ Translation by Milikowski, "Trajectories," 266.

¹⁹ Fitzmyer, "More About Elijah" 295-96; idem. *Luke I-IX*, 326-27; Collins, "Works," 104; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 429-30; Xeravits, *Protagonists*, 110.

²⁰ Poirier, "Endtime Return," 221-42.

with Elijah (e.g. *Tg. Ps.-Jon.* on Deut 33:11; 1 Macc 2:23-27). **Robert Hayward**²¹ suggested that the well-known identification of Elijah with Phinehas was first made because “someone believed that John Hyrcanus combined in himself the attributes of both characters.”²² It may also be that John Hyrcanus needed a compelling response against those who still favoured a Zadokite or Oniad family succession, which had evidently been discontinued when the Hasmonean high priests assumed office. By identifying John Hyrcanus with Phinehas/Elijah the whole controversy about Zadokite lineage could be brushed aside since this Patriarch was himself the progenitor of Zadok.

Markus Öhler²³ and **David Miller**²⁴ tried to trace the earliest reception history of the Elijah texts in Mal 3-4. Öhler argued that within Judaism the earliest expectations concerning the eschatological Elijah envisage him as a forerunner to God. As texts representative of this viewpoint he cited Mal 4:5-6 itself, along with Sir 48:10; *LAB* 48:1; and *Sib. Or.* 2.187-89. The historical John the Baptist, Öhler argued, adopted this viewpoint as well. While the Gospel traditions are correct in portraying John as an Elijah figure they are wrong in portraying him as a forerunner to the Messiah rather than to God. Jesus’ early followers transformed John into a forerunner to the Messiah/Jesus. They did this in order “to rule out any rivalry between John and Jesus and to proclaim that any important promise of the OT had been fulfilled.”²⁵

Miller focused his attention on Sir 48:1, 10; 4Q521 iii; LXX Mal 3-4; and Luke-Acts, arguing that while these texts agree in relating Elijah’s coming to “the broader context” of Mal 3-4 they do so in different ways. Sirach identifies Elijah as the “messenger of the covenant” in Mal 3:1b and envisages him as a figure of both purification and punishment. 4Q521 iii sees Elijah as a forerunner to God but otherwise has nothing to say about the prophet because the focus is entirely on the eschatological activities of God. The

²¹ Hayward, “Phinehas,” 22-34.

²² Hayward, “Phinehas,” 32.

²³ Öhler, *Elia*, 1-30; idem, “Expectation,” 461-64.

²⁴ Miller, “Messenger,” 1-16.

²⁵ Öhler, “Expectation,” 468.

Septuagint's treatment of Mal 3-4 associates God with both purification and judgment while associating Elijah with the restoration that is expected before the day of the Lord. The evangelist Luke identifies "my messenger" in Mal 3:1a as Elijah and identifies Jesus as the "Lord" in 3:1b. The evangelist associates Elijah with preparatory renewal and envisages Jesus as the Messiah.

I am not convinced that any of the texts cited by Öhler or Miller demonstrate that Elijah had been understood to be a forerunner to God rather than the Messiah. At least by the first century C.E. it seems plausible that the texts in Mal 3-4 were being read with messianic expectations, as I shall discuss below (→1.5.1.-1.5.1.1.). If that is so then Sir 48:10 could have been read this way as well, even in the Septuagint. *LAB* 48:1 mentions nothing about an appearance of God. The mention of Elijah here concerns his identification as Phinehas, not what his eschatological role will be. Also, *LAB (Biblical Antiquities)* has been characterised by Hayward as having a political ideology similar to that of John Hyrcanus.²⁶ This may help to explain why the book mentions nothing about a Messiah. Under the Hasmoneans the priestly Elijah was evidently given special prominence and it is probable that speculations about a Davidic king were downplayed or suppressed as these would have threatened the political establishment. In Chapter Four I argue that the Elijah reference in 4Q521 iii is by no means incompatible with notion that he acts as the Messiah's forerunner (→4.5.2.1.2.). Elijah's role in the *Sibylline Oracles* is quite unique. In 2.187-89 he is described not as a figure who forestalls or prepares Israel for judgment (as in Mal 4:5-6 and Sir 40.10) but as one who reveals "three signs as life perishes."²⁷ No Messiah is mentioned here. But just prior to this pericope, in lines 177-183, we are told that "the master ... will certainly come" and the expected figure in this case is almost certainly Jesus, given the intertextuality of these lines with Matt 24:45-51;

²⁶ Hayward, "Phinehas," 28. Note especially the book's strongly anti-Samaritan outlook. This probably suggests that its author was using traditions that were sympathetic to the politics of John Hyrcanus, given this man's well known conquest of many Samaritan cities and especially his destruction of the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim (see Josephus, *Ant.* 13. 255-57, 275-83; cf. also *War* 1.62ff.).

²⁷ All translations of *Sib. Or.* by John J. Collins in *OTP*.

25:1-13; and Luke 12:42-46. Indeed, the coming of “Christ” is expressly narrated in lines 238-244, shortly after the Elijah pericope:

When Sabaoth Adonai, who thunders on high, dissolves fate and raises the dead, and takes his seat on a heavenly throne, and establishes a great pillar, Christ, imperishable himself, will come in glory on a cloud toward the imperishable one with the blameless angels. He will sit on the right of the Great One, judging at the tribunal the life of pious men and the way of impious men.

As it stands, this text is obviously “Christian” but it may contain earlier Jewish elements. The prophetic vision in Dan 7:13-14 was understood by some Jewish interpreters as referring to the Messiah’s advent (→Appendix E.4). In any case, the Elijah pericope in 187-195 itself contains an allusion to Mark 13:17 *par.* Its reference to three eschatological signs is also paralleled in a passage in the *Didache* (16.6). Hence, it is by no means obvious whether *Sibylline Oracles* can reliably tell us anything about a distinctively Jewish view concerning the eschatological Elijah.

Aside from 1QS 9:11, a few more texts from Qumran have been published over the last few decades that have influenced scholarly discussions about the role of the eschatological Elijah in pre-Christian Judaism. **M. de Jonge** and **A. S. van der Woude** interpreted the מְבַשֵּׁר figure in 11QMelchizedek as a kind of prophetic Messiah. This notion was then embraced by **Florentino García Martínez**, **Paul J. Kobelski**, **John J. Collins**, **Géza Xeravits**, and others who have often identified this prophetic Messiah as “the eschatological prophet,” recalling the prophecy in Deut 18 and/or the anointed figure in Isa 61:1 who is often interpreted as a prophet rather than a king.²⁸ I myself have argued elsewhere against this approach to 11QMelch, suggesting that the two מְבַשֵּׁרִים in Isa 52:7 were interpreted by the author of this sectarian work as two distinct Messiahs, one royal and the other priestly, in accord with other sectarian works.²⁹ Collins has claimed support

²⁸ De Jonge and van der Woude, “11Q Melchizedek,” 307; van der Woude, “Melchisedek,” 354-73 (367); García Martínez, “Two Messianic Figures,” 30-36; Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 61; Xeravits, *Protagonists*, 74, 218-19.

²⁹ Flowers, “11QMelchizedek,” 194-227.

for the notion of a prophetic Messiah in other works besides 11QMelch, however. He proposed that “his Messiah” in 4Q521 ii 1 be seen as an anointed prophet, either the eschatological Elijah or Moses. Collins argued that the historical Jesus too, with his frequent allusions to Isa 61, appears to have seen himself as the eschatological Elijah and hence as a strictly prophetic (non-royal) Messiah, at least at an early phase of his ministry.³⁰ I shall respond to Collins’ arguments in Chapter Four (→4.5.1.1-2) where I argue that “his Messiah” in 4Q521 is best seen as a royal figure.

Faierstein’s article piqued my interest in the messianic forerunner concept. I had initially planned to investigate the possible Jewish origins of the concept and thus to respond to him more directly. But I eventually realized that in order to explore the origins of this idea I would first need to sort out its place in sources stemming from the early Jesus movement. Faierstein seemed to trace the concept back to the evangelist Mark. Others have done that as well.³¹ Fitzmyer took things a step further, suggesting that the concept was not even attested in the Gospel of Mark. This apparently left him to conclude that Matthew invented it (cf. Matt 11:7-14). Fitzmyer never actually said when he thought the concept was first introduced though. He may have even seen Justin in the mid-second century as its innovator. The present thesis attempts to resolve this debate, asking whether the concept can already be detected in Q or even in its earlier source material. It also seeks to establish the religious circle from which this material stemmed. Many scholars think that Q utilised “Baptist” sources (→1.1.2.2.). If that is so, these sources could conceivably bring us back a little closer to what the historical John himself believed on the matter of the messianic forerunner concept, or at least to what John’s early followers believed about the concept. On the other hand, if the sources derive from the Jesus movement they will

³⁰ E.g. Collins, “Herald,” 225-40; idem, *Scepter*, 229-234. Collins considered the possibility that Jesus began to think of himself as the royal Messiah later in life but was more convinced that Jesus’ followers had been the ones responsible for portraying him in this way.

³¹ E.g. Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 115-116; Goodacre, “First Intertextual Reading,” 81-82. Goodacre is perhaps forced to accept this view, in part, because he denies the existence of Q.

not necessarily help us to ascertain anything about a Jewish perspective on the messianic forerunner concept that pre-dates Jesus or his followers.

1.1.2. John the Baptist, Elijah, and the messianic forerunner concept

For obvious reasons, since I am looking at the messianic forerunner concept from the standpoint of Q and its sources my thesis will have a great deal to say about John the Baptist, especially with respect to his self-conception, preaching, baptismal ministry, movement, and relationship with Jesus. A vast amount has been written about these matters so in the present survey I shall have to be very selective and only mention the views of a few prominent scholars or those who have written things that seem most significant and relevant to my own concerns.

1.1.2.1. How the historical John and Jesus viewed themselves and their missions

Traditionally, within the various branches of Christianity the messianic forerunner concept has been understood in a rather distinct way. The historical John the Baptist has been identified as the Elijah figure of the book of Malachi and Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Many scholars have questioned whether these ideas originated with the historical John, the historical Jesus, or Jesus' early followers.

One common view among modern interpreters, as represented by **Charles H. H. Scobie**³² and **Robert Webb**³³, comports very well with this traditional perspective. Scobie

³² Scobie, *Baptist*.

³³ Webb, *Baptizer*.

and Webb accepted that the historical John envisaged himself as the eschatological Elijah. They also accepted that he at least considered the possibility that Jesus might be “the Coming One” about whom he had prophesied. Scobie’s view was that John anticipated the Messiah who would punish the wicked (baptise with fire) and bless the righteous (baptise with spirit). Webb’s view was that John never had a clear conception about who exactly this “Coming One” would be, whether the Messiah, an angelic figure, or someone else; he conceived of this figure only in vague terms as “God’s agent.”³⁴

John H. Hughes and **Markus Öhler** may be taken as representatives of those who have thought that the historical John believed himself to be a forerunner to *God* rather than the Messiah.³⁵ The latter notion they regarded as a “Christian” reshaping of what the historical John had himself believed.

According to **Albert Schweitzer**,³⁶ the historical John saw himself not as a forerunner to the Messiah or to God but to *Elijah*. He expected Elijah, upon his arrival, to act as a forerunner to the Messiah; but John did not envisage himself as Elijah. It was the historical Jesus who first identified the Baptist as Elijah. Jesus saw himself as the coming Son of man. **James A. T. Robinson**,³⁷ who is followed to some extent by **Joseph A. Fitzmyer**,³⁸ also argued that the historical John had expected Elijah rather than God or the Messiah. The historical Jesus maintained inconsistent views about John. Early in his ministry Jesus conceived of himself as the eschatological Elijah (cf. Mark 6:14-16; 8:27-28). But he later changed his mind, identifying John as Elijah (Mark 9:11-13) and himself as the Messiah.³⁹

³⁴ Webb, *Baptizer*, 287-88; also Tuckett, *History*, 125; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.34-35, 40.

³⁵ Hughes “Forerunner of God,” 191-218; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.32; Loisy, *Birth*, 64-67; Öhler, “Expectation,” 468-73; Bretscher, “Sandals,” 81-87 (→Appendix K); Catchpole, *Quest*, 68; Käsemann, “Disciples,” 142; Knox, “Prophet,” 23-24; and many others. Cf. Robinson, “Detection,” 269-70.

³⁶ Schweitzer, *Quest*, 373-76.

³⁷ Robinson, “Detection,” 263-81.

³⁸ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 472, 666-67.

³⁹ Robinson’s view has been embraced, with some modification, by other scholars as well. Cf., e.g., Hammer, “Elijah and Jesus,” 207-218; Brown, “Three Quotations,” 297-98; Collins, *Scepter*, 233.

Like Schweitzer, **Raymond E. Brown**⁴⁰ and **Joan E. Taylor**⁴¹ thought that the historical John never viewed himself as Elijah but as a prophetic herald of Elijah. Thus, when John posed the question in Q 7:18-20 (assuming one can even accept that the story here is historical) he was not asking whether Jesus were the Messiah, but whether he were Elijah. As with Schweitzer and Robinson, Brown and Taylor thought that the historical Jesus was the first to identify John as Elijah (cf. Q 7:24-27). Taylor, however, disagreed with both Schweitzer and Robinson in that she thought Jesus regarded himself merely as a prophetic co-worker with John, not as Elijah *redivivus* or the Messiah.

John P. Meier⁴² found tension between what he identified as two distinct streams of tradition about the historical Jesus. On the one hand, Jesus seems to have viewed himself as Elijah or as an Elijah-like figure;⁴³ on the other hand, from a remarkably early time in his ministry he must have either seen himself (or at least his followers must have seen him) as a Davidide. Meier was unsure how to reconcile these two presentations but suggested that during his early ministry Jesus viewed himself as Elijah and later came to see himself as the Davidic Messiah. Meier's views therefore ended up quite similar to Robinson's, even if the two scholars argued their respective views quite differently.

Two Jewish scholars, **Robert Alan Hammer**⁴⁴ and **Géza Vermes**,⁴⁵ emphasised the many parallels between Jesus and the historical Elijah. Like Elijah, Jesus is said to have healed a widow's son (cp. Luke 7:11-17 with 1 Kgs 17:17-24 and 2 Kgs 4:18-38). He is also said to have performed a food miracle similar to Elijah's (cp. Mark 6:31-44 *par.* and 8:1-10 *par.* with 2 Kgs 4:42-44). In Mark's Gospel members of the public are even said to have regarded Jesus as Elijah (cf. Mark 6:15; 8:27-28). And in Luke's Gospel Jesus himself draws comparisons between his miracle workings and those that had been

⁴⁰ Brown, "Three Quotations," 297-98.

⁴¹ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 288-93.

⁴² Meier, "Elijah-like Prophet," 145-183.

⁴³ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 3.655-57.

⁴⁴ Hammer, "Elijah and Jesus," 207-218.

⁴⁵ Vermes, *Jew*, 70.

performed by Elijah and Elisha (Luke 4:25-27; cf. 1 Kgs 17:9; 2 Kgs 5:14). Furthermore, Jesus is said to have surrounded himself with disciples, similar to Elijah and Elisha (cf. 2 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1). His authoritative pronouncements concerning halakhic law and purity can be seen as fulfilling Elijah's expected role in settling disputed issues of legal interpretation and purity (cf. Mark 7:1-22; 10:1-12; 12:13-37). Hammer, like Robinson and Meier, argued that Jesus initially saw himself as the eschatological Elijah but later as the Messiah. Vermes did not think that Jesus initially saw himself as an eschatological figure at all. He pointed out that two other pious Jews from around the turn of the era, Ḥoni the Circle Drawer (1st century B.C.) and Ḥanina ben Dosa (mid to late 1st century C.E.), are likewise remembered as having performed miracles and behaved in ways reminiscent of Elijah; also, both men were compared with Elijah.⁴⁶ During a drought, Ḥoni is said to have prayed until it rained (*m. Ta'an.* 3:8; Josephus, *Ant.* 14.22-24). The story is told in such a way as to evoke the biblical story about Elijah who also prayed successfully for rain (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:1, 42-45). Ḥanina is likewise said to have exerted control over the weather through his prayer. Walking home one day in a downpour, Ḥanina prayed that the rain would stop until he entered his dwelling; and so it was (*b. Ta'an.* 24b; *b. Yoma* 53b). Ḥanina is also said to have prayed in a style similar to that of Elijah, with his head between his knees (cp. *b. Ber.* 34b with 1 Kgs 18:42). According to the talmudic sage Rab (ca. 175-247 C.E.), king Ahab was a prototype for the wicked; the prototype for the righteous, on the other hand, was not Elijah—as we might have expected here—but Ḥanina (*b. Ber.* 61b). Vermes proposed that originally Jesus had been seen as an Elijah-like figure because of his “charismatic” miracle-working abilities, not because he was regarded as the eschatological Elijah of the book of Malachi. It was only later that Jesus' ministry was characterised in eschatological terms.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Vermes, *Jew*, 53, 58.

⁴⁷ Vermes, *Jew*, 70-71.

Joel Marcus⁴⁸ proposed that the historical Jesus saw himself as the protégé of John, whom Jesus identified as the eschatological Elijah. As his protégé, Jesus saw himself not as the Messiah or merely as John's prophetic co-worker but as the eschatological Elisha.

Steve Mason⁴⁹ argued that John's message and ministry were apocalyptic in character. He did not prophesy about the Messiah or about a baptism in the Holy Spirit. He expected only judgment but offered baptism as a means of escaping this.

According to **Bruce Chilton**, the historical John never conceived of himself as a prophet. The portrayal of him in that way, most notably in Q 7:27 where he is envisaged as the Elijah-like forerunner of Mal 3:1, is "tendentious, and applied in the service of an exaltation of Jesus' status."⁵⁰

Armed with the newly discovered manuscripts from Qumran, **William H. Brownlee**⁵¹ proposed that the historical John had once been a member of the "Essene" sect at Qumran. He pointed out that both John the Baptist (see Mark 1:3 *par.*) and the author of the *Community Rule* from Qumran (see 1QS 8:14; 9:19) cite Isa 40:3 as programmatic for their respective movements. He also proposed that the short anecdote in Luke 1:80 be taken to mean that John had been orphaned and raised by Essenes.⁵² Similar hypotheses about John's association with the Essenes have also been proposed by **J. A. T. Robinson**, **A. S. Geysler**, **Otto Betz**, and **James H. Charlesworth**.⁵³ Other scholars such as **William LaSor** and **Joan E. Taylor** argued that John had no affiliations with the Essenes/Qumran sectarians. They pointed out, among other things, that Josephus, in his discussion of John

⁴⁸ Marcus, "John the Baptist and Jesus," 179-97, esp. 188-189. Cf. also the comments by Allison (*Constructing*, 268-69) and the earlier articles by Bostock ("New Elijah," 39-41) and Brodie ("New Elijah," 39-42).

⁴⁹ Mason, "Tyranny," 163-180.

⁵⁰ Chilton, "John the Purifier," 249; idem, "John the Baptist," 27.

⁵¹ Brownlee, "Baptist," 33-53.

⁵² Josephus (*War* 2.8.2.) claims that the Essenes would often adopt orphans and raise them as members of their religious communities.

⁵³ Robinson, "Baptism," 11-27; Geysler, "Youth," 70-75; Betz, "Essene," 18-25; Charlesworth, "Baptizer," 356-67.

(*Ant.* 18.116-119), does not identify him as an Essene. Moreover, John is not said to have worn linen garments, as was required of all Essenes/members of the Qumran sect.⁵⁴ Most notably, John does not seem to have been part of a larger, closely knit religious community at all, but was somewhat aloof and individualistic.

In the present thesis I shall be focusing on historical matters only insofar as they relate to the interpretation of Q and its sources. Interpreting ancient texts is, of course, impossible without some prior presuppositions about history. The presuppositions one adopts with respect to the historical John will likely impact how one interprets texts that speak of the man. For Hughes and Öhler, John can be understood in light of what they take to have been a widespread Jewish belief in Second Temple Judaism about Elijah acting as a forerunner to God himself. Yet the textual evidence this belief, as I have already commented upon to some extent, is very slight and disputable. The key texts dealing with the eschatological Elijah are Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6. I discuss below that even without any influence from the NT Gospel traditions these two texts might well have given rise to the messianic forerunner idea (→1.5.1.-1.5.1.1.).

The notion that John envisaged himself as a forerunner to Elijah is biblically and conceptually difficult as this would have no obvious basis in Scripture and would make John a forerunner to yet another forerunner. Moreover, this view has often been arrived at through a dubious interpretation of John's preaching which I shall address in Excursus A.2. Robinson's argument for Jesus' changing views about himself and John are methodologically problematic for several reasons, most notably because they do not take into consideration how the Gospel writers redacted their sources (→5.6.). Taylor's historical approach is unsound because it attempts to psychoanalyse Jesus and often resorts to rather dubious interpretations of texts (Appendix E.2.).

⁵⁴ See Magness, *Archaeology*, 193-202.

The apparent contradiction between traditions that envisage Jesus as both an Elijah figure and as the Davidic Messiah can, perhaps, be resolved by recognising that whenever Jesus is associated with Elijah this is always with the historical rather than the eschatological figure. Associations in the NT Gospel traditions between these two men likely had something to do with their similar wonder-working abilities. In Appendix E.2 I explore further the issue of Jesus' associations with Elijah in Q.

Unless one can show that within Second Temple Judaism the eschatological Elijah was expected to act as a forerunner to Elisha there is reason to doubt that this is how the historical Jesus viewed himself. My own suspicion is that Jesus' Elisha associations in the NT Gospel traditions can be explained in much the same way as his Elijah associations.

Mason's interpretation of John as a doomsday prophet cannot be sustained, at least not on the basis of what we know about the man from Q and the NT Gospels. Q 3:16e almost certainly contained a reference to a baptism in God's Spirit (→2.2.5.4.) and this must have anticipated a coming blessing rather than punishment (→2.2.6.). Also, Q 3:17 envisions "the Coming One" as someone who would redeem and not just punish (→2.2.8.2.).

In Excursus B I argue, against Chilton, that the interpretation given to Mal 3:1 at Q 7:27 is not so obviously the work of someone connected with the Jesus movement. The bringing together of this text with Exod 23:20 was more likely based on traditional Jewish exegesis and even the messianic interpretation of Mal 3:1 may have predated Jesus (→1.5.1.-1.5.1.1.).

If one views John as either a member or former member of the Essenes/Qumran community this will likely affect how one handles traditions dealing with the man and his

ministry. Given the apparent eschatological interests of the Qumran community,⁵⁵ for example, one could plausibly see influences on John's own eschatological outlook and even his messianic beliefs, at least if we are considering John in light of NT Gospel traditions where I shall be arguing that he is envisaged an apocalyptic prophet and a herald to the coming Messiah.⁵⁶ Again, if one supposes that John had been expelled from the Essene/Qumran community this might help to explain why he conducted his ministry "in the wilderness" and perhaps even why he subsisted on a diet of locusts and wild honey (cf. Josephus, *War* 1.243). There are certainly differences between John and the Qumran sectarians. But these should not, in my judgment, cause us to overlook the quite striking similarities. We know that Josephus lived for a time as an Essene (*Life* 10-11). Perhaps John did something similar.

1.1.2.2. Questions about Baptist sectarians and Baptist sources

A major assumption behind much of the scholarly literature dealing with the historical John and the origins of the Jesus movement is that John's movement continued to exist for several decades after his death and that its members became polemically engaged with Jesus and/or members of his movement. This *rival Baptist sect* hypothesis certainly pre-dates **Wilhelm Baldensperger**⁵⁷ but he was one of its most influential proponents.⁵⁸ According to Baldensperger, the Gospel of John—especially its prologue—was composed as a polemic against rival Baptists. These Baptists regarded John as the Messiah, Jesus'

⁵⁵ Cf. the many eschatologically oriented and messianic texts in Qumran sectarian literature: e.g. CD 2:1, 12; 14:18-19; 19:10-11; 20:1; 1QS 9:11; 1QSa 2:11-22; 4Q285 5 3-4; 1Qsb 4:24-26; 5:20-29; 4Q 171 8 3 18-21; 4Q174 11-13; 4Q175; 4Q252 5 1-4.

⁵⁶ I discuss an important Qumran text in relation to John's baptism in 3.5.4.

⁵⁷ Baldensperger, *Prolog*. Many of the ideas in Baldensperger's book were already being argued in Michaelis' *Introduction*, 3.285-87 (available online at <https://archive.org/stream/introductiontone31mich#page/284/mode/2up>).

⁵⁸ He is still followed by a number of scholars: e.g. Brown, *Introduction*, 155; Lincoln, *John*, 101.

superior, and “the light,” among other things. John’s superiority to Jesus was implicit, they argued, in the fact that he had preceded Jesus temporally and had even baptised him. The Fourth Evangelist, in responding to these Baptists, asserted that the actual Messiah was *Jesus*. He was “the *true* light” who had *pre-existed* (hence was, in fact, temporally prior to John). John’s baptism did not indicate Jesus’ inferiority to John; rather, it was only a means of identifying Jesus as the Messiah. By administering this rite John acted as a humble witness to the much greater Jesus.

Rudolf Bultmann⁵⁹ saw John’s Prologue as an earlier “Gnostic” hymn that the Fourth Evangelist adapted to fit with his own christological views. The hymn was originally composed in rival Baptist circles where John had been worshipped as the Messiah and the pre-existent Word made flesh, through whom all things were made.

Walter Wink rightly questioned the methodologies underlying Baldensperger’s and Bultmann’s historical approaches, asking whether it is really legitimate to reconstruct the beliefs of a hypothetical Baptist sect simply “by reversing every denial and restriction placed on John in the Fourth Gospel.”⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Wink did not abandon the basic premise about a rival Baptist sect existing for decades after John’s death. He even accepted that the Fourth Evangelist wrote his Gospel, at least in part, in order to counter some of the claims being made by members of this sect. Against Baldensperger and Bultmann, however, Wink argued that the evangelist was not so much concerned with subordinating John to Jesus, whether for reasons of polemic or for the sake of advancing a higher christology. Any such subordination that can be identified in the Fourth Gospel “is itself subordinated to the Evangelist’s desire to portray John as *the ideal witness to Christ...*”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Bultmann, *John*, 17-18, 48-52; cf. also idem, “Prologue,” 27-46 and Patterson, “Prologue,” 323-332.

⁶⁰ Wink, *Baptist*, 102. Like Wink and others, I shall be using “Fourth Gospel” rather than “John” in order not to confuse the evangelist or his gospel with John the Baptist.

⁶¹ Wink, *Baptist*, 105 (emphasis original).

Luke 1 has proven to be fertile grounds for speculations about Baptist source material.⁶² Many scholars have found in this chapter what they think are the components of a “pre-Christian” birth narrative about John (which Luke then used as a model for creating his own birth narrative about Jesus).⁶³ Others have found evidence of Baptist material but not that of a *rival* sect. **H. L. MacNeill**,⁶⁴ for example, argued that chapters contain a synthesis of beliefs from the movements of both John and Jesus, and reflect the historical reality that these two movements at one time co-existed and were amicably connected. It was only later that they would have a falling out over the relative status of John and Jesus because Jesus’ followers emphasised their master’s superiority and messiahship. **Walter Wink**⁶⁵ rejected the idea of a pre-Lukan nativity story about John but still accepted the notion that Luke used some pre-existing “Baptist traditions” when composing the opening chapter of his Gospel. **Raymond Brown**⁶⁶ was even more sceptical. He found no clear trace of Baptist source material having been used in the birth narratives in Luke 1-2. These narratives, he argued, are predominantly Lukan compositions but also contain some “Jewish Christian” material (e.g., the *Magnificat* and the *Benedictus*).

With respect to Luke 1 the arguments made by Brown about Lukan style and concerns are very difficult to dismiss. Whether earlier source material was used in certain sections such as the *Magnificat* or the *Benedictus* hymns does not seem implausible but I remain sceptical that this material can be assigned to a specific group of impoverished “Jewish-Christians” living in Jerusalem or that it can be very precisely dated. Given that the

⁶² See, e.g., Winter, “Cultural Background,” 159-167; “Proto-Source,” 184-199; Völter, “Apocalypse,” 224-69; Dibelius, *Täufer*, 75; idem, Dibelius, “Jungfrauensohn,” 1-78, esp. 8; Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 320-21; Scobie, *Baptist*, 50-51; Bammel, “The Baptist,” 95-128; Sint, “Eschatologie,” 55-163, esp. 55-56; Ernst, *Täufer*, 116-20; Catchpole, *Quest*, 60-78; *Jesus People*, 19-29. For a listing of various opinions on the matter, see Ernst, *Täufer*, 115 nn. 4-5; Brown, *Birth*, 244-50.

⁶³ E.g. Vielhauer, “Benedictus,” 28-46; Catchpole, *Resurrection People*, 111-116; idem., *Jesus People*, 19-25.

⁶⁴ MacNeill, “Sitz,” 249-312.

⁶⁵ Wink, *Baptist*, 59-60.

⁶⁶ Brown, *Birth*, 346-55 (for a general discussion about the *Magnificat* and the *Benedictus*), 357-65 (for the *Magnificat*), 377-78, 381 (for the *Benedictus*)]. Brown (*Birth*, 286-329) thinks that the Annunciation of Jesus’ Birth was traditional and that Luke used it as a model for composing the Annunciation of John’s Birth.

material can be explained as either stemming from Luke's own hand or from some other member of the Jesus movement it seems unnecessary and speculative to posit anything here about Luke's use of rival Baptist sources.

I interact in more detail with this rival Baptist sect hypothesis at various points in my thesis and also offer a general critique of it in Appendix B. The hypothesis has impacted scholarship in ways particularly relevant to my own thesis. Scholars have often argued or (more often) assumed that rival Baptist sources were used by the authors/redactors of Q.⁶⁷ **David R. Catchpole**⁶⁸ has been a relatively recent proponent of this viewpoint and I have focused quite a bit on his arguments in my thesis. He argued that Q's redactors utilised material from a rival Baptist source ("pre-Q"). This source had presented John as a prophet who operated independently of Jesus and foretold the advent of God rather than the Messiah (Q 3:7-9+16b+e-17). It even declared him the greatest man to have ever lived (Q 7:28a). The redactors of Q, being followers of Jesus, found this material objectionable. Hence, although they utilised this material they also redacted it in order to make it fit better with their own views about Jesus. In so doing, they made a special effort at subordinating John to Jesus. They did this by portraying John as a (mere) forerunner to Jesus (Q 7:27) and Jesus as someone who will be far superior to John in the kingdom of God (7:28b).

John Kloppenborg,⁶⁹ in many of his reconstructions and proposed redactional stratifications of Q material, likewise assumed the existence of a rival Baptist sect and accordingly identified various sayings or portions of sayings in Q Baptist in origin. He felt that this Baptist material had been appropriated and modified by Q's redactors in order to convert or polemicize against their Baptist rivals.

⁶⁷ Aside from the names mentioned in n. 62, see also Völter, "Apocalypse," 244-69; Todd, "Logia," 173-175; Bowen, "Baptist," 90-106. In fact, most of the critical commentators of the NT Gospels could probably be mentioned here.

⁶⁸ Catchpole, *Quest*, 60-78; *Jesus People*, 1-52.

⁶⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 102-110.

Clare K. Rothschild⁷⁰ has taken this question of Baptist source material to new extremes, arguing that in its pre-Q form the traditions used by the Q redactors were *entirely* Baptist. That is, all the sayings and other traditions now ascribed to Jesus in Q were once ascribed to or written about John. Rothschild also argued that Baptist material turns up at many other points in the Gospel traditions. Because her monograph is so relevant to my own thesis I have discussed it at greater length in Appendix F.

In this thesis I analyse the units in Q most frequently suspected of containing Baptist source material: 3:7-9; 3:16b-17; 7:18-20+22-23; 7:24-28. I am not of the opinion that in any of these selections the Q redactor(s) were, in fact, utilising such material, certainly not from a *rival* Baptist group. While I am convinced that Q's redactors used source material I believe that in every case it can be most readily associated with the Jesus movement. I argue this position on the basis of detailed textual analysis throughout the thesis and shall not repeat myself here. I can add, however, that the general hypothesis about rival Baptist sources in Q seems to me implausible on its face. Why would a Q redactor use material from a source that portrays John and Jesus in ways that were christological problematic? Could he not have used material from other sources that were not so problematic? If it be supposed that alternative sources were simply unavailable this only raises further questions. For if the Q redactor(s) were so willing to modify severely the existing traditions about John, could they not have simply invented their own sayings and stories about John and Jesus? Why not simply discard these rival Baptist traditions altogether?

Those who advocate for rival Baptist material in Q are forced, at this point, to posit a complex and highly speculative history. They theorize that John's and Jesus' followers were at one time very closely connected and on good terms with each other. At that time Jesus' followers had great esteem for John. Because of their increased devotion to Jesus, however, they eventually felt it necessary to subordinate John to Jesus. This caused a rift

⁷⁰ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*.

between Jesus' and John's followers. The conflict left Jesus' followers with traditions about John that were now christologically problematic. Rather than dispensing with these traditions they edited them and, in so doing, re-cast Jesus as John's superior. Their purpose in doing this was to polemicize against Baptist sectarians or perhaps to convince them to join the Jesus movement.

This complicated historical reconstruction is, as I said, highly speculative. Even the more basic hypothesis about an on-going Baptist movement in the decades after John's death rests on dubious evidence. I briefly consider much of this evidence in Appendix B. But perhaps an argument about its general implausibility can be raised here. For when other religious leaders in the first century were slain their followers are known to have quickly disbanded (Acts 5:36-38). Is it not most likely, therefore, that John's movement would have similarly disbanded shortly after his death? Consider Josephus' comment in *Ant.* 18.118:

And when others gathered together [around John] (for they were also excited to the utmost by listening to [his] teachings), Herod, because he feared that his great persuasiveness with the people might lead to some kind of strife (for they seemed as if they would do everything which he counselled), thought it more preferable, before anything radically innovative happened as a result of him, to execute [John], taking action first, rather than when the upheaval happened to perceive too late, having already fallen into trouble.

The implication here is that by killing John Herod had effectively quelled John's movement. It is true that Jesus' followers continued as an organised group after his death. But this was obviously because they believed he was the Messiah and had risen from the dead (e.g. Rom 1:1-4; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Luke 24:26). We have no early evidence either that John was seen as the Messiah or that he was thought to have risen from the dead.⁷¹ Given the apparent ties between John and Jesus, and between their respective

⁷¹ This notwithstanding certain evidence to the contrary that is sometimes cited. The messianic reference in the *Benedictus* to "a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David" (Luke 1:69) clearly refers not to John but to Jesus and the term ἡγήσειν likely even adumbrates Jesus' resurrection. Luke 3:15 is Lukan

movements, it seems plausible that after John's death many of his disciples joined ranks with Jesus or his movement (cf. John 1:35-42; Acts 2; 19:1-7). Of course, since John appears to have baptised a great number of people there would have doubtless been many who continued to identify as John's "disciples" for years after his death. The story in Acts 19:1-7 can arguably be read in this way. But this is quite different from saying that John's disciples continued as an organised group for decades after his death, that they had set themselves up in opposition to Jesus' disciples, or that they were in the business of creating new traditions about John for circulation within their group.

1.1.2.3. John's historical relationship with Jesus

Morton S. Enslin⁷² proposed that the historical John and Jesus had never even met. Their supposed acquaintance and comradeship in the Gospels are completely fictitious. Jesus' early followers felt it important to associate their master with the Baptist for two main reasons: (1) by claiming that John and Jesus had been closely allied they would have a powerful rhetorical tool for combatting rival Baptist sectarians; (2) by presenting John as Jesus' Elijah-like forerunner they were able to answer the scribal objection against Jesus' messianic status (Mark 9:11).

Enslin's views were obviously based in large part on what I am calling the rival Baptist hypothesis, about which I have serious doubts. But even without rejecting this hypothesis most scholars have rejected Enslin's cynical and highly sceptical views. They accept that John knew Jesus and that the two were associates in ministry, at least for a time.

redaction and simply sets the stage for John's Q prophecy about the Coming One, which Luke interpreted messianically. The references in the Clementine *Recognitions* (1.54, 60) are too late and speak of fictitious groups engaging in fanciful exegesis of the NT Gospels.

⁷² Enslin, "John and Jesus," 1-18.

The following points are generally embraced in recent studies on the historical Jesus or John: Jesus was baptised by John, joined John in a baptismal ministry of unspecified duration, and embarked on his own ministry after John's death.⁷³ There has been fairly wide scholarly disagreement, however, about how exactly the historical John regarded Jesus. I have already mentioned some of this disagreement in 1.1.2.1. Certain Gospel traditions—especially in the First and Fourth Gospels—suggest that John acknowledged him as the Messiah at his baptism. In the Fourth Gospel, John is even said, shortly after Jesus' baptism, to have encouraged others to follow Jesus rather than himself. But many see this portrayal as christologically motivated and therefore historically inaccurate.

John P. Meier began his study on the historical John by trying to understand the man as much as possible without any reference to Jesus. He concluded that John was a highly regarded prophet in his own right and, as such, operated quite independently of Jesus. Nevertheless, he could not accept Enslin's view that John and Jesus never knew or interacted with one another. John had been the leader of a successful religious movement and proclaimed something about a coming eschatological figure. But he had no clear thoughts with regard to this figure, "whether it would be God, an angel like Michael, a heavenly Melchizedek, or a more earthly Messiah, Elijah figure, or generic prophet of the end time."⁷⁴ Tragically, after his imprisonment, with his inevitable execution looming, John was faced with the possibility that his prophecies would go entirely unfulfilled. He therefore sent envoys to Jesus from his prison cell asking whether Jesus were "the Coming One." Jesus had obviously not carried out the role that John envisioned, particularly with respect to the execution of divine judgment. Thus, for John even to ask this question implies that he was desperately looking for a way to vindicate his prophecies.

⁷³ E.g. Innitzer, *Täufer*; Dibelius, *Täufer*; Bernoulli, *Täufer*; Case, *Jesus*, esp. ch. 5; Goguel, *Life*, 96; Thomas, *mouvement*; Kraeling, *Baptist*; Schlatter, *Täufer*; Steinmann, *Baptist*; Robinson, *Twelve*, 11-27, 28-52, 61-66; Farmer, "John the Baptist," 955-62; Schütz, *Täufer*; Reumann, "Quest," 181-199; Scobie, *Baptist*; Becker, *Täufer*; Webb, *Baptizer*; Meier, *Marginal Jew* 2.19-182, esp. 123-130.

⁷⁴ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.132.

Some of the arguments in my thesis will have a direct bearing on Meier's historical analysis here. I understand John's preaching in Q 3:16b-17 to be the work of a Q redactor rather than the *ipsissima verba* of John, as Meier seems to think. As a redactional creation the words are meant to have a literary and christological function, linking John's prophecy about "the Coming One" to other texts in Q that use the same phrase with reference to Jesus (7:19, 20; 13:35) or refer to Jesus at his second coming (e.g. 12:39-40, 49, 51, 53). The apparent incongruity between John's preaching and the accomplishments of Jesus during his first advent is therefore deliberate. It raises the question as to why Jesus had not fulfilled all of John's prophecies, a question that will be answered in 13:34-35 where Jesus indicts Israel for its rejection and murder of God's representatives and declares that she will not see Jesus until she accepts him as the Messiah (→Excursus A).

According to **Paul Hollenbach**,⁷⁵ the historical Jesus came to John as a penitent, seeking forgiveness for having oppressed the poor. He stayed for a time with John, adopting many of his religious teachings and practices. At some point he began a similar type of ministry, working in close association with John. But Jesus soon discovered that he could exorcise and heal people. He therefore broke ranks with John, no longer preaching about repentance and condemning deeds of social injustice but focusing his efforts on healing people, especially the socially marginalized.

Meier severely criticised Hollenbach, among other things, for his "many unlikely and convoluted interpretations of individual texts," his uncritical use of Gospel material in order to create a chronology for the life of Jesus, and his presumed knowledge concerning developments in Jesus' thinking.⁷⁶ For Meier, there is little in the way of chronology that can be constructed about the individual events in Jesus life beyond his baptism, which occurred at the outset of his ministry, and the events just prior to his death. It is also an argument from silence, Meier noted, to say that Jesus ceased baptising and thereby broke

⁷⁵ Hollenbach, "Conversion," 196-219; "Baptist," 887-99.

⁷⁶ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.124-127.

ranks with John. According to Meier's historical reconstruction, Jesus had been a disciple of John and continued in his movement for a time. He then struck out on his own (after John's imprisonment?) in order to found a new kind of religious movement, one that continued to baptise but focused on things like Jesus' distinctive interpretation of the Law, his expectations of a coming kingdom, etc.

Many historical studies on John and Jesus have been based on alleged dissimilarities between these two men.⁷⁷ **Dale C. Allison**,⁷⁸ however, argued that these dissimilarities are often founded on meagre or non-existent evidence. In the extremely limited source material available to us, what stand out far more are the continuities: both John and Jesus opposed purely nominal Judaism and used similar imagery in their speeches. Jesus was baptised by John, appropriated many of his teachings, and appears to have identified himself as John's "Coming One."

Bruce Chilton⁷⁹ argued that John died around 21 C.E., long before Jesus embarked on his own ministry. The Gospel traditions are therefore anachronistic when they portray John and Jesus as engaging in coterminous or immediately successive ministries. The latter idea, according to Chilton, was invented by Jesus' followers. By presenting John as Elijah and as Jesus' prophetic herald who foretold and even publicly acknowledged Jesus as the object of his prophecies, Jesus' followers were able to furnish their claims about Jesus with greater credibility. Chilton's argument, however, is highly conjectural. He dismissed the Gospels, preferring a chronology that he constructed purely on the basis of Josephus' account. But in order to do this he had to read much more into that account than is actually stated. The issue here concerns the date of John's death. Chilton argues for a very early date of "around 21 CE." He arrives at this date largely on the basis of *Ant.* 18.110-111 where Josephus suggests that Herod Antipas and Herodias

⁷⁷ E.g. Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 208-11.

⁷⁸ Allison, "Continuity," 6-27; idem, *Constructing*, 204-220.

⁷⁹ Chilton, "John the Purifier," 267-67; idem, "John the Baptist," 39-44.

were married shortly after the former had returned from Rome. Josephus does not say when exactly this visit took place and nothing he does say about it really helps us to put it in a precise historical context. Chilton, however, conjectured a visit just before 19 C.E., that is, just before Antipas established the city of Tiberias. He inferred this visit from Josephus' remarks about the tetrarch's advancement within the inner circle of Tiberias' friendship in *Ant.* 18.36. Such advancement, according to Chilton, is unlikely to have occurred without a prior visit to Rome. Chilton then assumes that John's rebuke and execution occurred shortly thereafter.

It is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that John's rebuke and execution occurred shortly after the marriage. But exactly when the marriage took place is extremely difficult to determine. Unlike Chilton, **Christiane Saulnier**⁸⁰ hypothesised a visit to Rome sometime between 21 and 23 C.E., when Jews were expelled from the city (*Ant.* 18.81-84). This is no less conjectural than Chilton's proposed visit, of course, since Josephus mentions nothing about an intervention by Agrippa or anyone else on behalf of these expelled Jews. But at least Saulnier's suggestion can be reconciled with the Gospel traditions which uniformly portray John and Jesus as associates in ministry. It seems unnecessarily cynical to characterise this portrayal, as Chilton does, as an apologetically motivated fabrication. In order for such a historical revision to be apologetically useful one would have to suppose that the nearly ten year gap between John's death and Jesus' ministry had been all but forgotten by the time Q and other Jesus traditions were being composed and in the places where they were being composed (for Q this would seem to be ca. 40-60 C.E., Galilee, →1.2.). I find that unlikely. Josephus' narrative about Antipas' divorce, the death of John, and the military defeat at Nabataea (*Ant.* 18.113-119) is undoubtedly compressed. Nevertheless, if the defeat had really been popularly associated with John's death, as Josephus claims, this is probably because the two events were known

⁸⁰ Saulnier, "Herode," 367-368.

to have occurred in a somewhat rapid succession. John's death is usually dated to ca. 29-31 C.E. but can, perhaps, be dated to 27 or 28.⁸¹ The military defeat can be dated to ca. 29.⁸² With such a short period of time between John's execution and this latter defeat it is easy to explain a popularly held opinion that these two events had been causally related. It would be difficult to explain such an opinion if these events had occurred about a decade apart.

Arland Jacobson was less concerned with matters of historicity but his views at least imply a certain historical development with respect to how John and Jesus were understood. He argued that in Q John is not presented as a forerunner to Jesus. That idea will not actually turn up until Mark's and Matthew's Gospels.⁸³ In Q, John is still seen as only a preacher and a prophet who prepares the way for "the Lord," that is, God.⁸⁴ (Jacobson apparently thinks this is how the historical John viewed himself.) The composite quote of Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a at Q 7:27 is often thought to cast John as a forerunner to Jesus. But it is not uttered before or at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Q 3). Rather, it is uttered after his ministry has been underway for some time (Q 7). This implies that John's role as a prophetic "forerunner" did not conclude with the appearance of Jesus. In Mark's Gospel, by contrast, John is portrayed as a forerunner to Jesus and the latter "eclipses John in importance"; but not so in Q where he and Jesus are envisaged as peers, the two being engaged in a kind of joint ministry.

I find Jacobson's reasoning here unconvincing and shall interact with him in more detail in Chapter Five (→5.5.).

Francis Gerald Downing asked why Q places John at the beginning of its composition. In trying to answer this question Downing searched for another genre of

⁸¹ So Saulnier, "Herode," 375.

⁸² Saulnier, "Herode," 375.

⁸³ Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 81, 115-116.

⁸⁴ Jacobson locates the quote from Isa 40:3 at the beginning of Q (= Q 3:3).

literature that could be appropriately compared with Q's. He considered Jewish Wisdom collections, Jewish prophetic works, the Epistle of James, and the *Gospel of Thomas*. None of these, according to Downing, is really analogous with Q. The Greek *Lives of the Philosophers*, however, seem very similar to Q. In these works it is quite standard to have an eminent philosopher being brought into contact with his predecessor. This was especially the case in portraits of Cynic philosophers:

Thus Antisthenes is brought into contact with Socrates, Diogenes with Antisthenes, and so on. Twice when Dio expands just a few *chreiai* of Diogenes into a biographical character-sketch he begins in this way, and so does Lucian in his account of Demonax. This start tells us something of the philosopher's character as well as placing him in the succession and affording a form of 'legitimation'.⁸⁵

For Downing, then, John's function in Q is to associate Jesus with an impressive philosophical predecessor.

Downing's explanation here downplays the more obvious biblical basis for John and Jesus being brought into contact with one another. Jesus does not come into contact with John in order to learn from him, at least not in Q. Rather, John is envisaged as the eschatological Elijah of Mal 3:1. He is portrayed as preparing Israel for and foretelling the advent of the Messiah (Jesus). In so doing he is thought to have fulfilled biblical prophecy (→1.5.1.-1.5.1.1.). This, plausibly, also explains why Jesus is said to have been baptised by John (→3.5.4.).

As I have already mentioned, issues of historicity are not so much a concern to me in the present thesis. But they are not irrelevant. One's understanding of the historical relation between John and Jesus will likely impact how one interprets Q, especially on the

⁸⁵ Downing, *Cynics and Christian Origins*, 120.

matter of whether Q's redactor(s) utilised Baptist sources. If, for example, one believes that John and Jesus had been close historical associates and that John had even affirmed Jesus' ministry in some public way then one will probably find it less plausible that a rival Baptist sect had emerged shortly after John's death, setting itself up against Jesus and his early followers. And if one doubts the existence of such a rival Baptist sect one will probably be less inclined to see hints of Baptist rivalry in Q.

1.1.2.4. John's baptism

Several scholars, including **Wilhelm Brandt**, **Joseph Thomas**, **Ernst Lohmeyer**, **Charles H. H. Scobie**, **Walter Wink**, **Robert Webb**, and **Seán Freyne**, have tried to understand the historical John's baptism within the context of a wider protest movement against the temple and priesthood.⁸⁶ According to these scholars, many Jews at around the turn of the era, had rejected the temple cultus altogether and were proposing alternative strategies for obtaining forgiveness and purity. John's baptism was one such strategy.

Maurice Goguel, **Jean Steinmann**, and **Robert Webb** understood John's baptism was meant to initiate a person into John's religious group or movement.⁸⁷

Several scholars have tried to tie John more specifically to the sect at Qumran, as I mentioned earlier (→1.1.2.1.). His baptism can therefore be understood against the backdrop of Qumran literature, perhaps as an initiation of a purification ritual.

Joan E. Taylor⁸⁸ rejected the notion that John had ever been an Essene or Qumran sectarian. She saw John's ministry as fitting into a more general social movement that was

⁸⁶ Brandt, *Baptismen*; Thomas, *movement*; Lohmeyer, *Urchristentum*, 87; Scobie, *Baptist*, 102-110; Wink, *Baptist*, 108; Webb, *Baptizer*, 192-93; Freyne, *Jesus Movement*, 134-139.

⁸⁷ Goguel, *Life*, 98; Steinmann, *Baptist*, 5; Webb, *Baptizer*, 364.

preoccupied with purity ablutions. According to Taylor, John believed strongly in ritual purity. This, in theory, was obtainable by means of immersions, but could only *actually* be experienced if one first achieved inner (moral) purification by means of repentance and pious works. Jesus also practiced immersions for the sake of ritual purity.⁸⁹ **Bruce Chilton**⁹⁰ likewise rejected John's alleged Qumran associations and understood his baptism simply as a means of attaining ritual purity. For both Taylor and Chilton, John's baptism was not a once-for-all or initiatory rite into a religious movement as Goguel and Webb had maintained and, at least for Chilton, had nothing to do with conversion. It was entirely repeatable, just as all other Jewish ablutions were. A question therefore arises as to what made John stand out so much from the crowd of other immersers, such that he could be identified simply as "the Baptist." According to Taylor, John's teachings about baptism are what set him apart; for he claimed that ritual ablutions were only effective if one first repented and produced acts of piety.⁹¹ Chilton, by contrast, dismissed as historically useless the canonical Gospels' portrayal of John as a preacher of repentance. All that really set John apart from other immersers (such as the Qumranites or Bannus, under whom Josephus studied for three years) were his ability to draw large crowds, his public (non-solitary) life, and his interest in convincing others to join with him in performing repeated baptisms for the sake of ritual purity. According to Chilton, John's interest in baptising is the only sure things we can know about the man. Nothing about his preaching and way of life can still be recovered with any certainty. What we have in the Gospel traditions has been manifestly pressed, by Jesus' early followers, into the service of their own christological and catechetical needs.

⁸⁸ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 15-100; idem, "Essenes," 256-85.

⁸⁹ See esp. Taylor and Adinolfi, "Baptist," 247-84.

⁹⁰ Chilton, *Judaic Approaches*, 1-37; idem, "John the Purifier," 247-67.

⁹¹ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 86.

H. H. Rowley⁹² argued that John's baptism is best understood as a reinterpretation of Jewish proselyte baptism. Similar views have been advocated by **Joachim Jeremias**, **Thomas Torrence**, and **Lawrence Schiffman**.⁹³

According to **Steve Mason**,⁹⁴ John derived the idea for his baptism not from Jewish ablutions or proselyte baptism but from a conception or expectation of divine judgment as a kind of baptism in fire (cf. *I En.* 90.26; 1QH^a 11:27-32; Rev 20:10; *Sib. Or.* 4.162-178).

Adela Yarbro Collins⁹⁵ argued that there are just two pieces of background information needed in order to understand the origins of John's baptism: (1) Levitical ablutions and (2) the "prophetic apocalyptic tradition," which occasionally employs imagery of ablution when speaking of the eschaton (e.g. Isa 1:16-17; Ezek 36:25-28).

In Appendix A I explore the possible antecedents and background to the historical John's baptism as well as its meaning. I argue that it should not be seen as a purification ritual and probably not as a re-envisioning of Jewish proselyte baptism either. I suggest that John drew his inspiration for baptism from various prophetic texts that spoke of an eschatological outpouring of God's Spirit. So understood, the ritual was likely meant to symbolise that the baptisand had experienced what we today might call an inner conversion which was to be evidenced by the person's repentance and adherence to God's commandments. Whether John enjoined baptism as an initiation rite for membership in his movement seems unlikely, unless we are to understand that movement in a rather abstract sense. After all, John does not appear to have required baptisands to join a distinct religious community or adhere to a formal rule. He probably did not see his baptism as a protest against the temple or priesthood, or as an alternative to the temple cultus. If John had been known as someone who taught against the temple or the priesthood it is unlikely

⁹² Rowley, "Proselyte Baptism," 313-34, esp. 330-34.

⁹³ Jeremias, *Infant Baptism*, 24-37; Schiffman, *Who Was a Jew?* 25-30; Torrence, "Proselyte Baptism," 150-154; idem, "Origins of Baptism," 158-171. →Appendix A for further discussion.

⁹⁴ Mason, "Tyranny," 170-173.

⁹⁵ Adela Yarbro Collins, "Christian Baptism," 35-36; idem, *Mark*, 138-140.

that Josephus, a priest, would have spoken so positively about the man (*Ant.* 18.116-119). Jesus most likely baptised (cf. Matt 28:19-20; John 3:22; cf. also 1:25; 1 Cor 1:12-15)⁹⁶ and so did his disciples (e.g. Acts 2:37-42). This is most readily explained as a practice they appropriated from John. Yet early Gospel traditions portray Jesus as teaching in the temple, participating in its cultus, and advocating that people do the same (Matt 17:24-25; 26:55; 1:44; Mark 12:35; Luke 2:22-24, 41-51). Jesus' early followers likewise appear to have continued to participate in the temple cultus (Acts 2:46; 21:17-26). Hence, at least within the early Jesus movement baptism does not seem to have been regarded as an alternative to the temple cultus.

1.2. Prefatory remarks on Q

In this thesis I am concerned with the messianic forerunner concept as it is understood and exploited in Q and its sources. A lot could be said about both Q and its sources. But here a few brief comments shall have to suffice. More in-depth discussions can be found in the standard works.⁹⁷

With respect to Q's versification, I follow the standard convention of quoting it according to the Lukan chapters and verses. Thus, Q 7:27 = Luke 7:27||Matt 11:10. This protocol is followed only for the sake of convenience. It is not meant to suggest that Luke's ordering is necessarily closer than Matthew's to the original order of Q. For the ordering of various units in Q I have devoted a separate section in each chapter called "Location in Q."

⁹⁶ See, again, Taylor and Adinolfi, "Baptist," 247-84.

⁹⁷ Scholars favouring the Q hypothesis include: Tuckett, *Revival*; idem, *History*; Stein, *Synoptic Problem*; Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*; idem, *Q*; Kloppenborg, *Formation*; idem, *Parallels*; idem, *Excavating Q*; idem, "Dispensing," 210-36; Foster, "Dispense with Q?," 313-37. Those opposed include: Farmer, *Synoptic Problem*; Sanders and Davies, *Synoptic Gospels*, 49-119; Dungan, "Abridgement," 51-97; Goulder, "Test," 218-34; idem, *Luke*; Goodacre, *Case Against Q*; Goodacre and Perrin (eds.), *Questioning Q*.

Numerous questions have been raised about the nature of “Q”: e.g. its original language, date of composition, provenance, literary unity, genre, extent, redactional history, etc. Many have also expressed scepticism about whether it is really possible to reconstruct Q, given the fact that it can only be accessed indirectly through the synoptic authors who have clearly redacted it in ways that cannot always be determined.

I cannot discuss all of these questions in detail here but suffice it to say a few things. First, though, a comment with regard to definition. When I refer to “Q” I shall be speaking of the source that was jointly used by the Gospel writers known as Matthew and Luke (and often Mark). I am assuming here, perhaps without good reason, that the synoptic authors were using a version of Q that was more or less identical. If I refer to traditions that existed prior to Q, I shall use the term “pre-Q.” Various putative redactions of Q shall be referred to as Q¹, Q², etc.

The version of Q that can be extracted from the synoptic Gospels obviously comes down to us in Greek. But some have posited that this version was originally written in Aramaic.⁹⁸ The presence of Semitisms might be taken as support for this idea but these could alternatively be interpreted as “Septuagintalisms” or as Semiticised Greek. The present thesis makes no assumptions about an Aramaic (or Hebrew) Q. Nevertheless, Semitisms are taken as helpful in certain reconstructions of Q because as a *general* rule I think it more likely that an evangelist writing for a Greek-speaking audience would have removed Semitisms (in favour of a more prosaic wording) rather than inserted them (in favour of a Septuagintalized or Semitised rewrite). This is not an *iron-clad* rule, however, so I shall employ it with caution.⁹⁹

I take Q to have been a largely (if not entirely) written document. Several substantial agreements between Matthew and Luke would suggest this. And various redactional

⁹⁸ See the discussion by Robinson in James M. Robinson, *et al.*, *CritEd*, xxx-xxxiii.

⁹⁹ See the discussion on this subject in Sanders, *Tendencies*, 190-255.

manipulations of Q by the evangelists is probably most explicable if one assumes that they were working with a written document and not simply an oral tradition.

If the two-source hypothesis (2SH) is sound, it would entail that Q was composed prior to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. And if Mark used Q this would mean that Q also predated that Gospel. In this thesis I am taking Markan dependence on Q as a working hypothesis (→3.1.). But one need not accept this premise in order to conclude that Q is earlier. Even those who reject Mark's dependence on Q generally regard Q as more primitive than Mark, at least in its earlier redactions.¹⁰⁰ Q's general primitivity can perhaps also be inferred from the form of its traditions. It consists largely of sayings and chreia rather than of lengthy narratives and discourses such as we find in the canonical Gospels. Earliest traditions would have presumably been preserved in short sayings and chreia since these could be more easily memorised and transmitted. Any source material utilised by the Q redactor(s) would have obviously pre-dated Q itself although there is no way to determine their precise date.

Q is usually seen as being of Galilean provenance.¹⁰¹ This is suggested mainly by Q's geographical references (e.g. Q/Luke 3:3; 4:1, 16; 7:1-10; 10:13-15), its negative attitude toward "Jerusalem" (Q 11:49-51; 13:34-35), its religious references (Q 11:39, 41, 42), and the apparent primitivity of its sayings, given that the Jesus movement is usually thought to have begun in Galilee.¹⁰²

There are indications that Q was a united composition, at least in chapters 3-7, which are the main focus of this thesis. This can be discerned from several of its features: its recurring terms and themes; its distinctive theology/christology; its arrangement of the

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., Allison, *Jesus Tradition*, 49-54, esp. 54: "a date in the 40s or 50s seems feasible"; Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 80-87, esp. 87: "A date in the late 50s or very early 60s is certainly possible." But Kloppenborg assigns other parts of Q (e.g. 4:1-13; 11:43c; 16:17) to a date "slightly after the evens of 70 CE."

¹⁰¹ See, e.g., Tuckett, *History*, 102-103; Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 171-75.

¹⁰² On Galilee as the birthplace of the Jesus movement, cf. Mark 1:14, 16, 28, 39; 3:7; 14:28, 70; 15:41; 16:7; Matt 4:12-15; Luke 23:5-6; John 1:43; 4:3; 7:1, 41, 52; 21:2; Acts 1:11; 2:7; 9:31; 10:37; 13:31; *b. Ber.* 28b.

material; its inclusion of similar types of sayings/stories, etc. Many of these features shall be explored in the present thesis.

There has been much discussion about the genre of Q. In one highly influential study, James M. Robinson proposed that Q be classified as a “Sayings of the Wise” composition or, more simply, as a “Sayings Gospel.”¹⁰³ Robinson’s thesis was taken up and elaborated upon by John Kloppenborg in his book *The Formation of Q*. Subsequent critiques, however, have demonstrated (or at least argued very convincingly) that Q was not merely a collection of sayings but a kind of narrative, complete with characters, an implied passage of time, and a change in story. That is to say, Q contained all the usual components of a plot.¹⁰⁴ Other criticisms of Robinson and Kloppenborg have revolved around the fact that wisdom is by no means Q’s most unifying theme (even in its allegedly most primitive stratum) and that since wisdom and apocalyptic were not always easily distinguishable genres it is probably unhelpful to differentiate redactional strata within Q along these lines.¹⁰⁵

The extent of Q is often determined minimalistically by accepting only those passages attested in Matthew and Luke. But it is *a priori* likely that one or both of these evangelists omitted some material from Q. When using Mark’s Gospel, Matthew often abbreviates (e.g. Matt 17:14-21||Mark 9:14-29) and even omits material (e.g. Mark 9:38-40) while Luke omits a large swathe of material (e.g. the “Great Omission” of Mark 6:47-8:27a). There is no obvious reason to assume that Matthew and Luke would have privileged Q and preserved it more consistently. More likely, one evangelist has omitted some material from Q that the other has independently preserved.¹⁰⁶ For that matter, if material is attested in the triple tradition or in Mark and only Matthew or Luke this would not

¹⁰³ Robinson, “Gattung,” 71-113.

¹⁰⁴ See esp. Fleddermann, “Plot,” 43-69. Kloppenborg’s article “Wasteland” has actually contributed to this newer evaluation on Q’s genre, as I shall discuss a bit more in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁵ See, e.g., the critiques by Sato, “Prophetic,” 389-404; idem, “Wisdom Statements,” 139-58; Tuckett, *History*, 337-54; Allison, *Intertextual*, 172-175; Adela Yarbro Collins, “Review,” 720-22.

¹⁰⁶ E.g. Luke 13:32; Matt 11:28-30; 12:33-37; 13:24-30; 18:21-22.

necessarily mean that the material has been derived from Mark and not Q. If Mark used Q then agreements between Mark and both Matthew and Luke or agreements between Mark and just one of these Gospels may be because Mark was using Q and the other evangelist(s) was/were doing so as well.

On the matter of whether Q can be reconstructed, it is true that this source can only be accessed indirectly through the synoptic Gospels. Because of this there are many places where the text of Q is indeed difficult if not impossible to establish. But in many or perhaps even most places the situation is not so bleak. Often the verbal agreement between Matthew and Luke is quite extensive, such that very little even needs to be reconstructed. Other times redactional adjustments of a particular evangelist can be identified by taking into account the writing styles and interests of both Matthew and Luke (tendencies that may be discerned, in part, by looking at how they redact Mark).

The redaction history of Q is, of course, highly disputable and one might be reasonably sceptical about how much can actually be determined about this. Among others, Schulz, Polag, Kloppenborg, Jacobson, and Allison find indications that the version of Q used by Matthew and Luke had already been redacted several times, with each layer of redaction having its own distinctive characteristics and tendencies. Yet these scholars disagree widely about which material is traditional and which is to be assigned to the various proposed redactional strata.¹⁰⁷ In the present thesis I shall be very interested in examining any supposed instances of Q's redactional history. But no theory of stratification is adopted as a presupposition.

¹⁰⁷ See the overview of different theories in Fleddermann, *Q*, 31-36.

1.3. Methodology and aims

I am taking as a working hypothesis the Two-Source Hypothesis (2SH), according to the model of Fleddermann, which sees Mark as also being dependent on Q. I shall also interact with a few alternative views along the way, however. In order to analyse both Q and its sources I shall employ the usual methods of text-, redaction-, source-, tradition-, narrative-, and genre-criticism. I shall begin my analysis of each portion of Q by attempting to establish a most primitive “text.” This shall be done, first, by citing the material as it has been preserved in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (and sometimes Mark), placing them side-by-side and then subjecting them to comparative analysis, utilizing the critical methods just mentioned. Only after I have established a most primitive Q text shall I ask whether Q had made use of any source material.

The primary aim of this thesis is to analyse and articulate how the messianic forerunner concept was understood and exploited in both “Q” and its putative sources. My interest in Q and its sources stems from the fact that these are our earliest Christian sources dealing with the messianic forerunner concept. Such shall be my contention, at any rate. And if I am correct about that, then the messianic forerunner concept obviously cannot be seen as a Markan invention, as some have supposed. If the concept was already at work in Q, as I shall attempt to show, then it obviously was not invented by Mark, as some have asserted. My interest in Q’s sources stems as well from the fact that much of the scholarly discussion about Q (and about early Christianity in general) has revolved around suppositions of a Baptist movement existing for several decades after John’s death and setting itself in opposition to Jesus and/or his followers. Regrettably, this issue is highly complex so it is often difficult to get lost in the maze of data and scholarly debate. My contention, however, shall be that Q shows no obvious signs of having utilized rival Baptist material. There is no doubt that Q’s redactor(s) utilized earlier source material. But I will maintain that this material was of Christian rather than Baptist provenance.

Numerous studies have been produced on John the Baptist.¹⁰⁸ A few studies have also been produced on eschatological beliefs concerning Elijah, although these have almost all been quite brief.¹⁰⁹ To my knowledge there has never been a thorough study on the messianic forerunner concept. The present thesis is an initial and partial attempt at addressing that *desideratum*. I hope to show that this concept was not only present within early Christianity but was a central christological theme. Without recognizing this fact one is bound to draw faulty exegetical conclusions on a whole range of texts.

To demonstrate that the messianic forerunner concept indeed had a place in Q and/or its source material I shall have to demonstrate three things: 1) John was regarded as an Elijah figure; 2) John was regarded as Jesus' forerunner; and 3) Jesus was regarded as the Messiah. These points are all disputed but I believe they can all three be demonstrated quite conclusively.

This thesis is not meant to be a study on the historical John the Baptist *per se*. But it will hopefully contribute something to that area of research indirectly by examining the earliest sources scholars use for reconstructing the historical John. Many earlier studies on the historical John have been methodologically flawed because they have not approached the relevant material from a source critical perspective but have taken a more holistic approach, amalgamating material from several different sources in order to construct a single image of John.¹¹⁰ Other studies now seem unsatisfying because they relied too heavily on the so-called "criteria of authenticity," principles which are now being largely abandoned.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ See the above survey. A good listing of studies can be found in Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 1 n. 2.

¹⁰⁹ See again the above survey.

¹¹⁰ See, in particular, many of the older studies. Wink (*Baptist*, x) remarked that while research on the historical Jesus has had its "messengers of defeat," research on the historical John has found none.

¹¹¹ E.g. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.19-182; Webb, "Relationship," 179-229. For a critique of the criteria of authenticity, see the collection of essays in Keith and Le Donne (eds.), *Demise*. I, of course, disagree with Goodacre's article in this volume.

The present thesis takes a different approach. It relies most heavily on source-critical analysis, attempting to unravel early tradition and redaction within Q. It does not naively assume—without any further reflection—that the material being analysed, which is drawn from the Gospel traditions, is coherent or has come down to us in its original context. Rather, it asks whether the material had some earlier (pre-Q) form, who might have authored or transmitted it, what it originally meant, how it has been redacted into the form used by the evangelists, and whether this might have altered its original meaning.

A final note about historicity. Ultimately, confidence in any historical figure will depend not on how well a given proposition matches up with some list of abstract criteria, but on how much one thinks he or she can trust the historical sources from whence the proposition has been derived. And that kind of trust will depend partly on how much one can and does actually know about those sources and partly on how much his or her presuppositions allow the person to trust them. The latter issue is not one I can address in this thesis. But the former is. By employing the standard methods of critical analysis (mentioned above) we shall be able to know more about our sources dealing with the historical figures of John and Jesus (e.g. their extent, provenance, date, etc.). This will “prepare the way” for me to delve into matters of historicity, perhaps as a follow-up to the present thesis.

1.4. Overview of this thesis

The present thesis attempts to establish the earliest Christian views on the messianic forerunner concept by looking at Q and any sources that may have been used by Q’s redactor(s). Chapter Two deals with Q’s Prologue (3:2-3+7-9+16b-17), Chapter Three with Jesus’ Baptism by John (Q 3:21-22), Chapter Four with John’s Question and Jesus’ Reply (Q 7:18-20+22-23), and Chapter Five with Jesus’ Encomium On John (Q 7:24-28).

Each chapter will contain a reconstructed Q text, arguments for it, redactional and source-critical analysis, a consideration as to the material's location in Q, and a commentary. A concluding chapter will attempt to assess and summarize the analysis of these four chapters.

1.5. John/Elijah as “the forerunner” to the Messiah: origins of the concept in the Jewish Bible

In Western Christianity John is most commonly known as “the Baptist” (ὁ βαπτιστής), an epithet he is given by the synoptic writers and by Josephus (*Ant.* 18.116). In Eastern Christianity he is more commonly known as “the forerunner” (ὁ πρόδρομος). In scripture, this latter epithet is never actually applied to John (or to Elijah). In fact, the only person to whom this epithet is ever applied in the New Testament is Jesus (Heb 6:20). Nevertheless, the *idea* that John acted as a forerunner to the Messiah (Jesus) can be found in a number of biblical passages. Many of these shall be discussed throughout the course of this thesis. But a few others are worth mentioning here.

The ninth century B.C.E. prophet Elijah was portrayed in the Bible as a “forerunner” to the Israelite king Ahab. We are told that “he ran ahead of Ahab” (בָּרַח לְפָנָיו אֶת־רָכָב אֲחָב/ἔτρεχεν ἔμπροσθεν Αχααβ) as the king was riding in his chariot to Jezreel (1 Kgs 18:46). In Luke 1:17, the angel tells John the Baptist's father Zechariah that his yet-unborn son “will go before him” (προελεύσεται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ), that is, before “the Lord” Jesus.¹¹² Similarly, in Luke 1:76, Zechariah proclaims that his son will “go before the Lord” (προπορεύσει ... ἐνώπιον κυρίου). Again, in Acts 13:24-25 we are told that “before his [Jesus'] coming” (πρὸ προσώπου τῆς εἰσόδου αὐτοῦ) John the Baptist “was finishing his course/race”

¹¹² For a compelling narrative-based argument that Luke was indeed speaking of Jesus here and not God, see Rindoš, *He of Whom*.

(ἐπλήρου ... τὸν δρόμον). Outside of the New Testament, we already find Justin in the mid-second century referring to John with the title, ὁ προελεύσις.¹¹³

In the present thesis the terms “forerunner” and “messianic forerunner” shall be used to speak of an Elijah-like figure who not only precedes the Messiah chronologically but also acts as the Messiah’s herald (= ὁ παρασκευαστής) and prepares God’s people for the Messiah’s coming (= ὁ παρασκευαστής, to use a non-biblical term). Further clarification about these ideas shall be largely the subject of all that follows.

1.5.1. Two key biblical passages (Mal 3:1; 4:5-6)

Of key importance for the development of the messianic forerunner concept in early Christianity are the following two biblical passages from Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6.¹¹⁴ I quote here from the Hebrew and the Septuagint:

Mal 3:1	<p style="text-align: center;">1a הנני שלח מלאכי ופנה־דרך לפני b ופתאם יבוא אל־היכלו האדון אשר־אתם מבקשים ומלאך הברית אשר־אתם חפצים הנה־בא אמר יהוה צבאות</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1a ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδὸν πρὸ προσώπου μου b καὶ ἐξαίφνης ἦξει εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἑαυτοῦ κύριος ὃν ὑμεῖς ζητεῖτε καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς διαθήκης ὃν ὑμεῖς θέλετε ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ</p>
	<p>1a Behold, I send my messenger. And he shall prepare a way before me. b And suddenly he will come to his temple: the Lord whom you are seeking, even¹¹⁵ the Messenger of the Covenant, whom you desire. c Behold, he is coming, says Yahweh of hosts.</p>	<p>1a Behold, I am sending my messenger. And he shall look to the way before me. b And suddenly he will come to his temple: the Lord, whom you seek, even⁹⁷ the Messenger of the Covenant, whom you desire. c Behold, he is coming, says the Lord Almighty.</p>

¹¹³ Justin, *Dial.* 50: Ἡσαΐας οὖν περὶ τῆς Ἰωάννου προελεύσεως οὕτως προεῖπε + Isa 39:8+40:1-17.

¹¹⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, I use the English versification in this thesis. The MT and the LXX number the second passage differently, as indicated in the chart here.

¹¹⁵ The parallel structure here implies that האדון and מלאך הברית are one and the same figure. Hence, the *waw* is best construed exegetically (“even,” “that is”) rather than as a simple additive (“and”). The same can be said with respect to καί in the LXX.

Mal 4:5-6
(**MT: 3:23-24; LXX: 3:22-23**)

4:5 הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא

לפני בוא יום יהוה הגדול והנורא

6 והשיב לב־אבות על־בנים

ולב בנים על־אבותם

פן־אבוא והכיתי את־הארץ חרם

4:5 Behold, I send to you Elijah the prophet

before the great and terrible day of Yahweh comes.

6 And he will turn the heart of the fathers upon the sons and the heart of the sons upon the fathers,

lest I come and smite the land with a curse.

4:5 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμῖν

Ἡλιαν τὸν Θεσβίτην

πρὶν ἔλθεῖν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ

6 ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ μὴ ἔλθω καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἄρδην

4:5 And behold, I am sending to you Elijah the Tishbite

before the great and splendid day of the Lord comes,

6 who shall restore the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbour, lest I come and smite the land utterly.

Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6 provided the basis in Second Temple Judaism for the expectation of Elijah's eschatological return. Malachi himself (or whoever wrote Mal 4:5-6) probably inferred this idea, in part, from the fact that Elijah had never died but was taken to heaven in fiery chariots (2 Kgs 2:1-18). The present study will explore how this concept of Elijah's return was understood within our earliest sources dealing with John the Baptist, namely, Q and its sources. It will be argued that John the Baptist here is regarded as an Elijah-like figure; and that this belief was derived, in part, from a certain reading of Mal 3:1. Furthermore, it will be argued that John's Elijah-like role is always understood in relation to Jesus; and that Q and its sources envisage Jesus as the Messiah.

Since neither Mal 3:1 nor 4:5-6 mentions anything explicitly about a Messiah many have been perplexed as to how these two biblical texts could have given rise to the messianic forerunner concept. Part of what shall be argued in this study is that these two texts were not read in isolation but, first of all, in connection with one another and, secondly, in connection with other biblical passages/theological ideas. Thus, while Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6 may have been the key texts that gave rise to the messianic forerunner concept, neither text provided the *sole* basis for this concept.

1.5.1.1. The exegetical connections between Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6

I cannot at present explore all the exegetical underpinnings of the messianic forerunner concept. But a few things should at least be mentioned about the above-mentioned texts from the book of Malachi. It has often been suggested that מלאכי in 3:1a was meant by the author as a kind of self-reference. In other words, “Malachi” (cf. 1:1) saw *himself* as the prophet whom Yahweh had entrusted with preparing the way for “the Lord”/“the messenger of the covenant.”¹¹⁶ This interpretation is plausible but for our purposes the author’s original intent is of little relevance. Jewish interpreters living more than four centuries after the author would certainly not have still understood the term מלאכי in 3:1a to speak of the ancient prophet Malachi. After all, that biblical prophet was not remembered as having prepared the way for מלאך בריית/האדון to enter his temple. For first century interpreters, Mal 3:1a could only have been regarded as a prediction about the future. מלאכי here was seen as an eschatological figure, not someone from the ancient past.

The first person pronominal suffix makes מלאכי in Mal 3:1a equivalent to מלאך יהוה, an epithet that occurs frequently in the Hebrew Bible, sometimes in reference to *angels*¹¹⁷, sometimes to *prophets*¹¹⁸ and, at least in one case, to *priests* (Mal 2:7). It is conceivable that first century Jewish interpreters would have identified מלאכי in Mal 3:1a with any one of these three figures. The second and third options seem the most likely, however. Early followers of Jesus and other Jews from later periods (probably ones from earlier periods too) read Mal 3:1a in connection with Mal 4:5-6. This allowed them to see מלאכי as “the prophet Elijah”:

- Q 7:26-27 John the Baptist is referred to as the greatest “prophet” (≈ “the prophet Elijah” of Mal 4:5?) and is then identified with the “messenger” of

¹¹⁶ E.g. Elliger, “Maleachi,” 43-48; Vriezen, *Grace*, 132.

¹¹⁷ E.g. Gen 16:7; 22:11, 2 Kgs 19:35 *par.*; Isa 63:9; Zech 1:11-14; cf. also Tob 12.22.

¹¹⁸ E.g. 2 Chr 36:15, 16; Isa 44:26; Hag 1:13; cf. Isa 42:19.

Mal 3:1a.

- Mark 1:2, 6 the prophecy of Mal 3:1a is applied to John the Baptist and then John's attire is described in language evocative of Elijah's attire (cf. 2 Kgs 1:8).
- Luke 1:17, 76 Zechariah is told that John the Baptist "will go before him"/"will proceed before the Lord" (≈ Mal 3:1) "in the spirit and power of Elijah ... to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children" (= Mal 4:5-6).
- *Tg. Ps.-Jon.* at Exod 4:13 Moses says, "O Yhwh, send now your message by the hand of Phinehas [= Elijah], who is worthy to be sent at the end of days"¹¹⁹ (≈ Mal 4:5). At Num 25:12 this same targum identifies Phinehas-Elijah (= Mal 4:5) as מלאך קיים, "the messenger of the covenant" (= Mal 3:1b).
- *Exod. Rab.* 32.9 "... He [God] who protected the fathers will protect the children" (≈ Mal 4:6) by sending his מלאך (= Mal 3:1a).
- *Pirqe R. El.* 29 "the messenger of the covenant" (= Mal 3:1b) is expressly identified as "Elijah" (≈ Mal 4:5).

Nor was it only the ancients who could see a connection between Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6.

Modern interpreters do so as well, counting the latter passage as an editorial expansion of and commentary on 3:1.¹²⁰ Note the parallels between the two texts:

- The figures in both of these texts are introduced with the same phrase, הנהגה שלח, "behold, I am sending ..."
- Both texts anticipate a coming divine judgment (cf. 3:2-5; 4:1-3, 6).¹²¹

¹¹⁹ יי שלח כדון שליחותך ביד פינחס דחמי למשתלחא בסוף יומיא.

¹²⁰ E.g. Miller, "Messenger," 6; Teeple, *Prophet*, 4.

- “My messenger” and “Elijah the prophet” are both presented as figures having preparatory roles: the former prepares the way for the coming “Lord”/“messenger of the covenant”; the latter turns the hearts of fathers and children back towards one another before “the great and terrible day of Yahweh.”

Thus, by seeing Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6 as related texts, many interpreters—both ancient and modern—have found reason to identify “the prophet Elijah” in 4:5 as “my messenger” in 3:1a and/or “the messenger of the covenant” in 3:1b. It is plausible that some Jewish interpreters living around the time of Jesus had arrived at the same interpretation.

¹²¹ See also the parallelism in the LXX: ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποστέλλω (3:1); ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω (4:5).

CHAPTER TWO: Prologue (Q 3:2-3+7b-9+16b-17)

2.1. The beginning of Q (Q 3:2-3)

Matt 3

1 Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις παραγίνεται Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστῆς κηρύσσων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας
2 [καὶ] λέγων, Μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

3a οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ῥηθεὶς διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος,

11:10 οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὗ γέγραπται, Ἴδού ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου.

3b Φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ.

5 τότε ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία καὶ πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου,

Mark 1

2a Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφήτῃ,

2b Ἴδού ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου

3 φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ,

4 ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης [ὁ] βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ καὶ κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

5 καὶ ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα καὶ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται πάντες, καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

Luke 3

1 Ἐν ἔτει δὲ πεντεκαιδεκάτῳ τῆς ἡγεμονίας Τιβερίου Καίσαρος, ἡγεμονεύοντος Ποντίου Πιλάτου τῆς Ἰουδαίας, καὶ τετραρχοῦντος τῆς Γαλιλαίας Ἡρώδου, Φιλίππου δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ τετραρχοῦντος τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Τραχωνίτιδος χώρας, καὶ Λυσανίου τῆς Ἀβιληνῆς τετραρχοῦντος,
2 ἐπὶ ἀρχιερέως Ἄννα καὶ Καϊάφα, ἐγένετο ῥῆμα θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.

4a ὡς γέγραπται ἐν βίβλῳ λόγων Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου,

7:27 οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὗ γέγραπται, Ἴδού ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου.

4b Φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ·
5 πᾶσα φάραγξ πληρωθήσεται καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ βουνὸς ταπεινωθήσεται, καὶ ἔσται τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθεῖαν καὶ αἱ τραχεῖαι εἰς ὁδοὺς λείας·

3 καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς πᾶσαν [τὴν] περίχωρον τοῦ Ἰορδάνου κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν

2.1.1. Proposed reconstruction:

2 Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ 3 κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. καὶ ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα καὶ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται πάντες καὶ πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου.

2 Now in those days John was in the wilderness, 3 preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out to him all the Judean country, and all the Jerusalemites, and all the surrounding region of the Jordan.¹²²

¹²² English translations of the Bible and Old Testament Apocrypha are usually based on the RSV, as are most other quotations from the biblical works and the Old Testament Apocrypha, although modifications are sometimes made in order to bring out a more literal, or an alternative, or simply a better sense.

2.1.2. Establishing the text

The opening of Q is highly disputed. The above reconstruction is based, in part, on two minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark:¹²³

1. Both indicate something as to the time of John's appearance (Matt: ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις; Luke: Ἐν ἔτει δὲ πεντεκαίδεκάτῳ τῆς ἡγεμονίας Τιβερίου Καίσαρος, etc.).
2. Both contain the words πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου.

Rather than seeing these agreements as evidence of Matthew and Luke having used Q, some argue that these evangelists have independently redacted Mark in ways that are ostensibly similar.¹²⁴ This explanation might be reasonable if the first agreement were all that needed to be explained.¹²⁵ But the second agreement is too substantial and fits with other thematic interests in Q, as I shall now explain.

John Kloppenborg argues that the phrase πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου is intertextually related to the Sodom and Gomorrah story in the book of Genesis:¹²⁶

LXX Gen 13:10 And Lot, lifting up his eyes, saw *all the region round about the Jordan* (πᾶσαν τὴν περίχωρον τοῦ Ἰορδάνου), that all was watered—before God had overthrown Sodom and Gomorrah—like the orchard of God and like the land of Egypt until one came to Zoar. **11** And Lot chose for himself *all the region round about the Jordan* (πᾶσαν τὴν περίχωρον τοῦ Ἰορδάνου) ... **12** So then Abram settled in the land of Canaan, but Lot settled in a city of the regions round about (ἐν πόλει τῶν περιχώρων) and tented in Sodom.

¹²³ Others would add to this list the fact that both evangelists omit the conflated quote of Exod 23:20+Mal 3:1a, and the fact that Matthew and Luke both put the scripture quote after the remark about John rather than before (cf. Mark 1:3-4). But these agreements will be alternatively explained elsewhere (→5.5.). For further discussion of the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke, see Catchpole, *Quest*, 60-78; idem, “Beginning,” 217-18; Lambrecht, “Mark 1.1-15,” 363-64; Kloppenborg, “Wasteland,” 145-160; see also the references in the next note.

¹²⁴ Devisch, *Quelle-hypothese*, 402-21; Neiryneck, “Minor Agreements,” 67-72; idem, “First Synoptic Pericope,” 53-56; idem, “Appearance,” 41-74; Kloppenborg, *Parallels*, 6 (where a fuller bibliography is given of those who accept or reject an original beginning of Q at 3:2-4); Fleddermann, *Q*, 210-13.

¹²⁵ See Fleddermann, *Q*, 211; Neiryneck, “First Synoptic Pericope,” 53-56.

¹²⁶ Kloppenborg, “Wasteland,” 145-160, esp. 151-152.

Similar but abbreviated forms of this geographical description will occur twice more in the Sodom and Gomorrah story. In Gen 19:17 Lot and his family are commanded: “Do not look back behind you, nor remain *in all the region round about* (ἐν πάσῃ τῇ περιχώρῳ); flee safely into the mountain, lest you be swept away.” And in v. 28 we read that Lot “gazed upon the face of Sodom and Gomorrah and upon the face of the land of *the region round about* (τῆς περιχώρου); and he looked, and behold, the flame of the land was going up like a vapour of a furnace.” It is true that the term *περίχωρος* occurs in many other contexts that have nothing to do with Sodom and Gomorrah, both in the Septuagint and the NT.¹²⁷ And in 2 Chron 4:17 the longer phrase ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου occurs in a context that has nothing to do with Sodom and Gomorrah. Nevertheless, the double occurrence of the complete phrase at Gen 13:10, 11, and the occurrences of other shortened forms of the phrase at Gen 13:12; 19:17, 28, furnish Kloppenborg with a strong basis for thinking that when the complete phrase occurs at Matt 3:5||Luke 3:3 it is a literary device meant to recall the Sodom and Gomorrah story. The allusion would not have been random. It would have fit nicely into the present Q unit where John warns of impending fiery judgment, reminiscent of the Sodom and Gomorrah story. Compare, for example, the following:

Q 3:7 τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς

Q 3:9 πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται. **16** αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ. **17** τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ.

Gen 19:17 σῶζων σῶζε τὴν σεαυτοῦ ψυχὴν

Gen 19:24 καὶ κύριος ἔβρεξεν ἐπὶ Σοδομα καὶ Γομορρα θεῖον καὶ πῦρ παρὰ κυρίου ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ **28** καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνέβαινον φλόξ τῆς γῆς ὥσει ἀτμὶς καμίνου

An allusion to the Sodom and Gomorrah story at the opening of Q would have also linked up nicely with Q 10:12 and Q/Luke 17:28-30 where this story will again be recalled.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ E.g. Deut 3:4; 34:3; 2 Chron 16:4; 2 Esd 13.9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18; Mark 1:28; Luke 8:37.

¹²⁸ In this connection it may also be relevant that Abraham—that is, the brother of Lot—is mentioned in Q’s Prologue (3:8) and elsewhere (13:28).

The other minor agreement between Matthew and Luke, as I mentioned, is in their use of a time reference to introduce the pericope about John. Matthew's temporal indicator ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις is the better alternative here. Mark, who omits Q 3:7-9, apparently relocated this temporal marker and used it to introduce Jesus (Mark 1:9). Luke, in accordance with his historical style, sought to add some historical specificity to what was originally a vague temporal phrase. The phrase may have been vague but it was not pointless since it gave the story a more biblical character.¹²⁹

In the above discussion I have identified two minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark. I have also argued that πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου is meant as an allusion to the Sodom and Gomorrah story and that the allusion would have linked up with other sayings in Q. I conclude from all this that Q contained some kind of introductory statement about John's ministry that segued into his preaching in Q 3:7-9+16b-17. That such a statement occurred in Q is intrinsically probable since it would have helped to contextualize John's preaching in vv. 7-9+16b-17. Consider some of the alternative reconstructions of Q's opening. Some think that Q opened with only the words λόγοι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ or something similar.¹³⁰ This reconstruction is not based on *any* agreements between Matthew and Luke but on a presumed analogy between Q and the *Gospel of Thomas* which opens with: "These are the [secret] words which ... the living Jesus spoke ..." Q is often thought to have been of the same genre as the *Gospel of Thomas*, a genre that Robinson labels as λόγοι σοφῶν, "Sayings of the Wise."¹³¹ There are excellent reasons, however, not to define Q's genre in this way or to see the *Gospel of Thomas* as a key for defining Q's genre.¹³² Moreover, it would be peculiar if Q had begun with,

¹²⁹ Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις occurs 34 times in the Septuagint and 9 times in the Apocrypha (e.g. Gen 6:4; Exod 2:11; Judg 18:1; 2 Sam 16:23; 2 Kgs 20:1; Joel 4:1 [ET: 3:1]; Dan 10:2). Permutations also occur such as ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις and ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις + name/pronoun in genitive (e.g. Zech 8:9; *Pss. Sol.* 17.32). Cf. also Jer 33:15 in the MT: "In those days and at that time (בְּיָמַי הַהֵם וּבְצֵאת הַהֵם) I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David."

¹³⁰ Polag, *Fragmenta Q*, 28; Robinson, "Incipit," 9-33; Robinson, *et al.*, *CritEd*, 2-3; Mack, *Lost Gospel*, 73.

¹³¹ See further Robinson, "Gattung," in Robinson and Koester (eds.), *Trajectories*, 71-113.

¹³² See Tuckett, *History*, 330-54; idem, "Q and Thomas," 346-60; Horsley and Draper, *Whoever*, 75-82;

“[These are] the words of Jesus,” since the first quote that follows is not from Jesus but from *John*! Fleddermann proposes that Q opened with εἶπεν Ἰωάννης and calls this “a brief narrative introduction.”¹³³ The two words hardly constitute a proper “narrative,” however. Fleddermann evidently feels the need to characterize the words in this way because he realizes that Q is elsewhere quite concerned with developing a narrative.¹³⁴ But a narrative structure is precisely what Q’s introduction would lack if Fleddermann’s reconstruction is to be accepted.

If the Baptist was introduced, and if Q began, with 3.7-9, 16-17 alone, then that introduction and beginning was abrupt indeed. The readers, whether Q community members or we ourselves, start to bristle with questions: Who is this John? What is this baptism? What is the basis of the call to repentance? Where are “these stones” out of which God could produce children of Abraham?¹³⁵

Fleddermann thinks that Q’s compositional structure rules out a more elaborate introduction to Q.¹³⁶ On his analysis the various units of Q were chiastically arranged as follows:

- A. John’s Preaching (Q 3:7-9+16b-17).
- B. Jesus’ Temptation (4:2b+9-12+5-8+13)
- C. The Sermon (6:20-23+29-31+27-28+35c+32-33+36+37a+38c+41-49)
- B’. Centurion’s Servant (7:1-3+6-9)
- A’. John’s Question (7:18-20+22-28+31-35)

According to Fleddermann, the introduction to John that we are proposing would have disturbed this chiastic structure.

Fleddermann’s argument here rests on several disputable points. First, note that the material in his A’ encompasses three distinct units: 7:18-20+22-23; vv. 22-23; vv. 31-35. These cannot all be classed under the broad heading of “John’s Question.” By forcing the units under this heading Fleddermann has made the material seem more symmetrical than

Allison, *Intertextual*, 172-175; Kelber, “Verbal Art,” 26-31; Fleddermann, *Q*, 100-110; idem, “Plot,” 43-69.

¹³³ Fleddermann, *Q*, 224.

¹³⁴ See especially Fleddermann, “Plot,” 43-69. Also idem, *Q*, 110-119, 124-128, and *passim*.

¹³⁵ Catchpole, “Beginning,” 206.

¹³⁶ Fleddermann, *Q*, 209-213.

it actually is. Second, Fleddermann's alleged chiasmic structure is questionable because it requires us to think that no other material had been included in Q other than the units listed by Fleddermann. We shall argue later that the account of Jesus' Baptism (Q 3:21-22) was also part of Q. It could be argued as well—albeit with less certitude—that the Cleansing of the Leper in Mark 1:40-45 *par.* was part of Q.¹³⁷ Other candidates for Q material that would have been located between Q's Prologue and 7:35 include two Lukan *Sondergut* stories: Jesus' Preaching at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30) and the Healing of the Widow's Son at Nain (Luke 7:11-16).¹³⁸ If any of these units were part of Q Fleddermann's chiasm would not stand. Third, the identification of chiasmic structure is often a rather subjective enterprise. Scholars can easily imagine chiasms into existence where none was ever intended by the author. But another literary structure is still detectable here, namely, the *inclusio* between A and A'. On my analysis, 3:2-3+7-9+16b-17 would have formed a coherent Prologue to Q which had John the Baptist as its unifying character. John is also the unifying character in the three units at 7:18-20+21-22, 24-28, and 31-35. Q's *inclusio* would not be disturbed at all if 3:2-3 were included.

If Mark used material from Q's Prologue, it is possible that the description of John's attire and diet in Mark 1:6 was also derived from Q. But this is dubious. The material is omitted by Luke. And while Matthew does include it (Matt 3:4) he has re-ordered it. This reordering reflects a perceived awkwardness in the Markan order, which flows more naturally if we proceed directly from Mark 1:5 to 1:7. Thus, Q's original narrative

¹³⁷ See Sloan, "Q as a Narrative Gospel," 14-15. The evidence for this would consist of minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark. ἰδοὺ, κύριε, omission of *σπλαγχνισθεῖς, εὐθύς* (rather than *εὐθέως*). Matthew places the story between two Q units and against the order of Mark's narrative. Matthew and Luke both have the leper approach Jesus with an act of reverence: "coming to worship him" (Matt) "falling on his face" (Luke). The Markan text, by contrast, probably said nothing about what the leper did when he approached. κ L Θ f 565 *al* read *καὶ γονυπετῶν* but the phrase is missing from B D W *al*. If Q did contain the story an interesting thematic connection could be drawn between the Cleansing of the Leper and the phrase *λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται* in Q 7:22. This thematic connection with 7:22 would be matched by other phrases in this logion that likewise evoke earlier stories in Q: *πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται* \approx the Sermon in 6:20ff.; *νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται* \approx the Centurion's Servant in 7:1-10.

¹³⁸ For Luke 4:16-30 as part of Q, see Schürmann, "Nazareth-Pericope," 187-205; idem, "Bericht," 242-58; Tuckett, *Q*, 226-235. For Luke 7:11-16 as part of Q, see Sloan, "Q as a Narrative Gospel."

sequence appears to have been disrupted whenever some redactor, presumably Mark, inserted Mark 1:6.¹³⁹

Thus far, we have been able to reconstruct Q's introduction as containing two elements: *πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου* and *ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις*. But Q must have contained more material than this. Catchpole and Lambrecht reconstruct the opening of Q as follows:¹⁴⁰

Catchpole

Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων ἦλθεν εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν περίχωρον τοῦ Ἰορδάνου κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφήτῃ· φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ. ἔλεγεν δὲ τοῖς ὄχλοις ἐρχομένοις ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα...

Lambrecht¹⁴¹

Ἰωάννης δὲ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας· καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφήτῃ· φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ.

Catchpole and Lambrecht both accept that we are dealing here with a Mark-Q overlap.

This allows them to base their reconstructions on more than just the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke. I also accept that there is a Mark-Q overlap here. So beyond the two elements that have already been reconstructed, we shall also have to consider following elements as possibly deriving from Q:

1. John's location ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ for his preaching (Matt, Mark, Luke)
2. A quote from Isa 40:3 (Mark; omitted by Matthew and Luke)
3. κηρύσσων (Matt, Mark, Luke)
4. βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (Mark, Luke)
5. πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα (Mark) ≈ πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία (Matt)
6. οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται πάντες (Mark) ≈ Ἱεροσόλυμα (Matt)

¹³⁹ So Catchpole, "Beginning," 217.

¹⁴⁰ Lambrecht, "Mark 1.1-15" 363-64.

¹⁴¹ I have converted Lambrecht's English translation to Greek here for purposes of comparison.

- Regarding #2, I do not believe that the quote from Isa 40:3 was originally found in Q's Prologue but at Q 7:27. That issue shall have to be discussed elsewhere, however (→5.5).
- One could see #'s 1 and 3 as deriving from Mark rather than Q. But if we are dealing here with a Mark-Q overlap they could have just as easily been derived from Q.
- Regarding #3, some verb must have been used to describe what John was doing. So κηρύσσων is the only real option. It is also reasonable to think that ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ derives from Q. Q 7:24-25 speaks of people having gone out εἰς τὴν ἔρημον to see John and this unit is plausibly meant to hearken back on the present unit in Q 3.
- Regarding #4, Matthew's account is unique in stating the actual words of John's preaching ("Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"), whereas Mark and Luke only state that he preached "a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." If Matthew had still been using Q at this point he might have chosen to omit the phrase εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν in order to link the forgiveness exclusively with the redemptive death of Jesus (cf. Matt 20:28; 26:28).
- With respect to #'s 5 and 6, it should be noted that in Q 3:7b John is clearly addressing a group of people.¹⁴² A prior reference to "all the country of Judea" and "all the Jerusalemites" would have identified this otherwise non-descript audience (assuming Matthew's πολλοὺς τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων κτλ. and Luke's ὄχλοι are both redactional → 2.3.2.1). I have argued above that the phrase πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου derives from Q. It would have been rather awkward, however, to say that "all the surrounding region of the Jordan *went out* (ἐξέπορεύετο)" to be baptized; for John was presumably baptizing in the Jordan River. On this basis Catchpole concludes that Luke preserves the original wording of Q since he uses the phrase "all the region of the Jordan" to describe the location of John's ministry rather than the region from which the people

¹⁴² Cf. Kloppenborg, "Wasteland," 149: "...John's question 'Who warned you to flee?' presupposes precisely what Luke 3:7a envisages: a group of persons coming out to John (cf. Q 7:24)." Kloppenborg, however, is not arguing here for how to reconstruct Q 3:2-3. Rather, he is arguing that Q 3:7a originally read Ἔλεγεν ὄχλοις, in accord with Luke's wording. Against this judgment, see Fleddermann, "Beginning," 154 and my discussion below on Q 3:7a (→2.2.2.2.).

had come.¹⁴³ Again, Kloppenborg argues that Matthew’s version is secondary because it anticipates Mark 3:7-8 (|| Matt 4:25) where Jesus is said to have had followers from πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου.¹⁴⁴ Against Catchpole and Kloppenborg, however, it seems better to think that Luke took a more geographically awkward statement and transformed it into something more intelligible. He has evidently tampered with Q at other points in this unit for similar reasons. Luke obviously knew that John had baptized in the Jordan River (cf. Luke 4:1). If he used Q’s πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου in order to locate John he would have likely found no further reason to preserve the other geographical references. Omitting them would have removed another difficulty because “all the country of Judea and all the Jerusalemites” is redundant and “all the Jerusalemites” is stylistically awkward.¹⁴⁵ Matthew approached Q’s awkward geographical statements somewhat differently. He has preserved all of the statements but has reordered them and changed “the Jerusalemites” to “Jerusalem.” The changes may seem minor but they are not insignificant. The καὶ before πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία can now be understood adverbially—“even all Judea”—which removes the redundancy. I would argue, therefore, that in the cases of #’s 4-6 Mark has preserved Q’s original readings.

In light of the above considerations, I depart from Lambrecht’s and Catchpole’s reconstructions at many points. I do not include the Isaiah quote but I do include Matthew’s temporal indicator ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις. With Catchpole, I also include εἰς ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν and not just βάπτισμα μετανοίας (Lambrecht). Against Catchpole, I see ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου as the place from which the people were coming, not the location of John’s baptismal ministry. Finally, unlike both Catchpole and Lambrecht I

¹⁴³ Catchpole, “Beginning,” 217-18.

¹⁴⁴ So Kloppenborg, “Wasteland,” 150: “In 3:5 it would seem that Matthew wishes to suggest that people who ‘came out’ to John were those who would later follow Jesus. This means, however, that he is using ‘the region of the Jordan’ in a much broader sense than normal.” So too Fleddermann, *Q*, 212: “The sequence Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordan region appears also in Matt 4:25 (par. Mark 3,7-8), so Matthew assimilates the coming of the people to John (Matt 3:5-6) to the coming to Jesus (Matt 4:25) as part of his redactional intention to parallel the two.”

¹⁴⁵ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται (pl. of Ἱεροσολυμίτης) is *hapax* in LXX and NT. But it does occur elsewhere in *4 Macc* (4:22; 18:5) and very often in Josephus (*passim* in *Ant.* and *Life*).

include και ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα καὶ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται πάντες.

2.2. John's Preaching (Q 3:7b-9+16-17)

Matt 3:7 Ἰδὼν δὲ πολλοὺς τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδου-καίων ἐρχομένους ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,
Γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;
8 ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας
9 καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, Πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ.
10 ἤδη δὲ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται.

Luke 3:7 Ἔλεγεν οὖν τοῖς ἐκπορευομένοις ὄχλοις βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ,
Γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;
8 ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας καὶ μὴ ἄρξησθε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, Πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ.
9 ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται.

Matt 3:11

ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν,
ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν,
οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι·

αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ

12 οὗ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ διακαθαριεῖ τὴν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ καὶ συναξει τὸν σῖτον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην, τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ.

Luke 3:16

ἀπεκρίνατο λέγων πᾶσιν ὁ Ἰωάννης,
Ἐγὼ μὲν ὕδατι βαπτίζω ὑμᾶς·
ἔρχεται δὲ ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου,
οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν υποδημάτων αὐτοῦ·

αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ

17 οὗ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ διακαθαῖραι τὴν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ καὶ συναγαγεῖν τὸν σῖτον εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην αὐτοῦ, τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ.

Mark 1:7

καὶ ἐκήρυσσεν λέγων,

see v. 8 below
Ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου,
οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς κύμας λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν υποδημάτων αὐτοῦ.

8 ἐγὼ ἐβάπτισα ὑμᾶς ὕδατι, αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

John 1:26 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰωάννης λέγων, Ἐγὼ βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι· μέσος ὑμῶν ἔστηκεν ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε, **27** ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος, οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς ἵνα λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦ υποδήματος. **28** Ταῦτα ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ἐγένετο πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, ὅπου ἦν ὁ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων.

33 Ἐφ' ὃν ἂν ἴδῃς τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον καὶ μένον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

Acts 1:5 ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἁγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας.

Acts 11:16 Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

2.2.1. Proposed reconstruction¹⁴⁶:

Q 3:7 ἰδὼν δὲ πολλοὺς τῶν Φαρισαίων ἐρχομένους ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς; **8a** ποιήσατε οὖν

¹⁴⁶ Except in the many places where I reconstruct the text differently (as in the case of Q 3:2-5), quotations from “Q” utilize the Greek text of *CritEd* (eds. Robinson, et al.).

καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας **b** καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. **c** λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ. **9** ἤδη δὲ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται. **16b** ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι· **c** ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν—**d** οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς λύσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ—**e** αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ· **17** οὗ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ διακαθᾶραι τὴν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ καὶ συνάξει τὸν σῖτον εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην αὐτοῦ, τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ.

Q 3:7 But seeing many of the Pharisees coming against (i.e. opposing) his baptism, he said to them: **b** “Offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? **8a** Therefore make the fruit worthy of repentance **b** and do not think to say within yourselves, “We have Abraham [as] a father.” For I say to you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. **9** But the axe already lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. **16b** “I baptise you in water; **c** but the Coming One [following] behind me is mightier than I—**d** whose latchet of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie—**e** he will baptise you in the [Holy] Spirit and in fire—**17** whose winnowing shovel is in his hand and he will purge his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn in unquenchable fire.”

2.2.2. Establishing the text

2.2.2.1. Mark’s omission of this material

In Q 3:7-9 we find remarkable agreement between Matthew and Luke against Mark (where the verses have no parallel at all). Among scholars who accept the 2SH none seem to doubt that we are dealing here with Q material.¹⁴⁷ We shall see that in v. 16 Matthew and Luke once more agree with each other *against* Mark but they also agree in some ways *with* Mark. This suggests that we are still dealing with a Mark-Q overlap in Q’s Prologue (→2.1.2.).

If Mark was using Q at this point why does he omit Q 3:7-9? To answer this it should be noted that Mark also omits the clause καὶ πυρὶ in Q 3:16e and everything in v. 17. Mark seems to have removed all the elements in John’s preaching that anticipate coming judgment. This cannot be because Mark rejected the notion of coming judgment altogether

¹⁴⁷ Kloppenborg (*Parallels*, 10) states that “most” accept it as part of Q but cites none that does not.

(cf. Mark 13:24-27; 14:62). Rather, Mark probably picked up on a certain difficulty in Q's narrative. As John's message reads in Matthew and Luke (= Q), it sounds as if the Coming One will execute judgment *immediately*. Mark probably wanted to avoid giving his readers this impression since Jesus had obviously not executed judgment immediately. In the synoptic tradition Jesus' so-called "earthly ministry" is never characterized by fiery judgment (cf. Luke 9:51-55). And even in Q, despite the prediction about the Coming One bringing fiery judgment and Q's obvious identification of Jesus as this figure, Jesus only fulfils, at his *first* coming, a role as preacher and healer (cf. Q 7:22) whereas his role as a fiery judge is reserved for his *second* coming (e.g. Q 12:39-40, 42-46; 17:23-24, 28-30; 19:12-26). Mark's Gospel accepts this understanding of Jesus' two comings but is more obvious in delineating Jesus' roles during his first and second comings. In Mark's Gospel there is no doubt that Jesus fulfils John's prophecies immediately. Without any theme of judgment Jesus can fulfil everything at his *first* coming. And this he does. In 2:17 Jesus declares that he *came* as a physician, seeking to heal "the sick" and in 10:45 he identifies himself as a humble minister who *came* to give his life as a ransom for others. The verb ἤλθον (aor. tense of ἔρχομαι) in these two sayings can be read as hearkening back on John's earlier preaching at 1:7 (ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου). Thus, Mark appears to have omitted everything in Q's Prologue that spoke of coming judgment in order to portray Jesus as having fulfilled John's prophecies during his earthly ministry and to avoid the possible implication that Jesus would execute judgment immediately and not at his *second* coming.

2.2.2.2. How the material was introduced in Q's narrative, and other minor issues

Were John's words introduced with some kind of circumstantial clause in Q 3:7a? Several minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark occur here, suggesting that such a clause did exist in Q: John spoke (εἶπεν/ἔλεγεν/Mk: καὶ ἐκήρυσσεν

λέγων) to crowds (πολλούς τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων/ὄχλους) coming (έρχομένους/έκπορευμένους) to be baptized (ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ/βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ).

There are also significant differences between Matthew and Luke. While the evangelists agree in having John address a group of people they differ in their precise identification of this group. Matthew has “many of the Pharisees and Sadducees” coming against/to (ἐπὶ) his baptism. Luke describes an undifferentiated “crowd” of “many” who were “coming out to be baptized by him.” Again, Matthew seems to envisage an audience of hostile religious leaders coming out to judge or harass John while Luke describes a crowd of willing participants.

Given these differences, any reconstruction of Q at this point will be difficult. Matthew uses the phrase “Pharisees and Sadducees” five times (also 16:1, 6, 11, 12). At least some of these times the phrase is Matthean. The parallel to 16:1 at Mark 8:11 mentions only the Pharisees so Matthew has added “Sadducees.” The other occurrences of “Pharisees and Sadducees” in Matthew likewise do not correspond with their parallels in Mark. It is possible therefore that the phrase at Matt 3:7 is also Matthean. But Luke’s ὄχλοι also looks to be redactional.¹⁴⁸ So perhaps at Q 3:7a the audience was not identified at all and the two evangelists have both done so coincidentally.¹⁴⁹ This conclusion would comport with Mark’s Gospel where we are told only that John “was preaching, saying...” On the other hand, the Pharisees are mentioned elsewhere in Q (e.g. 11:39, 42). Tuckett suggests that Q 3:7a mentioned the Pharisees and that Matthew added καὶ Σαδδουκαίων, as he did at Matt 16:1 (||Mark 8:11). Tuckett also points to the themes of coming judgment as evidence that John was addressing a hostile audience. He points as well to Q/Luke 7:29-30 as support

¹⁴⁸ So, again, Fleddermann, “Beginning,” 154 n. 11, where he compares the following texts in Luke and Mark: Luke 4:42 with Mark 1:37; Luke 5:15 with Mark 1:45; Luke 5:29 with Mark 2:15; Luke 6:19 with Mark 3:10; Luke 9:11 with Mark 6:33; Luke 9:18 with Mark 8:29.

¹⁴⁹ So Fleddermann, “Beginning,” 154; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.303 n. 36; Neiryneck, “Minor Agreements,” 71.

for Q's polemic about the Pharisees having rejected John's baptism.¹⁵⁰ Tuckett's reasoning here is convincing and I have accepted it as a basis for my own reconstruction.

2.2.3. Issues of tradition and redaction: original unity of vv. 7-9

Many commentators regard the saying in v. 8bc about stones being raised as children to Abraham as intrusive, disrupting the fruit imagery in vv. 8a and 9.¹⁵¹ Schürmann suggested that a Q redactor conflated two originally independent sayings. According to Schürmann the saying in v. 8bc was more primitive, having its origins in an early mission conducted by Jesus' followers amidst hostile Jews who rejected baptism altogether. Verses 7-8a+9, on the other hand, originated in a later context in which baptisands were feeling overly confident about the saving power of baptism.

Jacobson, by contrast, sees v. 8 as a "redactional addition" to the saying.¹⁵² There is probably better warrant for this proposal since v. 8b-c can be easily seen as an intrusion into an already-existing chreia (i.e. vv. 7-8a+9). Jacobson agrees with Schürmann, however, in thinking that John's rhetoric in vv. 7-8a+9 was directed at "Christians" who were coming to be baptized unworthily. "John," here, is warning this group that baptism "is no substitute for good works as evidence of repentance."¹⁵³

Tuckett rejects both Schürmann's and Jacobson's proposals, seeing the verses as an original unity.¹⁵⁴ He argues that throughout vv. 7-9 the rhetoric is directed at a similarly hostile audience, not one that is hostile (v. 8bc) and another that is accepting (vv. 7-8a+9) as Schürmann argues. In fact, Tuckett argues that if any part of John's harsh rhetoric had been directed against persons who were accepting baptism, his notably harsh rhetoric

¹⁵⁰ Tuckett, *Q*, 115-116. For Luke 7:29-30 as deriving from Q, see Tuckett, *Revival*, 148-151.

¹⁵¹ E.g. Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 182; Linnemann, "Täufer," in Ebeling, *Festschrift*, 228-29; Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 82-83; Hoffmann, *Studien*, 27; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1.307; Uro, "Movement," 244.

¹⁵¹ Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 82-83.

¹⁵² Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 82-83.

¹⁵³ Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 82.

¹⁵⁴ Tuckett, *History*, 110-114.

“would imply rejection of the whole principle of baptism as such.”¹⁵⁵ This would be without parallel in the Gospel tradition and NT where baptism is always affirmed and where even John’s baptism is at least always viewed positively (albeit as something merely preparatory to something else). There is no need, therefore, to pit the sayings in vv. 7-8a+9 and v. 8b against one another and to postulate that they originated in different situations (Schürmann) or for quite different reasons (Jacobson). They can both be taken as warnings of judgment against those who were *not* accepting of John’s message/baptism.

Underlying most of the discussion about the traditional or redactional origins of Q 3:7-9+16b-17 is a view that for several decades after John’s death his followers had continued as an organised movement and that their views were often quite different from and even antithetical to those of Jesus’ followers. I shall henceforth refer to this as the “rival Baptist sect” hypothesis.¹⁵⁶ Taking this hypothesis as a presupposition, interpreters often note that John’s preaching in Q 3:7-9+16b-17 contains nothing characteristic or distinctive of the early Jesus movement and conclude on this basis that the material was derived from an earlier Baptist source:

[W]hat is perhaps most striking about the basic proclamation of John in Matt 3:7-10 [= Q 3:7-9] is that, while eschatological and even slightly apocalyptic, it lacks all specifically Christian character and makes not even a glancing reference to Jesus or to any human mediator of God’s final judgment. Taken by itself, Matt 3:7-10 seems to say that it is God himself who lays the ax to the root of the tree and presumably throws the bad tree into the fire. The only human involved is John, who does not wield the ax but simply reveals its ominous presence and offers a way to avoid it. Read in isolation, Matt 3:7-10 provides a good argument for those who claim that John saw himself as the forerunner of God alone, just as in the pre-Christian period Judaism generally thought of Elijah as the forerunner of God alone, and not of some human messiah. Whether or not John presented himself as the returning Elijah, the eschatology of 3:7-10, without Christianity or its Christ, fits in perfectly with the independent Baptist, who felt no need to define himself by his relation to Jesus of Nazareth. Hence there is no serious reason to doubt the substantial authenticity of these verses.¹⁵⁷

The quote from Meier cited here is typical of the kinds of arguments advanced for the

¹⁵⁵ Tuckett, *History*, 111.

¹⁵⁶ I offer a general critique of this hypothesis in Appendix B.

¹⁵⁷ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.32.

Baptist provenance of Q 3:7-9. How well do these arguments actually hold? Meier points out that Q 3:7-9 mentions nothing about Jesus but God only. This is true but it does not mean that John is being portrayed as “the forerunner of God alone,” as Meier imagines. One can only arrive at that interpretation if the verses are read in conjunction with vv. 16-17, not “in isolation” as Meier claims to do. The language in vv. 7-9 is typical of prophetic speech and anticipates coming judgment, not a coming *figure* (whether God or anyone else).¹⁵⁸ So if this material is read “in isolation” it would only indicate that John prophesied of coming judgment.

Meier’s claim that vv. 7-9 “lacks all specifically Christian character” is also quite disputable. The comment about God raising up children to Abraham “from these stones” in v. 8bc could be taken as an adumbration of the Gentile mission. Kloppenborg urges that v. 8bc is simply a “prophetic hyperbole” and as such implies nothing about the Gentile mission.¹⁵⁹ Perhaps a fully-fledged Gentile *mission* is too much to read into v. 8bc. But at least some adumbration here of Gentile salvation is not unreasonable and would cohere nicely with other positive statements about Gentiles in Q which can be read as indicators that Gentiles were to be included in God’s redemptive plan.¹⁶⁰ Hence vv. 7-9 need not be seen as deriving from a rival Baptist or otherwise “pre-Christian” source.

The fact that Jesus is not referenced in vv. 7-9 is not significant since Jesus has not yet been introduced in Q’s narrative. The fact that “no human mediator of God’s final judgment” is mentioned might be more significant if the saying were not so laden with metaphors and if these verses were not followed immediately by vv. 16b-17 where such a human mediator *is* referenced (→2.2.8.3.).

Risto Uro argues that John’s message in Q 3:7-9+16b-17 is mostly of “Christian”

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Zeph 1-2:3.

¹⁵⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 104.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. 7:1-10; 10:13-15; 11:31-32; 13:28-29; 14:15-24. See further Meyer, “Gentile Mission,” 405-417; Bird, *Gentile Mission*, 58-121.

provenance.¹⁶¹ He regards vv. 16b-17 as wholly Christian and vv. 7-9 as a composite, with vv. 8bc being a Christian interpolation into more primitive Baptist source material.

Precious little remains, then, that Uro can attribute to his putative Baptist source. And not even the small bit of material in vv. 7-8a+9 seems obviously of Baptist provenance in my judgment. The only supposed Baptist indicators would be the fact that John is mentioned and that no christological claims about Jesus are made—hardly sufficient grounds for a hypothesis about Baptist material being used here.

If the portrayal of John in vv. 7-9 does not seem characteristic of the Jesus movement this can be attributed to the author's interest in casting John as a typical prophetic figure, ideas for which he would have drawn from scripture rather than Jesus traditions. I mentioned how v. 8bc potentially fits with Q's perspective on Gentiles. It should also be noted that the portrayal of John here as an agent of repentance coheres nicely with Q's conception of John as Elijah (→2.2.8.4.). I remain unconvinced therefore that any of the material in vv. 7-9 is of Baptist provenance.

2.2.4. Was Luke 3:10-14 part of Q?

I do not regard Luke 3:10-14 as part of Q but have relegated the discussion here to Appendix I.

2.2.5. Establishing the text of 3:16b-17

Given its parallel in Mark 1:8, some doubt can be raised about whether the baptism saying at 3:16 really derives from Q. The alternative would be that Matthew and Luke simply derived the saying from Mark. But this alternative is implausible for several

¹⁶¹ Uro, "Movement," 231-55.

reasons.¹⁶² The saying in Q 3:17 clearly derives from Q since it is absent in Mark. With its hanging pronoun οὗ this saying requires a subject from the preceding verse. Verse 17 therefore “must have stood in Q.”¹⁶³ There are also several minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark which further suggest 3:16 was derived from Q:

Matthew and Luke	Mark
put the clause about the coming mighty figure’s sandals <i>between</i> the saying contrasting John’s baptism and that of the coming figure	puts the saying about the coming figure’s sandals <i>before</i> that one contrasting John’s and the coming figure’s baptism.
use the present tense of βαπτίζω with respect to John’s baptism	uses an aorist of βαπτίζω
place ὑμᾶς <i>before</i> the verb when the coming baptism is being described	places ὑμᾶς <i>after</i> the verb
use μέν ... δέ construction	_____
use ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί	uses ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ

We are clearly dealing here with a Q saying. This saying’s appearance in Mark’s Gospel is best attributed to Mark’s use of Q. That is to say, the Mark-Q overlap that was noted at 3:2-3 resumes here.¹⁶⁴ Mark has omitted καὶ πυρί in v. 16e and the whole of v. 17 for the same reason he omitted vv. 7-9, namely, because he did not wish to imply that Jesus, at his first coming, would execute judgment on humanity (→2.3.2.1.).

2.2.5.1. ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ ἰσχυρότερος, and ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ἔστιν

The next textual issue that needs to be resolved concerns the key phrase or title that John applies to his expected figure:

- Luke’s version of Q 3:16c uses ὁ ἰσχυρότερος (a substantive adjective) and the finite verb ἔρχεται: ἔρχεται δὲ ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου. This agrees in large measure with Mark 1:7: ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου. Luke’s and Mark’s use of a finite verb also

¹⁶² Tuckett, *History*, 109 n. 5; Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, 93.

¹⁶³ Bultmann, *History*, 168.

¹⁶⁴ So, e.g., Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 31-39; Catchpole, “Beginning,” 213-221.

coheres nicely with other sayings in Q: 7:34 (ἐλήλυθεν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου); 12:39 (ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται); 12:40 (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται); 12:43 (ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ ἐλθών); 12:46 (ἦξει ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου); also, Luke's and Mark's version of Q 3:16 matches quite well with another version of the saying in John 1:30 (ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ).

- Matthew's version of the saying, by contrast, uses the substantive participle ὁ ἐρχόμενος and ἰσχυρότερος as a predicate adjective: ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν (Matt 3:11). This agrees with Q 7:19, 20 and 13:35 where the same substantive participle is used with reference to Jesus/the Son of man. It also agrees with Acts 19:4 (τὸν ἐρχόμενον μετ' αὐτοῦ) and John 1:15 and 27 (ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος).

The nearly verbatim agreement between Luke and Mark might seem most readily attributable to the former's use of the latter. Matthew's version could then be taken to preserve the original wording of Q. But Luke has been using Q up to this point and it is therefore likely that he is using it here as well. What makes the Q text so difficult to establish here is the fact that Mark appears to have been using Q. If that is so one could just as well argue that he and Luke followed Q while Matthew harmonized Q 3:16 with Q 7:19, 20.¹⁶⁵

This difficult issue can be best resolved by examining Q at the compositional level. As many commentators have noted, the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος reappears elsewhere in Q and functions as a leitmotif.¹⁶⁶

(1) John prophesies about ὁ ἐρχόμενος (3:16c);

¹⁶⁵ As noted by Dunderberg, "Beginning," 503. . Dunderberg himself does not accept that there is a Mark-Q overlap here. Lambrecht, "Mark 1.1-15," 363-66, 372-75.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. Hoffmann, *Studien*, 177; Robinson, "Sayings Gospel," 362-66; Fleddermann, "Plot," 46-48; Allison, *Jesus Tradition*, 6-7.

(2) John asks if Jesus is ὁ ἐρχόμενος (7:19);

It is only if we reconstruct Q 3:16c to read ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος that this leitmotif will be discernible. In fact, Q's compositional strategy here extends beyond this rather simple repetition of a term. Much of the material intervening between these two references to ὁ ἐρχόμενος appears to have been carefully organized as well. Note that at 7:19, when John asks if Jesus is ὁ ἐρχόμενος, Jesus replies in v. 22 by pointing him back to certain actions he had performed earlier in Q:

νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται	≈ Healing of the Centurion's Servant (7:1-10).
πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται	= the Sermon in 6:20ff. (cf. esp. οἱ πτωχοὶ in v. 20).

The term ὁ ἐρχόμενος will occur one last time in Q at 13:35.¹⁶⁷ Here Jesus applies the term to himself. In Q, this saying likely stood near the opening of a section which itself began and ended with eschatological material (13:24-22:30).¹⁶⁸ Reappearing here within this eschatological section, ὁ ἐρχόμενος would have helped to frame this entire section in light of Q's Prologue where the phrase had appeared:

As in the Days of Noah [and Lot] (17:26-29+30)	≈ πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου (3:3)
Redefinition of God's people (13:29-30)	≈ God to raise up children to Abraham (3:8b-c)
References to the coming Son of man (11:30; 12:40, 43, 46; [14:21]; 17:24, 26, 30)	≈ ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν (3:16c)

If Q's John had used the finite verb ἔρχεται at Q 3:16c, much of this nicely developing plot and thematic artifice would be undercut. It seems fairly certain, therefore, that the version of Q known to the synoptic writers attested ὁ ἐρχόμενος at 3:16, not ἔρχεται.¹⁶⁹

How, then, is ἰσχυρότερός μου in this saying to be explained? One possibility is that the words were introduced by Mark and then assimilated into Matthew's and Luke's

¹⁶⁷ Cp. what follows with the comments of Uro, "Movement," 242-43.

¹⁶⁸ See Fleddermann, *Q*, 116-119.

¹⁶⁹ Contra Meier (*Marginal Jew*, 2.79 n. 76, 199 n. 90) who thinks Matthew manufactured the connection with 7:19 by interjecting the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος here. See also Ernst, *Täufer*, 50.

Gospels.¹⁷⁰ John 1:27 is often cited in support of this view since the Fourth Evangelist omits ἰσχυρότερος from his version of Q 3:16c. But as Fledderman explains, ἰσχυρότερός μου ἔστιν needed to drop out at John 1:27 because the evangelist prefaced the phrase with the words: μέσος ὑμῶν ἔστηκεν ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε. It would have been difficult to portray the Baptist as prophesying about someone “mightier” than himself while at the same time declaring that this figure was presently standing among the crowds unrecognized.¹⁷¹ There are other reasons too for doubting that John 1:27 preserves a more primitive version of the saying at Q 3:16c. The Fourth Gospel was written much later than Q after all and was plausibly dependent on the synoptic Gospels.¹⁷² An original version of Q 3:16c that omitted ἰσχυρότερός μου also seems implausible because it would mean that Matthew and Luke, acting independently of one another, used Q as their main source and then combed back through Mark’s Gospel, picked out this individual element, and incorporated it into their respective gospels. Such a procedure might not be inconceivable but it would be rather coincidental.

The words ἰσχυρότερός μου ἔστιν anticipate the saying about the sandals in v. 16d. This seems like positive evidence for the words being originally in Q. Indeed, if they were not originally in Q one would have to posit a rather complicated theory as to how the saying evolved into the various forms attested in the triple tradition. Kloppenborg,¹⁷³ for example, proposes that at some pre-Q and pre-“Christian” stage the saying had simply read:

ε ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ε ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί

¹⁷⁰ So, e.g., Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 84-85.

¹⁷¹ Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 33 n. 31; see also idem, *Q*, 223; Uro, “Movement,” 235-36.

¹⁷² See, e.g., Neiryneck, “Synoptics”; idem, “Moody Smith”; idem, “Recent Commentaries”; Dvorak, “Relationship,” 201-213; but cf. North, *Journey*, 94-112. See Dwight Moody Smith (*John*) for a discussion of various views on John’s relationship with the synoptics. More disputable, but also worth considering, are the views of Brodie, *Quest*. Brodie posits that the Fourth Gospel was familiar with all three synoptics as well as Acts and Ephesians.

¹⁷³ So, e.g., Kloppenborg, “City and Wasteland,” 148-149.

Subsequently, v. 16d was inserted:

ε ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος δ οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς λύσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ ε
ὕμῃς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί

This edit left the clause in v. 16c to stand as an incomplete thought. To remedy this, the same redactor inserted αὐτός at the beginning of 16e to function as a “resumptive pronoun,” completing the thought of 16c. Finally, when Matthew and Luke composed their gospels, they inserted ἰσχυρότερος μου ἐστίν from Mark’s Gospel and thus produced the more elaborate versions of the saying found in Matthew and Luke.

A more parsimonious and perfectly reasonable proposal would be that all three synoptic writers derived ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν from Q in the first place. Mark shows no special interest in subordinating John to Jesus elsewhere in his Gospel. And aside from 1:7 the adjective ἰσχυρός only occurs in Mark’s Gospel at 3:27. Indeed, in this case the saying is most likely taken over by Mark from Q 11:21-22.¹⁷⁴ Ἰσχυρός here is used not of Jesus but of Satan. Yet the person binding this “strong man” would presumably be a *stronger* man (= ὁ ἰσχυρότερος), that is, Jesus.¹⁷⁵ The saying at Q 11:22 is therefore best seen as an anaphoric statement, hearkening back on the earlier use of ὁ ἰσχυρότερος at Q 3:16c.

2.2.5.2. ὀπίσω μου

Luke’s version of Q 3:16 omits the words ὀπίσω μου while Matthew’s, Mark’s, and John’s versions attest the phrase. The phrase could be seen as secondary, given how it encumbers the saying and given the possibility that Matthew and John have simply conflated Q with Mark. But there are better reasons for regarding it as original to Q. Most notable of these is its multiple attestation. Even Luke appears to have known the phrase, despite the fact that he omits it in Luke 3:16; for in Acts 13:25 and 19:4 he uses μετ’ ἐμέ

¹⁷⁴ See Fleddermann, *Q*, 484-88. In Mark 2:17 the cognate ἰσχυρός is used but not in any reference to Jesus (implicit or otherwise).

¹⁷⁵ Allison, *Constructing*, 278.

in the place of ὀπίσω μου.

A good explanation can be offered as to why Luke omitted the phrase at Luke 3:16 and used the alternative μετ' ἐμέ at Acts 13:25 and 19:4. Kendrick Grobel argues that ὀπίσω μου would have been most naturally understood not as a temporal phrase (“after me *with respect to time*”) but a spatial one (“after me *with respect to my location*”).¹⁷⁶ On John’s lips the phrase would have therefore conjured up an image of the Coming One following behind John as a disciple would have followed behind his master. Luke’s awareness of this idiom is evident from Luke 9:23 and 14:27. In Q, the idiom was probably intended to be ironic: “Although the Coming One will be my own disciple, I will not be worthy to perform for him even the most demeaning of tasks.” Luke might not have caught the irony, or he might have simply found the imagery or the idea of Jesus following behind John as one of his followers/disciples unacceptable.

The arguments favouring ὀπίσω μου as original to Q thus clearly outweigh those that can be raised against it. In light of this, it is surprising that certain commentators do not consider the phrase to have been part of Q.¹⁷⁷

2.2.5.3. τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι (Matt 3:11) or λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ (Luke 3:16)?

In discussing this particular issue it will be helpful to lay out the five different versions of this saying attested in the New Testament:

Matt 3:11	οὐκ εἰμι <u>ἱκανὸς</u> τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι
Mark 1:7	οὐκ εἰμι <u>ἱκανὸς</u> κύψας <u>λῦσαι</u> τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων <u>αὐτοῦ</u>
Luke 3:16	οὐκ εἰμι <u>ἱκανὸς</u> <u>λῦσαι</u> τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων <u>αὐτοῦ</u>
John 1:27	οὐκ εἰμι ἐγὼ <u>ἄξιός</u> ἵνα <u>λύσω</u> <u>αὐτοῦ</u> τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος
Acts 13:25	ἀλλ' ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται μετ' ἐμέ οὐκ εἰμι <u>ἄξιός</u> τὸ ὑπόδημα τῶν ποδῶν <u>λῦσαι</u>

¹⁷⁶ Grobel, “After Me,” 397-401. He is followed by Taylor, *Mark*, 156-157; Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, 113-114; Fleddermann, *Q*, 219; Wink, *John the Baptist*, 55; Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 472-73.

¹⁷⁷ E.g. Schulz, *Q*, 368; Arens, *ἤλθον-Sayings*, 289.

Despite their differences, the general agreement here between the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John, as well as Acts, over against Matthew, is striking. Acts 13:25 appears to be a loosely worded paraphrase of Luke 3:16 (cf. μετ' ἐμέ, ἄξιος, τῶν ποδῶν). John's version may be dependent on Luke's or Mark's version, assuming the Fourth Evangelist was familiar with either of these Gospels.¹⁷⁸

I have judged Matthew's version to be secondary as it looks to be a simplification of one of the other bulky and cumbersome versions.¹⁷⁹ The use of ἄξιος in Acts and John is best seen as a later adjustment.¹⁸⁰ Acts and John were both written in the late first century so there is also reason to doubt that they would have preserved the most primitive wording. Indeed, ἄξιος was more commonly used in the New Testament so ἱκανός, its less fashionable synonym, was probably just replaced by the later evangelists. The original Q version appears to have had John saying that he was not worthy (ἱκανός) to loosen (probably aor. infin. λῦσαι) the strap (τὸν ἱμάντα) of [his] sandals (τῶν ὑποδημάτων [αὐτοῦ]). The pronoun αὐτοῦ might not have been used¹⁸¹ but this is somewhat inconsequential for our purposes. Even without it, the sandals would have certainly been understood to be the Coming One's, not John's.¹⁸²

2.2.5.4. ἐν πνεύματι, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, ἐν πυρί, or ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί?

Did the original version of Q have John speak of the Coming One baptising “with the Spirit” only (a conjectural reconstruction), “with the Holy Spirit” (= Mark, John), “with fire” only (conjectural), or “with the Holy Spirit and fire” (= Matt, Luke)?

A reconstruction of ἐν πνεύματι here is usually dismissed as problematic since it is

¹⁷⁸ See n. 172.

¹⁷⁹ So Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 1.173 n. 79; Fleddermann, “Coming One,” 379; idem, *Q*, 219-20. Cfr. *CritEd*, 14-15: τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι. This reconstruction can be argued on the basis of an analogous phrase at Q 10:4, which probably read: μὴ βαστάζετε ... ὑποδήματα.

¹⁸⁰ Fleddermann, *Q*, 220.

¹⁸¹ See Fleddermann, *Q*, 220.

¹⁸² This despite the arguments of Bretscher, “Sandals,” 81-87 (→Appendix K).

purely conjectural, not being attested in any extant version of the saying, despite the fact that the saying occurs six times in the NT: Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:15. But while this may seem like good reason to reject the reconstruction it is not in itself sufficient. At Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; and 11:15 we do at least have the clause ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ being used without the additional καὶ πυρί. And one could argue with some justification that ἁγίῳ at Luke 3:16 is secondary.¹⁸³ It is at least theoretically possible, then, that in an early version of this saying John's baptism ἐν ὕδατι had been contrasted with the Coming One's baptism ἐν πνεύματι. This reconstruction would have the advantage of being structurally balanced. It faces another problem, however, because it does not offer us very good options for explaining how the different versions of the saying originated.

Many commentators consider the phrase (τὸ) πνεῦμα (τὸ) ἅγιον to have been characteristic of the early Jesus movement and on this basis have questioned whether it is original at Q 3:16.¹⁸⁴ The phrase here is often regarded as a Markan element that Matthew and Luke brought over into their own versions of the Q saying. Underlying this reconstruction, however, is a tacit assumption that the material being used here in Q was taken from a Baptist source. The logic goes something like this: a saying derived from a Baptist source would surely not have used an expression so at home in the Jesus movement! Such a source would have likely reflected the original teachings of John who we all know anticipated a coming judgment only, not an outpouring of God's "Holy Spirit." I am obviously not convinced by this kind of reasoning. I argue throughout this thesis and in Appendix E that Q's redactor(s) do not utilize Baptist sources, either in the

¹⁸³ So, e.g., Todd, "Logia," 174; Barrett, *Holy Spirit*, 124-125. While ἁγίῳ here occurs in nearly all witnesses it is omitted in a few minuscules (63 64) and in Clement of Alexandria (*Eclogue* 25), Tertullian (*Bapt.* 10), and Augustine (*Harm. Gos.* 2.12.26). The patristic authorities are quite compelling here. In my own reconstruction therefore I have placed the term in brackets.

¹⁸⁴ Manson, *Sayings*, 40-41; Schulz, *Q*, 368; Dibelius, *Täufer*, 56; Thyen, "ΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ," 98 n. 6, 101 n. 25; Hoffmann, *Studien*, 18, 28-31; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, n. 37; Catchpole, *Quest*, 11; cf. Bultmann, *History*, 246. Ἅγίῳ is often viewed as an element introduced by a Q redactor: e.g. Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 84; Taylor, *Mark*, 157; Kleinknecht *et al.*, "πνεῦμα," 399.

present saying or anywhere else.¹⁸⁵ Arguments here about what the historical John could or could not have said actually confuse *what was historical* with *what was original to Q*. Whether the historical John ever really spoke of “the Holy Spirit” is, when reconstructing Q, something of a moot point because the John of Q may well be a projection of what Jesus’ followers wanted him to be.

I think it can be quite confidently deduced that πνεύματι was present in Q 3:16e. It occurs in all six versions of this saying in the NT. Also, it is probably too coincidental to imagine that Matthew and Luke, while writing independently of one another, extracted this one element from Mark’s Gospel and inserted it into their narratives without alteration.¹⁸⁶ Nothing else would suggest that either Matthew or Luke were using Mark here. The two evangelists (or at least Matthew) therefore seem to have derived ἄγιω from Q. I believe that Mark did so as well. A reference here to “the Holy Spirit” would have cohered with other sayings in Q: 3:22; 12:10, 12(?), and possibly 11:20 (assuming the original Q phrase here is ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ rather than Luke’s ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ¹⁸⁷). It would have cohered well with other NT writings too.¹⁸⁸ The Holy Spirit was obviously an important theological concept/experience in the early Jesus movement. Why, then should we be so sceptical about its originality at 3:16?

If Mark used Q, as I take to be the case, he likely omitted the fire reference for the same reason that he omitted references to coming judgment in Q 3:7-9, 17 (→2.2.2.1.).

2.2.6. Issues of tradition and redaction in 3:16b-17

In my attempt to reconstruct the text of Q I have already touched upon a few of the issues surrounding the tradition and redaction in the verses. In this section I am no longer

¹⁸⁵ I address this issue with respect to the present saying in 2.2.6. and its subsections.

¹⁸⁶ See Scobie, *Baptist*, 70-73.

¹⁸⁷ See the compelling argument by Fleddermann (*Q*, 483-84) in support of ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ here. Fleddermann (*Mark and Q*, 37) had previously argued that ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ was not in Q.

¹⁸⁸ Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12, 14; Heb 2:4; 6:4; 1 John 3:24; Jude 19-20; etc.

concerned with establishing the text of Q—at least in the form known to Matthew and Luke—but shall probe instead into whether the Q redactor(s) utilized any “pre-Q” tradition or whether the “original Q” composition was subsequently redacted.

Earlier I mentioned that certain commentators think ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ in Q 3:16c is attributable to Matthew’s and Luke’s mutual use of Mark rather than their use of Q. These commentators think that Q spoke only of a baptism ἐν πυρί. Other commentators do not necessarily deny that ἐν πνεύματι or ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ was present in Q, at least at some stage in its redactional development. But they think this phrase, either in part or the whole, was inserted by one of Q’s *later* redactors (e.g. Q², Q³, etc.). Jacobson, for example, argues that at Q’s earliest stage the saying expressed a simple contrast between John’s baptism “in water” and the Coming One’s singular baptism “in spirit/wind and fire.” The two baptisms stood in contrast: John’s was understood to be redemptive and the Coming One’s was expected to deal “exclusively with judgment.”¹⁸⁹ This view is problematic. First, the term ἁγίῳ appears in every version of the saying and this hardly accords with reading πνεῦμα here as a metaphor for judgment. Second, the word that Q uses elsewhere for “wind” is not πνεῦμα but ἄνεμος (6:48, 49; 7:24). Third, it is difficult not to see a parallelism being drawn between the Coming One’s expected actions mentioned in v. 16e and those in v. 17. In v. 17 this figure’s ministry is characterized in terms that are *both* salvific (“he will gather the wheat into the granary”) *and* judgmental (“the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire”). This dual ministry would correspond nicely with v. 16 only if the Coming One’s baptism “in the [Holy] Spirit” were taken as a positive blessing for the righteous and the baptism “in fire” had referred to a negative punishment for the wicked (or, perhaps if the saying referred to a single baptism—one “with the [Holy] Spirit and fire”—which would have positive *results* for the righteous and negative ones for the wicked). A positive aspect to the saying in v. 16e is also implied because

¹⁸⁹ Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 84.

there is no indication ... that those addressed will escape the future ‘baptism’ completely. If that were the case, we would expect something like ‘I baptize you with water so that he who is coming will *not* baptize you...’. Thus it seems unlikely that the predicted baptism is one which is wholly destructive for everyone.¹⁹⁰

Others think a primitive version of the saying—either at the pre-Q stage or the earliest stage of Q—had John speaking only of an expected figure baptizing “with fire.”¹⁹¹ This would have created a clear antithetical parallelism between John’s and the expected figure’s respective baptisms:

16b ἐγὼ μὲν ὕδατι βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι ... ε αὐτὸς δὲ ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πυρὶ

I shall come to the issue of whether the saying originally contained 16cd in a moment. For now, my focus shall be on whether John’s baptism ἐν ὕδατι was, at some stage of its transmission, contrasted with a coming baptism ἐν πυρὶ.

The biggest problem with the above reconstruction is that it is purely conjectural, not being attested in any extant version of the saying. As such, its only positive “evidence” is its poetic symmetry. I explained earlier why this is not a firm enough critical basis for establishing an original “Q” text, given the agreement between Matthew and Luke, and their unlikely derivation of ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ from Mark (→2.3.5.5.). Moreover, since symmetry is by no means a mark of primitivity (after all, most texts are composed with no concern for symmetry) this argument, by itself, cannot sufficiently establish a “pre-Q” text either. Indeed, one could argue that originally another kind of symmetry was at play in the composer’s mind. I just mentioned that the description in v. 17 about what the Coming One will do—that is, bring both salvation and condemnation—would have corresponded nicely with v. 16 if only the baptism with the Holy Spirit could be understood as a positive blessing and the baptism with fire could be understood as a punishment. Risto Uro regards

¹⁹⁰ Tuckett, *History*, 122.

¹⁹¹ Hoffmann, *Studien*, 31-33; Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 104; Catchpole, *Quest*, 71-72; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 146; Fledderman, *Mark and Q*, 37; but Fleddermann now (idem, *Q*, 230-31 n. 70) accepts that ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ was part of Q.

καὶ πυρί as an insertion made by one of Q's late redactors and thinks that Mark actually preserves a more primitive version of the saying, which the evangelist derived from a pre-Q source.¹⁹² As Uro sees it, the portrayal of John as an apocalyptic preacher in Q 3:7-9+16b-17 conforms to a late redactional stratum in Q, the same stratum in which a great deal of other apocalyptic material was inserted.¹⁹³ The Q redactor borrowed the fire imagery from v. 9 and introduced it into v. 16e in order to bring the baptism saying in v. 16b+e together with John's fiery preaching in vv. 7-9.¹⁹⁴ The redactor also added the saying in v. 17, which employs yet another fire metaphor. On Uro's analysis, the baptism saying in v. 16b+e was also of "Christian" rather than Baptist provenance (even before καὶ πυρί was added by another Q redactor). This saying, which contrasted John's baptism "in water" with Jesus' baptism "in the [Holy] Spirit," reflected a perceived need among Jesus' followers—former Baptist members such as they were—to define themselves over against their mother movement: while John baptised with water, Jesus did not baptize at all but was a charismatic miracle worker and his followers are now the recipients of the Spirit through "Christian baptism."

There are several problems with Uro's redactional analysis here. First, it would only hold up if Mark had been unfamiliar with Q, at least the version of Q used by Matthew and Luke. After all, these evangelists both attest καὶ πυρί so if Mark derived the saying from Q his omission of this element would have to be attributed to Mark's redaction of Q rather than Matthew and Luke independently choosing to insert a phrase that did not exist in Q.¹⁹⁵ Second, there is good reason to think that the historical Jesus had engaged in a water baptism ministry.¹⁹⁶ If that is correct, it is difficult to see what a Q redactor would have hoped to achieve by contrasting John-the-baptizer with Jesus-the-charismatic (who did not

¹⁹² Uro, "Movement," 247-52.

¹⁹³ The stratum would correspond to Kloppenborg's "Q²." On this supposed redactional stratum, see the discussion below (→ 2.3.5.2).

¹⁹⁴ Uro, "Movement," 246, 248-49.

¹⁹⁵ See Fleddermann, "Mark and Q," 37-38; idem, *Q*, 222.

¹⁹⁶ See further France, "Jesus the Baptist," 103-125; Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 294-99; Taylor and Adinolfi, "Baptist," 247-84; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.118-130. →

baptize). Third, I suggested earlier that Mark's redactional agenda prompted him to omit all of the apocalyptic elements in Q 3:7-9+16b-17 because he did not want to give his readers the impression that John expected Jesus to usher in the day of judgment at his first coming (→2.2.2.1.). Fourth, if a single redactor had been responsible for inserting ἐν πυρί in v. 16b in order to link it with v. 9 and for creating the saying in v. 17 we should probably have expected the fire metaphor to be employed more consistently. That metaphor in v. 16 is admittedly vague. But in v. 9 the metaphor is of a barren tree being burned whereas the one in v. 17 is of wheat chaff being burned.

John Meier also regards καὶ πυρί as a secondary insertion but makes his case much differently than Uro.¹⁹⁷ Meier notes that two references to this saying—found in Acts 1:5 and 11:16—omit the fire reference. He argues that with Luke's special interest in the story about the "tongues of fire" descending on Jesus' early followers (Acts 2), the evangelist would have had excellent reason to include a reference to fire in Acts 1:5 and 11:16, had he been simply reflecting back on the Q saying he quoted back in Luke 3:16. This suggests that in Acts 1:5 and 11:16 he was not composing things *ad lib*, hearkening back on his earlier reference, but was scrupulously following another source which omitted καὶ πυρί. Meier also appeals to Acts 13:25. This version of the saying mentions nothing about the coming baptism but it agrees with John 1:27, against the synoptics, in its use of ἄξιος instead of ἰκανός. Meier takes this as further evidence that Luke (like John) had access to another source besides just Mark or Q.

Meier's theory about independent source material here is unconvincing. The Fourth Evangelist was arguably familiar with Mark.¹⁹⁸ If so, he would have been familiar with Mark's version of the saying which omits the fire reference. John's knowledge of Q would also explain how he knew about the sandals saying. The word ἄξιος is an obvious synonym for ἰκανός and so its occurrence in both Acts 13:25 and John 1:27 is probably

¹⁹⁷ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.36-37. Cf. also Ellis, *Luke*, 90; Laufen, *Doppeliüberlieferungen*, 107-108.

¹⁹⁸ See n. 224 above.

just coincidental and can be explained in the way we suggested earlier (→ 2.3.5.4.).

Luke's omission of *καὶ πυρί* in Acts 1:5 and 11:16 can be attributed either to influence from Mark 1:8 or to Luke's desire to simplify the saying (he might have expected his readers to recall the saying in its fuller form, which he had already cited at Luke 3:16).

Regarding Meier's other point about the story in Acts 2, it should be noted that in the book of Acts baptism in the Holy Spirit is only accompanied by tongues of fire on one occasion—during Pentecost. The other recorded instances only describe persons being filled with the Holy Spirit, sometimes with accompanying signs such as the ability to speak boldly, prophesy, or speak in tongues (e.g. Acts 4:31; 9:17-18; 10:46; 13:9-11; 19:6). For Luke, then, baptism in the Spirit was not inextricably associated with “fire.” Hence, there seems no good reason to think the evangelist was accessing a more primitive version of John's saying about the coming baptism, either at Acts 1:5 or 11:16.

2.2.6.1. The complicated case of Q 3:16

2.2.6.1.1. A few influential theories: Laufen, Catchpole, Kloppenborg, and Tuckett

To proceed with my discussion on tradition and redaction in Q 3:16b-17 I shall now have to sort through some of the theories that have been proposed with respect to v. 16.

Many commentators observe that the saying here would read more smoothly if 16cd were omitted:

16b ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι· **c** ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν· **d** εὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς λύσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ· **e** αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί·

16cd, with its emphasis on John's inferiority vis-à-vis the Coming One, seems disruptive to the basic contrast being drawn between John's and the Coming One's baptisms in 16b+e. Q 3:16 is therefore frequently judged to have been either the conflation of two

originally independent sayings (b+e and cd) or an interpolation of new material (cd) into an earlier saying (b+e).¹⁹⁹

Rudolf Laufen adopts the first of these options, positing the existence of two originally independent sayings:

- 1) ἔρχεται (ὁ) ἰσχυρότερός (μού ὀπίσω μου) οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ (ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι)
- 2) ἐγὼ βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι, ὁ δὲ ἐρχόμενος βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ²⁰⁰

The primary evidence for this view would seem to be, first, that the material in 16cd disrupts 16b+e and, secondly, that Q and Mark—which Laufen takes to have been composed independently of one another—present the material in two quite different ways—Mark as two separate sayings and Q as just one long saying. Against Laufen, it could also be argued that since Q’s version is quite cluttered by the material in 16cd it is the *lectio difficilior* and thus more primitive than Mark’s version. In his effort to create a more prosaic narrative, Mark plausibly took a structurally complex saying and transformed it into two simpler ones. Tuckett observes that the sandals saying “scarcely makes sense without something additional to say what precisely the figure whose sandals John is unworthy to untie/carry will do.”²⁰¹

Commentators more often regard Q 3:16cd as a secondary interpolation into a more primitive saying. Catchpole points out that with the exception of 3:16cd (which he calls “16c”) all the material in Q 3:7-9+16b+e-17 “is coherent with the view that John looks for the coming of God” rather than Jesus.²⁰² He takes this as evidence that in its earliest form this block was derived from “pre-Q” traditions about John which had its origins with a

¹⁹⁹ Others who see 16cd as disruptive, aside from the commentators discussed below, include: For others who see v. 16d as a “Christian” redaction, see Hoffmann, *Studien*, 32-33; Merklein, “Umkehrpredigt,” 32; Schenk, *Synopse*, 19; Jacobson, “Wisdom Christology,” 33-35; idem, *First Gospel*, 83-85; Ernst, *Täufer*, 50.

²⁰⁰ Laufen, *Doppel-überlieferungen*, 116-117.

²⁰¹ Tuckett, “Mark and Q,” 170.

²⁰² Catchpole, *Quest*, 68.

rival Baptist group. Members of this group held views that were incompatible with the christological views of Jesus' followers. For example, they held that John (rather than Jesus) was the greatest man ever to have lived (Q 7:28a) and that he had foretold the advent of God rather than Jesus/the Messiah, held that John (rather than the Messiah/Jesus). Catchpole therefore thinks that 16cd is distinctive within Q's Prologue and is therefore best seen as the product of a Q redactor who wanted to redefine John's role and downgrade his status in relation to Jesus'. With the interpolation of 16cd this redactor achieved these goals by casting John as Jesus' prophetic herald rather than as the independent prophet that he was.²⁰³ The same redactional hand is detectable at 7:27, where John is similarly cast as Jesus' forerunner, and at 28b, where Jesus (ὁ μικρότερος) is presented as "greater" (μεῖζων) than John. According to Catchpole, the material in Q 3:7-9+16b+e-17, in its pre-Q form, envisaged John as an independent prophet who warned about the advent of God.

Not all who regard 3:16cd as an interpolation take it to have been the work of a Q redactor. Kloppenborg is impressed with the fact that 16cd is multiply attested in the Gospel traditions (Q 3:16; Mark 1:7; John 1:27; Acts 13:25) and concludes from this that the interpolation *pre-dated* Q.²⁰⁴ But this reasoning is dubious because it assumes that the synoptic writers, the Fourth Gospel, and the saying in Acts represent independent traditions.²⁰⁵ My own view is that these sources are all *interdependent* (though perhaps not in the same way or to the same extent). If that is correct then Kloppenborg's appeal to multiple attestation must be deemed indeterminate in establishing the saying's original wording in Q.

A more compelling argument against Catchpole and others who assign 16cd to a redactional stage of Q is offered by Tuckett. He points out that if a Q redactor had indeed been interested in downgrading John vis-à-vis Jesus we should not expect his literary

²⁰³ Catchpole, *Quest*, 67-68; idem, "Beginning," 206.

²⁰⁴ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 104-105.

²⁰⁵ Kloppenborg is similarly criticized by Tuckett, "Mark and Q," 169-170.

footprint on Q to have been so negligible and ineffective.²⁰⁶ However extensively redacted Q may be in the version that comes down to us through Matthew and Luke, its portrayal of John remains overwhelmingly positive. Q's Prologue features him as its central character and as a divinely inspired prophet (3:2-3+7-9+16b-17). It reaffirms his prophecies elsewhere, making Jesus' own legitimacy dependent on them (7:18-22, 24-27). Jesus' prophecies about impending judgment and a coming figure (in this case the Son of man) are patterned on John's earlier prophecies (cf. 12:40, 43, 46, 49; 19:23). Q portrays John and Jesus as co-workers and ambassadors of divine wisdom, both men having been sent out to minister to "this generation" and be rejected by it (7:31-35). Moreover, the unit in 7:29-35 (which immediately followed 7:28) presents John and Jesus as fellow ministers, with no suggestion that John's ministry was any less significant than Jesus'. So at best, Catchpole will have to concede that Q's redactors had no systematic or rhetorically effective strategy for downgrading John in relation to Jesus. But the implications of Tuckett's reasons surely imply more than just this. If the material in 16cd was indeed inserted in order to downgrade John Q's redactors are unlikely to have been the ones responsible for it. Such an apologetically motivated interpolation would have needed to pre-date the composition of Q itself.

In a pre-Q *Sitz im Leben*, the saying at Q 3:16b+e-17 would have most likely circulated independently of 3:7-9. The fire metaphors in v. 9 and v. 17 are quite different. Also, there is no logical flow of thought between vv. 7-9 and vv. 16b+e-17. Removed from its present Q context, Tuckett thinks that an insertion of 16cd would have likely transformed the original 16b+e into a much more negative statement about John. He surmises that this interpolation was made at a time shortly after the lives and ministries of John and Jesus (when John's and Jesus' disciples were allegedly still on good terms) and prior to the composition of Q (when tensions were allegedly high between John's and

²⁰⁶ Tuckett, "Mark and Q," 171-172; idem, *History*, 119-120.

Jesus' disciples).²⁰⁷

Though they are quite different in their approaches, Catchpole, Kloppenborg, and Tuckett all agree on one thing: the existence of a rival Baptist sect or movement in the decades following John's death. Their reconstructions of the earliest version of Q 3:16 are all premised on this idea. If the evidence for such a sect/community turns out to be unfounded then so must these (and many other) commentators' speculations about pre-Q tradition and redaction. I find no such evidence and have chosen to address this whole rival Baptist sect hypothesis, in more general terms, in Appendix B. But for now, I shall have to remain focused on the original content of the saying at Q 3:16 and ask whether this indicates anything about a rival Baptist sect/community.

2.2.6.1.2. The supposedly disruptive character of Q 3:16cd

Those who regard Q 3:16cd as an interpolation see it as a redactor's attempt at redefining John's role in relation to Jesus (casting him as a subordinate forerunner rather than an independent prophet in his own right).²⁰⁸ But Tuckett's argument—that an interpolation of this apologetic character would have needed to occur at some point prior to the composition of Q—is compelling. Hence, there would seem to be only two viable possibilities for how we can regard 16cd: it was either (1) a *pre-Q* interpolation or (2) an original part of the saying in vv. 16b-17.

By deleting 16cd one can certainly make this saying flow more smoothly. But smoothness is often a poor indicator of originality or primitivity. I suggested earlier that Mark's interest in producing a more prosaic narrative prompted him to splice one complex saying—i.e. Q 3:16—into two smoothly flowing ones. So the smoothness of Mark's wording in Mark 1:7-8 is actually better taken as evidence of redactional tampering, not

²⁰⁷ Tuckett, *History*, 119-120.

²⁰⁸ Such is the interpretation advanced by Catchpole, Kloppenborg, and Tuckett, as we have seen. Other commentators could be listed here as well.

originality/primitivity. In the same way, the fact that modern scholars are able to create a smoother saying at 3:16 by excising certain material is no obvious proof that their conjectured reconstruction is actually original/more primitive.

At issue here is not whether the saying can be simplified or transformed into something more aesthetically pleasing (by modern aesthetic standards) but whether its author might have wanted to compose a saying with a slightly more complex line of thought or with a different type of structure than certain commentators are unable to recognize. Q 3:16bcde does, in fact, have a detectable chiasmic structure:

A ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι

B ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς λύσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ²⁰⁹

A' αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί

There is much evidence to suggest that ancient authors often aspired to create such chiasmic structures in their writings.²¹⁰ In fact, there is at least one other saying in Q that compares nicely to the present one. As Fleddermann points out, the God and Mammon saying at Q 16:13 “has a similar structure with a second sentence inserted between the two halves of a parallel sentence.”²¹¹ It is unwarranted, then, to claim that 16cd is *structurally* disruptive.

The material in 16cd is also thought by some commentators to be *thematically* disruptive both within 16bcde and within the broader composition of Q. The material here portrays John as subordinate to Jesus whereas Q elsewhere portrays him as a prophet in his own right (3:7-9), as Jesus’ peer/equal (7:31-35), and even as Jesus’ superior (7:28a). It is true that in its present form 3:16 parallels 7:27 insofar as both texts portray John as a prophetic forerunner to Jesus.²¹² But 7:27 is also seen by some commentators as contextually and thematically intrusive within the larger block at Q 7:24-28a which is

²⁰⁹ One could also arrange 3:16 chiasmically by making B into two shorter statements (B and B’), the latter beginning with a pronoun answering to ὁ ἐρχόμενος.

²¹⁰ See Welch, *Chiasmus*.

²¹¹ Fleddermann, *Q*, 232.

²¹² In 7:27 this is expressly stated. In 3:16 it is implied since John’s acknowledgement of inferiority and his discipleship language envision a human rather than a divine or even an angelic being. See further the discussion below. The most obvious human being here would, of course, be Jesus.

otherwise focused on John's greatness, not his subordinate role vis-à-vis Jesus.

While John is admittedly subordinate to Jesus in 3:16cd and 7:27, his role is far from humble. He is cast as the eschatological Elijah and as the fulfilment of biblical prophecy. I shall have to discuss 7:27 a bit later (→5.3.1.). For now, suffice it to say that the verse is not at all intrusive. It actually emphasizes John's greatness as a prophet, which is precisely the thrust of vv. 24-26.

Within the larger composition of Q, 3:16cd and 7:27 are not unique in the way they cast John as Jesus' forerunner. That role is presupposed in the arrangement of material in Q's Prologue. Q's redactor(s) chose to speak of John's ministry and preaching as well as John's Baptism of Jesus in the Prologue. This precedes all the other material about Jesus' teachings and ministry. The arrangement, in effect, underscores the fact that John was acting as Jesus' forerunner (→2.3.8). John's forerunner role is likely also presupposed in 16:16.²¹³ Within the general composition of Q, then, 3:16cd does not seem thematically disruptive.

Nor does it seem thematically disruptive within In 3:16b-17 itself.²¹⁴ John's inferior status vis-à-vis the Coming One here would still be implied even if one were to remove 16cd. It would be implied, first, in the contrast drawn between the Coming One's baptism "with the Holy Spirit and fire" and John's baptism "with water" and, second, in the Coming One's expected roles in 3:17, which are cosmic in scope and as such clearly surpass John's roles of preacher, baptizer, and prophetic herald. Tuckett comments that for Q's redactors 16cd was not taken as a negative evaluation of John but "as a statement primarily seeking to underline the importance of the status of Jesus."²¹⁵ But this is just to admit that while 16cd was, at least as Tuckett supposes, inserted for the express purpose of downgrading John this purpose was entirely lost on Q's redactors who adopted the saying

²¹³ I was regrettably unable to discuss this important text in the present thesis.

²¹⁴ Contra Tuckett, *History*, 119: "...the clear qualitative distinction drawn between John and the coming figure in the 'sandals' saying does seem rather extraneous in the context of John's and perhaps fits better within a context of later rivalry between (followers of) Jesus and John."

²¹⁵ Tuckett, "Mark and Q," 172; idem, *History*, 119.

unmodified. If Q's redactors were able to miss the point of 16cd then that point must not have been very obvious or well known among Jesus' followers. That being the case, one wonders why Tuckett feels so convinced that 16cd was, in fact, really designed to downgrade John in the first place, that is, to bring him down from the more elevated position he enjoyed in earlier Baptist tradition.

From neither a *structural* nor a *thematic* standpoint, then, can it be said that 16cd is disruptive. It is integral to the saying's chiasmic structure; and its portrayal of John as someone who admitted his inferiority to the Coming One coheres thematically with the larger composition of Q and with 3:16b+e and 17. These observations suggest that 16cd was not an interpolation but was an element within the saying from the very beginning.

2.2.6.1.3. Q 3:16b-17 examined as an independent saying: could it have once circulated independently or without 16cd?

Conjectures about the redaction history of Q 3:16 often depend largely on what sort of figure commentators believe that "John" had been anticipating, whether they are thinking of the *historical* John, *pre-Q's* John, or *Q's* John.

3:16b-17 might be viewed as a pre-Q tradition if it could be shown to be intelligible apart from its wider Q context. In order for the saying to have once stood on its own the long sentence in 3:16 would have needed more than just an *implied* subject for the verb βαπτίσει or the undefined *pronoun* αὐτός. Without an antecedent to these words the saying would have been intolerably vague. Had the author (whether John or someone speaking in his name) been referring to God, as is sometimes argued, he would have surely wanted to clarify this, perhaps by using the word "God,"²¹⁶ by putting the verbs in the so-called

²¹⁶ The reference to God in v. 8 occurs in a dependent clause and is a simple passing reference. As such, it could not have functioned as the antecedent of the pronoun or subject of the verb βαπτίσει in v. 16d. And if the saying in v. 16b+e-17 once circulated independently it must have been intelligible without reference to v. 8.

“divine passive,” or by supplying some other surrogate for “God.” Similarly, if the author had been referring to a person other than God (e.g. the Messiah, Elijah, an angel) he would have surely used a proper name or a surrogate. In Q 3:16 there is no reference to “God,” no title, no proper name, and the verbs are in the active voice. However, ὁ ἐρχόμενος in 16α might have stood as a surrogate for God, the Messiah, or some other person. Thus, if we are going to posit that the saying in 3:16b+e-17 once circulated independently, ὁ ἐρχόμενος in 16α will have to be retained. And since this independent saying would have circulated independently of its present Q context we shall also have to assume that ὁ ἐρχόμενος did not function as a literary device (as it so clearly does in Q) but as a recognizable title, or at least as a “pregnant” expression that could call to mind a specific person; otherwise the saying would have still been too vague. For commentators like Bultmann, Catchpole, and Kloppenborg it could only have referred to God. But the philological evidence, which I outline in Appendix I, is capable of supporting at least two other interpretations, namely, that it referred to Elijah or the Messiah.

On its own, then, 3:16b-17 would have been quite vague. As such, one wonders why it would have been preserved as an independent saying in the first place.

2.2.6.1.4. Is John’s description of the Coming One in 3:16b-17 irreconcilable with the portrayal of Jesus in Q?

Commentators often claim that John’s prophecy about the Coming One in Q 3:16b-17 bears little resemblance to the recorded life of Jesus. From this they infer that the saying had its origins in Baptist circles rather than in the Jesus movement:

The prediction of the coming apocalyptic figure—either God himself or some supra-human (angelic?) figure—is arguably of Baptist provenance since the title ὁ ἐρχόμενος is not obviously Christian and since the description of that figure accords so poorly with the activity of Jesus.²¹⁷

²¹⁷ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 104. See also Dunn, *Spirit*, 61.

When Kloppenborg speaks here of “the activity of Jesus” here he is presumably referring to his so-called “earthly ministry.” Kloppenborg’s reasoning therefore fails to take into consideration the fact that Q sets up a two-stage fulfilment of John’s prophecies (see Excursus A). We need not inquire, simply, whether John’s prophecies about the Coming One correspond to the activity of the *earthly* Jesus but the *returning* Jesus as well.

Before I proceed with this inquiry I would like to point out that in 3:16b-17 we are dealing with *metaphorical language*. In fact, much of John’s preaching in Q’s Prologue is laden with metaphors:

- i** he calls his audience “offspring of vipers”;
- ii** he urges his audience to “make the fruit worthy of repentance”;
- iii** he speaks of God’s ability to raise up “stones” as children to Abraham;
- iv** he warns, “the axe already lies at the root of the trees” and “every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire”;
- v** he speaks of being unworthy to “untie” the Coming One’s “sandals”;
- vi** he says that the Coming One will baptize
 - (a)** with the Holy Spirit and
 - (b)** with fire;
- vii** he adds that this figure’s “winnowing fork is in his hand” and he will
 - (a)** clear away his threshing floor,
 - (b)** gather the wheat into the granary, and
 - (c)** burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Metaphors can, of course, be ambiguous. And that is certainly the case in vv. 16b-17, which we are specifically concerned with here.

Earlier I argued that v. 16 included the phrase ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί. But can the

Jesus of Q be understood, either in his first or second coming, as one who baptizes “in the Holy Spirit and fire”? In the commentary section below I argue that two different baptisms are envisioned in this saying: the baptism in the Holy Spirit refers to an eschatological outpouring of God’s Spirit; the baptism in fire refers to a punishment against the wicked (→2.2.8.2.).

Taking these metaphors each in turn, let us first ask whether Q associates Jesus with the outpouring of the Spirit. That would seem so. In Jesus’ Baptism by John—which I argue derives from Q (→3.2.1.)—the Spirit descends on Jesus (Q 3:22). We also find displays of the Spirit in Jesus’ earthly life (Q 11:20(?); 12:10, 12(?)). Less evidence can be cited from Q showing that he conveyed the Spirit on others. Nevertheless, his own Spirit-endued powers are manifest in his disciples when they heal the sick (10:9). There is also a theoretical basis for “the Q community” to have believed in an outpouring of God’s Spirit. In other writings of the New Testament, Jesus’ early followers clearly associate the outpouring of God’s Spirit with Jesus’ ascension into heaven (Acts 2; 1 Cor 12-14; Eph 4:7-14, etc.). While Q, outside of 3:16, does not speak of an outpouring of God’s Spirit, it does take for granted Jesus’ ascension.²¹⁸ There is at least a theoretical basis, then, for the Q redactor(s) to have associated this event with his/their expectations about the outpouring of God’s Spirit.

In v. 17 John’s language presumes an understanding of the multi-step harvesting process, according to which grain is cut and gathered, threshed (struck repeatedly with a flail in order to release the grain), winnowed (with the grain being thrown up into the air in order to separate the chaff), and stored. The remaining chaff is then gathered up and burned. Only part of this complex process is envisioned in John’s preaching. The words οὗ τὸ πύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ διακαθᾶραι τὴν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ are commonly interpreted as

²¹⁸ Q clearly presupposes Jesus’ death by crucifixion (14:27; cf. 11:49-51; 13:34-35) and yet expects him to return as the Son of man (12:39-40, 42-46; 17:23-24, 26-30; 19:12-26). These two premises imply belief in an ascension.

referring to the act of winnowing.²¹⁹ But Robert Webb points out that the Greek word for winnowing is not διακαθαίρω but λικμάω and διασπείρω or its synonym διασκορπίζω.²²⁰ He also notes that the word for “winnowing *fork*” is not πύον but θρίναξ. The former term refers to the winnowing *shovel* which, according to Webb, “was used to heap up the grain before the winnowing as well as to gather the wheat and straw into piles after the winnowing was completed.”²²¹ Webb emphasizes the latter function here. Finally, he notes that in John’s preaching the Coming One is not expected to purge *the grain* but *the threshing floor* (ἡ ἄλωνα). The purging therefore refers to the end of the harvesting process, after the winnowing is complete and when the grain and chaff are being removed from the threshing floor. Webb concludes that in John’s understanding the Coming One would not be engaged in the winnowing process at all. The winnowing is performed by John himself. The Coming One will simply remove the wheat and chaff from off the threshing floor, placing the former in the granary and tossing the latter into the fire.

With these general remarks about the metaphorical language in v. 17 let us continue our inquiry as to whether John’s preaching about the Coming One can be seen as having any fulfilment in the person of Jesus.

I shall focus first on John’s fire metaphor. Another fire metaphor had been used in v. 16e where John speaks of a baptism “in fire and the Holy Spirit.” Can Q’s Jesus be understood as someone who baptizes with fire or who burns the chaff with unquenchable fire? The fire metaphors in both of these verses should be interpreted similarly, that is, as referring to the eschatological judgment.²²² As such, they cannot be understood as having

²¹⁹ E.g. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1.318-19.

²²⁰ Webb, *Baptizer*, 296. For the discussion that follows about Webb’s interpretation of Q 3:17, see *ibid.*, 295-300.

²²¹ Webb, *Baptizer*, 297.

²²² For fire being used with respect to the eschatological judgment, cf. 1QH 11:27-31; 14:17-19; 1QS 2:7-8, 15-17; 4:11-14; *Jub.* 9.15; *1 En.* 10.6; 54.1-6; 90.24-25; 91.7-9; 100.9; 102.1; *Pss. Sol.* 15.4-5; *Sib. Or.* 3.53-54; 4.159-161; *4 Macc.* 9.9; 12.12; *T. Jud.* 25.3; *T. Zeb.* 10.3; *4 Ezra* 7.36-38; 13.4, 10-11; *2 Bar.* 44.15; 48.39; 59.2; *3 Bar.* (*Greek rec.*) 4.16; Mark 9:43-48 *par.*; *2 Thess* 1:8; *2 Pet* 2:4-9; *Rev* 14:10-11; 20:9-15. Luke may associate John’s prophecy about the baptism “in fire and the Holy Spirit” with the experience recorded in Acts 2 where “tongues like fire” (γλῶσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός) are said to have descended and rested upon the heads of those who were filled with the Spirit. But Webb (*Baptizer*, 272-73) points out that the

any meaningful fulfilment in Jesus' first coming. In fact, some commentators have suggested that the earthly Jesus rejected John's eschatological vision, opting for a more gracious and accepting vision. This interpretation is untenable, however. Jesus may not execute fiery judgment during his earthly ministry but he does not deny or distance himself from John's message of coming judgment either. Sending out his disciples, he tells them to bestow upon any who receive them a blessing of peace (i.e. assurance against God's judgment); he then adds that any who reject their message should be shown the tokens of coming fiery wrath: "Shake off the dust of your feet. I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that city" (10:5-12). Thus, Bethsaida and Chorazin—cities where Jesus (or perhaps only his disciples) had performed miracles but where the people evidently did not repent—are denounced with the same kind of threats used by John (Q 10:13-15). A similarly ominous threat is made in 11:49-51. So with Jesus' emphasis on coming judgment he can hardly be seen as having jettisoned John's earlier expectations of fiery wrath in favour of a more gracious message of acceptance and forgiveness. John's and Jesus' expectations in Q are essentially the same. Jesus still anticipates fiery judgment as John did. Indeed, he expects to fulfil John's prophecies about this judgment in his own person when he comes a second time. This is evident from several sayings in which he speaks of his second coming as a time of exacting judgment (17:23-24, 26-30; 19:12-26). In 17:26-27 he compares his coming to the time when God sent a flood upon the world. In 17:28-29 he compares it to the time when God sent fire on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.²²³ These stories of Noah and the Ark and the Judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah are doubtless invoked as archetypes of the final judgment.²²⁴

Thus, we can safely understand John's prophecies about fiery judgment as having their

terms *γλωσσαι* and *ὡσει* do not make the link explicit. He also notes that just prior to this experience, when John's prophecy is recalled at Acts 1:5, no reference to fire is made. At any rate, even if it *Luke* associated the fire in John's baptism prophecy with the outpouring of God's Spirit this would tell us nothing about how the metaphor was intended in Q.

²²³ 17:28-29 occurs only in Luke but should be counted as part of Q since the Sodom and Gomorrah story seems to be a major theme in Q. See Kloppenborg, *Parallels*, 66, 192, 194; idem, "Wasteland," 145-160. For a contrary view, see Fleddermann, *Q*, 823-24.

²²⁴ E.g. Q 10:12; 2 Pet 2:5-10a; Jude 7.

expected fulfilment at the second coming of Jesus.

I turn now to consider some of the other metaphors mentioned in v. 17. I noted earlier that commentators often characterize John as a preacher of coming judgment and overlook or underemphasize any anticipations in his message about restoration and salvation (→2.2.8.2.). Indeed, the burning of the chaff, that is, the ultimate punishment of the wicked, should itself be understood as a redemptive act since it is executed, at least in part, in order to liberate of the righteous from their oppressors. But there is more about redemption in John's message than just this. His prophecy about the Coming One baptizing with the Holy Spirit anticipates a blessed experience for the righteous.²²⁵ And the whole reason John was enjoining repentance and baptism in the first place was because he believed that people could still repent and escape the coming punishment. Thus, he declares that the Coming One would not only "burn the chaff with unquenchable fire" but also "cleanse his threshing floor" and "gather the wheat into his granary" (v. 17).

Can any of John's *positive* metaphors here about restoration and salvation be construed as having some fulfilment in the earthly life of Jesus? I believe so. Presumably, any gathering of the wheat would need to occur *before* the burning of the chaff, not only because John mentions it first but also because this would have been the natural order of things. The imagery about burning the chaff refers, as I explained earlier, to the final judgment. It is therefore set to occur in the future. But the imagery about the storing of grain in the granary can perhaps be understood as having an earlier, if only partial and proleptic, fulfilment in Jesus' earthly ministry of healing and evangelizing (cf. esp. Q 6; 7:22; 10:3-9). The "granary" is doubtless meant as a metaphor for the kingdom of God. During his earthly ministry Jesus is surely engaged in bringing people into this kingdom (cf. 10:2-9; 11:14-15+17-20).

I believe that in Q Jesus can also be seen as a kind of separator of wheat from chaff.

²²⁵ Luke, in Acts 2, sees baptism in the Holy Spirit as a "firstfruits" of ultimate redemption. Paul, similarly, refers to it as a "guarantee" (ἀρραβών) of one's redemption (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14). In Q the Spirit is elsewhere associated with blessing (Q/Luke 12:12; Q/Matt 11:28).

Webb is probably correct that the cleansing of the threshing floor refers to the final stages of the harvesting process, not the winnowing. But we should not, for this reason, infer that in this prophecy the Coming One is not expected to have any role in *separating* the wheat from the chaff. By purging his threshing floor—that is, by removing the wheat and chaff from it—and by placing the one in the granary and the other in the fire, he too would be effecting a separation. The question is whether this act of separating can be associated with Jesus’ earthly ministry or only with his second coming. Webb apparently thinks the metaphor applies only to the final judgment (hence, Jesus’ second coming). He claims that the purging of the threshing floor, the placing the wheat into the granary, and the burning of the chaff with fire, refer to “essentially the same action.” As support of this interpretation it might be noted that the evangelist Matthew frequently envisions Jesus’ second coming as a time when the elect will be separated from the reprobate (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-49; 25:32). Nevertheless, I do not think that in Q 3:17 we are compelled to think only in terms of Jesus’ *second* coming. Jesus’ ultimate act of separating will, of course, occur at his second coming, as in Matthew’s Gospel (cf. Q 12:42-46; 13:28-29; 17:26-30, 34-35). But his earthly ministry can be seen as the commencement of this process of separating. This comes through in several sayings in Q. Jesus declares, “Whoever is not with me is against me; and whoever is not gathering (grain) with me scatters” (Q 11:23). Here he divides humanity in two, based on whether or not they are “gathering with” him or not. The verb *συνάγω* plausibly hearkens back on the words of John’s prophecy in Q 3:17 since it is used in connection with a similar agricultural metaphor. Again, Jesus says that he came to bring a sword to divide even family members against one another (12:49-51+53). Other Q texts likewise emphasize that Jesus’ person and message would cause people to react in one way or another and that this would mark them as being either elect or reprobate. He tacitly acknowledges that some would be scandalized but pronounces a blessing on those who are not (7:23). He declares that “This generation,” that is, the non-elect, rejects both John and Jesus; “but wisdom is vindicated

by her children,” that is, the elect²²⁶ (Q 7:29-35).

There are only two real difficulties in fitting John’s prophecies into Q’s two-advent scheme: (1) John mentions nothing about the expected figure coming twice; (2) John envisions the judgment as something that will take place imminently, presumably when the expected figure appears for the first time. These difficulties are not insurmountable. Two advents may be implied in the double metaphors: baptism with the Holy Spirit *and* fire; the gathering of wheat *and* the burning of chaff. We should also keep in mind that for the Q redactor(s) the lapse of time between John and themselves was not great (< 30 years?). John’s threats of imminent judgment in Q 3:7-9+16b-17 would not have necessarily seemed so off the mark therefore, so long as the redactors did not expect Jesus to return at some point in the distant future.

In Q, then, Jesus can be seen as fulfilling all of John’s prophecies in Q 3:16b-17, baptizing in the Holy Spirit and fire, and purging his threshing floor by separating the wheat from the chaff and by placing the former in the granary and the latter in the fire. He fulfils these prophecies at different times. The elements in John’s prophecy anticipating punishment will be fulfilled entirely at his second coming. The elements anticipating blessing and salvation can be seen as partially or proleptically fulfilled at Jesus’ first coming and ultimately fulfilled at his second. All of this argues against seeing John’s prophecies here as deriving from a Baptist source.

2.2.6.1.5. The literary dependence of 3:16b-17 on the rest of Q

Another reason for seeing Q 3:16b-17 as having its origins in the Jesus movement rather than a Baptist one is the fact that John’s language and imagery cohere literarily with Q’s broader composition. I have already suggested that this saying shares certain verbal links with other parts of Q (cf. the terms *συνάγω*, *πνεύματι ἁγίῳ*, and *πῶρ*) and that it

²²⁶ For this interpretation, see Tuckett, *Revival*, 148-151.

shares certain thematic links with other parts of Q as well (cf. its anticipation of coming judgment, its metaphor of gathering grain into the granary \approx evangelizing and healing; and of purging of the threshing floor \approx separation of one part of humanity from another). But the most notable literary link between this saying and the rest of Q is found in the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος. It occurs for the first time in Q at 3:16 and here it serves to introduce the leitmotif of “Jesus-as-the-Coming-One.” This theme will resurface at 7:19, 20 and 13:35 (\rightarrow 2.2.5.1.). Additional links with these sayings about “the Coming One” can probably also be found in other Q sayings where the verb ἔρχομαι is used in the indicative mood; for Jesus uses this verb both when referring to his first (7:34; 12:49, 51, 53, Luke 4:16(Q?)) and his second (12:39, 40, 43, 46; 19:13, 15, 23) coming.

John’s prophecy about ὁ ἐρχόμενος, like the leitmotif of Jesus-the-Coming-One, was likely the work of a Q redactor/Jesus follower. As I explained above, the prophecy is far too vague to have ever circulated independently (\rightarrow 2.2.6.1.3.). The only real way that we can understand who or what sort of eschatological figure John was anticipating is by reading the prophecy in light of Q’s broader narrative, especially Jesus’ Baptism by John, John’s Question and Jesus’ Reply, and the saying of Jesus in 13:35. Moreover, there are three occurrences of ὁ ἐρχόμενος in Q—3:16; 7:19-20; 13:35—and I would suggest that the one spoken by Jesus in 13:35 gave rise to the others. The messianic exegesis undergirding this saying is plausibly traditional, reflecting an earlier Jewish (not Baptist) exegesis of Ps 118:26, according to which the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος was taken as a reference to the Messiah (\rightarrow Excursus A). It seems far less likely that this saying was composed by one of Jesus’ followers in order to promote a new interpretation of the vaguely worded prophecy about “the Coming One” in Q 3:16 which had been circulating among a group of Baptists and which they thought referred to someone other than Jesus. The order of composition, in my opinion, was the exact opposite: the vaguely worded prophecy by John was written up by a follower of Jesus who wanted to anticipate and evoke one of Jesus’ sayings, which he was planning to quote a bit later at 13:35.

2.2.6.1.6. Concluding remarks about tradition and redaction in Q 3

The above discussion concerning tradition and redaction has been lengthy and complicated. It will probably be helpful therefore to summarize some of what has been argued.

Verses 7-9 should not be seen as a composite of two discrete sayings—one in vv. 7-8a+9 and another in v. 8b. The material in both of these divisions is thematically similar in that it harshly rebukes those who have rejected John's message/baptism. There is no reason to think that two different audiences are being addressed or that vv. 7-8a+9 and v. 8b originated in two different *Sitze im Leben*.

Verse 17 cannot be easily separated from v. 16b+e, it being syntactically connected to v. 17. It must have originated either at the same time as v. 16 or subsequently.

The matter of 16cd was more complicated. I have argued that 16cd was an original part of the saying. This material is unlikely to have been added by Q's original composer/redactor or by its later redactors in order to downgrade John; for in that case we would not expect Q to have remained so positive and laudatory in its overall portrayal and estimate of John.

In order to imagine that this material had, at some pre-Q stage, circulated within a community of rival Baptists, one would have to remove it from its present literary context in Q and further purge it of any elements that seem too characteristic of the Jesus movement. The result of this procedure, not surprisingly, would be to render the material less markedly characteristic of the Jesus movement and, hence, more compatible with a rival Baptist sect hypothesis. But the procedure is seriously dubious for several reasons.

First, it is largely circular. One has to *assume* certain things about what sort of man John was and what sort of things he was capable of saying in order to recognize which elements are the work of a Jesus follower and which are "Baptist." Outside of the New

Testament Gospel traditions we really know nothing about John's or his followers' eschatological views. So identifying which elements stem from the Jesus movement and which from a hypothetical Baptist movement is difficult, if not impossible. The John of Q appears to anticipate a human figure. One can only alter this portrayal of John, at least in Q 3, by unjustifiably removing any elements in 16cd that conflict with this picture.

Second, the redactional theories that attempt to purge from Q 3:2-3+7-9+16b-17 any elements that derive from the Jesus movement lead to some very implausible results. Removing v. 16cd from 16b+e leaves nothing but an implied subject and an ambiguous pronoun to function as the subject of βαπτίζω. Even if we retain ὁ ἐρχόμενος there is no obvious reason to think that the saying had originally referred to God rather than a human Messiah. The remainder of 16cd is not necessarily out of place with 16b+e. It coheres both structurally and thematically, as we have seen. The material in vv. 16b-17 may therefore be regarded as an original unity.

Third, when commentators whittle down the supposed Baptist content in Q 3 they are often left with such little material that one wonders how they can actually recognize that it was derived from a Baptist source, or, for that matter, why Jesus' followers even bothered to seize upon these tiny bits of tradition.

2.2.7. Location in Q

Q 3:7-9+16b-17 is often thought to be the opening of Q. I have argued, however, that Q 3:2-3 preceded 3:7-9+16b-17. On this reconstruction, 3:2-3+7-9+16b-17 would have constituted a coherent narrative prologue in Q.

Locating of these verses at the beginning of Q can be justified on the basis that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all place material from this block at the beginning of their Gospels. Also, locating this material at the beginning of Q would have made good sense from a compositional standpoint since a brief description of John's baptism ministry (vv.

2-3) and his preaching about the Coming One (vv. 16-17) would have provided an obvious starting point for a narration about Jesus' own baptism (vv. 21-22), which, as shall be argued below, was also part of Q (→3.2.1.). More basically, Q's Prologue, while focused on the ministry and preaching of John the Baptist, would have helped set the stage for the main character in Q to enter—Jesus, whom Q identified as “the Coming One” whom John had anticipated (→2.2.5.1., 4.5., Excursus A).

Q's arrangement of the material has implications for our study about the forerunner concept in the early Jesus movement. Risto Uro rightly asks the question: “Why was a collection of *Jesus*' sayings introduced by a collection of John's sayings?”²²⁷ But his answer is unsatisfying. He points out that this material helps to lay out some of Q's main themes, especially that of “the Coming One.” That may be correct but it does not explain why Q began with material dealing with *John*. I would suggest that for Q John was thought to have had a specific role vis-à-vis Jesus and that this role was very much christological. I have already noted how John's prophecy about the Coming One in 3:16 nicely parallels Jesus' remark in 7:27, where John is implicitly identified as Jesus' Elijah-like forerunner. This conception of John seems to be at work in Q's Prologue as well. By opening with John's message and ministry, Q is portraying John as a prophet who prepared God's people for and announced to them the coming of Jesus.²²⁸ This portrayal of John vis-à-vis Jesus can really only be understood on the assumption that Q's redactor(s) regarded Jesus as a key figure in redemptive history. One of the central points of this thesis will be to show that in Q Jesus is regarded as the Davidic Messiah (→ Excursus A, 3.5.3-4., 4.5.2., Appendices E and I).

²²⁷ Uro, “Movement,” 239.

²²⁸ I disagree with Jacobson (*First Gospel*, 80-81) who sees Q's portrayal of John as being quite distinct from Mark's. In Q, John is not simply a preacher and prophet who prepares the way for Yahweh, as Jacobson thinks. Q's arrangement of the material and its identification of Jesus as “the Coming One” imply that John was preparing Israel for *Jesus*. Against Jacobson, the fact that the quote from Mal 3:1 occurs later in Q (i.e. at Q 7:27) than it does in Mark hardly changes the fact that John is being portrayed at the beginning of Q as Jesus' prophetic forerunner. Indeed, the Malachi quote at 7:27 only reinforces this portrayal.

2.2.8. Commentary

2.2.8.1. General

In Q 3:7-9 John seems to be confronting a notion that any Jew, by virtue of his/her genealogical tie to Abraham, was bound to inherit God's promises, regardless of personal piety.²²⁹ John insists that God accepts no one solely on the basis of physical descent.²³⁰ God could just as easily raise up stones as children to Abraham if he so willed it. Thus, even Jews are required to produce "fruit worthy of repentance" or else they will be "thrown into the fire" (vv. 7-9).

This "fruit" involves more than just baptism.²³¹ In Luke's Gospel Q 3:7-9 is immediately followed by a narrative in which several groups of people from John's audience approach him, asking: "What should we do?" John responds to each group with advice about how persons might conduct themselves more piously (Luke 3:10-14). So Luke, at least, clearly understood John to have been urging acts of piety beyond the mere reception of baptism. It is possible, of course, that Luke misunderstood John's message. But this is unlikely. John (at least the John of Q) is undoubtedly modelling his message on the biblical prophets' who frequently emphasized inward reform and moral conduct over religious ritual (cf. Isa 1; 58; Jer 4:4; 9:25; Mic 6:6-8). Q itself adopts a similar perspective (cf. 11:39+41-42). The same fruit metaphor used at Q 3:8a+9 will be taken up in Jesus' preaching at Q 6:43-45 where it can hardly refer to baptism. So for John (at least the John of Q), while baptism was certainly important, it was hardly all that he was urging on behalf of his audience when he spoke about the need for "fruit." The fact that he links this

²²⁹ Cp. the teaching attributed to Resh Lakish (200-275 C.E.) that "the fire of Gehinnom has no power over the sinners in Israel" (*b. Hag. 27a*).

²³⁰ Cp. Paul's argument in Rom 2 against Jews who prided themselves in circumcision.

²³¹ Contra Tuckett, *History*, 114.

fruit with “repentance” indicates that he was talking about turning from sin and adhering to God’s commandments.²³² For John, baptism was probably seen as an outward symbol of one’s reformed life and religious commitment (→Appendix A.3). Thus, if part of his audience was rejecting baptism, as I have argued above (→2.2.3), he perhaps took this as evidence that they were unrepentant. But baptism itself should not be equated with the “fruit worthy of repentance.”

The nearness of God’s judgment is implied, first, by the urgent command “to flee from the coming wrath” (v. 7); second, by the metaphor of the axe being laid “already (ἤδη) at the root of the trees” (v. 9). In Q, John’s prophecies about coming judgment can only be understood with reference to Jesus’ second coming, when he returns as the Son of man and inaugurates the final judgment (cf. Q 12:39-40, 42-46; 17:24, 26-30). This cannot be said to accord with John’s preaching about imminent judgment. In fact, other sayings like The Son of Man Comes as a Thief (12:39-40), The Faithful and Unfaithful Servant (12:42-46), and The Entrusted Money (19:12-13+15-24+26) tacitly recognize that Jesus’ second coming has been delayed. This discrepancy between John’s preaching about imminent judgment and the sayings about Jesus’ delayed return should not be taken as evidence that Q has brought together two irreconcilable traditions. I argued above that the preaching of John in Q’s Prologue is best seen as a composition of the Q redactor (→2.2.3.). Hence, the discrepancy here should not be seen as accidental but as purposeful. There is a theological point that the Q redactor is trying to make. According to Q, by rejecting its Messiah Israel had effectively delayed its own redemption.

²³² On this definition of repentance in the teachings of John and Jesus see Crossley, “Repentance,” 138-142. Crossley thinks that although the Gospels prefer the terms μετανοέω (or μετάνοια) a better translation for the Semitic term used by the historical John and Jesus (i.e. שׁוּב/חׁוּב) would have been ἐπιστρέφω since this implied a change of *action* and not simply a change of *mind*.

2.2.8.2. John prophecies of coming punishment *and redemption*

The nature of the coming judgment anticipated by John is often characterized by interpreters in wholly negative terms²³³: God will take the barren trees, cut them down, and cast them into the fire (v. 9); he will baptize them “with fire” (v. 16d); and once he has winnowed his threshing floor he will burn the chaff “with unquenchable fire” (v. 17). These threatening comments certainly stand out in John’s preaching. But one should not overlook the other expressions of hope and coming redemption. “Fruit of repentance” is offered as a means of *escaping* God’s wrath. Whatever one makes of the Coming One’s baptism with fire, his baptism with the Holy Spirit can hardly refer to a destructive or otherwise negative experience (→2.2.6.). Most likely it refers to the eschatological outpouring of God’s Spirit, often spoken of with the metaphor of water being poured out onto Israel (Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:28-29). This outpouring is referred to in Acts 2:14-21 (cf. also Eph 4:8). Finally, the gathering of wheat into the granary speaks of a coming deliverance. John’s message therefore contains both threats of doom and implicit assurances of salvation.

John appears to anticipate that the Coming One will enact two distinct baptisms.²³⁴ Unlike the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the Coming One’s baptism with fire is best regarded as a punishment against the wicked, not a blessing for the righteous. The other references to fire in this unit are unmistakable metaphors of judgment. But some commentators argue that the fiery baptism will have a two-fold effect, punishing the wicked but also purging the righteous.²³⁵ Evidence for such a “baptism in fire” is supposed

²³³ As noted by Webb, *Baptizer*, 289-95. He notes Becker (see his *Täufer*, 25, 38-39) as an example of how interpreters often characterize John only as a prophet of doom. Jacobson (*First Gospel*, 85) might be cited as another example. Cf. also Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.132, 133: John’s message was “centered ... on fiery threats and imminent doom.”

²³⁴ Contra some commentators (e.g. Dunn, “Spirit-and-Fire Baptism,” 84-85; Marshall, *Luke*, 147; Nolland, *Luke*, 1.152), nothing in the syntax of John’s prophecy implies that only one baptism is expected. See Webb, *Baptizer*, 289-95.

²³⁵ Kraeling, *Baptist*, 116; Scobie, *Baptist*, 68.

to be found in texts like the *Apocalypse of Peter* 6, the *Testament of Isaac* 5.21-25, and the *Sibylline Oracles* 2.252-54 where both the righteous and the wicked are made to pass through a fiery river (cf. also Dan 7:10; 4 *Ezra* 13.10). Daniel Frayer-Griggs has recently tried to defend this interpretation of John’s fiery baptism by proposing that Mark 9:49, in its original Semitic form, read: “For everyone will be *baptized* with fire.”²³⁶ If Frayer-Griggs’ retroversion is correct, this saying would have likely recalled John’s earlier prophecy in Q 3:16 and would have made the fiery baptism something that “everyone”—i.e. the righteous and the wicked—needed to endure. The retroversion is based on a supposed confusion between the Aramaic verb ܠܒܒܐ (“to spice, season”) and ܠܒܒܐ (“to immerse, bathe for purification”), which “may have occurred at the oral stage”; or, the confusion may have been translational since ܠܒܒܐ ordinarily meant, “to immerse, bathe for purification,” but could also mean, “to season.” Frayer-Griggs points out that in its present Greek form (παῖς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται) the saying is notoriously ambiguous, especially if one assumes it once circulated as a free-floating logion.

While this retroversion of Mark 9:49 is quite intriguing and even persuasive, it would not necessarily support Frayer-Griggs’ interpretation of the fiery baptism in Q 3:16. If the retroversion is correct, we would no longer need to assume that the saying had circulated independently because it would now cohere nicely with Mark 9:43-48, providing an appropriate conclusion to those verses.²³⁷ The term “everyone” would, in this case, be understood to mean “everyone *in Gehenna*.” So if the saying is meant to recall John’s prophecy at Q 3:16 it would only illustrate that Jesus interpreted the fiery baptism as a punishment for the wicked. It would not necessarily tell us anything about whether the phrase ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ was part of the saying or that Jesus had interpreted it too as a

²³⁶ Daniel Frayer-Griggs, “Baptized in Fire,” 254-85. Frayer-Griggs is reviving a proposal originally espoused by Baarda, “Mark IX.49,” 318-21.

²³⁷ Indeed, it seems unlikely that even the retroverted saying could have ever stood on its own. Without some kind of further contextualization, it would still have been notoriously ambiguous. Frayer-Griggs can only make sense of it by assuming hearers would have associated the saying with Q 3:16. But he would have no grounds for making that assumption if the saying originally stood as a free-floating logion.

punishment for the wicked. I have found no good reason to dismiss ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ as a later insertion (→2.2.5.4.). I have also argued above that such a baptism would have most likely anticipated the eschatological outpouring of God’s Spirit, a blessing for the righteous but not a punishment for the wicked. Moreover, a purgative interpretation of the baptism in fire would require us to read into the prophecy a metallurgical metaphor, whereas the other fire metaphors in this unit are agrarian: the burning of fruitless trees in v. 9 and the burning of chaff in v. 17.²³⁸ Hence, it seems best to understand the saying about a baptism in fire as a punishment against the wicked, not a purification or some other kind of blessing for the righteous. The baptism with the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, should be understood as a positive blessing for the righteous.

I conclude, then, that in v. 16 John’s baptism is contrasted not with one but two baptisms: one for the righteous (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ) and another (ἐν πυρί) for the wicked. The effects for the first group will be a positive blessing and those for the second will be wholly negative.

2.2.8.3. John not a forerunner to God but to a human being

The material in Q 3:16cd poses obvious problems for interpreters like Bultmann, Catchpole, and Kloppenborg who believe that the historical John anticipated the advent of God rather than the Messiah. There would have been no reason for John to assert that God “is mightier than I.” God’s superior might would have been such an obvious and hence would not have needed to be stated. In fact, to state it would have likely sounded improper, if not audacious. One would also be hard-pressed arguing that the “sandals” and “feet” in John’s prophecy would have been spoken with reference to God. While such anthropomorphic imagery might not be unprecedented in biblical literature (cf. Ps 60:8||108:9) there is no suggestion that the present saying contains any such imagery. I

²³⁸ So Tuckett, *History*, 122.

mentioned above that the phrase ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος conjures up the idea of discipleship (→2.2.5.2.). This would have made John’s words entirely inappropriate if they had been spoken them with reference to God. Furthermore, this phrase coheres with v. 16d where the sandals saying dovetails nicely with a famous dictum regarding discipleship by Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (*fl.* early 3rd cent.): “all manner of service that a slave must render his master a disciple must render to his teacher, except that of taking off his shoe.”²³⁹ Thus, John can be most readily understood in Q 3:16 as saying that one of his disciples—ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος—would be (or is already) so mighty that he would be unworthy to perform for him even the most degrading of tasks.

For several reasons, then, 16cd is not compatible with the supposition that John anticipated the advent of God. It strongly implies that John was anticipating a human being and a disciple of John.

2.2.8.4. Messianic forerunner idea in Q’s Prologue

In Q’s Prologue the messianic forerunner concept comes out in at least two ways. First, John is cast here as an Elijah figure. Unlike Mark’s Gospel, Q does not describe John’s clothing in ways reminiscent of Elijah (cf. Mark 1:6). Nevertheless, John’s message of repentance is likely meant to evoke the memory of that ancient prophet. On Mt. Carmel he had prayed, “Answer me, O Yahweh, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Yahweh, are God, *and you have turned their hearts back*” (1 Kgs 18:37).²⁴⁰ Through his denunciations, the prophet also once prompted the Israelite king Ahab to repent (1 Kgs 21:17-29). According to the prophecy in Mal 4:5-6 the eschatological Elijah “*will turn* (השיב/ἀποκαταστήσει) the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.” In the synoptic Gospels, John

²³⁹ *b. Ketub.* 96a. Also look up *b. Qidd.* 22b; *b. Pes.* 4a; *Sifre* on Num. 15.41; Plautus, *Trin.* 2.1; Eus., *Eccl. Hist.* 4.15.30.

²⁴⁰ וְאַתָּה/וְאַתָּה הַסַּבְתָּ אֶת־לִבָּם אַחֲרַיִתָּה/καὶ σὺ ἔστρεψας τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου ὀπίσω.

the Baptist, who is cast in the role of the eschatological Elijah, preaches “a baptism of repentance (βάπτισμα μετανοίας) for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4-5 *par.*; cf. also Matt 21:31-32). Alluding to Mal 4:5-6, Luke’s Gospel says that John “will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God (ἐπιστρέψει ἐπὶ κύριον τὸν θεὸν αὐτῶν), and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts (ἐπιστρέψαι καρδίας) of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (Luke 1:16-17). In the book of Revelation the “two witnesses” (presumably Moses and Elijah) prophesy for 1,260 days “dressed in sackcloth,” the garb of repentance (Rev 11:3; cf. Jonah 3:5-8). In *Pirqe R. Eliezer*, an eighth century midrash, the tanna R. Yehuda is reputed to have said: “there will be no repentance in Israel until Elijah of blessed memory comes, as it is said, *Behold I will send you Elijah ... and he shall turn the heart of the fathers, etc.* (ch. 43; cf. also 47).

The second way Q’s Prologue interacts with the messianic forerunner concept is in its record of John’s prophecies concerning “the Coming One” (vv. 16b-17). We have already seen how the language used to describe this figure implies that he will be human. Later I will argue that he is the (Davidic) Messiah. Q’s Prologue therefore seems to be working with several of the crucial components of the messianic forerunner concept: Elijah, the Messiah, and preparation of God’s people for the latter by means of repentance.

Excursus A: What is the significance of the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος in Q?

Interpreters debate whether ὁ ἐρχόμενος in the New Testament Gospel traditions is best interpreted and translated as a title (“the Coming One”) or as a verbal phrase (“the one who is coming”/“he who is coming”).²⁴¹ The phrase itself could, in most contexts, be used in a purely mundane sense.²⁴² But this mundane usage need not preclude it from being a title in other contexts; for “it is surely a feature of all levels of human society that words or phrases that are innocuous and vague in themselves carry overtones of meaning and significance for those in particular groups.”²⁴³ In Greek, many titles, in fact, consisted of quite mundane terms or phrases (e.g. ἡ παρθένος, “the Virgin” (i.e. Athena); ὁ ἡγούμενος, “the Leading One” (i.e. the Governor). The titular force of these terms or phrases was only discernible from the context in which they occurred, whether it was a particular literary context, a social context, or a conceptual context.²⁴⁴ These same rules should be taken into account when we are considering potential messianic terms. For example, the term “king of the Jews” could often be used in a purely mundane, political sense (e.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 7.72). But when Pilate asked if Jesus ought to be called by this term (Mark 15:2) the context makes it clear that he was asking whether Jesus were a special kind of king—namely, the Messiah.

This observation should caution us against a line of reasoning taken by Robert Webb. He points out that in each of the parallel accounts of the Triumphal Entry ὁ ἐρχόμενος is used in conjunction with other messianic terms and it is only by virtue of this fact that one can recognize that ὁ ἐρχόμενος—that is, Jesus—is being portrayed as the Messiah:

²⁴¹ Translations that understand it as a title include: NASB, NLT, Elberfelder (1905, 1993), Münchener NT. Those that understand it as a verbal phrase include: KJV (1611, 1769, 1982), ASV, NAB, NIV, RSV (1952, 1971, 1989), NJB, NET, Einheitsübersetzung, Lutherbibel (1545, 1984), Schlachter.

²⁴² For example, Paul writes: “For if one comes (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) preaching another Jesus...” (2 Cor 11:4).

²⁴³ Tuckett, “Inclusive Aspects,” 183. Tuckett is commenting here on ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου but his words are no less applicable to ὁ ἐρχόμενος.

²⁴⁴ Note here, again, Tuckett: “the study of semantics has taught us that we should rarely take any words in complete isolation” (Tuckett, “Inclusive Aspects,” 184).

“Matthew uses ‘Son of David’; Mark uses ‘kingdom of our father David’; Luke uses ‘the king’, and John uses ‘the king of Israel.’”²⁴⁵ Webb concludes that, on its own, ὁ ἐρχόμενος “is hardly a title as such.” But this reasoning is a non-sequitur. There was nothing to prevent an author from using one title in conjunction with another. In Isa 43:3 Yahweh is referred to as “your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.” Any of these terms could have stood as titles. Similarly, in the New Testament we read, “Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross” (Mark 15:32). Here, “king of Israel” is plausibly used in apposition with “Christ” in order to specify what type of Messiah is meant. It would be mistaken to infer that “Christ” is not a title simply because it is used in connection with “king of Israel” or vice versa. In the same way, in the Triumphal Entry, the fact that ὁ ἐρχόμενος is used in connection with messianic titles tells us nothing about whether it was itself a messianic title. The other terms may simply help to specify what type of “Coming One” was in view (e.g. not God or Elijah but the Messiah), much like “king of Israel” helps to specify what sort of “Messiah” is in view in Mark 15:32.

The phrase’s absolute usage in Q 7:19, 20 would suggest that it could, at least in Q, stand as a title, otherwise John’s question would have been extremely vague and otiose: “Are you the one who is coming/going?” One could, however, take it here as a literary device, it being inextricably linked, literarily, to its first occurrence at Q 3:16. In that case John’s question at 7:19 could be read as: “Are you the Coming One *whom I, John, predicted?*”²⁴⁶

Although I have chosen to translate ὁ ἐρχόμενος as a title this decision is not crucial to the present thesis. More crucial is whether the historical John or the writers of Q or the canonical Gospels, when using this phrase, intended to evoke expectations of the coming *Messiah*. If that could be established, the question about whether the phrase is a messianic title would be somewhat moot, at least for the purposes of the present thesis where I am

²⁴⁵ Webb, *Baptizer*, 270 n. 16.

²⁴⁶ So, e.g., Uro, “Movement,” 240.

attempting to elaborate on the messianic forerunner concept in Q, not on Q's use or non-use of messianic titles *per se*.

In the philological survey given in Appendix I, I show that in Hebrew, Greek, and other languages, at least three eschatological figures were referred to with the verb “to come” and related nouns or synonyms: God, Elijah, and the Messiah.²⁴⁷ This may, perhaps, limit our options a bit. The survey is of uncertain value, however, since it spans a wide range of texts that were written at different times and that possibly reflect widely different views or views which may not reflect Q's. We shall be better off seeking a narrower contextualization. So in this Excursus I shall only attempt to understand how ὁ ἐρχόμενος is used within Q and early Jesus movement.

In the story of the Triumphal Entry (Mark 11:1-10||Matt 21:1-9||Luke 19:28-40||John 12:12-19) ὁ ἐρχόμενος is used in a messianic context.²⁴⁸ Jesus is portrayed as riding into the city on a donkey, just the sort of action an heir to the Davidic throne could be expected to do at his coronation (cf. 2 Sam 18:9; 1 Kgs 1:33ff.). The action would have almost certainly recalled a messianic prophecy in the book of Zechariah:

Zech 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Look, your king comes (ἐπιβῆ/ἐρχεται) to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey.

The royal symbolism of Jesus' actions here is amplified by the anecdote about members of the crowd placing their garments on the ground before Jesus as he rode into the city (cf. 2 Kgs 9:13) and as they themselves chanted: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming (ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία). Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark 11:9-10). In the other three Gospels the crowd's chanting is even more overtly messianic:

Matt 21:9 Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in

Luke 19:38 Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the

John 12:13 Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the

²⁴⁷ Webb adds other figures to his list: Michael/Melchizedek and the Son of man.

²⁴⁸ Scobie, *Baptist*, 65.

the name of the Lord! Hosanna in Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in Lord, even the King of Israel!
the highest! the highest!

From its use in the Triumphal Entry, then, we seem to have some indication that ὁ ἐρχόμενος was understood by the Gospel writers to have messianic associations. They connected the phrase with Ps 118:26 and Zech 9:9, which they read through a lens of messianic expectation.²⁴⁹

Another example in the New Testament where ὁ ἐρχόμενος is used with messianic suggestions is Heb 10:37. In Appendix I.3 I discuss how the phrase here relies on a messianic reading of Hab 2:3.

Turning our attention now to Q, it is obvious that ὁ ἐρχόμενος is never used, as some have imagined, with reference to God or an angel. To reiterate some of the points made earlier (→2.2.8.3.), in 3:16 John describes this figure as “mightier than I,” a rather pointless truism if he had been speaking with reference to God. John also declares himself unworthy to untie the latchet of this figure’s sandals. Such anthropomorphic imagery is unlikely to have been used with reference to God or an angel. This is particularly obvious when one realizes that the imagery speaks ironically of the duties of a *human* disciple to his master, John here being the master and the Coming One the disciple (→2.2.5.2.). The phrase ὀπίσω μου, used with the verb ἔρχεται also suggests that the idea of discipleship is at work in John’s description of the coming figure.

In 7:19 John asks if Jesus is ὁ ἐρχόμενος. John here is not wondering whether Jesus might be *God* or an *angel*. Jesus was a human being after all. Hence, the Q redactor at least must have understood ὁ ἐρχόμενος as referring to a human figure. Thus, of the three possibilities considered in Appendix I we are with either Elijah or the Messiah.²⁵⁰

Joseph A. Fitzmyer opts for the first of these options.²⁵¹ His interpretation seems to rest on two observations:

²⁴⁹ Krause (“Unbinding,” 141-153) suggests that a third messianic text, Gen 49:11, is alluded to as well.

²⁵⁰ Since I equate “the Son of man” in Q with the Messiah (→Appendix E.4) I shall not consider this as a third and separate option here.

²⁵¹ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 472, 664, 666-67.

(1) John’s expectations of a *coming* figure fit well with Mal 3:1-2, where a certain “messenger” figure is similarly characterized as “coming”:

<p>הַנְּבִי שְׁלַח מֵאַחֶיךָ וּפְנֵה-דֶרֶךְ לְפָנָי אֲלֵה־הִיכָל־יְבוּא וּפְתָאֵם הָאֲדוֹן אֲשֶׁר-אֲתָם מִבְּקָשֵׁי וּמִלְאָה הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר-אֲתָם הַפְּצִים אָמַר הָיְהִי צְבָאוֹת בְּאַהֲנָה בְּאֲוִימֵי מִכְלָפֵל אֶת-יָוִם וּמִי הָעֹמֵד בְּהַרְאוֹתָו כִּי-הוּא כָּאֵשׁ מְצַרְרָה וּבְבִרִית מְכַבְּסִים</p>	<p>1 ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου, καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδὸν πρὸ προσώπου μου, καὶ ἐξαίφνης ἦξει εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἑαυτοῦ κύριος, ὃν ὑμεῖς ζητεῖτε, καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς διαθήκης, ὃν ὑμεῖς θέλετε· ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ. 2 καὶ τίς ὑπομενεῖ ἡμέραν εἰσόδου αὐτοῦ; ἢ τίς ὑποστήσεται ἐν τῇ ὀπτασίᾳ αὐτοῦ; διότι αὐτὸς <u>εἰσπορεύεται</u> ὡς πῦρ χωνευτηρίου καὶ ὡς πόα πλυνόντων.</p>
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Regarding this messenger we are told, “*he will come* to his temple.” It is also asked, “And who can abide the day of *his coming*?”

(2) John’s use of fiery imagery calls to mind not only the above text from Mal 3:2 (“For he is like a refiner’s *fire*”) but also the association Elijah often has, in both biblical and extra-biblical literature, with fire:

Sir 48:1 And Elijah arose, a prophet, like a fire (καὶ ἀνέστη Ηλιας προφήτης ὡς πῦρ), and his word burned like a torch (καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ὡς λαμπὰς ἐκαίετο). ... **9** You who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire (ἐν λαίλαπι πυρός), in a chariot with horses of fire (ἵππων πυρίνων).

The first piece of evidence here would be more convincing if it could be established that the verb ἔρχεται (= Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16) was indeed used at Q 3:16. It appears, however, that ὁ ἐρχόμενος (= Matt 3:11) was the original Q wording (→2.2.5.1.). Fitzmyer’s second piece of evidence is also weak inasmuch as Q consistently refers to John’s Coming One with the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος and refers to Jesus’ second coming with the related verb ἔρχομαι whereas the Septuagint translates בּוֹא at Mal 3:1-2 with three different verbs: ἦκω, ἔρχομαι, and εἰσπορεύομαι. Fitzmyer’s attempt to find an intertextual link between John’s preaching and Mal 3:1-2 is also problematic because in

the latter text the fire metaphor is metallurgical and speak of Israel's purification. By contrast, John's fire metaphors are agricultural and speak not of purification but of punishment. But Fitzmyer's interpretation is faced with an even bigger problem. For while Q identifies Jesus as ὁ ἐρχόμενος (7:18-20+22; 13:35) it identifies *John*, not Jesus, as Elijah (7:27). Fitzmyer tries to get around this problem by adopting Robinson's historical reasoning (→1.1.2.1.; 5.6.). Fitzmyer proposes that John (the historical one apparently) had been expecting Elijah and was hoping that Jesus might be he (cf. Q 7:18-20). Jesus, however, rejected this Elijah identity/role at 7:22 and 7:27. Commenting on 7:22, Fitzmyer writes: "Jesus now makes it clear that he carries no ax or winnowing fan, cleans no eschatological threshing floor, and burns no chaff. Instead, he cures, frees, resuscitates; he cares for the blind, cripples, lepers, deaf, and even the dead; and he preaches God's good news to the poor."²⁵² Against Fitzmyer's reasoning here, I have suggested above that John's metaphors in 3:17 can actually be interpreted as having their fulfilment in the person of Jesus, so long as one keeps in view that his first coming is only a prelude to his second (→2.2.6.1.4.). By healing and evangelizing, Jesus partially fulfils John's metaphor about gathering the grain into the granary. A more complete fulfilment of this metaphor as well as the others will take place when Jesus returns as the Son of man. Q's postponing of the ultimate fulfilment of John's prophecy is a central point behind 13:35, as I shall explain in a moment.

In the commentary on Q 7:18-20+22-23 I argued that Jesus' response to John's question indicates that he understood John to be asking: "Are you the Messiah?" (→4.5.2.). I even suggested that in this unit's pre-Q form John had asked whether Jesus was ὁ χριστός but that a Q redactor replaced this term with ὁ ἐρχόμενος in order to create a leitmotif about Jesus-the-Coming-One (→4.3). If either my interpretation of 7:22 or my pre-Q reconstruction of 7:19, 20 is correct, it would lend further support to the idea that ὁ

²⁵² Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 664.

ἐρχόμενος was thought to have messianic associations.

I believe the last occurrence of ὁ ἐρχόμενος in Q provides the key to understanding its other occurrences at 3:16 and 7:19, 20, and the key to understanding Q's theme about Jesus-the-Coming-One:

Q 13:35a Behold, your house is forsaken. **b** And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Here, the words εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου, which Jesus applies to himself, are derived from LXX Ps 118:26. Since the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος is so clearly anaphoric, hearkening back on John's earlier preaching in 3:16-17 and John's question in 7:19, we can infer that the redactors of Q understood John's earlier references to ὁ ἐρχόμενος as allusions to this same biblical text and not, for example, to Ps 96:12 or Mal 3:1-2. And this, in turn, is important to note because Psalm 118 was plausibly interpreted in first century Judaism as a royal psalm about king David and, thus, by extension, about the Davidic Messiah. According to James A. Sanders, Psalm 118 was recited at the annual commemoration of the king during the Autumn equinoctial New Year's festival.²⁵³ The recitation was apparently done antiphonally, with contemporary persons standing in for various biblical characters. This ancient tradition is preserved (albeit in different forms) in the following passages of the Bavli and the Targum on the Psalms:

b. Pes. 119a

Ps 118:21 *I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me* was said by David;
22 *The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief corner-stone;* by Jesse;
23 *This is the Lord's doing, by his brothers;*
24 *This is the day that the Lord has made by Samuel.*
25 *We beseech You, O Lord, save now!* was said by his brothers:
We beseech you, O Lord, make us now to prosper! by David;
26 *Blessed be he who comes in the name of the*

Tg. Ps. at

Ps 118:21 I will give thanks in your presence, for you have received my prayer, and become for me a redeemer.
22 *The child the builders abandoned was among the sons of Jesse; and he was worthy to be appointed king and ruler.*
23 "This has come from the presence of Yahweh," said the builders; "it is wonderful before us," said the sons of Jesse.
24 "This day Yahweh has made," said the builders; "let us rejoice and be glad in it," said the sons of Jesse.
25 "If it please you, O Yahweh, redeem us now," said the builders; "if it please you, O Yahweh, prosper us now," said Jesse and his wife.
26 "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the word of Yahweh," said the builders;

²⁵³ Sanders, "Hermeneutic," 180. See further Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 1.118-21, 170, 180-81, 245; 2.30; Ellis, *Luke*, 191.

Lord, by Jesse;
We bless you out of the house of the Lord, by Samuel;
27 *The Lord is God, and has given us light*, by all of them;
Order the festival procession with boughs, by Samuel;

28 *You are my God, and I will give thanks to you*, by David;
You are my God, I will exalt you, by all of them.

“they will bless you from the *sanctuary* of Yahweh,” said David.

27 “God, Yahweh, has given us light,” said the tribes of the house of Judah;

“bind the child for a festal sacrifice with chains until you sacrifice him, and sprinkle his blood on the horns of the altar,” said Samuel the prophet.

28 “You are my God, and I will give thanks in your presence; my God, I will praise you,” said David.

29 Samuel answered and said, “Sing praise, assembly of Israel, give thanks in the presence of Yahweh, for he is good, for his goodness is everlasting.”

To a lesser extent, the tradition also appears in the Midrash on Psalms, where vv. 15-16 and 24-29:

Midr. Ps. 118 §14 *The voice of rejoicing and salvation* (Ps. 118:15). From inside the walls, the men of Jerusalem will say, *The voice of rejoicing and salvation*. And from outside the walls, the men of Judah will say, *The right hand of the Lord does valiantly* (*ibid.*). From inside, the men of Jerusalem will say, *The right hand of the Lord is exalted* (*ibid.* 118:16); and from outside, the men of Judah will say, *The right hand of the Lord does valiantly* (*ibid.*). ...

§22 *This is the day which the Lord has made* (Ps. 118:24). After all the redemptions that came to Israel, enslavement followed, but from now on no enslavement will follow, as is said *Sing unto the Lord; for he has done gloriously ... For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of you* (Isa. 12:5-6).

We beseech you, O Lord, save now! (Ps. 118:25). From inside, the men of Jerusalem will say, *Blessed be he that comes IN the name of the Lord* (Ps. 118:26). And from outside, the men of Judah will say, *We bless you OUT of the house of the Lord* (*ibid.*).

From inside, the men of Jerusalem will say, *The Lord is God, and has given us light* (*ibid.* 118:27).

From inside, the men of Jerusalem will say, *You are my God, and I will give thanks unto you* (*ibid.* 118:28). And from outside, the men of Judah will say, *You are my God, I will exalt you* (*ibid.*).

Then the men of Jerusalem and the men of Judah, together, opening their mouths in praise of the Holy One, blessed be he, will say: *O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for his mercy endures forever* (*ibid.* 118:29).

The antiphony here is to be sung on the “day” of redemption (§22). Sanders suggests that this means parts of the psalm were to be recited “in the future, perhaps at Messiah’s arrival.”²⁵⁴

Note in both of these versions that the rejected “stone” in v. 20 is identified as David,

²⁵⁴ Sanders, “Hermeneutic,” 181 n. 11; also Str.-B. 1.850 (the psalm is for “nach der messian. Enderlösung.”). By contrast, Sanders claims the Talmudic and targumic versions are historicizing, that is, they are telling us “who originally said or spoke the several parts of the psalms; the midrash.”

and that the other characters mentioned (Jesse, David's brothers, Nathan, Samuel) were either family members or associates of David. Sanders argues that in its earliest tradition the verses were assigned to the following persons:²⁵⁵

1-4	the people	15-16	all	26	priests
5-6	the king	17-19	the king	27a	people
8-9	the people	20	priests	27b	priests
10-13	the king	21	the king	28	the king and people
14	the king and people	22-25	the people	29	all

According to Sanders, the psalm would have been recited thrice annually in Jesus' day: in the Autumn during the Feasts of Tabernacles, in the Spring during Passover, and in the Winter during Hanukkah.²⁵⁶ If that is so, the psalm and its royal associations would have been very well known. The Gospel writers appear to have recognized all of this when they cited vv. 25-26 of this psalm in the context of Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

Q probably did not have a Triumphal Entry since it lacks any such narrative at 13:35.²⁵⁷ It does quote here from Ps 118:26, however. If Ps 118 had, as Sanders argues and as the Triumphal Entry in the canonical Gospels suggests, been interpreted messianically it is not implausible that the quote from this psalm at Q 13:35 was meant to evoke expectations of the royal Messiah. Several observations about this saying by Dale Allison lend credence to this interpretation. He argues that Q 13:35 was an original unity but that it set forth two distinct, yet interrelated, propositions. Verse 35a speaks of the present consequence of Israel's having rejected the Messiah: her house (Temple?) is forsaken. Verse 35b is often understood negatively: "You will not see me until my return and by then it will be too late."²⁵⁸ But this interpretation cannot make good sense of the phrase: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," which is surely a reaction that sees Jesus' coming as a redemptive event, not a dreadful one (ctr. Rev 1:7). Other

²⁵⁵ See esp. Sanders, "Hermeneutic," 183-184.

²⁵⁶ Sanders, "Hermeneutic," 179-80. See *m. Pes.* 5.5 and 10.6; and *b. Pes.* 117a and 119a; *b. Sukk.* 45a and *b. 'Arak* 10a.

²⁵⁷ For a contrary view see Hultgren, *Normative*, 33-34.

²⁵⁸ E.g., Manson, *Sayings*, 127-128.

interpreters try to understand 13:35b in isolation from 35a, as if the two sayings originally circulated independently. But Allison finds “such surgery” unnecessary.

According to Allison, v. 35a indicts Israel for rejecting Jesus, that is, her Messiah. Verse 35b, then, lays out the consequence of this sin by effectively moving the day of redemption to a later point in time, making it conditional upon Israel’s repentance, that is, her acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.²⁵⁹

The notion that redemption would be contingent upon repentance is, as Allison observes, pervasive in both Jewish and Gentile writings connected with or unconnected with the early Jesus movement, tracing back to the Old Testament and extending into the New Testament and rabbinic literature: e.g. Isa 59:20; Hos 3:4; *T. Dan* 6.4; *T. Zeb.* 9.7-8; *T. Jud.* 23.5. The redemption envisioned in these texts probably involved expectations of a coming Messiah. Such sentiments are found in *Sifre* to Deuteronomy (41 (79b)) where we read that if Israel were to keep Torah, God would immediately send Elijah, that is, the Messiah’s forerunner. Again, in one Talmudic legend the prophet Elijah explains to R. Joshua b. Levi that the Messiah will come on the day when Israel becomes obedient (*b. Sanh.* 98a). Still other texts suggest a similar idea about how non-repentance or sin is holding back the Messiah:

***b. Nidd.* 13b** It is said in a baraita: ‘The proselytes and those who dally with little girls hold the Messiah back (מעכבים את משיח).

***b. Sanh.* 97b** Rab [175–247 C.E.] said: All the predestined dates [for Messiah’s coming] have passed, and the matter [now] depends only on repentance and good deeds.²⁶⁰

The idea that the Messiah’s appearance was being delayed by Israel’s non-repentance also comes over into the early Jesus movement. In Rom 10-11, Paul speaks of how God’s mercy toward the Gentiles would “provoke” (παραζηλόω) Israel such that she turns from her unbelief (10:19; 11:11, 14). He then asks: “For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?”

²⁵⁹ Allison, *Jesus Tradition*, 192-204.

²⁶⁰ Cf. also *b. ‘Abod. Zar.* 8b-9a; *Pirqe R. El.* 43 end.

(11:15). The implication seems to be that the resurrection—and hence Jesus’ second coming—will occur when Israel finally joins in with the Gentiles in accepting Jesus as the Messiah. The same ideas undergird Peter’s remarks to his fellow Jews in the Temple:

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, **20** and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, **21** whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.

The notion that the Messiah would not come (or return) until Israel repented was clearly a well-entrenched tradition, both in the early Jesus movement and wider Judaism. This point bears heavily on the present thesis dealing with the messianic forerunner concept in Q. If Allison’s interpretation is correct it would help to establish further Q’s identification of Jesus as the (Davidic) Messiah. It would also help to explain why exactly John is depicted as a preacher of repentance. As a forerunner to the Messiah he would have been entrusted by God with the task of ensuring that Israel had repented. This comes through in Q’s portrayal of John the Baptist’s preaching (Q 3:7-9).²⁶¹

Allison also notes a recurring formula in rabbinic tradition which nicely parallels the wording of Q 13:35:

b. Sanh. 97a: Ze’iri said in R. Ḥanina’s name: “The Son of David will not come until there are no conceited men in Israel.”

b. Sanh. 98a: R. Ḥanina said: “The Son of David will not come until even the pettiest kingdom ceases to hold power over Israel.”

b. Sanh. 98a: R. Simlai said in the name of R. Eleazar b. Simeon: “The Son of David will not come until all judges and officers are gone from Israel.”

b. ‘Abod. Zar. 5a: R. Jose said: “The Son of David will not come until all the souls destined for bodies are exhausted.”

b. Sanh. 98b: Rab said: “The Son of David will not come until the [Roman] power enfolds Israel for nine months.”

Allison points out that these sayings follow the same basic structure:

²⁶¹ I have discussed the conceptualization of Elijah as an agent of repentance earlier (→2.2.8.4.).

- a) statement about the messianic advent with adverbial particle of negation attached (“The Son of David will not come”);
- b) conditional particle (ἄν);
- c) condition to be met (in Israel) for fulfilment of the messianic advent (e.g. “no conceited men in Israel”).²⁶²

This is precisely the structure of Q 13:35, where Jesus says: a) “You will not see me [the Messiah] b) until (ἕως) you say, Blessed is he...”

I think Allison’s interpretation of 13:35 illumines profoundly Q’s theme about the Coming One. Many commentators have acknowledged the importance of Jesus’ two-fold coming in Q but few have attempted to explain why it sets up this two-coming scheme. Paul Foster argues that it has pastoral significance since that it provides Jesus’ followers with the comfort of future vindication while at the same time giving them a foretaste of the kingdom through Jesus’ healing of the sick and his preaching to the poor.²⁶³ This only really explains how the two comings are exploited, though, not why two were needed in the first place. From a historical standpoint, it was, of course, necessary for Jesus to come a second time since he had not fulfilled all the prophecies concerning the Messiah. But this would need to be explained theologically and not just in practical terms. Justin Martyr asserts that the two-coming scheme was in God’s original plan and that this is evident when Scripture speaks of the Messiah both as a suffering and as a glorious figure (*Dial.* 32-33, 52-54, 110-111). By contrast, for Q, Jesus’ second coming does not seem to have been part of God’s original plan but was something of an *ad hoc* response to Israel’s non-repentance and non-acceptance of her Messiah. Note the following saying:

Q 12:49 I came to cast fire upon the earth (πῦρ ἤλθον βαλεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν); and how I wish it were already kindled! **50** But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!

²⁶² Allison, *Jesus Tradition*, 200.

²⁶³ Foster, “Pastoral Purpose,” 81-91.

This saying only occurs in Luke's Gospel but likely derives from Q.²⁶⁴ It can be understood very well in light of the above interpretation of 13:35. Jesus is saying that he came to bring Israel's redemption (by inflicting punishment on her enemies) but was unable to do so because Israel had rejected him. He therefore expects to undergo death as a rejected Messiah (the *δέ* in v. 50 is adversative, and introduces an alternative idea). He wishes it had gone the other way, however, as is evidenced by the phrase *καὶ τί θέλω εἰ ἤδη ἀνήφθη* and the verb *συνέχομαι*, which implies here a feeling of distress.²⁶⁵ Similar frustration over Israel's rejection of Jesus can be found in Luke 13:31-34 where he again anticipates his death and laments over "Jerusalem" for her continued rejection of God's prophets. As with 12:49-50, this saying only occurs in Luke but likely derives from Q.²⁶⁶ In this saying, which occurred in Q just before 13:35 (cf. Matt 23:37-39), Jesus expresses once again his frustration with how his original purpose of redeeming Israel ("Jerusalem" here is synecdochic) had been thwarted by her obstinacy and disobedience.

For Q, then, Jesus' first coming was meant to bring redemption. But Israel rejected and killed her Messiah. A backup plan was therefore been put in place: Jesus would have to come a second time (this time as the Son of man) when Israel finally repents. John's prophecies have not fallen to the floor. They have only been delayed.

²⁶⁴ According to Jeremias (*Sprache*, 223), v. 49 exhibits no clear signs of Lukan redaction and *τί θέλω εἰ* is best seen as a non-Lukan Semitism. See Seper, "ΑΝΗΦΘΗ," 147-153. One could also say that v. 50 is un-Lukan in a sense because it portrays Jesus as emotionally affected, unlike many other places in the Gospel where Luke eliminates Mark's statements about Jesus' emotions. See further Kloppenborg, *Parallels*, 142.

²⁶⁵ Cf. 2 Kgs 14:26; Job 2:9; 3:24; 10:1; 4 Macc. 15:32; Wis 17:10; Luke 4:38; 8:37, 45; Acts 28:8; Josephus, *Ant.* 5.358; 7.42, 153; Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.131; 6.12; Aeschylus, *P.B.*; Euripides, *Heracidae* 634; Diod. Sic., *Library* 11.38.3.

²⁶⁶ In Luke it is located in the midst of several other Q sayings: The Yeast (13:20-21), The Narrow Door (13:24), I Never Knew You (13:25-27), Many Shall Come from the East and the West (13:28-29), The Last Shall Be First (13:30), and The Lament Over Jerusalem (13:34-35). The indictment against "Jerusalem" here also coheres thematically with the Lament Over Jerusalem (13:34-35).

CHAPTER THREE: Jesus' Baptism by John (Q 3:21-22)

Matt 3:13 Τότε παραγίνεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην πρὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

16 βαπτισθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εὐθὺς ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἠνεώχθησαν οἱ οὐρανοί, καὶ εἶδεν πνεῦμα θεοῦ καταβαῖνον ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν ἐρχόμενον ἐπ' αὐτόν.

17 καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν λέγουσα· Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα.

Luke 3:21 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ βαπτισθῆναι ἅπαντα τὸν λαὸν καὶ Ἰησοῦ βαπτισθέντος καὶ προσευχομένου ἀνεώχθη τὸν οὐρανὸν

22 καὶ καταβῆναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον σωματικῶς εἶδει ὡς περιστερὰν ἐπ' αὐτόν, καὶ φωνὴν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γενέσθαι· Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.

υἱός μου εἶ συ· ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκα σε (D it; Ju (CL) Meth Hil Aug)

Mark 1:9 Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν ἐκεῖναις ταῖς ἡμέραις ἦλθεν Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ Ναζαρετ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου.

10 καὶ εὐθὺς ἀναβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος εἶδεν σχίζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ὡς περιστερὰν καταβαῖνον εἰς αὐτόν.

11 καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν· Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.

3.1. Proposed reconstruction

21 καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην πρὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. καὶ βαπτισθέντος [εὐθὺς] ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος **22** καὶ ἠνεώχθησαν οἱ οὐρανοί καὶ εἶδεν τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐπ' αὐτόν. καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου, [ὁ ἀγαπητός], ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα.

21 And Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan, to John, to be baptised by him. **22** And being baptised, [immediately] he came out of the water, and the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit descending as a dove upon him. And there came a voice from heaven, "This is my Son, [the beloved], in whom I have been well-pleased."

3.2. Establishing the text

Establishing the text here will require two steps. First I shall provide a brief justification as to why I think these verses should be included in Q. Second, I shall handle additional uncertainties with regard to specific readings.

3.2.1. Justification for including this pericope in Q

Although it is disputed, a very strong case can be made for Jesus' Baptism by John being present in Q.²⁶⁷

First, there is no obvious evidence that either Matthew or Luke was using Mark. Generally, the three synoptic accounts differ widely. Some agreement with Mark can, of course, be accounted for on the assumption that Mark himself used Q or that Matthew or Luke were at least familiar with Mark's account, even if neither evangelist was using that account directly. The following words and phrases deserve some further explanation/comment:

- Matthew's ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας. If he got this from Mark why would he omit Ναζαρετ?
- Luke's ἐγένετο. Did he and Mark both get this from Q?
- Matthew's εὐθύς. This is a well-known Markan trademark. So Matthew's usage may be a Markan reminiscence. Less likely but not impossible, it reflects an element derived from Q itself.
- Matthew's ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος. Luke, interested in compressing the account (see below), plausibly omitted this as an unessential detail.
- Luke's similarly worded quote from Ps 2. This can be seen as a coincidental agreement with Mark, both evangelists conforming their texts more closely to Ps 2:7 by having the voice address Jesus directly.

Second, Matthew and Luke agree with one another in several instances *against* Mark. This is usually what commentators appeal to as primary evidence for a baptism story in Q:

²⁶⁷ For scholars who either support or reject the unit's inclusion in Q, see Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels*, 16.

Matt/Luke

- aor. pass. *participle* of βαπτίζω
- use of the verb ἀνοίγω
- verb καταβαίνω is placed *before* ὡσεὶ περιστεράν
- Spirit descends ἐπ’ αὐτόν

Mark

- aor. pass. *indicative* of βαπτίζω
- use of the verb σχίζω
- verb καταβαίνω is placed *after* ὡς περιστεράν
- Spirit descends εἰς αὐτόν

Some of these agreements against Mark may be coincidental or attributable to the redactional habits of Matthew or Luke.²⁶⁸ But the confluence of so many of them in such a short passage would be difficult to account for in this way. Two of the agreements in particular—ἀνοίγειν and ἐπ’ αὐτόν—are much more easily attributed to the evangelist’s use of Q.

Fleddermann, who offers the most extensive and compelling argument for seeing these minor agreements as redactional, notes that in the Septuagint and NT the preposition ἐπί is used more frequently than εἰς in connection with πνεῦμα and a verb of motion than with εἰς.²⁶⁹ This is certainly true in the Septuagint. But can one infer from this that Matthew and Luke independently adjusted Mark’s Baptism account in order to make it conform to some general biblical idiom? That would make for an impressive coincidence. Could it not rather be that *Mark* has modified Q? Among Fleddermann’s list of biblical examples, Isa 42:1 and 61:1 seem especially relevant to this question since the Baptism account is intertextually related to these specific verses (→3.5.2.2., 3.5.2.3.) and Q makes allusions to these texts elsewhere (6:20-21; 7:22; Luke 4:18-19 (Q?)). In light of this fact might it not be that Matthew and Luke preserve the original Q wording and Mark has altered it? Mark may well have been motivated to alter it in conformity with Greek or

²⁶⁸ So Neiryck, “Minor Agreements,” 65-67; Fleddermann, *Q*, 234-35; Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 84-5.

²⁶⁹ Fleddermann, *Q*, 235. Fleddermann cites as evidence: Judg 11:29; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Kgdms 10:6, 10; 11:6; Joel 3:1, 2; Isa 11:1; 32:15; 42:1; 44:3; 61:1. We should certainly add here 1 Sam 16:13 where David is anointed and “the Spirit of the Lord sprang upon him from that day forward” (ἐφίλατο πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπὶ Δαυὶδ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης).

theological idiom. Since the Septuagint is a translation, it is not always a good indicator of how Greek was ordinarily spoken. Whenever it refers to the Spirit coming “upon” (ἐπί) a person translating the Hebrew על. But in the NT it is the preposition εἰς appears most often in prepositional phrases involving τὸ πνεῦμα and a verb of motion (e.g. Luke 11:24; Gal 4:6; 1 Thess 4:8; Rev 5:6). Πρός is used as well (e.g. John 16:7). Such usage is no doubt theologically informed. Apparently, in the thought world of Jesus’ early followers, a πνεῦμα (whether God’s Spirit or an evil spirit) could enter *inside* and not simply rest *upon* an individual. In NT writings, persons are often said to become “filled” with the Spirit,²⁷⁰ once again suggesting that the Spirit was *inside* of them.²⁷¹ Again, when an unclean πνεῦμα is exorcized, the terms ἐξέρχομαι²⁷² and ἐκβάλλω²⁷³ are used. This language implies, again, that the πνεῦμα had dwelt *inside* the person (ἐκ being an antonym for both ἐν and εἰς). That Mark in the present text is reflecting this same linguistic tradition is suggested by his own use of εἰς at 5:13; 9:25 and by his non-use of ἐπί elsewhere. It is plausible therefore that Mark has redacted Q here, substituting εἰς for Q’s ἐπί.

Again, Fleddermann argues that Mark’s use of σχίζω is “unusual” and that ἀνοίγω is “the normal verb in the OT” that is used to describe the opening of the heavens.²⁷⁴ For Fleddermann, it was Matthew’s and Luke’s awareness of this idiom that independently motivated them to adjust Mark in the same way. But one could more plausibly argue that Mark has redacted Q here. By using σχίζω Mark has paralleled Jesus’ baptism with the tearing of the temple curtain in 15:38: τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ’ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω.²⁷⁵

Also relevant to the question of whether Q contained an account of Jesus’ baptism is Matthew’s unique wording of the *bat qôl*, which differs from that found in Mark’s and

²⁷⁰ Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 5:3; 9:17; 13:9, 52; Eph 5:18.

²⁷¹ Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21.

²⁷² Q 11:24; Mark 1:26; 5:13; 9:25; Luke 8:2; Acts 8:7; 16:18.

²⁷³ E.g. Q 11:15-20; Mark 1:34, 39; 6:13; 7:26; 9:18; Matt 8:16; Luke 9:49; 13:32.

²⁷⁴ Fleddermann, *Q*, 235, citing as evidence Isa 64:1 [63:14LXX]; Ezek 1:1; cp. Gen 7:1; Mal 3:10; Isa 24:18; 3 *Macc* 6.18.

²⁷⁵ Several commentators have recognized the parallelism: e.g. France, *Mark*, 74, 77.

Luke's Gospels:

Matt

Mark/Luke

Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα. Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.

(cp. John 1:34: Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ)

In Mark's and Luke's versions, the words are directed at Jesus alone (though it might be imagined that the words were audible to others, especially in Luke's version). In Matthew's version, the words are directed at someone other than Jesus, either the crowds or John. The difference in wording is sometimes attributed to Matthew's christological or narrational concerns. Meier, for example, proposes that Matthew saw no reason to have Jesus being told at this point in his life that he is God's Son, given what had already been narrated about his divine sonship in the birth account of Matt 1-2.²⁷⁶ Another possibility—one that seems to be rarely considered—is that Matthew has preserved the original wording of Q.²⁷⁷ In fact, it is Mark's and Luke's phrasing that most likely betrays christological concerns since it conforms more exactly to the wording of Ps 2:7: υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ.

Michael Goulder tries to explain the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark in terms of Lukan dependence on Matthew. Aside from the general arguments one could make about Matthew and Luke being independent of one another Goulder's explanation of the minor agreements in the present passage is problematic for at least two reasons:

- a. Despite the fact that Luke's account is very brief there are several minor agreements between Luke and Mark against Matthew:

²⁷⁶ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 188 n. 25.

²⁷⁷ This is accepted as the original Q reading by Harnack, *Sprüche*, 216-19 [ET: *Sayings*, 310-14]; Streeter, *Four Gospels*, 143, 188, 276, 291; Polag, *Fragmenta Q*, 30-31.

- (1) ἐγένετο (v. 21 = Mark 1:9)
- (2) ὡς (v. 22 = Mark 1:10 ≠ ὡσεὶ in Matt 3:16)
- (3) φωνὴν ... γενέσθαι (v. 22 = Mark 1:11 [φωνὴν ἐγένετο] ≠ ἰδοὺ φωνή in Matt 3:17)
- (4) σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα (v. 22 = Mark 1:11 ≠ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα in Matt 3:17).

If Luke was using Matthew, how is it that we have all these agreements with Mark?

Goulder dismisses (1) as “part of [Luke’s] normal LXX formula for introducing any major new departure, ἐγένετο [δὲ] ἐν τῷ + inf.”²⁷⁸ The other three agreements (2-4) he describes as “reminiscences” of Mark’s Gospel, which Luke has preserved out of familiarity with Mark. With respect to (4) Goulder also points to the well-known textual variant in Luke 3:22:

- σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα: ℱ⁴ κ A B *et al.*
- υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε: D it^{a(b).c.d.ff2.l.r1} Justin (Clement) Methodius; Hilary *et al.*

Goulder only mentions this “Western” variant as one *possible* way of handling Luke’s agreement with Matthew here. If it were original there would obviously be no actual agreement with Mark for him to explain. The argument is weak, however. In fact, some scholars who accept this variant reading attribute it to Q, precisely the conclusion Goulder would like to avoid. Goulder himself inclines toward the first reading and this is indeed the generally accepted one.²⁷⁹

- b. Matthew’s conversation between Jesus and John (Matt 3:13-15) is not found in Luke’s Gospel. Goulder suggests that this is because Luke “is keeping the Baptist in the

²⁷⁸ Goulder, *Luke*, 281.

²⁷⁹ See, e.g., Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 112-113.

background,” having “already sent him to prison.” This explanation begs the question somewhat; for one would then need to ask why Luke decided to send John to prison prior to his conversation with Jesus and indeed prior to Jesus’ baptism. Furthermore, it is hardly obvious that Luke actually intended the reader to think that John was in prison when Jesus was being baptized. No known ancient reader inferred this from Luke’s narrative. The passive voice does not imply that John was absent whenever Jesus was baptized, any more than the passive phrase ἐν τῷ βαπτισθῆναι implies that John was absent whenever “all the people” were baptized. Goulder also points out that Luke had already included a conversation between Mary and Elizabeth that parallels the one between John and Jesus in Matt 3:13-15. In that conversation Elizabeth remarks: “How is it that my Lord’s mother should *come to me*?” Goulder apparently thinks that Luke invented this conversation on the back of Matt 3:13-15. This seems rather unlikely, however. Any parallels that can be drawn between the two stories are superficial at best. But even if Luke had patterned the Elizabeth-Mary conversation on the John-Jesus conversation this would not have precluded him from including the latter conversation when relating the story of Jesus’ baptism.

A third reason for accepting Jesus’ Baptism by John as part of Q is its allusions to Isa 42 and 61:1 (see below). An allusion to Isa 61:1 is made in Q 6:20-21 and another to both Isa 42 and 61:1 is made in Q 7:22.²⁸⁰ The baptism pericope therefore coheres with Q’s use of scripture elsewhere.

Fourth, from a compositional standpoint it seems highly abrupt for Q’s Prologue in 3:2-3+7-9+16b-17 to have been immediately followed by the Temptation story in 4:1-13. Without some kind of transition story to connect John with Jesus the two narratives would have seemed unrelated.²⁸¹ By contrast, if the story of Jesus’ Baptism by John had

²⁸⁰ On these see below →4.5.2.

²⁸¹ This remains so, despite the efforts of Fleddermann (Q, 235) to suggest otherwise.

immediately followed Q's Prologue the narrative would have transitioned quite naturally from the Prologue to the Temptation. The Prologue would have provided a perfect set-up for the story about Jesus' Baptism: in 3:7 we are told that John was baptizing (Matt: τὸ βάπτισμα; Luke: βαπτισθῆναι); in 3:16 another reference is made to John's baptism (Ἐγὼ μὲν ὕδατι βαπτίζω ὑμᾶς). And the Baptism provides a nice setup for the Temptation, which seems to presuppose and require it, as we shall now see.

Fifth, there are two elements in the Temptation that seem to refer back, anaphorically, to the story of Jesus' Baptism by John:

- a) The mention that "Jesus was led by the Spirit (τοῦ πνεύματος) into the desert" in Q 4:1 plausibly recalls the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at his baptism. That the reference to "the Spirit" in 4:1 indeed recalls a Baptism story *in Q* (and is not simply the story that Matthew and Luke would have known from Mark's Gospel) is further suggested by a minor agreement here between Matthew and Luke against Mark:

Matt 4:1 ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος

Luke 4:1 ἤγετο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ

Mark 1:12 τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον

The root verb ἄγω occurs in Matthew and Luke. Mark may have modified this to ἐκβάλλει for dramatic effect or because this is the usual verb he associates with spiritual force.²⁸²

- b) In the Temptation story, two of Satan's temptations are introduced with the words, εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ (Q 4:3, 9). These words plausibly recall the acknowledgment of Jesus as God's Son, as this is mentioned in the baptism story. Kloppenborg rejects this line of reasoning, claiming: "The title 'Son of God' in Q 4 does not require an explanatory

²⁸² Cf. Mark 1:34, 39; 3:15, 22, 23; 6:13; 7:26; 9:18, 28, 38. There are also some noteworthy verbal agreements between Mark's Temptation and LXX Exod 23:29: ἐκβάλλω, ἔρημος, and θηρία.

narrative any more than does the title ‘Son of Man’ ...”²⁸³ That may be the case but the anaphoric reference likely serves another purpose by creating an interlocking narrative by means of a catchword and plot development. Kloppenborg also thinks that Jesus’ Baptism by John is out of keeping with the broader christology of Q, claiming that Jesus is not presented in Q as the Davidic Messiah, which is precisely the implication of this pericope (→3.5.4.).²⁸⁴ It might be added that this pericope would not fit in very well with Kloppenborg’s ideas about Q’s genre either since he holds that Q was a “sayings gospel,” with its closest analogue not in any of the narrative-oriented canonical gospels but in the *Gospel of Thomas*.²⁸⁵ Yet Q 3-7 undoubtedly contains several other features that would characterize it as a narrative.²⁸⁶ If Q contained Jesus’ Baptism by John this would cohere nicely with and help to expand its narrative structure.

Fleddermann offers two structural arguments against Jesus’ Baptism being included in Q:

1. He claims to have identified in Q 3-7 several “chiastic ring compositions,” according to which “the central Sermon [is] flanked by two rings that center on christology, an inner ring [is] made up of Jesus’ Temptations and the Centurion’s Servant and an outer ring [are] made up of John’s Preaching and John’s Question.”²⁸⁷

A. John’s Preaching

B. Temptation

²⁸³ Kloppenborg, *Parallels*, 16.

²⁸⁴ For Kloppenborg’s view on the christology of Q, see his “Wisdom Christology,” 129-147.

²⁸⁵ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 263-316.

²⁸⁶ In his book *Formation*, Kloppenborg acknowledged that Q exhibits certain “logical and qualitative progressions” but insisted that it “lacks a unifying narrative format” (pp. 94-95). I would disagree with him about this, at least in Q 3-7. He has more recently argued for a basic narrative introduction to the material about John in Q 3:2-3 (→2.1.2.). This introduction adds further support, however, to the idea that Q can be properly characterized as a narrative.

²⁸⁷ Fleddermann, *Q*, 235. See similarly Allison, *Jesus Tradition*, 8-11.

- C. Sermon
- B'. Centurion's Servant
- A'. John's Question

For Fleddermann, a Baptism “would disturb this ring composition.”

I have already noted that this structural analysis is rendered uncertain because other units—such as the Cleansing of the Leper (Luke 5:12-16 *par.*) or the Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17)—might have been located just before the Centurion's Servant. Were either of these to be included in our analysis, the structure would balance itself out:

- A. John's Preaching
- B. Baptism
- C. Temptation
- D. Sermon
- C'. Leper Cleansed/Widow's Son
- B'. Centurion's Servant
- A'. John's Question

With a little bit of creative thinking, I could probably come up with ways to make the B+B' units and the C+C' units seem parallel within this schematization. For example, while B and C are narratives about Jesus' spiritual formation for ministry, C' and B' are narratives about his active ministry. The Sermon, meanwhile, is not a narrative but a representative collection of his teachings. The chiasmic structure would therefore remain intact. Including either the Cleansing of the Leper or the Raising of the Widow's Son would also help anticipate Jesus' statement in 7:22 about how lepers are being cleansed and the dead are being raised. On the other hand, this proposed structure (as well as Fleddermann's) would be undermined if one were to include Jesus' Preaching at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30),²⁸⁸ which would have to be located after the Temptation and probably before the Sermon. In the final analysis, arguments supporting an elaborate chiasmic structure here are too subjective. They are also highly

²⁸⁸ For an argument in favour of Luke 4:16-30 being in Q, see Tuckett, *History*, 226-37.

uncertain, depending on an exact knowledge of the extent of Q. Since other material may have been included in Q beyond what Fleddermann allows in this section, his argument cannot be relied upon.

One need not rely on uncertain arguments about the chiastic arrangement of the units in Q 3-7) in order to identify some structural artifice. A basic narrative plot clearly develops around Jesus as “the Coming One.” Jesus’ answer in 7:22 not only presupposes John’s prophecy in 3:16b-17 but also Jesus’ activities in the Sermon (e.g. evangelizing the poor), raising the dead (Centurion’s Servant, or possibly the Widow’s Son of Nain and (less possibly), the Cleansing of the Leper). An *inclusio* can also be detected when John’s Preaching about the Coming One is recalled in John’s Question. Had Jesus’ Baptism by John been in Q it would not have disturbed any of *this* structural artifice.

2. Fleddermann points to certain catchwords that occur in all five of his supposed units in Q 3-7.²⁸⁹ But many of these terms are quite common and as such are likely coincidental (e.g. λέγω, θεός, ποιέω, ἔχω). Others only link up with one or two of the other units, which makes them no different from the Baptism since it too contains catchwords found in other sections: βαπτίζω (3:21 ≈ 3:7, 16); τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον (3:22 ≈ 3:16; [4:18]); υἱός (3:22 ≈ 4:3, 9); οὐρανός (3:21 ≈ 6:23). Fleddermann’s catchword argument is therefore unpersuasive.

The fact that Matthew’s account differs so much from Mark’s is a further indication that he is using Q rather than Mark:

- 1) Whereas Mark reads καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις ἦλθεν, Matthew reads
τότε παραγίνεται.

²⁸⁹ Fleddermann, *Q*, 224-25, 235.

- 2) Matthew omits Mark's ἀπὸ Ναζαρετ.
- 3) Matthew uses an infinitive absolute to say that Jesus was baptized by John whereas Mark employs a more simple parataxis: καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη...ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου.
- 4) Matthew also omits that Jesus was baptized εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνου (although he does have Jesus come to John who was “at the Jordan” (ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην)).
- 5) Matthew (and Luke) uses βαπτισθῆναι (inf.) whereas Mark uses ἐβαπτίσθη (indic.).

In sum, there are several compelling reasons for thinking that Q contained the short narrative about Jesus' baptism.

3.2.2. Additional uncertainties with regard to specific readings

Having dealt with why I think Q contained the story of Jesus' baptism I shall now try to establish particular textual readings within this story. In the above reconstruction I have mainly followed Matthew. Luke appears to have compressed and modified his version quite extensively. His reason for doing so was likely two-fold. First, he needed to trim back his narrative, having inserted a large amount of extra (redactional) material into it:

- a) A historical note (vv. 1-2);
- b) An extended quote from Isa 40 (vv. 5-6);
- c) John's answers to the people, tax collectors, and soldiers (vv. 10-14);
- d) A note about the crowds questioning whether John might be the Messiah (v. 15);
- e) John's imprisonment by Herod (which is actually a compressed version of Mark 6:17-30 but which nonetheless intrudes into Luke's narrative prior to the baptism story).

Second, Luke's interposing of the Markan reminiscence about John's imprisonment (cf. Mark 6:17-30) has required Luke to make a harsh transition back to Q, probably prompting him to displace and modify some of the material in Q, which he had been using up to this point in his narrative. Taking up my working hypothesis that all three of the synoptic writers were familiar with Q, I would propose that Matthew, like Luke, is not using Mark but Q here while Mark has also used Q but has modified it more substantially than Matthew.

If indeed Luke has severely compressed the Baptism as I have suggested and Mark (or Matthew) has extensively modified it, any reconstruction of the original text of Q shall have to be only tentatively proposed.

Since ἐγένετο occurs in both Mark and Luke it should be preferred to Matthew's παραγίνεται, which is likely MattR since he evidently prefers it to ἐγένετο at 3:13 (diff. Mark 1:9) and uses it to introduce Jesus at 2:1. Mark's ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις may have been brought over from 3:2. Mark's ἦλθεν seems to be required. It is not attested in Matthew because he used παραγίνεται while Luke, by compressing the material, has omitted Jesus' journey from Galilee altogether and so had no need for ἦλθεν.

Matthew has evidently added the story about John's discussion with Jesus in Matt 3:14-15. Mark and Luke, if they had known it, would not have omitted it, given its obvious apologetic and christological value (more on this below).

Matthew's εὐθύς (v. 16) looks suspiciously Markan (cf. Mark 1:10), but may be a Markan reminiscence. Luke's καὶ προσευχομένου is redactional. Mark's σχιζομένους is also redactional (cf. Mark 15:38). Matthew's plural οἱ οὐρανοὶ (cf. also Mark) is more Semitic in style whereas Luke's version is more in accord with Greek (and Lukan) idiom; I take that to mean Luke's is less original.

I have chosen Mark's τὸ πνεῦμα as the original Q reading. Aside from the present verse and the Q overlap at 1:12, Mark always refers to God's Spirit as "holy" (1:8; 3:29; 12:36; 13:11). Matthew altered Q's τὸ πνεῦμα to the more biblical πνεῦμα θεοῦ (e.g. Gen

1:2; 1 Sam 10:10; Ezek 11:24) and Luke to his patently redactional “the Holy Spirit.” The simpler Markan reading matches up with 4:1, thus strengthening its anaphoric significance there and helping to clarify that it is not an evil spirit but God’s Spirit that drove Jesus into the wilderness.

Matthew’s pleonastic ἐρχόμενον may be redactional since it is not attested in Mark or Luke.

Ὁ ἄγαπητός may be a Markan interpolation that has influenced and so turned up in Matthew and Luke’s versions. The term also shows up in the quote from Ps 2:7 in the Transfiguration (Mark 9:7) and this is followed by Matthew in his version of the story (Matt 17:5; but cf. Luke 9:35) so Mark’s Transfiguration may have influenced him here in the Baptism. The term is also used in Mark’s Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Mark 12:6). I have therefore placed it in brackets in my reconstruction of the Baptism pericope. Matthew’s wording of the *bath qôl* is preferable since it differs from Mark and Luke and since the wording of those two evangelists can be explained as an attempt to conform the text more closely to Ps 2:7 where the υἱός is addressed in direct speech.

3.3. Location in Q

If Jesus’ Baptism by John was indeed part of Q, it must have immediately followed the material in 3:2-3+7-9+16b-17. All four Gospels begin with a brief description of John’s baptism ministry, a mention of his prophecies about the Coming One, and then either narrate (Matt, Mark, Luke) or presuppose (John) the baptism of Jesus by John.

Given its placement immediately before Jesus’ Baptism, the description of John’s baptism ministry and preaching in 3:7-9+16b-17 was clearly not told for its own sake, as if John’s ministry and preaching were important in and of themselves. Rather, John’s baptism, ministry, and preaching serve a narrative function by helping to set the stage for Jesus’ baptism and ministry. The present baptism pericope itself led into another short

narrative about Jesus' temptation by Satan (4:1-12) and that then led into the Sermon (4:16-30; 6:20ff.).

3.4. Issues of tradition and redaction

Although I am treating Jesus' Baptism by John in a separate chapter, from a compositional standpoint it must have always been one of a piece with the Prologue and the Temptation. These three sections are too intertwined to justify a hypothesis that they had once circulated independently of one another.²⁹⁰ I argued above that the Prologue (with the possible exception of 3:7-9) was the work of someone within the Jesus movement. Jesus' Baptism by John and the Temptation must therefore be attributed to that same composer.

3.5. Commentary

3.5.1. A private vision?

It is often supposed that in Mark's Gospel the vision of the dove and the *bat qôl*, which are seen and heard during Jesus' baptism, were only experienced *privately* by Jesus (cf. εἶδεν...σὺ εἶ...).²⁹¹ Mark's version of Jesus' baptism contrasts with the other Gospels in these respects. In Matthew's version the voice speaks either to John or the crowd: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (Matt 3:17). Mark's version also contrasts with Luke's, which seems to present the dove and heavenly voice as objective phenomena (Luke 3:22), and with the Fourth Gospel's, in which the dove's descent and a heavenly voice are said to have been witnessed by John (cf. John 1:32-34). One explanation for these differences is

²⁹⁰ See the discussion above (→3.2.1.) for anaphoric terms that link Jesus' Baptism by John with the Temptation, and for the way the Prologue sets the stage for Jesus' appearance and baptism.

²⁹¹ E.g. Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 265-66; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 28; Lane, *Mark*, 58; Catchpole, *Quest*, 11-12.

that the later Gospel writers were trying to make Jesus' miracles more impressive by describing them as public theophanies (Matt, Luke) or at least as events that were not only perceived subjectively by Jesus.²⁹² I am not convinced. If Mark was using an earlier story that he found in Q then Matthew's version of the *bat qôl* may well be the more primitive one (→3.2.1.; 3.2.2.). In that case, Mark could be seen as having adjusted the quote himself for at least two reasons: (1) because a public declaration by God of Jesus' sonship would have undermined the so-called "messianic secret," a well-known Markan theme (cf. Mark 1:43-45; 4:1; 8:29-30, etc.);²⁹³ (2) because the adjustment makes the words conform more closely to Ps 2:7 (on which, see below).

3.5.2. Intertextual links

The Baptism is thought to contain intertextual links with several biblical passages.

3.5.2.1. Gen 22

Ὁ ἀγαπητός ("the beloved one") may harken back to the story of Isaac's binding—the *Aqedah*—in Gen 22 where Isaac is referred to three times by the Hebrew term אֲבִיבִי (vv. 2, 12, 16).²⁹⁴ In each case, this term is translated in the Septuagint as ὁ ἀγαπητός. This intertextual link is dubious, however, since Q does not seem interested in an *Aqeda* based christology elsewhere (contr. Rom 8:32; Heb 11:17; 1 John 4:9-10). Moreover, ὁ ἀγαπητός is more likely to have been derived from another text, as I shall now explain.

²⁹² So, e.g., Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 265.

²⁹³ So Lambrecht, "John the Baptist," 368. For the classic study on the "messianic secret," see Wrede, *Secret*). Another worthwhile study on the topic is by Raisanen, *Secret*.

²⁹⁴ See further Stegner, "Baptism," 36-46; Daly, "Soteriological," 45-75, esp. 68-71. The *Aqedah* allusion is disputed by Davies and Chilton, "Aqedah," 514-46.

3.5.2.2. Isa 42:1

The words ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα are often thought to derive from Isa 42:1: “Here is my servant... [in whom] my soul delights (שִׂיחַתִּי בְּיָדָיו), upon whom I have put my Spirit (רוּחִי עָלָיו).” This intertextual link is often disputed, however. Q and Mark show likely familiarity with the Septuagint in some of their other quotes from the book of Isaiah.²⁹⁵ Yet the words spoken by the *bat qôl* differ considerably from LXX Isa 42:1, which reads: “Israel is my chosen; my soul has accepted him” (Ἰσραηλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου προσεδέξατο αὐτὸν ἡ ψυχὴ μου). None of this matches verbally with ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα. To be sure, the verb נָצַח is occasionally translated in the Septuagint with εὐδοκέω.²⁹⁶ But this is by no means the standard translation in the Septuagint; for of its fifty-seven occurrences in the MT the Septuagint translates it with εὐδοκέω only seven times.

These objections might seem compelling at first glance. But they are outweighed by other evidence. In Luke’s version of the Transfiguration—which also features a *bat qôl* declaring something quite similar to what we have in the Baptism—there is a more obvious intertextual link with LXX Isa 42:1: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος. And even more significantly, when Matthew quotes from Isa 42:1, he uses the phrase ὁ ἀγαπητός μου and the verb εὐδοκέω:

Matt 12:18 ἰδοὺ ὁ παῖς μου ὃν ἠρέτισα, ὁ ἀγαπητός μου εἰς ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου· θήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν, καὶ κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ.

Furthermore, Bruce Chilton has pointed to several possible intertextual links between the Baptism and *Tg. Isa.* 42:1, as well as two other related texts in the book of Isaiah:²⁹⁷

42:1 Behold my servant, ... my chosen in whom my Memra has been pleased (בְּחִירִי (אֶתְּיָן רוּחַ קוֹדֵשׁ עָלָיו); I will put my Holy Spirit upon him (אֶתְּיָן רוּחַ קוֹדֵשׁ עָלָיו); I will put my Holy Spirit upon him (אֶתְּיָן רוּחַ קוֹדֵשׁ עָלָיו).

41:8-9 And you, Israel my servant, Jacob in you I have been pleased (אֶתְּיָן רוּחַ קוֹדֵשׁ עָלָיו). ... I

²⁹⁵ Q 7:22; 6:20-21; Mark 1:3; 7:6-7.

²⁹⁶ Gen 33:10; Lev 26:34, 41; 1 Chr 29:3; 2 Chr 10:7; Eccl 9:7; Job 14:6.

²⁹⁷ Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi*, 128-130. Translations here are based on Chilton’s but with slight modification for a more literal rendering.

have said to you, My servant, I have been pleased with you (אֶתְרַעֲיִתִּי בָךְ) and will not cast you off.

43:10 ... and my servant the Messiah in whom I have been pleased (הַבְּרַעֲיִתִּי בִּיהָ).

Chilton links these texts with Jesus' Baptism by John on the following grounds:

(1) the servant is explicitly identified as the Messiah (in 43:10).

(2) הַבְּרַעֲיִתִּי בִּיהָ in 43:10 (cf. also אֶתְרַעֲיִתִּי בָךְ in 41:8-9 and 42:1) corresponds nicely with εἰς ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου.

Joel Marcus adds:

(3) the reference to the impartation of the Spirit.²⁹⁸

Thus, Jesus' Baptism by John appears to contain an allusion to Isa 42:1.

3.5.2.3. Isa 61:1

Jesus' Baptism by John seems to allude to Isa 61:1 as well. We are told that when Jesus came up from the river "he saw the Spirit descending upon him like a dove" (τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐπ' (Mark: εἰς) αὐτόν. Shortly after this in Mark's Gospel, Jesus begins "preaching the gospel of God (κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ), saying, "Repent and believe in the gospel" (μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ) (vv. 14-15).²⁹⁹ The language and sequence here compares nicely with Isa 61:1 where the anointed figure declares,

The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon
me because he has anointed me
to preach the good news to the poor
to proclaim the year of Yahweh's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

רוח אדני יהוה עלי	πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ
יען משח יהוה אתי	οὗ ἕνεκεν ἔχρισέν με
לבשר עניים	εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς
ליהנה רצון-שְׁנַת לְקָרָא	καλέσαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτὸν
לְאַלְהֵינוּ נְקָם יוֹם	καὶ ἡμέραν ἀνταποδόσεως,
אֲבִיבִים לְנַחֵם-כָּל	παρακαλέσαι πάντας τοὺς
	πενθοῦντας

²⁹⁸ Marcus, *Way*, 53.

²⁹⁹ See Adela Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 149) for other possible intertextual links with Isa 61:1-2.

In Q Jesus' Baptism by John is similarly followed, after the Temptation, by Jesus' Sermon (Q 6), which opens with an allusion to Isa 61:1-2:

Q 6:20 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί, ὅτι ὑμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. **21** ... μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσεσθε.

For Q, Isa 61:1-2 was clearly an important text.³⁰⁰

This allusion to Isa 61:1 in Jesus' Baptism by John has serious implications for the present study. The speaker attests that Yahweh has anointed him. This fact, along with the fact that Jesus' baptism takes place at the very outset of his ministry (shortly before his inaugural Sermon) implies that his baptism has been interpreted as a kind of anointing ceremony: Jesus became the Messiah at his baptism.³⁰¹

3.5.2.4. Ps 2:7

It is generally acknowledged that the *bat qôl* in Mark 1:11 *par.* also contains a partial quote from Ps 2:7. In this psalm text the Davidic "Messiah" (מֶשִׁיחַ) declares Yahweh's decree:

He said to me, "You are my son, today I have begotten you."

The words in the Septuagint read very similarly to what we have in Q. Some commentators, however, dismisses this biblical reference on the basis of minor differences in word order:³⁰²

³⁰⁰ While most Q scholars acknowledge this fact, they rarely discuss Jesus' Baptism by John or recognize how this pericope's intertexts with Isa 61:1 cohere with other sections of Q. See, e.g. Tuckett ("Isaiah in Q," 51-64), who does not think that Jesus' Baptism by John was in Q and therefore does not bother to mention its intertexts with Isa 61:1.

³⁰¹ So, e.g., Adela Yarbro Collins, "Messiah as Son of God," 22 (she is commenting, however, on the story in Mark's Gospel). See also Allison's relevant remarks: "Jewish kings were not born but made. They ascended the throne only when they received anointing" (*Constructing*, 289).

³⁰² E.g. Dalman, *Words*, 276-80; Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 97-98; Jeremias, *Abba*, 191-198; Zimmerli and Jeremias, "παῖς θεοῦ," 701-4; Cullmann, *Christology*, 66; Gnika, *Markus*, 1.50.

υἱός μου εἶ σύ	(LXX Ps 2:7)
σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου	(Mark 1:11 Luke 3:22)
οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου	(Matt 3:17)

These commentators usually try to explain the use of υἱός here as an early alteration of παῖς, which had originally stood in the text because this is the term used in Isa 42:1. But this is purely speculative. It also fails to recognize that Gospel stories and sayings are often laden with intertexts. Early tradents of the Jesus movements apparently wanted to pack as much scripture into these stories and sayings as possible. Hence, it is a false dilemma to think that we have only one of two options here: either Isa 42:1 *or* Ps 2:7.

Taylor emphasizes that ὁ ἀγαπητός does not occur in Ps 2. She also rejects the notion that this term alludes to Gen 22 and that this term or the phrase ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα has any connection to Isa 42:1.³⁰³ She contends that there is, in fact, “no clear biblical parallel” to the words of the *bat qôl* at Mark 1:11 *par*.³⁰⁴

Taylor does not think Jesus’ Baptism by John reflects any interest in portraying Jesus as the Davidic Messiah either. It merely confirms his status as a prophet and pious man. She argues this on the basis of alleged intertextual links with biblical passages dealing with God’s prophets. She compares the portrayal of Jesus here with Dan 9:20-21 where the prophet is portrayed as being in a state of prayer (“confessing my own sins and the sins of my people Israel”) and seeing a “vision” (הַרְאָה/ὄρασις/ὄπτασία). Again, she notes that Daniel sees the angel Gabriel coming to him “in swift flight” and thinks this is reminiscent of the dove in Jesus’ heavenly vision. In Dan 9:23 the angel describes Daniel as “beloved” (הַמְדוּדָה), and Taylor finds this to be reminiscent of the term ὁ ἀγαπητός uttered in the Baptism. Again, Taylor cites Dan 10:5-11, a passage where Daniel is standing on the bank of the Tigris—like Jesus on the bank of the Jordan—when an angel declares to him: “Daniel, you are a beloved man (אִישׁ הַמְדוּדָה); comprehend the words that I will tell you.”

³⁰³ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 268 n. 19.

³⁰⁴ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 267.

Finally, Taylor points to Jer 11:15 where the term יְדִידִי (“my beloved”) occurs.³⁰⁵ She claims this can be interpreted as referring not to Judah/Israel (which is how all commentators understand it as far as I am aware) but to the prophet Jeremiah. She apparently thinks this because the term is masculine rather than feminine (as in 12:7 [נְפִישֵׁי יְדִדְוֹת]). She notes that the targum *Ps.-Jon.* translates the Hebrew דְּוִדִי (“my beloved”) as חַבִּיב קִדְמִי (“a beloved one before me”) and suggests that the term would best describe a prophet rather than Israel.

As for the phrase σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου, I have already noted that Taylor finds no connection here with Ps 2:7. She thinks the divine sonship ascribed to Jesus is not related to his messianic status but is more egalitarian, pointing out that in texts from both Judaism and the early Jesus movement all the righteous could be referred to as God’s children:

Hos 11:1 When Israel was a child (נֶעַר/νήπιος), I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son (בְּנִי/τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ).³⁰⁶

Wis 2:13 He professes to have knowledge of God, and names himself a child of the Lord (παῖδα κυρίου ἑαυτὸν ὀνομάζει)... **16** We are considered by him as something base, and he avoids our ways as unclean; he calls the last end of the righteous happy, and brags that God is his father (ἀλαζονεύεται πατέρα θεόν).

4Q504 frg. 1-2 iii 5 you have established us as your sons (בְּנִים) in the sight of all the peoples. For you called **6** [I]srael “my son, my first-born” (בְּכֹרִי בְנִי) and have corrected us as one corrects **7** his son (בְּנִי).

Matt 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God (υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται).

Rom 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (οὗτοί εἰσιν υἱοὶ θεοῦ).

In view of passages such as these Taylor writes:

Therefore, the statement, “You are my beloved son in whom I am satisfied” may mean that at the moment of his baptism Jesus heard a heavenly voice accounting him righteous, like a parent acknowledging the good behavior of a child. The statement does not necessarily imply that he was the King-Messiah. The statement may be wholly appropriate to the experience of

³⁰⁵ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 272.

³⁰⁶ The LXX here speaks not of God’s son but of Israel’s children: τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ. Contrast Matt 2:15 (τὸν υἱόν μου) which matches the received Hebrew text.

someone who had repented and undertaken to be righteous.³⁰⁷

It seems ironic that Taylor would dismiss the direct quote from Ps 2:7 and the apparent allusion to Isa 42:1 due to slight differences in word order and verbal correspondence with the Septuagint only to argue for what is, in effect, a far more generalized smattering of allusions from the Hebrew Bible, in texts where the language and concepts are much further removed from Mark 1:11 *par.* than LXX Ps 2:7 or even LXX Isa 42:1. The Greek word used in Dan 9 and 10 for “vision” (ὄρασις/ Θ: ὀπτασία) does not actually occur in Jesus’ Baptism by John at all, a fact that has led commentators to debate whether a (subjective) *vision* or a *theophany* is being described.³⁰⁸ The Old Greek version’s rendering of תמודות (“beloved”) in Dan 10:11, 19, is not ἀγαπητός but ἄνθρωπος ἐλεεινός (“a man pitied”) while Theodotion’s rendering is ἀνὴρ ἐπιθυμιῶν (“a man of desires”). It is true that the prophet Daniel is said to be “beloved.” But this appears not to be a distinctly prophetic epithet. Taylor’s appeal to Jer 11:15 is unconvincing. Neither the Hebrew nor the Aramaic of this text can be cited as support for her claim that the prophet Jeremiah is being referred to here. For one thing, the Hebrew may be corrupt, given that the Septuagint and Syriac both use feminine equivalents, linking the term to Israel. But even if it is not corrupt the context makes it plain, in the Hebrew and in all its translations, that the term is being used with reference to Israel. Moreover, Jack R. Lundbom notes that the masculine ידדי is also used of Israel in Isa 5:1 and adds that there are numerous gender shifts in 11:14-17 and that similar shifts occur in 2:2, 27a.³⁰⁹

The other parallels Taylor mentions are quite superficial, the differences standing out far more than the similarities. In the Baptism, for example, it is *the Holy Spirit*, appearing in the form of a dove, that lands on Jesus in order to indicate God’s favour; Jesus is not visited by an *angel* who comes to disclose the meaning of an eschatological vision. Whereas Daniel confesses the sins of his nation, Jesus simply prays. The Tigris is a

³⁰⁷ Taylor, *Immerser*, 269.

³⁰⁸ See Marcus, *Way*, 56-58.

³⁰⁹ Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 629.

symbol of bondage and punishment whereas the Jordan is a symbol of deliverance and blessing. And so forth.

While Mark 1:11 and Ps 2:7 may differ in terms of word order this fact is of no great significance. Word order in Greek does not typically change the meaning of a sentence and biblical texts were often recalled through memory. Moreover, I posited earlier that Matthew's οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου represents the original Q. This would have been an allusion to Ps 2:7 rather than a direct quote. Preserving the original word order of the psalm would therefore not have been as important for the Q redactor. While ὁ ἀγαπητός does not occur in Ps 2 this phrase can be explained as an intertext with Isa 42:1 or (less likely) the *Aqedah* in Gen 22 (→3.5.2.1-2). Taylor's argument that Ps 2:7 is not alluded to because it does not use ὁ ἀγαπητός fails to appreciate the phenomenon in the early Jesus movement and elsewhere of combining two or more biblical texts in a single "quote." Psalm 2 is quoted from or alluded to in several other places in the NT outside of Jesus' Baptism by John.³¹⁰ This shows that early followers of Jesus thought the chapter was very important for their understanding of Jesus. I think we are on very good footing, therefore, if we find in Jesus' Baptism by John a quote from Ps 2:7.

Adela Yarbro Collins suggests with regard to Jesus' Baptism by John that since the quote from Ps 2:7 is given alongside an allusion to Isa 42:1 (see above) that the latter allusion somehow overrides or obscures the royal (and military) associations within the psalm and presents Jesus as a purely prophetic Messiah. But this reasoning is question-begging and non-sequitur because the allegedly *prophetic* figure of Isa 42 was, in fact, quite often interpreted as the *Davidic* Messiah (→4.5.2.). The militaristic elements in the psalm are not a problem either. Jesus' followers were still able to identify him as the Davidic Messiah despite the fact that he had not been a conquering military figure. His kingdom and rule were understood spiritually. Any militaristic or violent role was thought to be reserved for his second coming.

³¹⁰ Acts 4:25-26; 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5-6; Rev 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15.

3.5.2.5. Gen 1:2

In Gen 1:2 the Spirit of God is described as hovering (מְרַחֵף) over the primeval waters. This may help us explain how the Spirit is portrayed as a dove in Jesus' Baptism by John.³¹¹ Note the following text from the Babylonian Talmud:

b. Hag. 15a Our Rabbis taught: Once R. Joshua b. Hanania was standing on a step on the Temple Mount, and Ben Zoma saw him and did not stand up before him. So [R. Joshua] said to him: Whence and whither, Ben Zoma? He replied: I was gazing between the upper and lower waters, and there is only a bare three fingers' [breadth] between them, for it is said: And the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters—like a dove which hovers over her young without touching [them] (ואינה נוגעת כיונה שמרחפת על בניה).

Here the Spirit of God in Gen 1:2 is explicitly compared to a dove. There is another relevant allusion to Gen 1:2 in 4Q521 where we are told, in an eschatological context “and his Spirit will hover upon the poor” (ועל העניים רוחו התרחף) (2 ii 5). The combined use of רוח of and רחף here make the influence of Gen 1:2 unmistakable. The meaning is not altogether clear, however. Plausibly, the text suggests that in the last days God would restore the world to its original state at creation.³¹² But for our purposes it is of more significance to note that in 4Q521 the act of bestowing the Spirit in the end of days appears to be connected in some way with the Messiah's appearance, which is mentioned only a few lines earlier: “[for the heav]ens and the earth will listen to his anointed one (משיח)...” (2 ii 1). In this respect there is also a very intriguing, albeit late, text in *Gen. Rab.* 2.4 that interprets Gen 1:2 as an allusion to “the spirit of the Messiah” and adds a reference to Isa 11:2. In view of 4Q521 it may be that the intertextual connection with Gen 1:2 in Jesus' Baptism by John was meant to give Jesus' baptism some additional messianic significance.

³¹¹ So Allison, *Allusions*, 9-14.

³¹² So Allison, *Allusions*, 9-14.

3.5.3. The significance of Jesus' sonship

Taylor is not alone in denying that Jesus' sonship was always understood within the early Jesus movement as having messianic and royal implications. Tuckett, for example, interprets the phrase υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in the Temptation (Q 4:3, 9) in a "democratized" sense.³¹³ On his reading υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ implies nothing about Jesus' unique relationship with God or his identity as the Davidic Messiah.

I shall return a bit later to the Temptation story. But sticking for a moment to Jesus' Baptism by John, I think that one would be hard-pressed arguing that its vision of the Holy Spirit/dove descending on Jesus and the message of the *bat qôl* were not meant to set Jesus apart in some way from the many others who were being baptized by John. Note the following rabbinic story about Hillel:

t. Soṭa 13.3 The story is told that sages entered the house of Guryo in Jericho and heard an echo saying, "There is here a man who is worthy of the Holy Spirit, but his generation is not sufficiently righteous," and they set their eyes on Hillel the elder. And when he died, they said concerning him, "Oh the modest [man], the pious [man], disciple of Ezra."³¹⁴

The *bat qôl* in this story is not specifically addressed to Hillel but it is understood to have been referring to him because of this man's outstanding piety. In a similar way, since no one else is said to have had a *bat qôl* address him or her during John's baptism ministry we should conclude that this miraculous voice was meant to mark Jesus as someone quite unique. Indeed, the term ἀγαπητός is likely meant an equivalent for the Hebrew term יְהִיָּה which is used in scripture to indicate a special, often unique, relation between a parent and son.³¹⁵ The divine pronouncement εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα therefore cannot be understood here in a democratized sense in the way Tuckett understands υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in the Temptation.

³¹³ Tuckett, "Temptation," 1.479-507, esp. 494-96.

³¹⁴ Trans. by Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions*, 1.237-38. Parallels appear in *y. Soṭa* 9.13; *b. Soṭa* 48b; *b. Sanh.* 11a; *y. 'Abod. Zar.* 3.1; *y. Hor.* 3.5.

³¹⁵ This would be true even if the baptism account in Q contained no intertext with the *Aqeda* story in Gen 22. Cf. also Judg 11:34; Prov 4:3; Jer 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech 12:10.

We can also find Jesus sonship being understood in a unique sense in Mark, our earliest canonical Gospel. In 3:11 unclean spirits exclaim: σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. The definite article on υἱός here, and the fact these demons apply the title to Jesus personally, emphasize that the divine sonship was something that set Jesus apart from others and imply that he had some kind of special (if not unique) authority about which the demons were singly afraid. Jesus' sonship sets him apart from others in Mark's Transfiguration story as well; for it links his supreme authority precisely to this idea. Note the words of the *bat qôl*: "This is my beloved son—*hear him.*" In the story Peter had just proposed that three tabernacles be built for Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. The *bat qôl* therefore functions as a corrective to Peter's words. It says, in effect, that Jesus is not anyone's equal, be it the prophet Elijah or even the great legislator Moses himself. In the Transfiguration, Jesus' sonship is not a democratized concept. Rather, it emphasizes his superior status.

It is true that in both the Jewish Bible and the NT as well as in several extra-biblical writings we find instances in which Israel and the faithful are referred to as υἱοὶ θεοῦ. But consider the following texts from the NT, which speak of the sonship of believers generally, when they are juxtaposed with other texts in the very same books, which speak of Jesus' sonship specifically:

Gal 3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God (υἱοὶ θεοῦ), through faith.

Gal 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law

Rom 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (υἱοὶ θεοῦ).

Rom 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

Rom 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?

John 1:12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God (τέκνα θεοῦ)

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only Son (ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός), who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

These texts illustrate that while Jesus' early followers could and did refer to all the faithful as God's "sons," this did not detract from their recognition that Jesus' sonship was somehow unique. The faithful were plainly not counted as God's "sons" *in the same sense* that Jesus was. The texts in the first column show that in one breath an author could speak of the faithful as God's "sons"/"children" and those in the second column show that in the next breath the same author could speak of God's singular "Son," without any confusion as to who he was referring to or not referring to. In this respect, it is probably significant that we have no early example of an *individual* follower of Jesus being referred to as *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*. At least in the preserved texts of the early Jesus movement, sonship with God for the faithful is always spoken of in *collective* terms.

Ps 2, which is quoted in the story of Jesus' baptism, has often been described as an enthronement psalm, recited either at the king's accession (when he would have been anointed) or at an annual enthronement festival (when his accession was re-enacted or commemorated).³¹⁶ In this connection, note how "my son" (בְּנִי/υἱός μου) in v. 7 is also referred to as "his anointed" (מְשִׁיחַ/τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ) in v. 2 and as "my king" (מַלְכִי/βασιλεύς) in v. 6. The figure in view here is no mere prophet and certainly not just a pious individual. He is a royal figure whose authority is said to be universal (vv. 8-9). This should probably help us to appreciate how the psalm is being used in Jesus' Baptism by John. Indeed, it is plainly understood as having royal messianic implications in other texts of the NT.³¹⁷ John Collins argues as well that the psalm was widely understood in Second Temple times to refer to the Davidic Messiah.³¹⁸ This interpretation is probably most evident from *Pss. Sol.* 17 but is also present in *1 En.* 48.10 and *4 Ezra* 13, and the interpretation persists into Rabbinic Judaism as well.³¹⁹ Among the Dead Sea Scrolls,

³¹⁶ See Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Son of God*, 10-15; Gessmann, *Messias*, 9; Hamilton, *Royal Body*, 60-61; Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 7.

³¹⁷ E.g. Acts 4:25-28; 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5; Rev 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15. Note the connections drawn to Jesus' position of rulership and his subjugation of "the kings of the earth."

³¹⁸ Collins, "Psalm 2," 49-66.

³¹⁹ *b. Sukk.* 52a; *Gen. Rab.* 44.8; *PRE* 28.1; *Midr. Ps.* 2. See Str.-B., 3.675-77; Rashi: "Our rabbis expounded

4Q174 likely contained a messianic interpretation of Ps 2.³²⁰ And several scholars have argued that in 4Q246 the mysterious figure referred to as “Son of God” (ברה די אל) and “Son of the Most High” (בר עליון) is none other than the Davidic Messiah.³²¹ If correct, Ps 2 would have played a clear role in influencing the author’s choice of titles here.

Older scholarship tended to view the “Son of God” concept or title, insofar as it is applied to Jesus in the NT, as primarily understood against a “Hellenistic” background rather than a “Palestinian” and “traditionally Jewish” one. As such, it was not so much Jewish messianism that helped to define notions of Jesus’ divine sonship but Greek mythology and Greek religious personality cults of the so-called “divine man” (θεῖος ἄνθρωπος).³²² In the Greek pantheon, Zeus was known as “Father of gods and of men” (e.g. Homer, *Il.* 1.544; Hesiod, *Theog.* 47) because he sired the gods Apollo, Aphrodite, Persephone, Hephaestus, and several “heroes” such as Perseus, Dionysus, and Heracles. Apollo was likewise said to have sired famous figures such as Orpheus, Hector, Plato, Asclepius, and Alexander the Great. Divine sonship was claimed by various kings too,

the subject of this psalm as king/messiah.” For Rashi’s own exegesis, see Signer, “Rashi’s Exegesis,” 273-78.

³²⁰ This is disputed by Steudel (“Psalm 2,” 189-197) and Mason (“Psalm 2,” 67-82). Both Steudel and Mason think it was interpreted collectively. But they can only infer this from the way the author seems to identify משיח in Ps 2:2 with בחירי ישראל (i 19). See also Brooke, *Exegesis*, 148-149. Brooke (*Exegesis*, 147) proposes that the opening lines of Ps 2 are being quoted as an *incipit* for the entire psalm. This would imply that in the continuing lines the author provided commentary on the remaining verses of this psalm. Regrettably, since the current fragment breaks off after line 19 and the remaining fragments are too poorly preserved, most of that putative commentary has been lost. It seems reasonable, however, to conjecture that if indeed the author went on to comment on vv. 6-7 that he would have interpreted the “son” as the Davidic Messiah because this is how he interpreted the “son” in 2 Sam 7:14 (see line 11). Indeed, in 1 ii 7 the words משיחי ישראל ואהרון can be plausibly restored as משיח ישראל or משיח ואהרון. In Heb 1:5 we also find 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 2:7 being similarly interpreted in light of each other, an unlikely coincidence. Brooke (*New Testament*, 75-77) suggests that both the authors of 4Q174 and Hebrews “were acquainted with a tradition whereby 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2 belong together ... [and] refer to the kingly Messiah” (77). See further, Collins, “Interpretation of Ps 2,” 51-53.

³²¹ See, e.g., Collins, “*Son of God* Text,” 65-82; idem, *Scepter*, 171-190; Collins and Yarbro Collins, *Son of God*, 65-73; Stökl Ben Ezra, “Messianic Figures,” 515-544, esp. 524; Zimmerman, *Messianische Texte*, 162; idem, “4Q246,” 175-190; Xeravits, *Protagonists*, 88-89; Brooke, “Kingship,” 435-55 (445-49); Evans, “‘Son’ Texts,” 141-143. For a non-messianic interpretation of 4Q246, see Steudel, “Collective Expectations,” 508-525. See also the survey of interpretations and critiques given by Fitzmyer, “Aramaic ‘Son of God’ Text,” *Bib* 74 (1993), 163-78 [also idem, *Christian Origins*, 55-61]; Collins, *Scepter*, 173-185.

³²² See the discussions by Bultmann (*Theology*, 1.128-133), Bousset (*Kyrios Christos*, 91-98), and Hahn (*Titles*, 279-99).

most notably, Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies, and many Seleucid kings. When used politically, as a legitimization of royal claims, the divine sonship concept seems to derive ultimately from Egyptian kingship ideology in which the Pharaoh was seen as the Son of Osiris or (Amun-)Re. The connection with Egyptian ideology is most obvious in the East. But the ideology also worked its way West-ward. The Roman emperors, beginning with Augustus, began to assume the title “son of god” (*divi filius*) too, although here the legitimization of Roman emperors did not rest on one’s relationship with a traditional deity (Jupiter, Mars, etc.) but with a divinized Caesar (especially Julius or Augustus). Significantly, *divi filius* was translated into Greek as θεοῦ υἱός. Thus, it is possible that conceptions of Jesus’ sonship had their origins in either Hellenistic mythology with its legends about the divine lineage of gods and heroes or in Hellenistic and Roman political ideology, with its concerns about claims to royal authority and legitimacy.

But is it really necessary to look to the pagan world in order to understand Jesus’ sonship? Jesus and the early writers of the NT would have undoubtedly been aware of certain biblical texts that speak of the Davidic Messiah as God’s “Son.” Ps 2 was one such text. Another was 2 Sam 7:14: “I shall be his father, and he will be my son (אָנִי אֶהְיֶה לּוֹ לְאָב) (וְהוּא יִהְיֶה לִּי לְבֵן).” Here David’s “seed” is declared to be Yahweh’s own “son.” Similarly, in LXX Ps 109:3 (MT 110:3) we read of a certain divinely established ruler, concerning whom the Lord declares: “I have begotten you from the womb before the morning” (ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐξεγέννησά σε). The Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint here was likely more primitive than that of the Masoretic text which appears to be corrupt.³²³ Again, in Ps 89 the Davidic king calls upon God, saying, “You are my Father” (v. 26) and God refers to the king as his בכור, “firstborn” (v. 27) and משיח, “anointed”/“Messiah” (vv. 39, 52). We have already seen that Ps 2 was interpreted messianically by Jesus’ early followers and other Jews living around the turn of the era. The same can be said of 2 Sam

³²³ See the discussion in Adela Yarbro Collins and Collins, *Son of God*, 15-19.

7, Ps 110 (LXX 109), and Ps 89.³²⁴

We are thus faced—if I may put the matter somewhat simplistically—with two possibilities for the origin and meaning of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in the earliest stage of the Jesus movement. Are we better off understanding the expression in light of Greek and Roman traditions or in light of biblical/Jewish ones? Adela Yarbro Collins thinks that to frame the question in this way is to create a false dilemma.³²⁵ In the earliest Gospel traditions, notions of Jesus’ sonship may well have been derived from Jewish tradition and may well have been understood by Jewish and Judaized (my term not hers) audiences in terms of this tradition. But in some cases the Gospel writers seem, in the way they tell their stories about Jesus, to present his sonship in ways that are evocative of traditions involving “workers of miracles, philosophers and other wise men, inspired individuals, and benefactors” known from Greek and Roman traditions. Such a presentation would have resonated with readers who were of a non-Jewish background and were therefore less familiar with Jewish scripture and tradition.

On the surface, Adela Yarbro Collins’ thesis seems plausible enough; for theology can often draw from a range of influences. However, I find many of her alleged parallels between Son of God passages in Mark’s Gospel and non-Jewish accounts of various divine or quasi-divine figures strained and unconvincing. For example, she compares Jesus’ baptism with stories about the fable writer Aesop and the poet Archilochus because both men are said to have been supernaturally gifted with speaking/writing abilities after having experienced “an extraordinary experience.”³²⁶ Parallels such as this seem overly general. Indeed, neither Aesop nor Archilochus is said to have been the son of a god.

³²⁴ 2 Sam 7:13-14: 4Q174; Heb 1:5. Ps 110: 11QMelch; Mark 12:35-37; *Gen. Rab.* 85.9; *Num. Rab.* 18.23; *Midr. Ps.* 2 § 9; 18 §29; Ps 89: cf. 4Q369; and cf. the phrase עֲקֻבוֹת מִיְשִׁיעַ from Ps 89:51 which is used in *m. Sota* 9.15; *Song Rab.* 2.13; *b. Sanh.* 97a. The Qumran texts cited here have been discussed in numerous articles and monographs. But for 4Q174, see Allegro, *DJD* 5:53-57 and 67-74; idem, “Further Messianic References,” 176-177; Brook, *Exegesis*; Xeravits, *King*, 55-57. For 11QMelch, see García Martínez, *et al.*, *DJD* 23: 221-241; Flowers, “11QMelchizedek.” For 4Q369, see Attridge and Strugnell, *DJD* 13:353-362; Xeravits, *King*, 89-94; Evans, “Son Texts”; idem, “Note.”

³²⁵ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Greeks and Romans,” 85-100; also idem, *Mark*, 147.

³²⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Greeks and Romans,” 88.

Additionally, Collins' argument seems to ignore or downplay the distinctively *Jewish* elements in the story of Jesus' Baptism by John (John's baptism itself, quotes and allusions to Jewish scripture, the *bat qôl*, the Spirit). Again, Collins suggests that for some readers Mark 3:7-13 would have recalled stories about the philosopher and miracle worker Empedocles (5th cent. B.C.E.) who is said to have performed healings among large crowds of people and once declared:

An immortal god, mortal no more, I go about honoured by all. ... They follow me in their thousands, asking where lies the road to profit, some desiring prophecies, while others ask to hear the word of healing for every kind of illness, long transfixed by harsh pains.³²⁷

It seems unlikely that when reading/hearing Mark 3:7-13 Mark's readers would have called to mind the somewhat obscure character of Empedocles, or much less the singular text Collins cites, especially when Empedocles is not actually said in this or any other preserved text to have been the son of a god. Again, Collins thinks Mark's pagan readers might have associated Jesus' healings with those performed by Aesclepius, whom Hesiod and Pindar claim to have been a son of Apollo.³²⁸ But Aesclepius was a healing *god* whom people would consult at various shrines, not a *man* who walked the earth performing healings. The parallel is therefore tenuous at best. It is even more dubious that when Mark's readers heard the demoniac cry, "What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of *the Most High God?*" (Mark 5:7) they would have inferred a filial relationship between Jesus and *Zeus*, as Yarbrow Collins seems to suggest.³²⁹ It is true that Zeus was referred to as (ὁ) ὑψίστος in several Zeus cults throughout Greece and the ancient Near East. But Mark's Gospel clearly identifies Jesus as the Son of the *Jewish* God, who was also commonly referred to by Jews of the first century and beyond as "the Most High" in accord with biblical usage of this expression.³³⁰

³²⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins, "Greeks and Romans," 89.

³²⁸ Adela Yarbro Collins, "Greeks and Romans," 89-90.

³²⁹ Yarbro Collins, "Greeks and Romans," 90.

³³⁰ In Greek translations of the Jewish Bible, the Hebrew term *יְהוָה* is rendered as ὑψίστος (e.g. Gen 14:18-22; Num 24:16; Deut 32:8; 2 Sam 24:14; Ps *passim*; Dan *passim*). The title is widely used frequently in the

My last objection leads me to a more fundamental criticism of Collins' article from 2000. I would suggest that she posits the wrong kind of audience for Mark's Gospels. The Gospel's use of quite subtle intertexts from the Jewish scriptures, explicit quotes and allusions to these scriptures, along with its mention of various Jewish customs—most of which would have been lost on someone wholly unacquainted with Jewish scripture and tradition—indicate that the evangelist was not writing for people who were only vaguely familiar with Judaism or familiar only with pagan stories about Zeus, Aesop, and the like. In fact, Collins' hypothetical pagan Greek audience—so blithely unfamiliar as it supposedly was about the Jewish God, Jewish scripture, Jewish tradition, and indeed about the Jesus movement itself—is probably unlikely to have even existed in the latter half of the first century C.E., at least in any place where Mark can be thought to have written his Gospel.

This is not to deny that at times the evangelist plays to his non-Jewish readers. For example, Collins is quite right about the centurion's acclamation in Mark 15:39: ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν. For readers not particularly versed in Jewish tradition (and probably also for those who were), this expression on the lips of a Roman centurion would have plausibly evoked notions of the imperial cult, especially when Mark uses this title in connection with a solar eclipse.³³¹ Virgil and Plutarch describe Julius Caesar's death as having been similarly attended by a darkening of the sun:

... the Sun shall give you signs: ... He expressed mercy for Rome when Caesar was killed; he hid his shining head in gloom and the impious age feared eternal night.³³²

For throughout the whole year the sun rose pale, and it had no radiance; and the heat which came from it was weak and effete, so that the air lay heavy, due to the feebleness of the warmth which entered it. The fruits, half-ripe and imperfect, faded and decayed because of the chill of the atmosphere.³³³

Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (esp. *Sir*, *4 Ezra*, *1 En.*). See further Bertram, "ὄψιστος," 8.602–20.

³³¹ See further, Bligh, "Huios Theou," 51–53; Johnson, "Key," 3–32; idem, "Confession," 406–413; Kim, "Anarthrous," 221–41; Adela Yarbro Collins, "Greeks and Romans," 93–97.

³³² Virgil, *Georg.* 1.463–68; trans. from Cartlidge and Dungan, *Documents*, 163.

³³³ Plutarch, *Caesar*, 69.3–5; trans. from Cartlidge and Dungan, *Documents*, 164.

In fact, we are probably dealing here with another kind of false dilemma if we are thinking in terms of Jewish-versus-pagan origins and influences on the Son of God title; for the biblical texts that portray the Davidic king as God’s “son” were themselves probably influenced by Egyptian royal ideology.³³⁴ As such, these texts would have shared a similar “pagan” origin as did the traditions influencing many of the Greek kings (e.g. Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies). The Jewish-or-pagan dichotomy would therefore not hold, at least not ultimately.

Thankfully, for our purposes, the murky origins of the divine sonship concept are not especially important. More important is whether or not concept was understood in Second Temple Judaism to have messianic implications and whether these implications had been appropriated within the earliest Jesus movement. We have already seen how divine sonship had been associated with the Davidic Messiah in Second Temple Judaism and beyond. The same is true in many early writings of the NT. Mark’s Gospel refers to Jesus several times as God’s “Son” but two texts are especially helpful in establishing the title’s perceived messianic import. The first is in 1:1 where Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ stands in apposition with υἱοῦ θεοῦ, suggesting that the Second Evangelist understood the latter as a messianic title. The text here is uncertain, however.³³⁵ Another important text is found at 14:61, where Jesus stands trial before the Sanhedrin and the high priest asks: “Are you the Christ,

³³⁴ See, for example, the discussion by John Collins in Adela Yarbro Collins and Collins, *Son of God*, 1-19.

³³⁵ The textual evidence is as follows:

χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ	χριστοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ	χριστοῦ
ⲛ ^a B D L Γ W 2427 Diatessaron ^p	A Δ K P f ^{1,13} 33 180 205 565	ⲛ* Θ 28 l2211 sa ^{ms} syr ^{pal} cop ^{sa(ms)}
Irenaeus ^{lat} Severian	579 700 892 1241 1424 2542 𐌆	arm geo ¹ Irenaeus ^{gr,lat1/3}
	l844 it vg syr ^{p, h} cop ^{sa(mss),bo} goth	Epiphanius (om. ἱησοῦ χριστου)
	arm eth geo ² Iren ^{lat2/3} Origen ^{lat}	Origen ^{gr,lat} Asterius Serapion
	Ambrose Jerome Augustine	Cyril-Jerusalem Basil Severian
		Hesychius Victorinus-Pettau
		Titus-Bostra Jerome ^{3/6}

The general consensus is that υἱοῦ (τοῦ) θεοῦ was not original to Mark but a later addition. See Adela Yarbro Collins, “Mark 1:1,” 111-127; Ehrman, “Text of Mark,” 19-31; idem, *Orthodox Corruption*, 72-75; Head, “Mark 1.1,” 621-29. Reasons for seeing the words as an interpolation include: 1) it is unlikely that such an conspicuous omission would occur and be transmitted at the very beginning of a work; 2) the shorter reading is strongly supported by ⲛ* Θ *et al.*; 3) the longer reading is easily seen as a theologically motivated insertion into the text. On the other hand, it is not impossible that υἱοῦ (τοῦ) θεοῦ has dropped out by parablepsis: ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΥΙΟΥΘΕΟΥ. The longer reading also has the strongest and most diverse external support.

the Son of the Blessed?” The phrase υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ is, of course, a pious surrogate for ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. Since, it stands here in apposition with ὁ χριστός, this indicates that it is functioning as a messianic title.

The following early texts of the NT also indicate that Jesus’ sonship was understood to have messianic implications:

Matt 16:16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Matt 26:63 ...“I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

Luke 1:32-35 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, **33** and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.” **34** And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” **35** And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”

Luke 4:41 And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

Luke 22:67-71 “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe; **68** and if I ask you, you will not answer. **69** But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” **70** And they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” **71** And they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”

John 1:49 Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

John 11:27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.”

John 20:31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

Acts 9:20 And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, “He is the Son of God” [i.e. the Messiah].

Rom 1:3-4 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh **4** and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord...

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

1 John 2:22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

In the above texts, terms like “Son” and “Son of God” are used, either in close association or in apposition with “Christ,” “King of Israel,” or some other messianic title, phrase, or context. This suggests that [ὁ υἱὸς [τοῦ θεοῦ]] was recognized by Jesus’ early followers as a messianic title (although doubtless more than just this).

Thus far I have demonstrated that Q’s story of Jesus’ baptism as well as many other texts indicate that Jesus’ sonship was understood within the earliest Jesus movement to have messianic implications. But one could object that the Baptism was not present in Q and the other early writings cited cannot be used to interpret the other “son” references in Q. I find this kind of sceptical response a bit unreasonable. But for the sake of the argument let us consider two other places in Q where Jesus is referred to as God’s “Son.”

In the Temptation narrative of Q 4:1-12 the Devil twice introduces his temptations with the phrase: “If you are the Son of God...” (vv. 3, 9). As was mentioned above, Tuckett argues against seeing υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ here as implying anything unique about Jesus’ relationship with the Father or his messianic status. He points out that Q elsewhere refers to all of the faithful as God’s sons/children (cf. Q 6:35; 11:13) and that God is presented as their “Father” (6:35, 36; 11:2, 9-13; 11:13; 12:30). He also notes that the key phrase, since it lacks the article, could alternatively be translated “a son of God.” Finally, he argues that Jesus’ three temptations are “paradigmatic.” By this he means that Jesus’ temptations were not meant to sound uniquely directed at Jesus.³³⁶ The Devil tempted him with precisely the sorts of things that other “Q Christians” would have been tempted with: needs of bodily sustenance, expectations of signs from God, and earthly prestige/position. Jesus’ victory over temptations therefore provided a model for others to follow. By following it they too would be able to overcome the Devil and in so doing vindicate their divine

³³⁶ A paradigmatic interpretation of the temptations was earlier suggested by Bultmann (*Tradition*, 256) as well as Schottroff and Stegemann (*Jesus*, 70-75). Aside from the criticisms offered below, see those of Kloppenborg (*Formation*, 250-53).

sonship.³³⁷

Tuckett is certainly correct that Jesus' victory over the Devil is meant to stand as a model for other "Q Christians" as they similarly underwent various temptations in life. He is probably also correct that the temptations Jesus underwent reflected at least *some* of the distinctive concerns of these "Q Christians." But none of this necessarily implies that υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ is used in the story as a general term for the faithful or that the Temptation has no messianic implications. For one thing, despite any wider social concerns of the Q community that *might* be reflected in the story, Jesus' temptation comes off as a highly unique, supernatural event. Other followers of Jesus could have hardly expected to endure the same sort of dramatic confrontation with the Devil as Jesus does. The Devil comes to Jesus *in person* and does so with the specific goal of questioning and discrediting his status as υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. We have no parallel stories in which the sonship of Jesus' early followers is being questioned by the Devil, nor do we find teachings about how to confront the Devil when he questions the believer's sonship.³³⁸ More importantly, I suggested earlier that υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in the Temptation story is anaphoric, hearkening back on the "Son" reference in the Baptism where it is derived from Ps 2:7. If that is correct, this would have clear messianic implications with respect to the "Son" reference in the Temptation. In order to deny the messianic significance of υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in the Temptation, then, one would probably *have to* deny that Q featured Jesus' Baptism by John. In fact, the Temptation itself may contain an allusion to this same royal psalm. In his third temptation, the Devil shows Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor" and says: "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me" (Q 4:5-7). The Devil is obviously making false promises here. Scripture teaches that the kingdoms of the

³³⁷ Tuckett, "Temptation," 479-507.

³³⁸ Kloppenborg (*Foundation*, 252-53) cites the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* as evidence that "equally fantastic (and contrived) stories are told of various Jewish and Christian heroes." But this work is late (ca. 5th century C.E.) and the temptations of various saints were likely patterned on Jesus' own desert temptations. In fact, the whole movement within the Jesus movement involving desert asceticism seems to have taken its primary inspiration from the Temptation in the Gospels.

earth belong to God and that it is he who gives them to whomsoever he wills.³³⁹ But while this general teaching of scripture and Jesus' quotation from Deut 6:13 (or 10:20) may be enough to help the reader recognize the Devil's offer as disingenuous and audacious, the words of this temptation will seem all the more poignant if read in connection with Ps 2:8 where God declares to his "Son": "Ask of *me*, and *I* will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession." Regardless of whether there is an allusion here to Ps 2, though, the third temptation is hardly generalizable in the way Tuckett proposes. "Q Christians"—and Jesus' early followers in general—were mostly comprised of lower class and "low birth" individuals with little or no political connections and little or no hope of ever attaining political power.³⁴⁰ Moreover, it is hard to imagine a "Q Christian" ever being tempted to worship *the Devil*. Tuckett tries to get around this latter problem by arguing that the third temptation speaks from an exaggerated "black and white" viewpoint, in a way comparable to other passages in Q (cf. esp. 11:23; 16:13). But the third temptation is quite specific in what it asks Jesus to do and there is no obvious reason to think that "Q Christians" would have allegorized this temptation in the way Tuckett proposes, namely, by equating sins of "neutrality" and "apathy" with Devil worship. More likely, the third temptation is specifically directed at Jesus because of his unique status as the Son of God and thus the presumptive king in the kingdom of God. The Devil would, in this case, be offering him an alternative rulership position within his kingdom. The diabolical strategy would be quite intelligible within Q. Note that in 11:18 Jesus implies that his exorcism ministry had done severe damage to the "kingdom" of "Beelzebul" (= the Devil). In light of this saying, it is plausible to see the Devil in the Temptation as singling out Jesus for attack because of the unique threat that he—as υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (= the

³³⁹ Cf. 2 Chron 20:6; Ps 47:8; Jer 27:5-6; Dan 2:21; 4:17, 25, 32-35.

³⁴⁰ See 1 Cor 1:26-29 and the several references to "the poor" in Q 6:20; 7:22; 14:21. Kloppenborg (*Formation*, 251) suggests that the Q community was mostly of the "middle classes." This is probably a largely a semantic issue. In the ancient world poor people were not necessarily destitute. And the Jesus movement seems to have encouraged a mixing of classes, thus allowing tax collectors and businessmen to associate with poorer "brethren." This hardly implies that Jesus' followers in the Q community were mostly affluent.

Davidic King/Messiah)—posed to “Beelzebul, the ἄρχων of the demons” (= the Devil) and his “kingdom.”

Q contains yet another reference to Jesus as God’s “Son” at 10:22: “All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” In this saying Jesus’ sonship is *sui generis*, with absolutely no parallel in the lives of the general faithful. One might even say that the “high christology” expressed here is comparable to that found in the Fourth Gospel.³⁴¹ Because of this, many assign the saying to a late redactional stratum in Q.³⁴² This decision is based largely on *a priori* assumptions and otherwise disputable arguments about the late development of high christology in the early Jesus movement.³⁴³ The saying could have just as easily been incorporated into Q at its earliest redactional stage.³⁴⁴

I conclude, then, that in Q (as in the canonical Gospels, Paul’s epistles, and other early writings connected with the Jesus movement) Jesus’ sonship with God is seen as highly unique. While other believers/followers of Jesus were also counted as “sons” (and “daughters”) of God, their filial relationship was seen as qualitatively and perhaps even ontologically different than Jesus’ sonship. Jesus’ sonship was also understood in a messianic sense. This is true in Q and not just other NT writings. Conceptualizations regarding Jesus’ sonship doubtless became more elaborate over time, taking in many different theological implications. But one cannot exclude from Q any notion that Jesus’ divine sonship implied something unique about his relationship with God or that it implied

³⁴¹ Cf. John 1:18; 3:35; 5:19-27; 10:15; 13:3; 14:9; 17:2, 25; 1 John 2:23; 5:20. See further Denaux, “Mt 11,27/Lk 10,22,” 163-99.

³⁴² E.g. Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 247, 319-20; Jacobson, *Q*, 149-151.

³⁴³ For the view that high christologies developed very early in the Jesus movement, see Hurtado, *Lord Jesus*; idem, *One God*; and Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*. The argument about 10:22 being an original part of Q has less to do with the structural integrity of 10:21-22. See Fleddermann, *Q*, 451 for an argument that vv. 21-22 are structurally coherent. I am not convinced, however, and think the sayings were probably detached. The sayings might have been brought together via catchwords.

³⁴⁴ It coheres with Jesus’ Baptism by John where a heavenly voice declares Jesus to be God’s “beloved Son.” It also coheres with the Temptation where Satan targets Jesus specifically, it appears, because of the unique threat that God’s “Son” posed to his kingdom. It also coheres with 7:29-35 where the recipients of divine wisdom are those who embrace the message of Jesus (and John, who had announced the coming of Jesus).

something about his (royal) messianic status.

3.5.4. The messianic significance of John's baptism in the early Jesus movement

The discussion above has established that within the early Jesus movement Jesus' filial relation with God implied something about his unique status and authority, and, at least in many texts, his identity as the Davidic Messiah. This latter idea is particularly apparent whenever his sonship is understood in connection with Ps 2, as it is in Jesus' Baptism by John (see Q 3:22; Mark 1:11 *par.*), the Temptation (see Q 4:5-7), the Transfiguration (see Mark 9:7), and the High Priest's question at Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin (see Mark 14:61). Indeed, I have argued that other intertextual links in the Baptism—namely, Isa 42:1 and probably Isa 61:1 and Gen 1:2—help to underscore Jesus' messianic identity.

The emphasis on Jesus' messianic status in Q's story of Jesus' baptism is a key for helping us understand how Jesus' early followers interpreted John's baptism. As noted earlier, Ps 2 had probably been composed as an enthronement psalm. If the psalm had been read in this way by the original author of Jesus' Baptism by John, or if that author at least thought that the psalm was written about the Messiah, this would mean that the author understood Jesus' baptism as a kind of anointing ritual. The same interpretation of Jesus' baptism can be found in Acts, where Luke appears to associate Jesus' baptism with his anointing:

Acts 10:36 You know the word which he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), **37** the word which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power...

Some interpreters acknowledge that Luke here was associating Jesus' baptism with his anointing by God but understand the anointing as being strictly *prophetic* and not as

having any royal suggestions.³⁴⁵ Several objections can be raised against this interpretation. Luke's own version of Jesus' Baptism by John (Luke 3:22-23) features the heavenly voice quoting from Ps 2:7. Since Ps 2 was a royal psalm and since Luke understood it to have royal implications (cf. Acts 4:25-26), it is most natural to think that the anointing he refers to in Acts 10:36-38 was royal. This, of course, assumes that Luke either wrote the verses. If we are to suppose that the evangelist did not write them but derived them from another source I still think it would be very difficult to interpret the anointing as strictly prophetic or non-royal. Note, for example, Peter's statement that Jesus is "Lord of all" (v. 36). This is hardly a *prophetic* title. Again, Jesus is said to be "the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead" (v. 42). This too suggests that a royal anointing is in view; for in first century Judaism broadly speaking and the Jesus movement more narrowly the Davidic Messiah was often expected to fulfil a judicial role, in accord with messianic texts like Isa 9:6-7 and 11:1-5.³⁴⁶ One final suggestion that Jesus' baptism was understood by Jesus' early followers to have been an anointing ceremony is the fact that in all the Gospel traditions Jesus' messianic mission commences with his baptism.³⁴⁷

Why would Jesus' baptism have been interpreted as a royal anointing ceremony? It obviously had not been an "official" ceremony. It was not been pre-planned or institutionally sanctioned. Also, Jesus had been one of many other persons who had been baptized by John. Obviously, none of those other people whom John baptized could also claim to be the Davidic Messiah. Jesus' baptism can only be taken as an anointing ceremony if seen from the divine perspective. That is precisely how it has been narrated. We are told that the Spirit descended on Jesus at just the moment of his baptism.

³⁴⁵ E.g. Dunn, *Acts*, 143.

³⁴⁶ Cf. *1 En.* 45.2-3; 49.4; 55.4; 61.8; 62; 69.26-29; *4 Ezra* 13; *Q/Matt* 19:28; *Mark* 14:62 *par.*

³⁴⁷ When exactly Jesus' public ministry began is not easy to tell from a strictly historical standpoint. If the Fourth Gospel is taken into account, Jesus may have ministered in conjunction with John for a time before embarking on a completely independent Galilean ministry. Even so, in the Fourth Gospel Jesus' baptism occurs prior to his joint ministry with John. Also, John's ministry loses its vigour just as Jesus' ministry commences.

Messianic phrases from Isa 42:1 and probably 61:1 and Gen 1:2 are also worked into the narrative. And then a voice from heaven declares: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

I can only think of two reasons for why Jesus’ baptism might have been interpreted as an anointing ceremony. The first is that John had been identified as the eschatological Elijah and among Elijah’s expected roles was that of the Messiah’s anointer. Evidence for the latter belief can be found in Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, in the words of a Jewish interlocutor named Trypho who claims that the Messiah would remain hidden until Elijah comes to anoint him.³⁴⁸ Justin presumably understood John to have fulfilled this Elijanic role when he baptized Jesus, although he does not state his own beliefs with regard to this issue.

Further evidence for this belief about Elijah’s role in anointing the Messiah can also be found in the Fourth Gospel.³⁴⁹ This may not be apparent at first glance because in John 1:21 the Baptist explicitly denies that he is Elijah and this is often taken as a repudiation of the teaching about John’s Elijah identity in Q and the synoptic tradition (Q 7:27; Mark 9:11-13||Matt 17:9-13; Luke 1:17, 76).³⁵⁰ But one should be careful not to read too much into John 1:21. In 3:28 John declares: “You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.” Mal 3:1a is most likely alluded to here.³⁵¹ Thus, the Fourth Evangelist plainly envisaged John as a messianic forerunner to Jesus and appears to accept that he fulfilled the prophecy about Elijah in Mal 3:1a (→1.6.1.). Again, the Fourth Evangelist seems to portray John as an Elijah figure at 5:35 where he describes the man as “a burning and shining lamp” (ὁ λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων). Dodd sees this as an echo of Sir 48:1 (ἀνέστη Ἡλίας προφήτης ὡς πῦρ, καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ὡς λαμπὰς

³⁴⁸ Justin, *Dial.* 8.4: “But Christ—if he has indeed been born, and exists anywhere—is unknown, and does not even know himself (ἀγνοστος ἔστι, καὶ οὐδὲ αὐτός ποῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐπίσταται), and has no power until Elijah comes to anoint him, and make him manifest to all (φανερὸν πᾶσι ποιήσει).” Cf. also 49.1; 110.2.

³⁴⁹ Since Justin does not appear to have known the Fourth Gospel it can be taken as an independent witness to this belief concerning Elijah’s role in anointing the Messiah.

³⁵⁰ E.g. Trumbower, “Malachi,” 39; Wink, *Baptist*, 89.

³⁵¹ Pace Webb (*Baptizer*, 76 n. 85) who claims the allusion is to Isa 40:3. See Snodgrass, “Streams,” 33.

ἐκαίετο) where Elijah is described.³⁵²

Perhaps John's remark at 1:21 can be understood as a denial of *strict* identity. The Fourth Evangelist likely wanted to avoid having John bear witness to himself (cf. John 5:31; 8:13; also 7:18; 16:13); hence, he portrayed the Baptist as over-literalizing the question put to him and then answering it in the negative. However one deals with 1:21, however, it does not seem that the Fourth Evangelist had any doubt that John could be identified with Elijah in some sense. And in view of this, it is quite remarkable that in the Fourth Gospel the Baptist plays precisely the Elijianic role, as mentioned by Trypho, of disclosing the Messiah to Israel. He accomplishes this by means of baptism: "I myself did not know him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel" (John 1:31).³⁵³

There is another piece of evidence in the Fourth Gospel that John's baptism ministry was recognized as having some possible messianic implications. We are told that "the priests and Levites from Jerusalem" ask John whether he were the Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet (John 1:19-24). After he responds in the negative to each of these questions, they ask: "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" (John 1:25). This retort presumes that baptism was something that only the Messiah, Elijah, and the Prophet should be doing. Why exactly *the Messiah* and *the Prophet* would have been expected to baptize is not clear. But the mention here about *Elijah*, at least, matches up with the statement by the Baptist in 1:31 and the remark by Trypho in Justin's *Dialogue* 8.4.

Second, John's baptism might have been interpreted as an anointing ritual for the Messiah because of the mode by which John had administered it. We are never expressly told how exactly John administered baptism but several pieces of evidence are highly suggestive. The term βαπτίζω ("to dip," "immerse") indicates that it involved *dipping* or

³⁵² Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 266.

³⁵³ So too Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, 266.

immersing the person.³⁵⁴ But it likely involved pouring or sprinkling as well. John plausibly found justification for his baptism ministry in scripture. If so, the following texts are the best candidates:

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that *I will pour out* (אֶשְׁפֹּךְ) my Spirit on all flesh... **29** Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Isa 32:15 until the Spirit *is poured* (יִעֲרָה) upon us from on high...

Isa 44:3 For *I will pour* water (אֶצְקֶה מַיִם) on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; *I will pour* (אֶצְקֶה) my Spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring.

Ezek 36:25 *I will sprinkle* clean water upon you (וַיִּזְרֹקֵתִי עֲלֵיכֶם מַיִם טְהוֹרִים), and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **26** A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. **27** And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.

Ezek 39:29 and I will not hide my face any more from them, when *I pour out* (אֶשְׁפֹּךְ) my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord Yahweh.

Texts like these, which anticipate the outpouring of God's Spirit in the last days, are likely to have influenced John to take up a baptism ministry, especially if he saw himself as carrying out an eschatologically significant agenda. But notice what kinds of terms are used in these texts: שפך, ערה (*nif.*), יצק, and זרק (*pual*). Similarly, note the language used in the following text from Qumran:

1QS 4.20 Then God will refine (יברר), with his truth, all man's deeds, and will purify for himself the structure of man (יזקק לו מבני איש), ripping out all spirit of injustice from the innermost part **21** of his flesh (להתם כול רוח עולה מתכמי בשרו), and cleansing him with the spirit of holiness (ולטהרו ברוח קודש) from every wicked deed. He will sprinkle over him the spirit of truth like lustral water (ויז עליו רוח אמת כמי נדה) [in order to cleanse him] from all the abhorrences of deceit and (from) the defilement **22** of the unclean spirit (והתגולל ברוח נדה).

This passage is often mentioned in discussions about John's baptism.³⁵⁵ As in John's baptism a connection is drawn here between moral and ritual cleansing. I only wish to

³⁵⁴ So, e.g., *LSJ*, s.v. βαπτίζω 1: "dip, plunge."

³⁵⁵ E.g. Webb, *Baptizer*, 156-157; Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 140; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Origin of Christian Baptism," 30.

point out that God effects cleansing/purification by a *sprinkling* (ἵπν [hiph.]) of the spirit of truth over a person. The mode of administration is also compared to the ritual regarding “lustral water”³⁵⁶ (cf. Num 19, esp. vv. 18, 19, 21). Similarly, in the book of Acts, Jesus’ promise that “you will be baptized (βαπτισθήσεσθε) with the Holy Spirit” (1:4-5) is fulfilled when Jesus’ disciples are “filled with the Holy Spirit” (v. 4). Peter explains this as the fulfilment of Joel 2:28-32, a text that speaks of a day when God declares: “*I will pour out* (ἐκχεῶ) of my Spirit on all flesh” (Acts 2:17-18; cf. also 33; 10:45). A connection between baptism of the early Jesus movement and pouring is also made in the following text:

Titus 3:5 he saved us, ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit (διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου), **6** which he poured out upon us (οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς) richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, **7** so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

For Jesus’ early followers, then, *baptism* in the Spirit was often referred to as the *pouring out* or *sprinkling* of the Spirit. This terminology of pouring and sprinkling is unlikely to have been so closely correlated with the baptism in the Spirit if the mode by which water baptism was administered did not also involve pouring or sprinkling. Regarding early “Christian” baptism, Joan E. Taylor writes:

Archaeology confirms that early baptisteries had fonts that were too shallow to be used for complete immersion. The house-church at Dura Europos in Mesopotamia, also dated ca. 230, contains a font that would have permitted the person to kneel within it, while water was poured over his or her head. In the Lateran baptistery at Rome, a jet of water would have gushed into the font, so that the person could be immersed by standing in the flow. In the case of such a pouring type of baptism, one is necessarily “immersed” by someone who actually does the pouring of the water over the body. Indeed, in early Christian art John the Baptist is depicted as baptizing Jesus in the Jordan by pouring water over his head.³⁵⁷

From all this, it is reasonable to infer that John’s “baptism” had been administered not simply by immersing or dipping persons into the water. It may have involved that but it

³⁵⁶ Lit. “the waters of impurity.”

³⁵⁷ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 54. She references other articles in this paragraph: Pocknee, “Archaeology,” 309-11; Sodini, “baptisteres,” 45-47; Joan Taylor, “Graffito,” 143-145.

would have also involved *pouring* or *sprinkling* of water. The fact that Peter could cite Joel 2:28-32 in the context of the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit suggests that Jesus’ early followers continued to administer baptism in this manner. For our purposes, this mode of administration is not a mere technicality. We will likely miss some important symbolism if we think John’s baptism involved only immersion or dipping. The pouring of water would have more easily evoked anointing rituals in which oil was *poured out* on the head of priests and kings.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸ Exod 29:7; Lev 8:12; 21:10; 1 Sam 10:1; 2 Kgs 9:6; Ps 23:5; 133:2; 4Q375 1 i 9.

CHAPTER FOUR: John's Question and Jesus' Reply (Q 7:18-20+22-23)

Matt 11:2 Ὁ δὲ Ἰωάννης ἀκούσας ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ χριστοῦ

πέμψας διὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ

εἶπεν αὐτῷ·

3 σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν;

4 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες ἀπαγγείλατε Ἰωάννῃ ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ βλέπετε·

5 τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν, καὶ νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται·

6 καὶ μακάριός ἐστιν ὃς ἐὰν μὴ σκανδαλισθῇ ἐν ἐμοί.

Luke 7:18 Καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν Ἰωάννῃ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ περὶ πάντων τούτων.

καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος δύο τινὰς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ὁ Ἰωάννης

19 ἐπέμψεν πρὸς τὸν κύριον λέγων·

σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἄλλον προσδοκῶμεν;

20 παραγενόμενοι δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ ἄνδρες εἶπαν·

Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστὴς ἀπέστειλεν ἡμᾶς πρὸς σὲ λέγων· σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἄλλον προσδοκῶμεν;

21 ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐθεράπευσεν πολλοὺς ἀπὸ νόσων καὶ μαστίγων καὶ πνευμάτων πονηρῶν καὶ τυφλοῖς πολλοῖς ἐχαρίσατο βλέπειν

22 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς·

πορευθέντες ἀπαγγείλατε Ἰωάννῃ ἃ εἶδετε καὶ

ἠκούσατε· τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν, χωλοὶ

περιπατοῦσιν, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται καὶ κωφοὶ

ἀκούουσιν, νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται, πτωχοὶ

εὐαγγελίζονται·

23 καὶ μακάριός ἐστιν ὃς ἐὰν μὴ σκανδαλισθῇ ἐν ἐμοί.

4.1. Proposed reconstruction:

Καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν Ἰωάννῃ [οντι ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ] οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἰησοῦς καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τινὰς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ὁ Ἰωάννης ἐπέμψεν αὐτῷ λέγων· **19** σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν; **20** παραγενόμενοι δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ ἄνδρες εἶπαν· Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστὴς ἀπέστειλεν ἡμᾶς πρὸς σὲ λέγων· Σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἄλλον προσδοκῶμεν; **22a** καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· **b** πορευθέντες ἀπαγγείλατε Ἰωάννῃ ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ βλέπετε· **c** τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν, νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται· **23** καὶ μακάριός ἐστιν ὃς ἐὰν μὴ σκανδαλισθῇ ἐν ἐμοί.

Q 7:18 And his disciples declared to John [while he was in prison] the works of Jesus. And having called some of his disciples, John sent to him, saying, **19** “Are you the Coming One or shall we look for another?” **20** And when the men had come to him they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the Coming One, or shall we look for another?’” **22a** And having answered, Jesus said to them, **b** “Go, report to John what things you hear and see: **c** the blind regain their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor are evangelised; **23** and blessed is he who is not scandalised by me.”

4.2. Establishing the text

The present pericope in Q appeared in the form of a coherent chreia. Its opening differs significantly in Matthew's and Luke's versions but a few significant verbal and contextual agreements indicate that both evangelists were utilizing Q, not separately manufacturing an introduction whole cloth. At the very least, the opening here must have told of how John sent some of his disciples to ask Jesus whether he were "the Coming One." This much is evident from the strict verbal agreements between Matthew and Luke.

More difficult to reconstruct are what exactly John heard, the general circumstances under which he had been asking his question and how exactly he referred to Jesus. According to Matthew, John had heard about "the works of the Messiah" while he was in prison. Luke, on the other hand, says John's disciples had brought the news to him "concerning these things" and mentions nothing about John being in prison. Again, Matthew has John's disciples speak (aor. indic.) simply "to him" while Luke has them speaking (pres. ptc.) "to the Lord."

Stephen Witetschek argues for the following "minimalist" reconstruction for the opening of this chreia:

καὶ ὁ Ἰωάννης πέμψας διὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτῷ³⁵⁹

Witetschek calls this "the safest and most controlled reconstruction." It is certainly that; for it relies mostly on what is common between Matthew and Luke. But he acknowledges that to some Q specialists this reconstruction would likely seem inadequate since it precludes the chreia from ever having stood on its own, so dependent as it would have necessarily been on its broader Q context.³⁶⁰ But Witetschek thinks this would only be a

³⁵⁹ Witetschek, "What Did John Hear?," 255.

³⁶⁰ Witetschek, "What Did John Hear?," 256. He proposes (258) that the antecedent for αὐτῷ is to be found in the Healing of the Centurion's Servant (7:1-10) where "Jesus" occurs in v. 9.

problem if one were to conceive of Q as a collection of sayings or as a work otherwise lacking in broader narrative (as, e.g., the *Gospel of Thomas*). If, in fact, the present chreia had been composed as part of a broader narrative this minimalist reconstruction would actually help to reinforce that structure:

The less narrative circumstance is left in the reconstruction of Q 7:18-23, the more is the passage dependent on and integrated into the overarching literary framework of Q as a whole.³⁶¹

One can appreciate Witetschek's line of reasoning here. In current discussions Q is being increasingly recognized as a narrative composition.³⁶² This is most evident in Q 3-7. But this conception of Q as a narrative composition is by no means incompatible with the notion that it was composed on the basis of smaller, independently circulating units. The Gospel of Mark was composed in precisely this way with discrete units of tradition being arranged by the evangelist and linked together by means of redactional framing in order to create the broader narrative that now exists.³⁶³ Since the arrangement of the traditional material was secondary so also was the resulting narrative.³⁶⁴ I believe Q was composed in a similar way. This is a fundamental point of disagreement that I have with Witetschek's article. But beyond that, I am not convinced that a less "minimalist" reconstruction of the present unit would cause any significant "narrative cohesion" to be "lost" as Witetschek claims.³⁶⁵ Unless one takes ὁ ἐρχόμενος to be a well-known messianic title—in which case no broader context would be required in order for the phrase to be understood—the reference to John and his question about "the Coming One" remain clearly anaphoric of John's earlier preaching in 3:16b-17 and would actually require a connection with that material if the present chreia is to be intelligible. Indeed, Jesus' reply in v. 22, which

³⁶¹ Witetschek, "What Did John Hear?," 259.

³⁶² Fleddermann, "Plot," 43-69 (see 46-48 for discussion of the present unit); Sloan, "Q as a Narrative Gospel"; Labahn, *Gekommene*, esp. 243-569; Witetschek, "What Did John Hear?," 256-59.

³⁶³ See the classic study by Schmidt, *Rahmen*.

³⁶⁴ The smaller units themselves, of course, often contain brief narrative or perhaps even a more elaborate narrative, as in the possible case of Mark's passion narrative.

³⁶⁵ Witetschek, "What Did John Hear?," 260.

contains a reference to Isa 61:1 (πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται) and to several miraculous healings, can only be fully appreciated in light of Q's broader narrative in which Jesus has been portrayed as preaching to "the poor" (6:20) and as having performed various healings (7:1-10; Luke 5:12-13 (Q?); 7:11-18?). Q's narrative structure, then, would not demand the minimalist reconstruction offered by Witetschek. Whether one's reconstruction is minimalist or slightly more elaborate (as mine is) the narrative connections between this chreia and other parts of Q would remain intact.

Luke may have omitted ὁ Ἰησοῦς in v. 22a since he elsewhere removes it as an expressed subject.³⁶⁶ In v. 22c Jesus' deeds are given in pairs, forming a clear parallel structure:

τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν	καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν
λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται	καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν
νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται	καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται

That Luke has removed most of the καὶ's here is suggested by the fact that he retains one before κωφοί. Matthew preserves all of them but appears to have inserted one before νεκροί, disrupting the otherwise perfectly symmetrical structure.³⁶⁷

4.3. Issues of tradition and redaction

I maintain that the material dealing with John in Q 7:18-35 once consisted of four³⁶⁸ independent units (7:18-20+22-23, 24-27, 28, 29-35) and that these units all circulated independently at the pre-Q stage. These points will be argued at length below with respect to all but the last unit (which I have not addressed due to constraints of space). For now, it is worth noting, simply, that they are all distinctive formally: a chreia/pronouncement story (7:18-20+22); rhetorical questions followed by a clarifying biblical quote (vv. 24-

³⁶⁶ Luke 4:24; 5:20; 6:17; 9:18, 28; 10:26; 18:27, 29, 40; 20:3, 25, 41; 21:5, 8; 22:25, 34, 67. See Neiryck, *Minor Agreements*, 261-66.

³⁶⁷ So Fleddermann, *Q*, 357.

³⁶⁸ Or possibly five if 16:16 originally stood within this block of tradition dealing with John and Jesus.

27); a contrast saying (28); a brief anecdote followed by a parable and application (vv. 29-35). The units were brought together, apparently, because they all (with the exception of v. 23) make reference to John the Baptist and explain something about his relationship to Jesus.

Thomas Hieke notes that Q 7:22 omits an important motif found in Isa 42:7 and 61:1: “to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness” (Isa 42:7) and “to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound” (Isa 61:1).³⁶⁹ He speculates that Q might have originally contained something about this but that Matthew and Luke both deleted it because in their narratives John was asking his question from prison. Hieke’s suggestion is thought provoking but unprovable.

John’s Question and Jesus’ Reply is often thought to have been the creation of a christologically minded Q redactor working at one of Q’s later stages of development. Jacobson points to three pieces of evidence as support for this view: (1) the chreia’s dependence on the Septuagint in v. 22; (2) its interest in miracles; (3) its subordination of John to Jesus; and (4) its link with 3:16cd (which he also takes to be a redactional intrusion into earlier material).³⁷⁰ Another supposed indication that at least the framing chreia (vv. 18-20+22ab) is secondary is (5) Jesus’ seemingly incongruous reply to the question posed to him. With respect to this last point, John would have presumably been asking Jesus if he were the fiery judgment figure about whom he prophesied in 3:16b-17. But Jesus responds by listing his credentials as a miracle worker and preacher, ideas not mentioned in 3:16b-17. Tuckett writes that “the best explanation [for the incongruous nature of Jesus’ reply] is that the putting together of Jesus’ claims with John’s question is a secondary composition of a later [Q] editor.”³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Hieke, “Compendium,” 181.

³⁷⁰ Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 112-114.

³⁷¹ Tuckett, *History*, 126. In support of this line of reasoning he cites Bultmann, *History*, 23-24; Hoffmann, *Studien*, 201; Catchpole, *Quest*, 239. For the supposed incongruity between John’s question and Jesus’ reply,

Not all of Jacobson's arguments need to be addressed here. I have already explained why 3:16cd is best seen as an original unity with the rest of 3:16-17 and as part of a larger composition made by one of Jesus' early followers that encompassed Q 3:2-3+7-9+16b-17+21-22+4:1-13 (→2.2.6.1.-2.2.6.1.6.). I shall return in a moment to the issue of John's supposed subordination in the present chreia. Thus, only two of Jacobson's arguments (#'s 1, 2) as well as #5 shall be addressed here.

Against Jacobson's two remaining arguments the following counterpoints can be offered:

- Q's general use of the Septuagint is disputed.³⁷² But at 7:22c the language is plausibly Septuagintal:

Q 7:22c	Possible LXX quote/allusion	Original Hebrew
τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν	τυφλῶν βλέπονται ἀνοιχθήσονται ὀφθαλμοὶ τυφλῶν οἱ τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέψατε ἰδεῖν τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν	עיני עורים תראינה Isa 29:18
		תפקנה עיני עורים Isa 35:5
		והעורים הביטו לראות Isa 42:18
		ולאסורים פקחקה Isa 61:1
χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται	ἀλείται ὡς ἔλαφος ὁ χωλός	ידלג כאיל פסח Isa 35:6
κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν	ἀκούσονται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ κωφοὶ λόγους βιβλίου ὅσα κωφῶν ἀκούσονται οἱ κωφοὶ ἀκούσατε	ושמעו ביום-ההוא Isa 29:18
		והשמעו דברי-ספר Isa 35:5
		והשמעו חרשים תפתחנה Isa 42:18
		והשמעו חרשים שמעו Isa 42:18
νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται	ἀναστήσονται οἱ νεκροί, καὶ ἐγερθήσονται οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις	והיה מתים Isa 26:19
πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται	ἀγαλλιάσονται πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς	והספּוּ עניים...שְׂמֵחָה Isa 29:19
		לְבַשׂוּר עניים Isa 61:1

There are likely intertextual connections between most of the clauses in Q 7:22c and various clauses in LXX Isaiah. For example, the first and sixth clauses almost certainly derive from Isa 61:1 and the fourth clause probably derives from Isa 35:5. Indeed, the MT contains no reference in Isa 61:1 to the blind being healed.³⁷³ Yet none of the phrases in Q matches a Septuagint text verbatim. In particular, the second clause is

see also Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 129; Goguel, *Life*, 278ff.; Lohmeyer, *Johannes der Täufer*, 18; Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 108; Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 289-90; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.133-134.

³⁷² See the note by F. Neiryck in Fleddermann's *Mark and Q*, 269 n. 27.

³⁷³ At least in our extant mss. Whether the Hebrew did once contain עורים is another question. Note also Isa 42:18 as the possible intertext at Q 7:22c.

quite far removed from LXX Isa 35:6. The parallel this saying has with 4Q521 (see the discussion below) suggests that at least some of the intertextual links here originated not in the Septuagint but in the Hebrew.

But even if we grant Jacobson's premise of Q's Septuagint usage here it by no means follows that we can know anything about whether a Q redactor had been responsible for creating or inserting the unit at a late stage of Q's development. Jacobson assigns Q 6:20-21 to the "formative stage" of Q's redaction.³⁷⁴ Yet here one can identify an intertext with Isa 61:1-2, the same biblical text that undergirds Q 7:22.³⁷⁵ This suggests that 6:20-21 and 7:22 derive from the same redactional stratum. The notion that Septuagint usage (or biblical references more generally) stem from a late stage of Q's redaction is not borne out by the evidence and often betrays a shallow understanding of intertextuality. In fact, allusions or influence of biblical texts on Q is trenchant and can hardly all be relegated to some imagined late stage of redaction.³⁷⁶

- It also seems dubious that the mention of miracles in Q 7:22c indicates that we are dealing here with a late redactional expansion of Q. Jacobson claims that "the list of miracles in Q 7:22 bears no relation to the rest of Q."³⁷⁷ But miracles are mentioned in several other Q passages and it is not obvious that all of these can be assigned to later redactional stages.³⁷⁸ The phrase νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται in v. 22c likely harkens back on the healing in 7:1-10 (even if the servant was not said in Q to have actually died³⁷⁹) and κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν seems to anticipate the healing in 11:14-20. Moreover, the

³⁷⁴ Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 99-101. Here Jacobson follows the proposals of Kloppenborg, "Formation," 454; idem, *Formation*, 317-22.

³⁷⁵ For Isa 61 in Q 6:20-21, see Tuckett, *History*, 223-226; idem, "Isaiah in Q," 55-57; Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, 104-107.

³⁷⁶ See, e.g., Allison, *Intertextual*, 182-212.

³⁷⁷ Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 112.

³⁷⁸ 7:1-10; 10:9; 11:14-20; 17:6; cf. also Luke 13:32 (Q?); Luke 5:12-16(Q?); Luke 7:11-17(Q?).

³⁷⁹ Luke describes the servant before his healing as κακῶς ἔχων ἡμελλόν τελευτᾶν (7:2) whereas Matthew says he had been cast into the house as a παραλυτικός, δεινός βασανιζόμενος. In both accounts he would have probably been understood to be at the brink of death.

reference to evangelising the poor, while not a miracle, recalls the evangelistic Sermon of Q 6. (Note, once more, the allusions to Isa 61:1 in Q 6:20-21.) The structural interconnections between Q 7:22c and other parts of Q suggest that we are not dealing in this material with multiple redactors, each with different agendas, but with one redactor, or at most a group of redactors with indistinguishable literary and christological agendas.

What is to be said, then, of #5, the alleged incongruity between John's question and Jesus' response? It is not clear to me how this would point to a later redactional hand. Presumably, a later redactor would have tried to smooth over any incongruity between John's message and Jesus' actual life. Mark has done precisely this by omitting all the elements in John's preaching that warn of impending fiery judgment. Why would one of Q's later redactors compose a story that presents Jesus as the fulfilment of John's prophecies but which only points the reader back to things that were (supposedly) not anticipated in John's earlier preaching?

Tuckett appears to think that a Q redactor appropriated a piece of older tradition (i.e. v. 22c) and used this as a conclusion for a newly invented chreia. Several other scholars have held this view at any rate. Bultmann, for example, thought the statement about miracles in v. 22c was originally a free-standing dominical saying. It was "a picture of the final blessedness which Jesus believes is now beginning."³⁸⁰ John's question in vv. 18-19, on the other hand, and v. 22ab, were "a community product" that envisaged Jesus as declaring his miracles to John in order to demonstrate his messianic credentials. The larger chreia of vv. 18-23, then, was created to serve as an apologetic against rival Baptist sectarians who regarded John as the Messiah. Others have held that vv. 22c-23 were originally independent but that the larger chreia (vv. 18-20+22ab) originated among persons who

³⁸⁰ Bultmann, *History*, 23-24. Similar are: Fridrichsen, *Miracles*, 97-98; Schulz, *Q*, 193, 203; Klostermann, *Matthäusevangelium*, 94-95; Fuller, *Miracles*, 47-48; Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie I.*, 106-107.

had embraced John's preaching (perhaps former members of John's movement) but were now followers of the Jesus movement and wanted to reconcile John's preaching with Jesus' life and ministry.³⁸¹

Any hypothesis that tries to disentangle vv. 22c-23 from the rest of the chreia is faced with the problem that without vv. 18-19 and 22ab the saying in v. 22c lacks both context and motive, two things it desperately needs in order for it to have once circulated independently. For a context, one would have to supply, at the very least, some very brief introductory statement like, "And Jesus said, the blind regain their sight...etc." But a statement like this is unlikely to have been made by Jesus without some special prompting: one can hardly imagine a saying in which Jesus spontaneously bragged about his healing and preaching abilities. Bultmann may have sensed this difficulty when he proposed that the saying originally spoke of "final blessedness." But that interpretation fails to appreciate the *messianic* implications of the biblical texts Jesus cites in this saying, which I shall elaborate upon in greater detail below.

At least in the version of Q known to Matthew and Luke, the saying at v. 22bc is introduced with a note that Jesus told "them" to report to "John" what they had seen or heard. Ἀυτοῖς here needs an antecedent and the command that follows in 22b requires some further contextualization about why exactly Jesus was telling John's disciples to inform their master about his healings and preaching. The larger chreia surely provides us with both of these things as well as a plausible *Sitz im Leben* for the saying in v. 22c-23.

Catchpole also tries to detach v. 22bc from the larger chreia in vv. 18-20+22a, but goes about this in quite a different way. Like Bultmann, he claims that v. 22bc was used by a "Christian" redactor to create the larger chreia. But unlike Bultmann, he recognizes that v. 22c is unlikely to have ever existed as a context-free, independent saying. He therefore rejects the notion that v. 22c is a dominical saying and instead follows an argument advanced by Anton Vögtle, suggesting that v. 22bc is a creative elaboration on the

³⁸¹ E.g. Kraeling, *Baptist*, 129-130; Hoffmann, *Studien*, 214-15.

traditional saying found at Q 10:22-23.³⁸² For purposes of comparison, it will be helpful here to cite these two texts side-by-side:

Q 7:22b Πορευθέντες ἀπαγγείλατε Ἰωάννη ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ βλέπετε· ε τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν, καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν, νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται, καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται· **23** καὶ μακάριός ἐστιν ὃς ἐὰν μὴ σκανδαλισθῆ ἐν ἐμοί.

Q 10:23 Μακάριοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ οἱ βλέποντες ἃ βλέπετε. **24** λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ προφητῆται καὶ βασιλεῖς ἐπεθύμησαν ἰδεῖν ἃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν, καὶ ἀκοῦσαι ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσαν.

Catchpole admits that the list in Q 7:22bc, without its narrative framework, could not have survived in isolation. Nevertheless, he thinks the correspondences between 7:22b-23 with 10:22-23 implies that before the composition of Q the list at 7:22bc “represented that amplification and definition of the presently undefined ‘what you see’ and ‘what you hear’ [in Q 10:22-23].” In other words, at the pre-Q stage the tradition found in Q 10:22-23 was used to create the chreia in 7:18-20+22-23. The chreia would serve the interests of “Christian apologetic vis-à-vis the Baptist movement.”³⁸³

Catchpole’s tradition-critical analysis here rests chiefly on the shared terms βλέπετε, ἀκούετε, and μακάριος. But this seems like a rather small foundation to build such an elaborate hypothesis. Phraseology of “seeing and hearing” will be used again at 11:31-32. It also occurs on the lips of Jesus in other Gospel traditions (Mark 4:12 *par.*; 8:18 *par.*; John 5:37; 12:40) and turns up elsewhere in the NT as well (Acts 28:26; Rom 11:8; 15:21; Jas 5:11). Indeed, it occurs in numerous texts of the Jewish Bible,³⁸⁴ most notably Isa 6:9, which Jesus cites in all four Gospels and which might have been an important text for his own self-understanding (it deals with Isaiah’s commissioning by God and the opposition he would face from the people). Moreover, statements about *seeing and hearing* were often made in order to express the notion of eyewitness experience.³⁸⁵ As far as the

³⁸² Catchpole, *Quest*, 240; idem, “Beginning,” 206; Vögtle, “Wunder,” 240-42.

³⁸³ Catchpole, *Quest*, 240.

³⁸⁴ E.g. Exod 3:7-8; Deut 29:4; Isa 42:19; 42:20; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2; etc.

³⁸⁵ Cf. Luke 2:20; John 3:32; 5:37; Acts 2:33; 19:26; 22:14-15; 2 Cor 12:6; Phil 4:9; 1 John 1:1, 3.

macarism is concerned, the idea undergirding both 7:23 and 10:23-24, that those witnessing Jesus' miracles were blessed, reflects a Jewish conviction that the messianic age would be most blessed.³⁸⁶ That this idea should be picked up in Q on more than one occasion is not too surprising, given the messianism that so pervades Q (→2.2.8.3-4.; 3.5.2-5; 3.5.3-4; 4.5.2-4.5.2.2.1.). Macarisms are cited elsewhere in Q in connection with messianic texts or in messianic contexts (6:20-22; 12:43; Q/Luke 11:27-28). The shared terminology in Q 7:22c-23 and Q 10:23-24 is therefore probably just coincidental, both texts invoking a well-worn trope about seeing—probably one quite characteristic of the historical Jesus—and both texts invoking a tradition about blessedness related to the messianic age. It is too speculative and unnecessary therefore to infer that the former text was written up as an “amplification and definition” of the latter. Moreover, Catchpole fails to interact with the many pieces of evidence suggesting that 7:18-20+22-23 preserves an actual historical event.³⁸⁷

The strongest reason for doubting that John's Question and Jesus' Reply originally circulated independently is the fact that it so manifestly hearkens back on John's preaching about the Coming One in 3:16 and anticipates several other sayings in the rest of Q which portray Jesus as the fulfilment of John's earlier prophecy (→2.2.5.1.). At least in Q, ὁ ἐρχόμενος is undoubtedly a literary device. Indeed, this expression is so vague that apart from Q's broader context John's question would have probably been unintelligible. Hence, the present chreia looks to be the creation of a Q redactor. This would make it one of a piece with Q's Prologue where the term ὁ ἐρχόμενος occurs for the first time in Q. I am not convinced that this is how the chreia here was produced, however.

For reasons just mentioned, John's Question and Jesus' Reply, in its present form, is

³⁸⁶ 4 Ezra 7.45; Pss. Sol. 17.44; 18.8; Pes. R. 37.7.164a; 'Ag. Ber. 23.1.

³⁸⁷ Matters of historicity are not the focus of this thesis but see Wink, “Jesus' Reply,” 123-124; Webb, *John the Baptizer*, 281-82; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.130-137; “Kümmel, “Antwort,” 2.177-200; idem, *Promise*, 109-111; Strobel, *Untersuchungen*, 268-72; Dunn, *Jesus and Spirit*, 56-60; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 131-132; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2.244-45. For arguments against its historicity, see Ernst, *Täufer*, 315-19; Öhler, *Elia*, 55-57.

unlikely to have ever circulated independently. However, the only thing preventing this chreia from having once stood as a self-enclosed unit is the expression ὁ ἐρχόμενος. I would like to suggest that while the chreia itself is traditional this expression was secondary, having been added by the redactor whenever he incorporated the chreia into Q. Nothing in this chreia actually requires the expression. If we remove and substitute it with ὁ χριστός the chreia actually becomes a lot more intelligible. As I shall explain later, Jesus' answer in vv. 22-23 is meant to cast him as the Messiah (→4.5.2.-4.5.2.2.). With my proposed adjustment there would be no doubt as to the appropriateness of Jesus' reply; for John's earlier preaching about ὁ ἐρχόμενος had mentioned nothing explicit about miracles of healing or evangelizing. To be sure, I argued above that Jesus' answer can be understood as hearkening back on John's earlier preaching (→2.2.6.1.4.). But that connection is admittedly a bit strained and this probably suggests that it is not original within Q. The alteration of ὁ χριστός to ὁ ἐρχόμενος would have presumably been made by the Q redactor in order to create a leitmotif about Jesus as the Coming One. This would have allowed the Q redactor to link the present unit with various other units and sayings in his composition (→2.2.5.1.) while, at the same time, to provide the reader with a theological explanation for Jesus' two advents (→Excursus A).

4.3.1. Was v. 23 an originally independent saying?

Thus far, I have argued that 7:18-20+22 coheres very well: John asks if Jesus is the Messiah (= "the Coming One"); Jesus responds by pointing to his messianic miracles, implying that he is indeed the Messiah (→4.5.2). But it is less obvious how the saying in v. 23 fits into this unit. One fairly common line of interpretation sees the offense here as stemming from the fact that Jesus had not fulfilled John's earlier prophecies. On this interpretation, Jesus responds in vv. 22-23 by telling John, in effect, not to be put off by his ministry of healing and preaching when he had expected him to act as a fiery judge.

Thus understood, Jesus is seen in v. 23 as gently and subtly rebuking John for his misunderstandings and doubts about Jesus.³⁸⁸ Wink understands the rebuke against John more harshly: “John is therefore excluded from the kingdom of heaven, in spite of Jesus’ high regard for him, since he never attained faith in Jesus as the messiah.”³⁸⁹ A slight variant on this interpretation sees v. 23 as directed not at John specifically but at *anyone* who had found Jesus’ ministry of healing and evangelism somehow disappointing in view of John’s earlier prophecy.³⁹⁰

Neither of these interpretations is very satisfying. A rebuke against John would not have been apologetically useful for Jesus’ early followers who were interested in claiming John as one of their own and as a prophetic herald of Jesus. These people would have had nothing to gain by presenting John as an outsider and a sceptic of Jesus—much less as “excluded from the kingdom of heaven.” However gently or subtly Jesus’ words are understood, if he were indeed rebuking John for “getting it wrong,” he would be casting John as a false prophet! That would hardly accord with what we find elsewhere in Q and in other early Jesus traditions which take John to have been a true prophet of God who predicted the coming of Jesus.³⁹¹ The second interpretation mentioned above is less problematic than the first but still seems rather peculiar since it makes the offense reside in Jesus’ healings and preaching, hardly the sorts of things we would expect anyone to find offensive. One could emphasize that John’s offense resided not in Jesus’ healings and evangelizing *per se* but in the fact that Jesus was not doing what John had predicted he would do—that is, execute fiery judgment.³⁹² But John did not *only* prophesy about coming judgment. He also expected “the Coming One” to “gather the wheat into his granary” and Jesus’ reply in v. 22 can be understood as fulfilling that very prophecy in

³⁸⁸ So, e.g., Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 135; Catchpole, *Quest*, 239.

³⁸⁹ Wink, *Baptist*, 24. Wink would later change his view, seeing the pericope as based on a real historical event: idem, “Jesus’ Reply,” 121-128.

³⁹⁰ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 665; Tuckett, *History*, 127-128.

³⁹¹ On the argument that the Fourth Gospel polemicizes against John, see the critical review of Rishell, “Baldensperger’s Theory.”

³⁹² This is at least Meier’s, Fitzmyer’s, and Tuckett’s view.

part, as I argued earlier (→2.2.6.1.3.). Indeed, to see Jesus' reply as a possible cause of John's (or anyone's) offense seems to miss Jesus' point entirely. His deeds are exactly the kind of evidence John would have been looking for if he had been wondering whether Jesus were "the Coming One"/the Messiah.

I believe that v. 23 was an original part of John's Question and Jesus' Reply. I argue in Excursus A that in Q the title/phrase *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* was derived from Ps 118:26. In v. 22 of this psalm, only a few verses removed from v. 26, we read of a "stone" that is rejected by the builders. This "stone" was interpreted as a reference to the Messiah by both Jesus' followers and later Jews.³⁹³ The reason for this can be plausibly surmised. As I explain in Excursus A, Ps 118 appears to have taken on royal/Davidic associations. This would have likely opened up the psalm to messianic interpretations. By utilizing an exegetical principle, known by the later rabbis as "*gezera shawah*,"³⁹⁴ interpreters were able to link v. 22 with other texts that were thought to speak of the Messiah under the "stone" cipher:

Ps 118:22 (LXX 117:22) The stone which the builders rejected (*הַבּוֹנִים הִיתָה מְאַסֵּי אֶבֶן/λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες*) has become the head of the corner.

Isa 8:14 (MT): And he will become a sanctuary, and a stone of offense (*אֶבֶן נִגְף*), and a rock of stumbling (*צוּר מְכַשּׁוֹל*) to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Isa 8:14 (LXX): And if you trust in him, he will become your holy precinct, and you will not encounter him as a stumbling caused by a stone (*οὐχ ὡς λίθου προσκόμματι*) nor as a fall caused by a rock (*οὐδὲ ὡς πέτρας πτώματι*)...

Isa 28:16 Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone (*אֶבֶן/λίθον*), a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'He who believes will not be in haste.'³⁹⁵

³⁹³ Mark 12:10 *par.*; 1 Pet 2:4-10. See also Str.-B. 1.875-77, who cite Rashi on Mic 5:1: "Out of you shall come forth to me"; hence, the Messiah, the Son of David, is meant; as it says: "The stone which the builders etc."

³⁹⁴ According to this principle one text could be interpreted in connection with another if they contained identical (or at least similar) terms or phrases. See *t. Sanh.* 7.11; *Sifra*, introduction, end; *ARN (A)* 37; *b. Yeb.* 24a; *b. Ker.* 5a. This principle is said to have been endorsed by Hillel and Ishmael in the first century C.E. (*Gen. Rab.* 92.7; *b. Pes.* 66a; *j. Pes.* 6.1). Its use in the first century C.E. can scarcely be denied (contra Solomon, "Talmudic Reasoning," 24). It is utilised in the DSS (e.g. 11QMelch; 4QFlor [on use of the principle in this text, see Slomovic, "Exegesis," 5-10]) and the NT (e.g. Rom 15:9-12; Gal 3:6-14; Heb 4:3-7; 1 Pet 2:6-8). For recent discussions of this principle, see Solomon ("Talmudic Reasoning," 9-28, esp. 24) and Wenkel ("Gezerah Shewah," 62-68). A brief discussion can also be found in Chilton and Evans, "Jesus and Israel's Scriptures," 288-89.

³⁹⁵ For a messianic interpretation of this verse, cf. *Tg. Zech* at 10:4 where *פִּנְיָה* ("cornerstone") is interpreted as a reference to the Messiah. Also Rom 9:32-33; 10:11; 1 Pet 2:6.

Dan 2:35c ...But the stone (אֶבֶן/ὁ λίθος) that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.³⁹⁶

Early followers of Jesus doubtless found it christologically compelling and apologetically useful to identify Jesus as “the stone which the builders rejected” in Ps 118:22 or as “a stone of offense” in Isa 8:14, given the fact that he had been so widely rejected by Jews of his day (cf. Rom 9-11).³⁹⁷ Isa 8:14 is quoted and applied to Jesus in both Rom 9:33 and 1 Pet 2:8. Jesus quotes Ps 118:22 in Mark 12:10 *par.*, notably, in a hostile context shortly before his crucifixion. Paul conflates Isa 8:14 with Isa 28:16, producing the following reading:

Rom 9:33 ... “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make men stumble (λίθον προσκόμματος), a rock of offence (πέτρων σκανδάλου); and he who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

The phrase πέτρων σκανδάλου does not match the language of LXX Isa 8:14 (which reads πέτρας πτώματι). Nevertheless, Paul’s translation is a perfectly good rendering of the Hebrew צוּר מְכֻשָׁל. This is significant because in the early Jesus movement Jesus is often spoken of as a “scandal” and people are often said to have been “scandalized” by him (cf. Mark 6:3 [||Matt 13:57]; Matt 15:12; 24:9-10). His crucifixion was, for many, the greatest “scandal” of all (cf. Mark 14:27, 29 [||Matt 26:31-32]; 1 Cor 1:23; Gal 5:11). This terminology was not chosen at random but was apparently derived from Isa 8:14. And this verse was, in turn, linked verbally and thematically with Ps 118:22. Thus, when Jesus answers John’s question about whether he is “the Coming One,” that is, the Messiah of Ps 118:26, he appropriately replies by citing his messianic deeds and then by invoking the notion of the scandalous/rejected Messiah in Isa 8:14 and Ps 118:22. His reply might be

³⁹⁶ For the “stone” in this verse as a messianic reference, see Josephus, *Ant.* 10.206-210; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.21.7; 5.26.2; cf. Luke 20:18. See also the references in Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6.415 n. 80. E. F. Young (“Stone Hewn,” 364-79) argues that the vision in Dan 2 was originally messianic in thrust. Most modern commentators say otherwise. For example, Collins (*Daniel*, 304-310) argues for an originally angelic interpretation of the “one like a son of man” figure.

³⁹⁷ According to the Gospel tradition Jesus’ most intense persecution seem to have come from the religious leaders, among whom were “the scribes.” In view of this, Strack and Billerbeck (Str.-B. 1.876) interestingly point out that in rabbinic interpretation the term בניין (“builders”) was often applied to “scholars” (תלמידי חכמים) (*b. Shabb.* 114a; *b. Ber.* 64a; *Lam. Rab.* 1,5 (87b); *Tg. Ps.* on 118:22-29).

paraphrased thus: “Yes, I am the Coming One of Ps 118:26. Blessed are those who do not find me, the Messiah, to be a stone of offense, as foretold in Isa 8:14, or a rejected stone, as foretold in Ps 118:22. On this interpretation, Q 7:23 hangs together quite well with the rest of Jesus’ reply in v. 22c, fitting appropriately with the messianic term ὁ ἐρχόμενος and Jesus’ messianic deeds in v. 22c. However, since I have attributed ὁ ἐρχόμενος to the Q redactor it follows that v. 23 must be so attributed as well.

For reasons already mentioned, the phrase ὅς μὴ σκανδαλισθῆ ἔν ἐμοί should not be read as directed at John specifically. If Jesus is portrayed here as invoking the concept of a scandalous Messiah his words would be best understood generically.

4.4. Location in Q

Matthew appears to have arranged much of the material in his Gospel around this Q chreia. By the time the reader arrives at Matt 11:5 (= Q 7:22c) Jesus will have performed all the miracles listed and evangelized as well. Luke may have arranged the material in his Gospel similarly:

Q 7:22c	Matt	Luke
τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν	9:27-31. Cf. 9:1-8, where the verb περιπατέω is used (v. 5) in the context of the healing of a παραλυτικός (rather than a χωλός).	7:21; cf. also 18:35-43. Cf. 5:17-26, where the verb περιπατέω is used (v. 23) in the context of the healing of a παραλυτικός (rather than a χωλός).
λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται	8:1-4. Cf. 9:32-33. 8:5-13; 9:18-19+23-26. Chh. 5-7; cf. 10:5-15.	5:12-15. Cf. 1:22. 7:11-18; cf. also 8:53-55. Ch. 6:17-49.

But the two evangelists, by borrowing some extra material from Mark, have really only filled out a plot that was, to a lesser extent, present already in Q. John’s Question and Jesus’ Reply must have also been located shortly after Jesus’ Inaugural Sermon (Q 6³⁹⁸)

³⁹⁸ Q 6:12, 17, 20a-23, 27-33, 35c, 36-37b, 38c, 39b-40, 41-42, 43-45, 46-49.

and on the immediate heels of the Healing of the Centurion’s Son (7:1-10), or perhaps on the heels of the Healing of the Widow’s Son at Nain (Luke 7:11-18) if this chreia derived from Q. Jesus’ answer in v. 22 therefore either recapitulates or (in the case of the mute-deaf speaking in 11:14) anticipates much of what is told in Q’s broader narrative:

τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν	—————
καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν	—————
λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται	Cf. Luke 4:27(Q?)
καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν	11:14 (ἐλάλησεν ὁ κωφός)
νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται	Healing of the Centurion’s Servant (7:1-10) and possibly the Healing of the Widow’s Son at Nain (Luke 7:11-18(Q?)).
καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται	Inaugural Sermon (6:12ff.; Luke 4:16-30(Q?))

According to Q’s “narrative,” a significant time interval and a successful opening phase of Jesus’ ministry would have therefore been implied once the reader progressed from John’s initial preaching in 3:7-9+16b-17 to the present chreia in 7:18-20+22-23. With the material thus arranged, there would have been a good motivation for John to ask his question (having learned about Jesus’ successful preaching and healing ministry) and for Jesus to have answered the way he does (by recapitulating some of the healings and the preaching that had been mentioned previously).

In Q, John’s Question and Jesus’ Reply was placed at the front of three other traditional units: 7:24-27; 7:28; 7:29-35 (and possibly 16:16). This material is all thematically related insofar as it deals with John and his relationship with Jesus. The effect (if not the purpose) of this arrangement of material by the Q redactor was to suggest that John and Jesus were engaged in a kind of joint ministry, with John acting as Jesus’ prophetic herald and Jesus acting as the Messiah. A theme of rejection also seems to underlie much of the material. I have already noted how this theme is implicit in v. 23 and shall deal with vv. 24-27 a bit later, in the commentary section. With regard to the other material, vv. 29-30 (which I take to have been part of Q) clearly imply that “the Pharisees

and the Torah experts” had rejected John’s preaching and baptism while “tax collectors and harlots” had embraced it. Verses 31-35 continue this theme of rejection and acceptance, framing it as both John’s and Jesus’ rejection by “this generation” and their acceptance by the children of wisdom.

4.5. General commentary

Although John’s very direct question in this story is met with an equally indirect reply by Jesus, there can be little doubt that his reply is meant to be taken in the affirmative. On the other hand, there is much scholarly disagreement as to what exactly John was asking, why Jesus responded the way he did, and what exactly Jesus was meaning to imply.

4.5.1. An incongruous reply?

I talked earlier about how Jesus’ reply is often thought to be incongruous with John’s question I considered a few of the explanations for how this supposed incongruity was produced and argued that these explanations are unconvincing. In fact, I am not convinced that Jesus’ reply even deserves to be seen as incongruous.

Many interpreters argue that Jesus’ reply was meant to re-frame, correct, or reject John’s eschatological expectations.³⁹⁹ John’s prophecies about the Coming One in 3:16b-17, especially when read in conjunction with his other preaching in 3:7-9, seem to anticipate a figure who would immediately execute divine wrath, punishing the wicked with “unquenchable fire.” Jesus, by mentioning nothing about fiery judgment and by pointing to his healings and preaching, was effectively challenging John’s conception of who “the Coming One,” was supposed to be. He was not to be wrathful and punitive but

³⁹⁹ →3.4; 3.4.1. Aside from the interpreters previously mentioned, see Kraeling, *Baptist*, 130; Dunn, *Spirit*, 61; Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 664, 667-68; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.133-137. Cf. also Hoffman, *Logienquelle*, 215; Nolland, *Luke 1-9*, 331.

gracious and accepting.

This interpretation is unpersuasive. In Q, John is consistently regarded as a divinely inspired prophet. Indeed, John functions as Jesus' prophetic forerunner and so Jesus' own legitimacy as the Coming One depends very much on the idea that John "got it right." We can only assume, therefore, that the composer/redactor(s) of Q did not mean to insinuate that John's prophecies had been off-point or mistaken and were now being corrected by Jesus.

John's mention of "the Coming One" recalls his earlier preaching in 3:16b-17. The elements from that unit dealing with wrath and fiery judgment are obviously still in need of fulfilment. But in Q that is expected to happen when Jesus comes a second time as the Son of man (→Excursus A). Q's presumed two-advent scheme needs to be borne in mind therefore when interpreting John's Question and Jesus' Reply. If we do that, John's prophecy in 3:16b-17 and John's Question and Jesus' Reply will cohere quite well. The latter unit helps to bring out the Coming One's positive role in redemption. John had not prophesied only that this figure would punish the wicked but that he would also redeem God's people. I suggested in chapter two that Jesus' healings and preaching help to fulfil his prophecy that the Coming One would gather the wheat into his granary (→2.2.6.1.4.). Jesus' healings would, according to this interpretation, be a means by which persons are drawn into the kingdom (= the granary). In this respect the healings would serve the same purpose as Jesus' evangelizing. Note that a similar harvest metaphor occurs in Q 10:2 where Jesus sends his disciples out both to heal the sick and to proclaim God's kingdom (cf. v. 9). The disciples here are portrayed parabolically as participants in the Coming One's job of harvesting the grain. I also suggested that 7:23, which challenges the hearer/reader not to be scandalized by Jesus, might fulfil this figure's expected role in the separating of the wheat from the chaff as they are removed from the threshing floor in anticipation of the final judgment (→2.2.6.1.4.). But while some of John's prophecies can be seen as having their fulfilment (at least their partial fulfilment) in Jesus' "earthly

ministry,” others—most notably his burning of the chaff—are obviously left unfulfilled and will not be fulfilled until Jesus’ second coming. These, however, are not forgotten by Q’s redactors but will become the focus of later sayings that deal with Jesus’ second coming (e.g. 12:39-40, 42, 46).

Jesus’ reply can also be seen as apposite rather than incongruous for another very important reason. In the next section I shall discuss 4Q521, an important document from Qumran. In this document several of the same deeds mentioned in Q 7:22c are somehow associated with the Messiah. In light of Q 13:35, where Ps 118:26 is cited, John can be understood to be asking, “Are you the Messiah?” And in light of 4Q521 Jesus’ reply can be understood to be answering in the affirmative by listing his messianic credentials. Properly understood, then, Jesus’ reply in Q 7:22-23 need not be seen as incongruous but as quite apposite.

I admit that the interpretation proposed here is not immediately obvious. It may well be that the connection between John’s early prophecy about the Coming One and the present unit feels a bit forced. This need hardly imply that the Q redactors had utilized Baptist material but in so doing had inadvertently left us with a glaring discrepancy between John’s prophecies and their supposed fulfilment in the person of Jesus. Nor does it seem reasonable to see Jesus here as challenging John to re-evaluate his eschatological vision. Any disconnect between the prophecy in 3:16b-17 and the present unit can be attributed to the fact that (on my analysis anyway) the present unit was originally independent and was appropriated into Q secondarily by a Q redactor whenever he used it in the composition of Q and when he adjusted ὁ χριστός to ὁ ἐρχόμενος, thereby linking the unit artificially back to John’s earlier preaching in 3:16b-17 (→Appendix A).

4.5.2. The messianic significance of Jesus' reply

While some interpreters⁴⁰⁰ insist that the *historical* John had foretold the advent of God or an angelic figure, there is no question that in *Q* “the Coming One” spoken of by John is Jesus, not God or an angel. I argued above that the language in 3:16cd suggests that John was expecting a human figure. In 7:19-20 that point is more than just suggested. Obviously, if John had been expecting God or an angelic figure he would not have bothered to ask Jesus—a human being—if he were “the Coming One.”⁴⁰¹ John’s question was more specific than is usually recognized though. In Excursus A I argued that the term “the Coming One” is derived from Ps 118:26 and that this text had been interpreted in *Q* as referring to the Davidic Messiah.

The next thing to consider is Jesus’ reply to John in *Q* 7:22. One can only be fully appreciate the significance of this reply if one recognizes what sort of figure John had been prophesying about in 3:16b-17 and what sort of christology undergirds *Q* generally. Indeed, these issues will have serious implications for how one understands what *Q* has to say about the messianic forerunner concept. In this section I shall argue that Jesus’ reply in *Q* 7:22 was meant to have messianic significance.

4.5.2.1. 4Q521: a key parallel to *Q* 7:22

Jesus’ answer to John in *Q* 7:22 must now be understood in light of 4Q521, the so-called “Messianic Apocalypse.”⁴⁰² This fragmented document has been dated to the first quarter of the first century B.C.E., and is likely to have been a copy of an even earlier

⁴⁰⁰ E.g. Ernst, Catchpole, Kloppenborg, Meier, Hughes, Öhler, *et al.*

⁴⁰¹ It would be implausible, of course, to suppose that John’s question presupposes that Jesus is himself God. Trinitarian theologizing is simply not in the purview of *Q*’s narrative here.

⁴⁰² See Puech, “Apocalypse, 475-522; *idem*, *Croyance*, 2.627-92; *idem*, DJD 25, 1-38; Tabor and Wise, “4Q521,” 149-162.

manuscript.⁴⁰³ A reference is made in 2 ii 1 to “his Messiah” (משיחו).⁴⁰⁴ This is followed, in lines 5-8 and 11-13, by two lists of what the author calls, “glorious deeds that have never happened” (line 11). Among these are:

- freeing of prisoners (line 8; = Ps 146:7; cf. Isa 61:1),
- healing of the blind (line 8; = Ps 146:8; cf. Isa 35:5; 61:1),
- “straightening out the twis[t]ed” (line 8; = Ps 146:8),
- healing of “the pierced,”
- raising of the dead,
- evangelizing of the poor (line 12; cf. Isa 61:1).

This list compares remarkably with the list Jesus gives of his own deeds in Q 7:22, among which are:

- healing of the blind,
- healing of the lame,
- healing of the deaf,
- raising of the dead,
- evangelizing of the poor.

Most remarkably, 4Q521 and Q 7:22 allude to some of the same biblical texts (most obviously, Isa 35:5; 61:1) and pair the raising of the dead with the evangelizing of the

⁴⁰³ See Puech, DJD 25, 5.

⁴⁰⁴ The orthography here would also allow for the translation “his anointed ones” if we read לְמָשִׁיחוֹ rather than לְמָשִׁיחוֹ. A so-called “defective plural” here would have some support since (1) in other texts the plural for משיח is also written defectively: e.g. CD 2:12 (||6Q15 3 i 4); 6:1; (2) a plural here would match the plural קדושים in line 2; (3) 4Q521 itself attests a plural form of משיח in 9 8, which can be reconstructed as: כהנ[ה] וכל משיחיה (“the priest]hood and all his holy ones”). The strongest arguments against a plural reading are (1) that the singular “his Messiah/anointed” is a biblicism, occurring 9 times in the Hebrew Bible; (2) a plural reading would undermine the apparent parallel with Q 7:22 where Jesus appears to be speaking, as Matthew puts it, of “the works of *the Messiah*” (sg.).

poor. Q 7:22 and 4Q521 undoubtedly reflect a shared Jewish tradition.⁴⁰⁵ The exact character of this tradition is disputable, however.

4.5.2.1.1. The connection between “his Messiah” in line 1 and the eschatological signs in lines 5-8 and 12-14

Due to its fragmented state, 4Q521 leaves us to ponder why it is concerned with miracles and evangelizing, and what the connection was, if any, between “his Messiah” in line 1 and the lists of deeds in lines 5-8 and 11-13. Puech argues that the *vacat* at the end of line 3 in column ii marks the beginning of a new line of thought, thus making for a disconnect between משיח in line 1 and the marvellous deeds in the lines that follow.⁴⁰⁶ But Collins effectively counters that the allusions to Ps 146 in both sections imply a thematic link.⁴⁰⁷ Others have pointed out that the deeds in lines 5-8 and 11-13 are attributed not to the Messiah in line 1 but to “the Lord” (אדני) (lines 5, 11). But Collins again counters that the Lord could be imagined as performing these deeds indirectly, *through the agency of* “his Messiah.”⁴⁰⁸ One could, perhaps, imagine the Lord acting without an agent to heal the blind or raise the dead (cf. the divine title in the Second Benediction: מחיה המתים). But it would be quite unexpected to read of the Lord evangelizing the poor directly rather than by means of an agent.⁴⁰⁹ This is especially the case here since יבשר ענויים alludes to Isa 61:1 where the person doing the evangelizing is an anointed human. The same could be said

⁴⁰⁵ So, e.g., Collins, “Works of the Messiah,” 107; Brooke, “MMT,” 76; Berger, *Wahrheit*, 100; Neiryck, “Isaiah 61,” 58.

⁴⁰⁶ Puech, “Some Remarks,” 554 and notes 26-27.

⁴⁰⁷ Collins, “Works,” 99; idem, “He Shall Not Judge,” 162.

⁴⁰⁸ Collins, “Works,” 99-102; idem, “Herald,” 234-36; idem, *Scepter*, 132-33; also Tabor and Wise, “4Q521,” 157-158. On the concept of divine agency, note the important maxim in *m. Ber.* 5.5.: שלוחו של אדם כמותו, “a man’s agent is like to himself.” For further reflections on this topic, particularly as it relates to Jesus, see generally Hurtado (*One God*).

⁴⁰⁹ Contra Puech (“Some Remarks,” 558) who appeals, rather unconvincingly, to the fact that in Pauline theology God evangelized Abraham directly (Gal 3:8). Eve (*Jewish Context*, 192-196) argues, lamely, that all of the deeds in 4Q521 are performed by God *except the evangelization of the poor*, which will be performed by God’s agent. According to Eve, 4Q521 “is not a systematically constructed theological treatise” and the author “was more concerned with inspiring his audience.”

about the freeing of prisoners since this clause (מתיר אסורים) also links up intertextually with Isa 61:1 (and not just Ps 146:7). The close proximity of lines 8-12 and line 1 is itself suggestive of a connection between the “glorious deeds” and “his Messiah.” And the anointed figure’s miraculous abilities are, in fact, expressly indicated in the statement that “the heavens and the earth will listen to his Messiah” (שמים וארץ ישמעו למשיח).

Furthermore, the deeds listed in lines 5-8 and 11-13 are so closely paralleled with those in Q 7:22 that it would seem unreasonable not to read the two texts as dealing with identical or closely related topics.⁴¹⁰ In Q 7:22 Jesus is answering John’s question about whether he is ὁ ἐρχόμενος. Given the likely derivation of this title/phrase from Ps 118:26 and the royal associations of Psalm 118 that obtained in Second Temple Judaism generally speaking and the early Jesus movement more narrowly I have argued that John was, in effect, asking Jesus: “Are you the Messiah?”⁴¹¹ In his reply, the deeds Jesus mentions have been culled primarily from the book of Isaiah and bring together several texts which were thought to speak of the eschatological future, when the world would be free from suffering.⁴¹² This utopian situation would have likely been associated with the Messiah for reasons that shall be given below. Thus, if 4Q521 is read in conjunction with John’s Question and Jesus’ Reply the texts can be seen as mutually enriching, both being focused

⁴¹⁰ The parallels between 4Q521 and Q 7:22 pose a particular problem for Kvalbein (“Wonders,” 92-93) since he interprets the “glorious deeds” in the former work as purely metaphorical. He emphasizes that 4Q521 is considerably older than the Q text and claims that we are better off understanding the Qumran text in light of how the biblical texts it cites were originally intended. This methodology is highly questionable for two reasons: (1) the elapsed time between biblical texts influencing 4Q521 and the composition of 4Q521 is actually greater than the elapsed time between 4Q521 and Q; (2) one cannot assume out of hand that the author of 4Q521 would have read biblical texts according to their authors’ original intent.

⁴¹¹ I have also proposed, not gratuitously, that in the pre-Q form of Q 7:18-20+22, John’s question was, in fact, “Are you ὁ χριστός?” (→4.3.).

⁴¹² See esp. Hieke, “Compendium,” 175-187. Kvalbein (“Wunder,” 111-125; idem, “Wonders,” 87-110) argues that the healings in 4Q521 are metaphors for Israel’s *spiritual* renewal. But Hieke (“Compendium,” 178) questions this interpretation, asking: “How is an eschatological renewal worthwhile, if there are still sick people, blind, deaf, lame?” Kvalbein’s interpretation seems methodologically unsound. He reasons (“Wonders,” 90-91) that since terms like “the devout,” “the just,” “the poor,” etc. are used with reference to the whole of Israel that other terms like “the blind,” “the dead,” “the badly wounded,” etc. must do so as well and hence cannot refer to individual healings. But this fails to recognize that a collective group could often be described by the characteristics of its individual members. Cf., e.g., Paul’s description of apostles in 2 Cor 4:8-13.

on the idea of miraculous deeds being performed by the expected Messiah.⁴¹³

4.5.2.1.2. A prophetic or royal Messiah?

There is another twist. Often interpreters have recognized a connection between “his Messiah” and the “glorious deeds” in the lines that follow but have argued that we are dealing here not with a *Davidic* Messiah but a *prophetic* one.⁴¹⁴ I believe this interpretation is ill-founded. Collins suggests that the statement “the heav]ens and the earth will listen to his Messiah [and all] that is in them will not turn away from the precepts of the holy ones” is meant to recall Elijah’s famous command of the sky to withhold or supply rain in 1 Kgs 17:1 (cf. also Sir 48:3; *LAB* 48.1; Rev 11:6).⁴¹⁵ But the language here is not derived from 1 Kgs 17:1 but from Ps 146:5-6. A number of texts roughly contemporary with 4Q521 anticipate that the *Davidic* Messiah would speak with special power and authority.⁴¹⁶ This notion had been inferred from the messianic prophecy in Isa 11:4: “and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.” Note especially *Pss. Sol.* 17.43, which appears to be a midrash on Isa 11:2-5: “His words [shall be] like the words of the holy ones in the midst of the sanctified peoples.”⁴¹⁷ This compares nicely with a statement about “his anointed

⁴¹³ Interpreters often speak of how Jesus’ works imply “the eschatological kingdom events are occurring” (Webb, *Baptizer*, 281) or something similar, but this is to miss the specifically *messianic* thrust of John’s question and the implicit “Yes, I am the Messiah” in Jesus’ words.

⁴¹⁴ E.g., Collins, “Works,” 98-112; idem, “Herald,” 233-38. See also many of the authors in Appendix E.3. n. 78.

⁴¹⁵ Collins, “Works,” 101-102; “Herald,” 235. Collins has been followed by others, e.g. Xeravits, *King, Priest, Prophet*, 190.

⁴¹⁶ E.g. *Pss. Sol.* 17.24-25, 35, 36, 43; 4Q161 8 iii 18-22; 1QSb 5.24-25; *1 En.* 62.2; 69.29; *4 Ezra* 12.31-34; 13.3-4, 8-11; Rev 19:15-16, 19-21; cf. also 4Q541 9.2.

⁴¹⁷ οἱ λόγοι αὐτοῦ ὡς λόγοι ἁγίων ἐν μέσῳ λαῶν ἡγιασμένων. Hultgren (“4Q521,” 338) suggests that the statement was based on the language of Ps 89. This psalm, which was doubtless interpreted messianically from an early time, uses the term מִשְׁכָּן (vv. 6, 8 [ET: 5, 7]) and speaks of the messiah’s throne eternal and comparable to the sun and moon (vv. 37-38 [ET: 36-37]). Hultgren speculates that such language gave rise to a belief that the Messiah “would have an exalted position (perhaps in heaven), not unlike the angels themselves.” But Ps 89 mentions nothing about the Messiah’s authoritative speech. For that we must look to Isa 11.

one/Messiah” in 4Q521 ii 1, particularly with the latter’s reference to the “holy ones” (קדושים = *Pss. Sol.*: ἅγιοι), that is, the angels.⁴¹⁸ The term לבשר, which derives from Isa 61:1 (or 52:7), is sometimes also taken as evidence that “his Messiah” in 4Q521 is a prophetic rather than a royal figure, given the fact that prophets often proclaimed God’s messages to the people. But בשר was not a technical term for prophetic speech (cf. Isa 40:9; 60:6; 68:11) and kings could certainly proclaim things about God too (cf. Ps 40:9-10 [MT: vv. 10-11]; 71:15, 17-18). Finally, some interpreters note that 4Q521 alludes to the Elijah prophecy of Mal 4:5-6 in iii 1-2. This is taken as confirmation that “his Messiah” in ii 1 is Elijah.⁴¹⁹ But a large amount of content between these two fragments has either been destroyed or badly damaged. Because of that, it is impossible to know what the exact connection was between “my Messiah” at the top of column ii and Elijah at the top of column iii. It is possible that the latter was understood to have been the former’s forerunner.⁴²⁰

Stephen Hultgren has recently argued that the Messiah figure in 4Q521 is indeed the Davidic Messiah. He highlights several striking parallels between 4Q521 and the Second Benediction of the *Amida*, which runs as follows:

You, O Lord, are mighty forever, you are the one who gives life to the dead, mighty to save, who sustains the living in mercy, who gives life to the dead with abundant compassion, who

⁴¹⁸ The two texts are noted for comparison by Hultgren, “4Q521,” 337.

⁴¹⁹ See esp. Collins, “Works of the Messiah,” 105.

⁴²⁰ Cf. Puech, *Croyance*, 669-81; “Some Observations,” 559-61. There are about nineteen lines intervening between the mention of the marvellous deeds in ii 13 and the allusion to Mal 4:6 in iii 1-2 and a very large part of this intervening section is completely lost (see Pl. 1 in *DJD* 25). The lines that are preserved seem to speak of divine punishment against the wicked and vindication of the just (7 + 5 ii). Given the large lacuna and our uncertainty about what was said in this section it is entirely possible that we are dealing in these two columns with two distinct figures. In the DSS we find other instances where two or more distinct eschatological figures are featured within the same document and sometimes the figures are even mentioned in close proximity to one another (e.g. 11QMelch; 1QS 9:11; 1QSB; 4QTest; CD 12:23-13:1; 14:19 [// 4Q266 10 i 12]; 19:10-11; 20.1; 1QSa 2:11-15). Puech sees Elijah in column iii as a forerunner to the royal Messiah. But without good reason, he, like Collins, identifies Elijah and the anointed figure in ii 1. Collins, *Scepter*, 135-137) criticizes Puech’s interpretation of Elijah here as a forerunner to the Messiah, claiming it is too speculative and uncertain, proposing instead that an allusion to Sir 48:10 is being made. But Collins’ reconstruction/interpretation seems no less dubious than Puech’s. The text is poorly preserved so any proposed reading will be somewhat uncertain. Responding to Collins, Puech (“Some Remarks,” 559+n. 46) writes: “it is impossible to restore here what Sira says (48:10) *lhkyn šbty ysr’ly’ qwb* (see Isaiah 49:5) ... If it were possible, we would have expected this reading at line 2 and not line 6.”

supports those who fall, who heals the sick, who releases the captives, and who keeps his faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like you, O Master of mighty deeds (גבורות) and who is comparable to you, O King, who kills and makes alive, and who makes salvation to sprout? And faithful are you to make the dead to live. Blessed are you, O Lord, who gives life to the dead.⁴²¹

Hultgren notes the following parallels with 4Q521:

	4Q521		<i>Amida</i>
God gives life to the dead	2 ii 12	מתים יחיה	מחיה [ה]מתים
God releases the prisoners	2 ii 8	מתיר אסורים	מתיר אסורים
God heals the pierced/slain	2 ii 12	רופא חללים	רופא חולים
God raises those who are bowed down (4Q521) and upholds those that are weak (<i>Amida</i>)	2 ii 8	זוקף כפ[ופים]	סומך נופלים Cf. Ps 145:14 where the following synonymous parallelism occurs: סוּמֵךְ יְהוָה לְכָל־הַנְּפֹלִים וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל־הַכְּפוּפִים
Allusions to the messianic hymn in 1 Sam 2:1-10	2 ii 7	כי יכבד את חסידים על כסא מלכות עד וכסא Cf. 1 Sam 2:8: וכסא כבוד ינחלם.	חסידו, ממית Cf. 1 Sam 2:9 ([ק=חֲסִידוֹ] and 2:6 (מחיה).
Intertexts with Ps 146		<i>passim</i>	מתיר אסורים Cf. Ps 146:7; also Isa 61:1.

Hultgren posits that both 4Q521 and the Second Benediction of the *Amida* originated from within a group of religious enthusiasts known as “the Hasidim” (“the devout ones”). As support, he points to several verbal and theological parallels between these two works and the *Psalms of Solomon*, which he also believes to have been of Hasidic provenance.

Collins, who argues that the anointed figure in 4Q521 is a prophetic/Elijianic Messiah, argues in response that the origins of the Hasidim are too obscure and registers some doubts as to whether the group ever even existed or (supposing that it did) whether it continued as an organized group from the time it is first mentioned in 1 Maccabees (late 2nd century B.C.E.) to the time when the Second Benediction of the *Amida* was

⁴²¹ Hultgren, “4Q521,” 313-40. Cited from the Babylonian version. For the text, see Singer, *Prayer Book*, 44-45; or Scherman and Zlotowitz, *Artscroll*, 98-101; Dugmore, *Influence*, 114-125; Instone-Brewer, “Eighteen Benedictions,” 25-44 (29-33). The Babylonian version has fewer parallels with 4Q521 than the shorter Palestinian version. But Hultgren (“4Q521,” 314) points out that the Babylonian has its roots in Palestine. See Flusser, “*Amida*,” 331-34 (333) (in Hebrew).

composed.⁴²² He then appeals to Sir 48:3 and 11QMelch as “closer parallels” to 4Q521 and as confirmation that we are dealing in 4Q521 not with a Davidic but a prophetic Messiah. Against Collins, it should be noted that Sir 48:3 does not identify Elijah as a “Messiah.” As for 11QMelch, I have at length elsewhere that this document says nothing about a non-royal Messiah. It mentions two מְבַשְׂרִים (“heralds”) and identifies one of them (and probably both) as a מְשִׁיחַ (line 18). These figures therefore most naturally correspond to the two Messiahs mentioned in other sectarian writings, one being royal and the other priestly.⁴²³ While Hultgren certainly labours his point about the Hasidic origins of 4Q521, the *Amida*, and the *Psalms of Solomon*, it is not actually crucial to his more basic observations that 4Q521, the *Amida*, and *Psalms of Solomon* are verbally and exegetically related. Whether these works all originated from within a well-defined group known as “the Hasidim” is really only of secondary concern to us here. We are concerned with trying to ascertain the type of messianism presupposed in 4Q521. For that, the verbal and exegetical parallels between 4Q521, the *Amida*, and the *Psalms of Solomon* are highly suggestive. They suggest that these works originated from within a common or at least a similar milieu of eschatological beliefs. This must be acknowledged even if we cannot label that milieu with the Hultgren’s attempted specificity. The messianism undergirding in these compositions is therefore more likely to have been similar than markedly different. The *Psalms of Solomon* and the *Amida*, of course, know of only one Messiah—the Davidic (see esp. *Pss. Sol.* 17-18; the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Benedictions). Even in the Second Benediction of the *Amida* belief in the Davidic Messiah is unmistakably alluded to in the phrase “to make salvation sprout” (מְצַמִּיחַ יְשׁוּעָה).⁴²⁴

⁴²² Collins, *Scepter*, 139. Hultgren (“4Q521,” 315-16) dates the Second Benediction, quite generally, to “the Second Temple Period.” So too Kohler, *Origins*, 67; Liber, “*Tefilla*,” 335, 342-3, 354; Instone-Brewer, “Eighteen Benedictions,” 25-44. Hultgren (“4Q521,” 321-22, 332-33) sees the messianic allusion in the phrase מְצַמִּיחַ יְשׁוּעָה as a later addition, brought in during “the late Hasmonean period.”

⁴²³ For the full argument, see Flowers, “11QMelchizedek.”

⁴²⁴ Hultgren, “4Q521,” 321. Cf. the cognate term צִמַח in Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12 and צִמַח דָּוִד in 4Q174 1-2 i 11; 4Q161 frgs. 8-10 iii 18; 4Q252 v 3-4; 4Q285 v 2-3. Cf. also *Sop.* 19.9: “May Elijah the prophet soon come to us; may the King Messiah cause to sprout forth (יְצַמַח הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ) in our days the

There is really no reason, then, to understand Q 7:22 as evidence of a strictly prophetic christology in Q. The interpretation advanced above coheres with much of what was noted earlier about Q's royal christology, evident in its identification of Jesus as God's "Son," its use of Isa 61:1, and its identification of Jesus as the Son of man figure in Dan 7:13-14. For Q, Jesus was not simply a prophet; he was the Davidic Messiah.

4.5.2.2. A wonder-working Messiah?

Before the publication of 4Q521, interpreters regularly assumed that the list of deeds in Q 7:22c had been drawn from Jesus' own (allegedly) miraculous life. They concluded accordingly that the saying reflected christological opinions that were unique to the early Church. Kloppenborg, for example, wrote that the miracles "seem to be selected with Jesus' miracles in view, and the mention of the cleansing of lepers, which does not occur in Isaiah, suggests that 7:22 is a post-Easter interpretation of Jesus' deeds as evidence of the presence of the kingdom."⁴²⁵ Again, interpreters regularly argued that the deeds enumerated by Jesus in v. 22c were of no messianic significance. Writing in 1989, only two years before the publication of 4Q521, Wink claimed that Jesus, in his reply to John,

does not make messianic claims. He neither asserts that he is or is not the one John expected. The things he lists have no evidential value as proof of messiahship. They are signs of the inbreaking of God's reign, but they were not associated, so far as we know, with any messianic expectations of the first century.⁴²⁶

Again, Tuckett wrote that "the actions referred to in [Q 7:]22 are for the most part not those associated with expectations of either a messianic or prophetic figure" and reflect a "post-Easter" viewpoint.⁴²⁷ Many other scholars writing in the twentieth century made similar pronouncements, claiming that the deeds mentioned by Jesus had nothing really to

[happy] time like the years will be rebuilt." In the Fifteenth Benediction a similar reference to the Messiah is evident in the statement that God "makes the horn of salvation to sprout" (מצמיח קרן ישועה).

⁴²⁵ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 108.

⁴²⁶ Wink, "Jesus' Reply," 125-126.

⁴²⁷ Tuckett, *History*, 127.

do with Jewish messianic expectations and must therefore be regarded as a creation of the later church.⁴²⁸ With the publication of 4Q521 in 1991 these older judgments now seem highly disputable. Jesus' reply to John need no longer be seen as reflecting a "post-Easter" perspective. And the notion that Jesus' miracles and preaching might really be intelligible within a Jewish context and have messianic significance need no longer be dismissed as implausible. Jesus' reply in Q 7:22c appears to reflect an exegetical tradition that pre-dates Jesus and his movement and that deals with the sorts of deeds which would occur in the messianic age or be performed by the Messiah. As such, the saying in Q 7:22c might actually capture the voice of the historical Jesus. It is unlikely, in any case, to capture only the voices of later redactors within the Jesus movement who were writing in Greek and were unacquainted with Jewish messianic expectations.

The older scepticism as to the messianic significance of Jesus' deeds in Q 7:22c is perhaps easy to criticize in retrospect. But one cannot help but wonder how it became so entrenched in the scholarly commentaries. Was this an example of "group think"? Even before the publication of 4Q521 there were other texts suggesting a belief that the Messiah would perform miracles. Among these, the Gospel traditions probably stand out most conspicuously. Here, miracles are frequently demanded or expected of Jesus.⁴²⁹ Presumably, this is because his performance of miracles would somehow confirm him as the Messiah (cf. Matt 11:2; John 2:23; 7:31).⁴³⁰ With respect to his exorcisms, Edward P. Meadors argues that these were meant to recall the anointed figure in Isa 61:1 who is sent "to proclaim liberty to the captives," a theme that is also connected with the messianic

⁴²⁸ So, e.g., Zeller, "Process," 123 n. 32; Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 663. Even Luz (*Matthew 1-8*, 132 n. 20), though publishing in 2001, overlooks or fails to interact with 4Q521 and states simply: "There are in Judaism no particular concepts of 'messianic deeds.' One did not expect the Messiah to perform miracles of healing."

⁴²⁹ Q 4:3, 9; 11:29; Mark 8:11-12 *par.*; Matt 12:38; Luke 11:16; John 2:18; 6:30.

⁴³⁰ Contra Streeter ("Evolution," 217-18) who contrasts Q's lesser interest in miracles with Mark's greater interest, claiming that this corresponds to Mark's interest in portraying Jesus not so much as the Messiah but as the Son of God. Mark is clearly interested in portraying Jesus as the Messiah, however. Streeter is drawing a false dichotomy here between Messiah and Son of God. In both Q and Mark the ideas seem interchangeable.

“Servant” of Isa 42 (v. 7).⁴³¹ As support for this interpretation, Meadors points to two sectarian texts from Qumran that speak of the “captives”/“poor” being liberated from the hand of “Belial”/“Satan” (11QMelch ii 4, 6; 4Q171 2:9-10). He might have also noted two other texts. *T. Dan* 5.11 also understands Isa 42:7 or 61:1 as referring to a spiritual kind of bondage: “he shall take from Beliar the captives, the souls of the saints; and he shall return the hearts of the disobedient ones to the Lord.” Likewise, in the healing story at Luke 13:10-17 a woman’s healing is framed as release from Satanic bondage, possibly with another subtle echo once again to Isa 42:7 or 61:1.⁴³² Jesus himself may characterize demonic possession as a kind of bondage at Q 11:21-22||Mark 3:27. As was discussed above, the anointed figure in Isa 61:1-3 is often interpreted as a prophetic figure. But if Jesus’ exorcisms can indeed be understood in light of this biblical text it is perhaps relevant to note that David was also an exorcist. Several times when Saul was afflicted by “an evil spirit from Yahweh” David played on his harp and drove the spirits away (1 Sam 16:15-16, 23). Meadors notes that Solomon, David’s son, was also regarded as an exorcist, although it is not clear how widespread this idea would have been in Judea and Galilee of the first century C.E.

Aside from the Gospels and Q, several extra-biblical texts—many of which were noted already by Strack and Billerbeck, Louis Ginzberg, and others—should be mentioned since they envision the eschaton as a time of impressive wonders.⁴³³ These texts do not

⁴³¹ Meadors, “‘Messianic’ Implications,” 262-63.

⁴³² Cf. v. 16: ταύτην δὲ θυγατέρα Ἀβραὰμ οὖσαν, ἣν ἔδησεν ὁ Σατανᾶς ἰδοῦ δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ ἔτη, οὐκ ἔδει λυθῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ δεσμοῦ τούτου τῆς ἡμέρας τοῦ σαββάτου. Cf. also vv. 11 and 12.

⁴³³ See Str.-B 1.593-94; Ginzberg, *Sect.*, 234-35. Texts relevant to the present discussion would include 4Q504 1-2 ii 12; vi 10-16; *Jub.* 23.26-30; 4 *Ezra* 7.26-28, 51-54 [121-124]; 8.52-54; 2 *Bar.* 29; 73; *b. Sanh.* 91b (R. Laqish opposed [two verses to each other.] It is written, [I will gather them...] with the blind and the lame etc... whilst it is also written, Then shall the lame man leap etc... How so? They shall rise with their defects and then be healed”); *Gen. Rab.* 20.5 (“In the future all will be healed except the serpent and the Gideonite.”); *Eccl. Rab.* 1.4 § 2 (“I raise them [from the grave] with their blemishes, so that people shall not say, ‘Those He allowed to die are different from those He restored to life.’ ‘I kill and I make alive, I wound,’ then I will heal them [after the resurrection.]”); *Tanḥ.* 11.9 (“...whatever the Holy One has smitten in this world is healed in the world to come. The blind are healed, as stated [in Isa 35:5]: THEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND SHALL BE OPENED. The lame are also healed, as stated [in vs. 6]: THEN THE LAME SHALL LEAP LIKE A HART. And the dumb shall be healed, as stated [ibid., cont.]: AND THE TONGUE OF THE DUMB SHALL SHOUT FOR JOY. Everyone shall be healed, just as one goes [to the grave], so he comes <back>. If he goes blind, he

explicitly state that the Messiah would perform the wonders. But since the Messiah was expected to be a kind of redeemer figure he could have easily been paralleled with Moses who performed several impressive miracles.⁴³⁴ Hence, it would only have been a short leap from an expectation of eschatological miracles to a belief that the Messiah would actually perform those miracles. Several of the so-called “sign prophets” mentioned by Josephus told their followers that they would perform impressive “signs.” Josephus refers to these as σημεῖα ἐλευθερίας, “signs of liberation” (*War* 2.258-60 (259)) or, in a parallel account, τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα, “wonders and signs” (*Ant.* 20.168).⁴³⁵ Regrettably, we know very little about most of these figures.⁴³⁶ Yet some of them can doubtless be characterised as would-be Messiahs and that their signs as attempts at establishing their messianic credentials. One of these figures, referred to by Josephus as “an Egyptian false prophet” (or simply “the Egyptian”), is said to have led 30,000 of his followers from the wilderness to the Mount of Olives and was preparing to dispatch the Roman garrison and set himself up as king, plausibly as the royal Messiah (*War* 2.261-63). It is therefore significant, at least for our purposes, that when Josephus retells the story in *Antiquities* he adds that the Egyptian had claimed the walls of Jerusalem would fall at his command (*Ant.* 20.169-71).⁴³⁷ This, of course, recalls the miraculous sign in Josh 6. Another example of someone with messianic aspirations who tried to (and in this case did) perform an eschatologically significant “sign” is Simon bar Giora.⁴³⁸ This man made no pretence about having prophetic abilities so there is no reason to restrict him to a prophet category. His ambitions

comes <back> blind, etc. ... So that the wicked of the world will not say: After they died would the Holy One have healed them and later brought them <back>? It would seem that these are not the same ones [who died], but others. The Holy One said: If so, let them rise just as they went [to the grave], and afterwards I will heal them.”

⁴³⁴ Cf. the rabbinic saying: “As the first redeemer was, so shall the latter Redeemer be” (*Eccl. Rab.* 1.9§1; *Ruth Rab.* 5.6). Note too the remark in *Tanḥ.*, *Toldot* 17: “Just as in Egypt, I shall redeem you in the future from subjugation to Edom (i.e. the Roman empire) and shall perform miracles for you, as it says, ‘As in the days of your leaving Egypt, I shall display miracles.’” Cf. also *Tg. Cant.* at 4:5; 7:4.

⁴³⁵ Cf. also τὰ σημεῖα τῆς σωτηρίας, “signs of salvation” (*War* 6.285).

⁴³⁶ See the discussions in Barnett, “Sign Prophets,” 679-697; Horsley, “Popular Prophetic Movements,” 3-27; Webb, *Baptizer*, 333-46; Eve, “Jewish Context,” 296-325; Gray, *Prophetic Figures*, 114-158.

⁴³⁷ The account in *Antiquities* probably captures something closer to what actually happened. See Eve, *Jewish Context*, 299-302.

⁴³⁸ See Flowers, “11QMelchizedek,” 224-25.

were strictly political. Thus, the following remark by Josephus is quite significant:

[Simon] was aspiring to despotic power and cherishing high ambitions; accordingly on hearing of the death of Ananus, he withdrew to the hills (τὴν ὄρεινὴν), where, by proclaiming liberty for slaves and rewards for the free (προκηρύξας δούλοις μὲν ἐλευθερίαν γέρας δὲ ἐλευθέρους), he gathered around him the villains from every quarter.⁴³⁹

In performing this action Simon was likely trying to cast himself as the messianic figure in Isa 42:7 and 61:1.⁴⁴⁰

4.5.2.2.1. Exegetical basis for the expectation of a miracle-working Messiah

Even without 4Q521, then, there would have been good reason to interpret Jesus' miracles as a kind of messianic claim, given John's question and other associations of the Messiah or the eschaton with signs and wonders. But with the discovery of this remarkable text (along with Q 7:22) we can now start to see how the idea of a miracle-working Messiah came to be developed exegetically. Note that 4Q521 and Q 7:22c appear to quote from or allude to Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:18; 61:1-2. 4Q521 also alludes to Ps 146:6-8. It is worth considering these biblical texts in further detail in order to see, from an ancient exegetical standpoint, their interrelation and relevance to the topic of messianism.

Isa 29:18 declares that various healings will take place "on that day" (בְּיוֹם־הַהוּא), a theologically weighted expression that was often understood eschatologically and even messianically in the first century C.E.⁴⁴¹ Indeed, the phrase בְּיוֹם־הַהוּא occurs twice in Isa 11 (vv. 10, 11; also 12:1, 4), a chapter that was widely recognized as a prophecy about the

⁴³⁹ Josephus, *War* 4.508. See further, Flowers, "11QMelchizedek," 224-5.

⁴⁴⁰ Josephus himself appears to have missed the biblical allusion. He states in 4.513 that Simon ultimately had released the prisoners simply because he was planning an assault on Jerusalem.

⁴⁴¹ Cf. CD 19.10a-13 + 8.1b-3; 1 Cor 1:8; Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:2; Heb 10:25; 1 Pet 2:12; 2 Pet 3:10; *Sim.* 49.3-4; *4 Ezra* 7.113; 12.34; cf. also *b. Sukk.* 52b; *b. San.* 98b-99a.

Davidic Messiah.

Isa 35 declares that “the wilderness” (מִדְבָּר) will blossom (v. 1-2, 7) and that “the way of holiness” (דֶּרֶךְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ) (v. 8) will be opened only for “the redeemed” (גְּאֻלִּים) to trod (v. 9). It declares as well that “the ransomed of Yahweh (פְּדוּיֵי יְהוָה) shall return (יָשׁוּבוּן), and come with singing unto Zion; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (v. 10). This return of God’s people is framed as a new exodus (v. 8), a theme evocative of 11:11-12:6. Many of the other terms and ideas used in Isa 35 also link up verbally or conceptually with texts that were likely interpreted eschatologically (e.g. Isa 40:3; 42:16; 43:19; 51). Hence, when the chapter adds that the sick and infirm will be healed (vv. 5-6) it is understandable why these healings too would have been connected with the eschaton and interpreted as physical (rather than metaphorical) healings. Later texts interpret Isa 35:5-6 in precisely this way.⁴⁴²

Ps 146 is thematically connected with Pss 146-150 and was likely read in conjunction with them. Verses 6-8 are alluded to in the preserved portions of 4Q521. These verses link up verbally with other chapters in Isaiah that I am presently discussing. מתיר אסורים (“freeing of prisoners”) is a verbatim quote of Ps 146:7 but also links up verbally with Isa 61:1: וְלְאֲסוּרִים פְּקוּחַ-קוֹחַ (“and to the prisoners an opening of the opening/prison”). Again, 4Q521’s פּוּקַח עוּרִים (“opening [the eyes] of the blind”) is clearly derived from Ps 146:7 but links up with expressions in Isa 35:5 (אֲזוּ תִפְקַחְנָה עֵינֵי עֲוִרִים) and 61:1 (פְּקוּחַ-קוֹחַ). Ps 146 might seem like a simple hymn praising God’s greatness and healing power. But when read in connection with other verbally and thematically related texts found in Isaiah it could apparently be taken as a kind of prophecy about the eschaton.

It is, of course, possible that while interpreters may have expected healings to take place during the eschaton they would not have necessarily expected them to be performed

⁴⁴² *Tanḥ. Wayyiggash* (Genesis) 11.9; *b. Sanh.* 91b (cited in Str.-B. 1.594); *Ecc. R.* 1.4.2; cf. *y. Kil.* 9:4 (32b).

by the Messiah.⁴⁴³ But this seems unlikely when we take into consideration how the above texts were linked with Isa 42:7 and 61:1-3. Isa 42 begins with the words: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him.” The terms עֶבְדִּי and בְּחֻרִי were read as messianic expressions by many Jews of the first century C.E. and beyond, including those within the Jesus movement. The reason for this is not difficult to appreciate:

- Let me begin here with the title, “my Chosen”: The term בְּחֻר, “chosen” is applied to David in several biblical and extrabiblical texts.⁴⁴⁴ The title may derive from the story in 1 Sam 16 where Samuel tells Jesse, with regard to David’s seven other brothers, “Yahweh has not chosen these” (v. 10).
- “My Servant”: The phrases עֶבְדִּי, דָּוִד עֶבְדִּי, and עֶבְדְּךָ are used repeatedly in scripture with reference to king David (e.g. 1 Sam 20:8; 2 Sam 7:8; Ps 89:20 [MT: v. 21]; 132:10). The “Servant” of Yahweh is mentioned several times throughout the book of Isaiah in what modern scholars typically classify as “the Servant Hymns” (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). Ancient readers would probably not have read these hymns as isolated units, of course, but within the larger portions of text in which they were located. It is notable, therefore, that in 42:6 Yahweh declares, with respect to this “Servant”/“Chosen”: אֶתְנַהֵךְ לְבְרִית עַם, “I have given you for a covenant of the people.” This “light” language connects up not only with 49:6 (נִתְתִּיךָ לְאֹר גּוֹיִם) but with 9:2 [MT: v. 1], which speaks of how the people walking in darkness “have seen a great light ... upon them the light has shined” (רָאוּ אֹר גָּדוֹל ... אֹר נִגְהָ עֲלֵיהֶם). Again, the “covenant” language in 42:6 is reminiscent of 61:8 (וּבְרִית עוֹלָם אֶכְרֹז לָהֶם), a text not far removed from v. 1 where

⁴⁴³ This is essentially the view of Kvalbein (“Wunder,” 111-125), although he interprets the miracles metaphorically.

⁴⁴⁴ E.g. 2 Sam 6:21; 1 Kgs 8:16; 11:13; Ps 89:4, 21; 106:23; 2 Chron 6:6; Sir 47:22; 4Q504 1-2 iv 4-8. Cf. esp. בְּחֻרִי ... לְדָוִד עֶבְדִּי (Ps 89:3); דָּוִד עֶבְדִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּתַרְתִּי (1 Kgs 11:34).

an anointed figure is mentioned. The covenant language would have probably also been evocative of the “new covenant” text of Jer 31:31-34 (בְּרִית הַדְּשָׁה) and perhaps of the many biblical texts that associate David with an “eternal covenant” (2 Sam 7:13, 16; 1 Chron 17:11-14; Ps 89:29-30, 35-39). In this connection, ancient exegetes might have also recalled Ezek 37:24-28: “David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them.” This text, written several centuries after David, would likely have been read as a messianic prophecy in the first century C.E.

Also in v. 1, just after using these two highly evocative titles, Yahweh declares: “I have put My Spirit upon him.” This language links the verse not only with 61:1, where an anointed figure declares: “The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon me,” but with Isa 11:2, where we are told concerning the Davidic Messiah that “the Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him.” Indeed, the saying here is verbally and conceptually reminiscent of David’s own anointing, after which we are told that “the Spirit of Yahweh came upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam 16:13). Thus, with so many messianically evocative terms and ideas present in Isa 42 is it really so remarkable to imagine ancient interpreters taking v. 7 as a prophecy about the Messiah’s miracle working abilities? The phrases לְפָקֹחַ עֵינַיִם וְעוֹרוֹת and לְפָקֹחַ עֵינַיִם וְעוֹרוֹת would have been easily associated with the phrase וְלְאַסּוּרִים פָּקַח-קוֹחַ in Isa 61:1 where an anointed figure is declaring what Yahweh has sent him to do. The phrases יִשְׁבֵּי חֹשֶׁךְ and אֹר גּוֹיִם in v. 6 would have linked up nicely with another messianic text at 9:1 [MT: v. 2]: הָעָם הַהֹלְכִים בַּחֹשֶׁךְ רָאוּ אֹר גָּדוֹל יִשְׁבֵּי בְּאֶרֶץ צְלִמּוֹת אֹר נָגַהּ עֲלֵיהֶם: “The people walking in darkness saw a great light; those dwelling in the land of darkness, on them has light shined.”

I turn finally to Isa 61:1-3. Because of its own verbal and conceptual links with ch. 11 this portion of text would have likely been taken as a prophecy about the Messiah (→Appendix E.3). Verse 1 speaks of an anointed figure/Messiah who would “evangelize

the poor,” “bind up the broken-hearted” (לְחַבֵּשׁ לְנַשְׁבְּרֵי־לֵב), proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the door/eyes (פְּקַח־קוֹרָה) to them that are bound.” These deeds could have easily been interpreted as physical healings, especially if the text was read in conjunction with 29:18-19; 35:5; 42:18; and Ps 146:7-8.⁴⁴⁵ The chapter goes on to associate the anointed figure’s actions with “the day of vengeance of our God” (יּוֹם נִקְמָה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ) (v. 2), language reminiscent of Isa 35:4 (הִנֵּה אֲפֹלְחֵיכֶם נִקְמָה יְבוֹא), a verse that is followed with: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy” (v. 5). In Isa 61 this “day” will also be for “joy” (שִׂשׂוֹן) and “salvation” (יִשְׁעָ) to God’s people (v. 10), and the earth will flourish (v. 11).

With so many overlapping terms and themes in the above-mentioned portions of scripture it is not difficult to appreciate how interpreters might have read them in connection and used to extrapolate that the Messiah would evangelize “the poor,” release prisoners, heal the sick, and raise the dead.

What Q 7:22 ought to show is that christology is not just about titles but about actions as well. Older scholarship often missed this point when it tried to frame Jesus’ miracles not against the backdrop of Jewish messianism but against so-called “divine men” like Apollonius of Tyana and Alexander of Abonutichus⁴⁴⁶ or even “charismatic men” like Honi the Circle Drawer and Hanina ben Dosa.⁴⁴⁷ As Seán Freyne emphasizes, “The terminology used by the Evangelists for the deeds of Jesus removes them from the realm of thaumaturgic activity, locating them rather in the sphere of God’s continual care for his

⁴⁴⁵ The Hebrew here is likely corrupt. פְּקַח־קוֹרָה is a *hapax* in HB and DSS. 1QIsa^a writes it as one word: פְּקַח־קוֹרָה. The LXX translates it as καὶ τσφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν (“recovery of sight to the blind”). This could imply an alternative Hebrew *Vorlage* that spoke of a healing of the blind. Possibly the term עֵינַיִם or some other noun has dropped out from the extant Hebrew. Cf. Ps 146: פְּקַח עֵינַיִם; Isa 35:5: תִּפְקַחְנָה עֵינֵי עֹרְרִים; 42:7: לְפִקֹּחַ לְעֵינַיִם עֹרְרוֹת. In all but one instance in the HB (Isa 42:20) the verb פִּקַּח is used to speak of an opening of the eyes. But the mention of “prisoners” in 61:1 complicates the text. Perhaps the verse had originally spoken of a release of prisoners *and* an opening of the eyes of the blind but these two ideas were conflated through a transcriptional error.

⁴⁴⁶ For a critique of the “divine man” interpretation of Jesus, see Holladay, *Theios Aner*; Blackburn, “Theioi Andres,” 185-218; idem, *Theios Anēr*.

⁴⁴⁷ Contra Vermes, *Jew*, 58-82. See the critique of Vermes in Eve, *Jewish Context*, 272-95.

people.”⁴⁴⁸ More precisely, we might say that Jesus’ terminology in Q locates his deeds in the sphere of God’s redemptive plan, which is now being realized with the advent of his Messiah.

4.5.3. Was this unit designed to cast John in a negative light?

Kloppenborg claims that John’s Question and Jesus’ Reply was created in order to downgrade John. He writes: “John’s inferiority to Jesus is obvious. It is as if John is ‘on the outside looking in,’ seeking the fulfilment of his own prophecy rather than actively engaging in the events of the kingdom.”⁴⁴⁹ Gundry even infers from the story that John, as someone who doubted Jesus, was now seen as a “dangerous example not to be followed by Christians who find themselves in similar straits.”⁴⁵⁰ Tuckett, on the other hand, thinks that “any tendency to downgrade John is minimal” and finds the pericope quite positive in its appreciation of John.⁴⁵¹

I would agree with Tuckett that the story is not meant to indict John or cast him in a negative way. If John had, at this point in Jesus’ ministry (at least in the Q redactor’s

⁴⁴⁸ Freyne, *Jesus Movement*, 150. Freyne points to terms and ideas like “Spirit of God,” the metaphor of the divided houses/kingdoms, “Son of David,” the authority of his word, Jesus’ concern with restoring the stigmatized of society, etc. See also Eve, *Jewish Context*, for a recent attempt at contextualizing Jesus’ miracles within a Jewish milieu. Eve’s monograph first examines a wide array of texts dealing with miracles. Only after having done that does he attempt to understand how they might help to contextualize Jesus’ miracles. This approach has its merits but its drawback is that it misses how the Gospels can often be mutually enlightening of many of the texts surveyed (as, for example, in the case of 4Q521 and Q 7:22). In his survey of texts and miracle working figures, Eve finds a few inexact analogues to Jesus, especially in Josephus’ “sign prophets,” but he seems unable to contextualize Jesus’ miracles any further within a Jewish context. Thus, he leaves the door open for further research into a possible pagan contextualization (p. 386). Eve concludes that Jesus’ miracle-working is “distinctive,” that is, without any close analogues in Jewish sources. But contextualizing Jesus’ miracle-working does not necessarily require that we find such analogues. One can understand the significance of what he was doing by other means. Freyne, for example, points to the terms and ideas Jesus associates with his miracles. And I myself have been considering how the texts Jesus cites in connection with his miracles are likely to have been understood by Jewish interpreters of the first century C.E.

⁴⁴⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 108. See also Catchpole, *Quest*, 240-41; Lührmann, *Redaktion*, 26; Schultz, *Q*, 203; Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 114.

⁴⁵⁰ Gundry, *Matthew*, 207.

⁴⁵¹ Tuckett, *History*, 127. Part of his reasoning here, however, assumes that the deeds listed in v. 22 had no messianic associations.

understanding), been arrested and imprisoned, this would explain why he is not portrayed as “actively engaging in the events of the kingdom.” One could, of course, infer from John’s question that he is open to the idea of Jesus being his superior, given what the Baptist had said earlier about the Coming One’s superiority (3:16b-17). However, this need not be seen as an attempt to challenge the opinions of John espoused by a rival Baptist group. There is no obvious anti-John sentiment in the pericope and no obvious attempt to devalue him as a prophet. His prophecy about the Coming One is recognized as divinely inspired, implying that he was a true prophet. Additionally, the material immediately following the present chreia (i.e., the material in vv. 24-28) identifies John as the eschatological Elijah and eulogizes him as the greatest of all those born of women; the material following that (i.e., in vv. 29-35) presents him as a co-minister with Jesus. The literary effect of these three units is therefore quite positive in its portrayal of John. His inferiority to Jesus is, of course, presumed throughout but this is consistent with how Q presents John elsewhere.

Some commentators think that the concluding saying in v. 23 is particularly negative about John and that it should be taken as a kind of soft rebuke against him or against a rival Baptist movement. According to Meier, the saying is not to be construed generically (“whoever”) but as specifically directed at John (“he/the person”). It is an appeal for John not to be “put off” by his “shock” about how his earlier prophecies about judgment and punishment had not materialized and because the eschatological drama was being fulfilled quite differently than he had envisioned, namely, through Jesus’ “joyful ministry of healing and comfort.”⁴⁵² I explained above why this kind of interpretation does not comport with Q’s portrayal of John as a true prophet and as one whose prophecies had served to confirm Jesus’ own validity as the Messiah. I also explained how Jesus’ “earthly ministry” might be seen as the partial fulfilment of John’s prophecies. There is no indication of “shock” on John’s part in the present chreia. The fact that he would even ask

⁴⁵² Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.135.

his question to Jesus suggests an implicit faith that is quite ready to accept Jesus as the fulfilment of his expectations. Meier is also very far off the mark when he writes: “in this apophthegm, the great scandal that could keep one from believing in Jesus is not his rejection by Israel and its leaders, and certainly not his crucifixion, but rather his success. The church’s kerygma of cross and resurrection has left no mark on this text.”⁴⁵³ Is it not somewhat absurd to think that Jesus’ *success* in performing miracles and evangelizing could become an offence, even if the offended person were John?

Fleddermann also understands v. 23 as directed specifically at John. He thinks the saying contrasts John’s lack of faith with the centurion’s faith in 7:1-10:

To set up the contrast the author of Q portrays both as responding to Jesus with profound humility. John refers to the One Coming after him as one stronger, “the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy (οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανός) to untie” (Q 3,16), and the centurion addresses Jesus, “Lord, I am not worthy (οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανός) that you enter my roof” (Q 7,6). The centurion, though, goes on to express a profound faith that acknowledges Jesus’ unconditional authority (Q 7,7-8), whereas John wonders whether Jesus is the Coming One or not (Q 7,19). Both have humility; only the centurion goes over to faith; John remains outside of the kingdom (Q 7,28; 16,16). In the NT scandal means unbelief, and Jesus’ negative beatitude constitutes an inverted woe, “and blessed is the one who is not scandalized in me” (Q 7,23).⁴⁵⁴

I am not convinced that a contrast is being drawn in 7:18-20+22-23 between John and the centurion of 7:1-10. The present unit uses neither ἰκανός, the supposed catchword in 3:16 and 7:1, nor πίστις, the key term in the story about the centurion. Nor is it obvious that in the early Jesus movement “scandal means unbelief.”⁴⁵⁵ But even if that were a proper way to understand σκανδαλισθῆ here one could not then infer that the saying in 7:23 was meant as an indictment of John’s unbelief. As was just noted, his question already suggests an *implicit faith*. And while we never get to hear how John reacted to Jesus’ remarks it is hardly conceivable that the reader was supposed to take away from the story the notion that John remained doubtful about Jesus’ identity or that his lack of faith excluded him from the kingdom. Given the way John is presented elsewhere in Q the

⁴⁵³ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2. 136.

⁴⁵⁴ Fleddermann, *Q*, 383.

⁴⁵⁵ Cf. Q 17:1-2; Matt 13:21; 15:12; 16:23; 17:27; 26:31, 33. See Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 135.

author could only have expected his readers to assume that John understood Jesus' words properly and embraced him as the Coming One/Messiah.

To speak of “an implicit threat” (Meier) or “an inverted woe” (Fleddermann) may be a bit off-point. Jesus is pronouncing a *benediction* after all. If one accepts—as both Meier and Fleddermann do—that the saying was an original unity with vv. 18-20+22 (a disputable point, as we have seen) and if one accepts—as Meier and Fleddermann do—that it was directed specifically at John (another disputable point, as we have seen) it would have surely been spoken as a commendation or encouragement, not a rebuke or a woe. The Q redactor(s) obviously would not have regarded John as a disbeliever or as the object of an “inverted woe” rather than a proper blessing; for in that case we would not expect the man to have remained such a venerated figure in the broader composition of Q. Thus, it is better—assuming we are indeed to understand the words as directed at John—to read the saying thus: “Blessed are you, John, for not feeling scandalized in me, despite the fact that you have had to endure persecution and imprisonment on behalf of the kingdom.”

A more fundamental argument can be urged against Fleddermann, namely, that the story in vv. 18-20+22 is unlikely to be a purely literary invention but records an actual (historical) correspondence between John and Jesus, when John was in prison awaiting his own execution.⁴⁵⁶ If Jesus' benediction in v. 23 had also been spoken in such a context, it would have surely been meant as an encouragement for John to persist in his faith, despite his own challenging circumstances which might have otherwise led him to doubt.⁴⁵⁷

Nor does Fleddermann seem correct in thinking that John is being presented in this pericope or in the sayings at 7:28 and 16:16 as someone who is “outside of the kingdom.” I shall deal with 7:28 a bit later but shall not be able to discuss 16:16 within the limits of this thesis. Suffice it to say that neither of these sayings support the notion that John is

⁴⁵⁶ For matters of historicity here, see the authors mentioned in n. 387.

⁴⁵⁷ In saying this, I am not motivated by “modern psychologizing and historicizing concerns,” as Fleddermann (*Q*, 378) suggests. There are reasons to think the chreia in Q 7:18-20+22(+23?) had its origins in history and was not a purely literary invention. Proposing a reasonable *Sitz im Leben* such as the one given here is therefore entirely appropriate.

outside of the kingdom. Elsewhere in Q the role given to John, both as Jesus' prophetic forerunner (3:16; 7:24-27) and as a fellow messenger of divine wisdom sent to minister to "this generation" (7:31-35), suggests that he is nothing other than a man of faith and that he is of the same epoch as Jesus.

4.5.4. Conclusion to commentary

Commentators often speak of how Jesus refocuses John's question, which was whether Jesus were the Coming One by talking not about himself but about the time of salvation being realized.⁴⁵⁸ I think this profoundly misses the point of Jesus' answer. He may speak indirectly but he does nonetheless speak of himself here. The miracles and preaching are his own, after all. And the pastiche of biblical texts that he references, in both v. 22c and v. 23, constitute a messianic claim.

Read in light of 4Q521, Q 7:22bc fits in very nicely into the larger chreia of 7:18-20+22-23 because it presents John as asking if Jesus is "the Coming One" (that is, the Messiah) and Jesus as pointing to his miracles and preaching as the fulfilment of texts which had (apparently) been associated with the Messiah.

If the unit at Q 7:18-20+22-23 was not meant as a corrective to John's mistaken conception of the Coming One or as an apologetic against some rival Baptist movement what was its function? Whether it circulated independently (without v. 23) or had been incorporated into the larger context of Q, its purpose would have been the same: to portray John as the forerunner of Jesus and Jesus as the expected Messiah.

⁴⁵⁸ E.g. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.134-135; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 134.

CHAPTER FIVE: Jesus' encomium on John (Q 7:24-28)

Matt 11:7 Τούτων δὲ πορευομένων ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωάννου· τί ἐξήλθατε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον θεάσασθαι; κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον; **8** ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; ἄνθρωπον ἐν μαλακοῖς ἡμφιεσμένον; ἰδοὺ οἱ τὰ μαλακὰ φοροῦντες ἐν τοῖς οἴκοις τῶν βασιλέων εἰσίν. **9** ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; προφήτην; ναὶ λέγω ὑμῖν, καὶ περισσώτερον προφήτου. **10** οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὗ γέγραπται· ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου. **11** Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν· οὐκ ἐγήγερται ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν μείζων Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ· ὁ δὲ μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν μείζων αὐτοῦ ἐστιν.

Luke 7:24 Ἀπελθόντων δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων Ἰωάννου ἤρξατο λέγειν πρὸς τοὺς ὄχλους περὶ Ἰωάννου· τί ἐξήλθατε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον θεάσασθαι; κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον; **25** ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; ἄνθρωπον ἐν μαλακοῖς ἱματίοις ἡμφιεσμένον; ἰδοὺ οἱ ἐν ἱματισμῷ ἐνδόξῳ καὶ τρυφῇ ὑπάρχοντες ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις εἰσίν. **26** ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; προφήτην; ναὶ λέγω ὑμῖν, καὶ περισσώτερον προφήτου. **27** οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὗ γέγραπται· ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου. **28** λέγω ὑμῖν, μείζων ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν⁴⁵⁹ Ἰωάννου οὐδεὶς ἐστιν· ὁ δὲ μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ μείζων αὐτοῦ ἐστιν.

5.1. Proposed reconstruction:

Q 7:24 τούτων δὲ ἀπελθόντων ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωάννου· τί ἐξήλθατε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον θεάσασθαι; κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον; **25** ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; ἄνθρωπον ἐν μαλακοῖς ἡμφιεσμένον; ἰδοὺ οὐ τὰ μαλακὰ φοροῦντες ἐν τοῖς οἴκοις τῶν βασιλέων εἰσίν. **26a** ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; προφήτην; **b** ναὶ λέγω ὑμῖν, καὶ περισσώτερον προφήτου. **27a** οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὗ γέγραπται· **b** ἰδοὺ [[ἐγὼ]] ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, **c** ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου. **d** φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ. **28a** Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν· οὐκ ἐγήγερται ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν μείζων Ἰωάννου· **b** ὁ δὲ μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ μείζων αὐτοῦ ἐστιν.

Q 7:24a And when they had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: **b** “What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? **25** What then what did you go out to see? A person robed in soft clothing? Behold, those wearing soft clothing are in kings’ houses. **26a** What then did you go out to see? **b** A prophet? Yes, I tell you: more than a prophet! **27a** This is he of whom it has been written: **b** Behold, I am sending my messenger before your face, **c** who will prepare your way before you. **d** A voice crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight. **28a** Amen, I say to you: among those born of women none is greater than John; **b** yet the lesser one is, in the kingdom of God, [going to be] greater than he. among those born of women none is greater than John; **b** yet in the kingdom of God the One Who is Less is greater than he.

⁴⁵⁹ The term προφητής is inserted after γυναικῶν in A (D) Θ f¹³ Δ Ψ 28 180 205 700 892 1071 1241 ℳ Byz (E G H) Lect. it^{aur f g r1} (it^d) vg syr^{s p h} bo^{pt} arm geo (cf. also 892 1241 1342) Cyril^{lem}; Ambrosiaster Ambrose. Goulder (*Luke*, 389) argues that this reading is original and attests to Luke’s redaction of Matthew. But the term is not found in ℑ⁷⁵ & B L W Ξ f¹ 157 579 syr^{pal} cop^{sa mss} bo^{pt} Diatesseron Origen^{1/3} Didymus. It would be difficult to explain why the term was omitted from so many authorities. On the other hand, it is easy to imagine a copyist adding it for christological reasons. By having Jesus refer to John the greatest *prophet* ever born, John is placed in a different category than Jesus (the *Christ*) and this helps to avoid the implication here that John was greater than even Jesus.

5.2. Establishing the text

Because Matthew and Luke agree so well in this portion of Q the text is less disputed. A few points are discussed, once more, in Appendix C.

In v. 28, Luke drops ἀμήν in accordance with his usual style.⁴⁶⁰ Luke probably also altered οὐκ ἐγήγγραπται to οὐδεὶς ἐστίν. But he might not have done this simply because he wanted to produce “better Greek.” He might have just wanted to make the clause conform more closely with 28b:⁴⁶¹

μείζων	ἐν γεννητοῖς	γυναικῶν	ἐστίν
ὁ μικρότερος	ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ	τοῦ θεοῦ ...	ἐστίν

Luke appears to betray a reminiscence of Q’s original reading in Luke 7:16 where he says that the crowds cried out: προφήτης μέγας ἠγγέρθη ἐν ἡμῖν. Moreover, Matthew’s ἐγγράπται would provide a catchword link with v. 22, making it a plausible Q original, given Q’s fondness for finding catchword connections.⁴⁶² Τοῦ βαπτισοῦ and τῶν οὐρανῶν are characteristically Matthean.

⁴⁶⁰ Cadbury, *Style*, 157-158.

⁴⁶¹ Fleddermann, *Q*, 360.

⁴⁶² Fleddermann, *Q*, 360.

Excursus B: The bringing together of Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a

Before proceeding with a discussion about the tradition/redaction and location of the present unit in Q or its tradition-redaction history a few things are worth noting with respect to the biblical quote in 7:27. This quote has several interesting features. While it might seem, at first glance, to be a quote from a single biblical text it is actually the conflation of two texts—Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a:

Q 7:27b (||Mark 1:2a)

ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου,

Exod 23:20a LXX

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου

Q 7:27c (||Mark 1:2b)

ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου. [Mark omits ἔμπροσθέν σου]

Mal 3:1a LXX

καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδὸν πρὸ προσώπου μου

The bringing together of these two texts (though not necessarily their conflation) can be explained in light of ancient Jewish exegesis. As I noted earlier, one important exegetical principle in late Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism, which came to be known as “*gezera šawa*,” allowed two or more passages with similar wording to be interpreted in light of one another.⁴⁶³ When interpreters employed this principle they were not typically concerned with the author’s original intent or a given text’s original context. That may come as a surprise to modern interpreters who regard authorial intent and context as crucial to any “proper interpretation.” Ancient Jewish interpreters approached texts with very different presuppositions and agendas. They saw the scriptures as inspired by God. Because of this, verbal agreements between two or more texts were not so easily dismissed as coincidental. They were often seen as indications of the divine mind, clues for helping the more biblically astute reader discern a meaning that the casual reader would never detect. In the case of Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a, the authors’ original intentions and the original literary contexts in which the texts occur were obviously very different. The

⁴⁶³ →n. 394.

former spoke about the *angel* in the wilderness who led Moses and the Israelites into the promised land. The latter spoke about a prophetic *messenger* preparing the way before a mysterious “Lord”/“messenger of the covenant” who will come to visit his temple. Yet exegetes were able to see a connection between these two texts because their language was so similar, both in the Hebrew and Septuagint Greek:

Exod 23:20a

הנה אנכי שלח מלאך לפניך לשמרך בדרך
 και ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου
 μου πρὸ προσώπου σου

Mal 3:1a

הנני שלח מלאכי ופנה דרך לפני
 ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου και
 ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδὸν πρὸ προσώπου μου

In fact, the Gospel traditions are not unique in bringing these two texts together. An undated midrash in *Exodus Rabbah* does so as well:

Exod. Rab. 32.9 God said to Moses: ‘Now also, He who guarded the fathers will protect the children,’ as it says, *Behold, I send an angel* (Exod 23:20). ... In the millennium, likewise, when he will reveal himself, salvation will come to Israel, as it says, *Behold I send my messenger, and he shall clear the way before Me* (Mal 3:1).

Given that the language of Mal 3:1a and Exod 23:20a corresponds so closely in the Hebrew, and given that these same verses are brought together in a rabbinic midrash, it is reasonable to infer that the conflated quote in Q 7:27 relies on an earlier exegetical tradition in which the two texts had been brought together *in Hebrew* by means as the *gezera šawa* principle.⁴⁶⁴ This tradition, if it was indeed based on the Hebrew text, must have ultimately pre-dated Q (at least Q’s Greek version). But can we go farther and conclude that we are dealing here with an exegetical tradition that pre-dates the Jesus movement? Both the Hebrew and Septuagint of Mal 3:1a have the messenger preparing “the way before *me/my* face” (לפני/πρὸ προσώπου μου) while in Q’s (and Mark’s) quotation the pronoun here is altered to the second person: “before *your* face” (πρὸ προσώπου σου). Many think this adjustment was christologically motivated since the change of pronouns allows John to be cast as the forerunner to *Jesus* rather than to God.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴ So too Marcus, *Way*, 16.

⁴⁶⁵ Most regard it as an invention of Jesus’ early followers: e.g. Farmer, “Baptist,” 957; Chilton, “John the

But the adjustment might have just as easily resulted from the fact that Mal 3:1a is conflated here with Exod 23:20a. In the latter text God says he will send his messenger “before *your* face”:

MT	LXX
הנה אנכי שלח מלאך לפניך	ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου

Unadjusted, the conflated quote at Q 7:27 would have read: “Behold, I send my messenger before *your* face (Exod 23:20a) who will prepare a way before *my* face” (Mal 3:1). That would have been stylistically awkward and conceptually unintelligible. Hence, it is plausible that the pronoun in Mal 3:1a came to be adjusted to the second person for purposes of literary and conceptual consistency, in order to match the pronoun in Exod 23:20a that had just been cited.⁴⁶⁶ The adjustment could have certainly been exploited for christological reasons, as we can see from both Q and Mark; but one need not assume that christology is what prompted the adjustment in the first place. Hence, it is at least possible that we are dealing here with an earlier *Jewish* exegetical tradition, not one that originated with Jesus or his early followers.

5.3. Issues of tradition and redaction

If it may be conjectured that v. 24a originally contained ὁ Ἰησοῦς as the expressed subject of the sentence (→Appendix E) this would have allowed the larger chreia in vv. 24-27 to stand on its own in a pre-Q context. The introductory note about John’s messengers departing could, in this case, be seen as a redactional transition supplied by a Q composer/redactor who wanted to connect the unit with John’s Question and Jesus’

Purifier,” 249; Catchpole, *Quest*, 66-67; Nineham, *Mark*, 60. Hughes (“Forerunner of God”) traces it back to Jesus himself.

⁴⁶⁶ So too Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 7-28. Such seemingly arbitrary adjustments to scripture in quotations and allusions were quite common before the rabbinic era. Cf., e.g. Matt 2:6 (οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη), NT & Qumran examples.

Reply. This traditio-historical hypothesis raises another problem, however, because the only explicit mention of John in 7:24-27 is in v. 24a. This is problematic because if vv. 24-27 were to have once circulated independently the material would have needed some note of clarification as to who exactly Jesus was discussing. Hence, if the note in v. 24a about John's messengers departing has to be dismissed as a redactional transition the unit will be too vague. It is possible that the verses are simply the creation of a Q redactor. But this is an unnecessary conclusion. The problem here can be resolved if we conjecture that in its pre-Q form, the chreia's introduction contained a simple reference to John: "And Jesus began to say to the crowds *concerning John...*" (ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἤρξατο λέγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωάννου). This reconstruction, though quite minimal in its conjectures, allows the unit to have once circulated independently.

5.3.1. Were 7:27 and 28b secondary redactions?

Many commentators think that vv. 27 and 28b are secondary.⁴⁶⁷ Verse 27 is often seen as intrusive. Kloppenborg even goes so far as to suggest that the verse contradicts the identification of John as *περισσότερον προφήτου* in v. 26: "While 7:24-26 declares that John is greater than a prophet, 7:27 places him in the role of Elijah..."⁴⁶⁸ He therefore proposes that vv. 24-26 originally stood alone. He thinks, however, that the enigmatic character of v. 26b would have encouraged further explication and posits that a second Q redactor did just this by inserting v. 28ab. Verse 27 was then inserted by another Q redactor:

⁴⁶⁷ Those who see v. 27 as secondary include Dibelius, *Täufer*, 12; Schulz, *Q*, 230; Polag, *Christologie*, 47, 158; Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 108; Sato, *Prophetie*, 35; Meier, *Marginal Jew* 2.141-142; Ernst, *Täufer*, 61 n. 94 (for a note on which scholars consider it secondary); Catchpole, "Beginning," 207; Öhler, *Elia*, 66. Those who see v. 27 as integral to vv. 24-26 include Marshall, *Luke*, 293; Tuckett, *History*, 133-134; Fleddermann, *Q*, 381-84. Those who see 7:28b as a later interpolation, added to correct Jesus' words in v. 27 (or vv. 24-26) include Dibelius, *Täufer*, 14; Wink, 24-25; Bultmann, *History*, 165; Schultz, *Q*, 233 and n. 376; Hoffmann, *Studien*, 219-20; Catchpole, "Beginning," 208; idem, *Quest*, 65-66; Tuckett, *History*, 133.

⁴⁶⁸ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 108 n. 29; See also, Bultmann, *History*, 165; Klostermann, *Matthäusevangelium*, 96-97; Hahn, *Titles*, 367-68; Schulz, *Q*, 230.

Q 7:28 a, b does not comment on 7:27 as its position might suggest, but relates back to 7:26b. It is connected to the cluster of sayings not because of any attraction to 7:27, but because of the affinities of μικρότερος/μείζων in 7:28 with περισσότερο in 7:26b.⁴⁶⁹

Catchpole also thinks v. 27 and v. 28b are secondary, but regards v. 28a as traditional. Following the lead of Dibelius and others⁴⁷⁰ he suggests that the highly laudatory remarks about John expressed in 7:26 and 28a were seen as christologically problematic by Q's redactors. Verse 28a seemed especially so since it implies that John was greater than Jesus himself! Catchpole claims that within this unit only v. 28a can be seen as defining and completing v. 26.⁴⁷¹ Also—and most importantly for Catchpole—within vv. 24-28 only v. 28a can be regarded as the climax of vv. 24-26 since it alone “causes the graph of assessment to rise, as it were, beyond vv. 24-26, whereas vv. 27 and 28b both cause it to fall by insisting on John's inferiority to someone else.”⁴⁷² Catchpole concludes that vv. 24-26+28a are thematically and theologically coherent and that they constituted an original unity at the pre-Q stage. He also thinks this unit “could not possibly be a Christian construction.”⁴⁷³ As the verses originally stood, they would have posed a “serious problem ... for Christian theology...” and so could only have been derived from a Baptist source.⁴⁷⁴ A proper “Christian” redactor must have subsequently inserted vv. 27 and 28b in order to downgrade John and subordinate him to Jesus by relegating him to a position in redemptive history as Jesus' forerunner (v. 27) and by stating that Jesus (ὁ μικρότερος) is (going to be) greater than even John in the (future) kingdom of God (v. 28b). The latter statement is analogous with 3:16c where “the Coming One” is described as “greater than [John]” (ἰσχυρότερος μου). Catchpole infers from this that 3:16c and 7:27 were inserted by the same christologically minded Q redactor.

Against Kloppenborg, there is wide agreement that v. 26 could never have stood as the

⁴⁶⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 110.

⁴⁷⁰ →n. 467.

⁴⁷¹ Catchpole, *Quest*, 65.

⁴⁷² Catchpole, *Quest*, 66.

⁴⁷³ Catchpole, *Quest*, 65.

⁴⁷⁴ Catchpole, *Quest*, 69.

original conclusion to vv. 24-26.⁴⁷⁵ Something must have been said to clarify the statement that John was *περισσότερον προφήτου*. The question is therefore whether the unit's original conclusion was v. 27, 28a, or 28ab. Against Catchpole (and Kloppenborg), v. 28 does not need to be tied back directly to v. 26b. It can and probably did originally stand on its own prior to when it was appended to the unit in vv. 24-27 (→5.4.). It likely found its present location in Q because of its mention of John the Baptist. Even if one were to argue, as Kloppenborg does, that the statement about greatness in v. 28 hearkens back on v. 26b this need hardly imply the sort of complex stratification theory he proposes or the elaborate Baptist source theory at work in Catchpole's reasoning. For one could argue that the theme of John's greatness is not disrupted but *elaborated upon* by v. 27. Tuckett's comments here are worth quoting at length:

V. 27 is unlikely to be a later modification of v. 28, if only because it comes first, and a secondary comment is more likely to follow the tradition it is seeking to modify and comment on. ... In fact, a strong case can be made out for v. 27 being the original conclusion to vv. 24-26. Vv. 24-26 alone seem to be almost a torso and to cry out for some clarification and conclusion. V. 26 ends with the double claim that it is indeed appropriate to think of John as a prophet, but that John is also more than a prophet. To the question 'Is John a prophet?', the answer seems to be yes and no: he is a prophet, but he is also more. At the very least, one could say that such a claim is enigmatic! What does it mean to say that John is both a prophet and more? At one level Q 7,27 provides a perfect answer. John is described as an Elijah redivivus figure. He is then a prophetic figure in that he is an Elijah-figure; but he is also more than just any prophet: for he is the inaugurator of the new age forecast by Malachi. Thus v. 27 provides a very good conclusion to vv. 24-26 and there is no need to drive too much of a wedge between the two.⁴⁷⁶

Tuckett also argues that if v. 27 or v. 28b had been added to vv. 24-26 for the purpose of subordinating John to Jesus, verses 31-35 would not have been left to stand as a literary climax to the section; for in these verses "Jesus and John appear in tandem with no real indication of inferiority of John."⁴⁷⁷ Dunderberg adds that if v. 27 were omitted the thought progression from v. 26 to v. 28a would be unclear; for we would then have to

⁴⁷⁵ So, e.g., Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 417; Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 109-110; Catchpole, "Beginning," 208-209; Tuckett, *History*, 133-134.

⁴⁷⁶ Tuckett, "Mark and Q," 165-166; also *idem*, *History*, 133-34.

⁴⁷⁷ Tuckett, *History*, 132.

suppose that Jesus regarded John as “more than a prophet” (i.e. greater than other prophets) *because* he was the greatest of those born of women, a rather tautological statement.⁴⁷⁸

Nor is Kloppenborg correct in supposing that v. 27 contradicts the statement in v. 26 about John being “more than a prophet.” According to Kloppenborg, Jesus’ identification of John as *περισσότερον προφήτου* places him outside the category of prophet. This is not true. In v. 26 itself Jesus clearly affirms John’s identity as a prophet when he answers, *ναί*, “yes.” John was widely regarded as a prophet, both in Q and elsewhere (Q 16:16; Mark 11:32; cf. also Mark 3:5-6). John’s *prophecy* about the Coming One in 3:16b-17 is obviously a central theme in Q. Hence, Jesus’ words in v. 26 cannot be construed as implying that John was something *other than* a prophet. The words *περισσότερον προφήτου* evidently mean that although John was a prophet he was something more than *just* this.

In what respect, then, does Q envisage John as a prophet and yet something more than *just* this? For Tuckett, it is John’s identity as “Elijah *redivivus*” and his role as “the inaugurator of a new age.” His identification as Elijah *redivivus* would certainly make him a prophet not something *more*. His supposed role as “the inaugurator of a new age” is not actually stated in the Malachi prophecy and would likely detract from what Q itself regards as Jesus’ role (cf. 6:20; 10:9; 11:20). It is therefore worth exploring some other options as to how exactly John could be both a prophet and something more.

It is sometimes suggested that John was a miracle worker.⁴⁷⁹ Indirect evidence for this is thought to be found in the following texts:

Mark 6:14 (||**Matt 14:1**) And King Herod heard [about the miracles performed by Jesus’ disciples]; for Jesus’ name had become known. Some said, “John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him.”

⁴⁷⁸ Dunderberg, “Beginning,” 508.

⁴⁷⁹ E.g. Bultmann, *History*, 24.

John 10:41 And many came to him; and they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.”

The first text could be taken to suggest that the comparison between Jesus and John was drawn because the latter had also been a miracle worker. John 10:41, then, could be read as an attempt at denying John’s miracle working abilities. This approach to these texts seems dubious though. Mark 6:14 need only be taken to mean that John was seen by the people (and at least tacitly by Herod Agrippa) as a divinely sanctioned prophet. As for John 10:41, the interpretation I just mentioned would fit with the older views of Wilhelm Baldensperger who regarded John’s Gospel as an apologetic against a rival Baptist sect. Baldensperger read negative statements made by or about John in this Gospel (e.g. “He was *not* the light,” “I am *not* the Christ,” “John did *no* sign”) as disavowals of positive claims that Baptist sectarians were making about him.⁴⁸⁰ Baldensperger’s book has been severely criticized, however.⁴⁸¹ Walter Wink pointed out that most of the polemics in the Fourth Gospel are not directed at John the Baptist or his followers but the Pharisees, with any subordination of John the Baptist to Jesus being best attributed to the Fourth Evangelist’s heightened christological interests or his interest in presenting John as an ideal witness, not a concern with rebutting contrary claims made by a rival Baptist sect.⁴⁸² The other Gospels and Josephus at least indirectly confirm the remark in John 10:41 by mentioning nothing explicit about John having performed miracles. Luke and Josephus portray him mostly as a preacher of virtue (Luke 3:10-14; *Ant.* 18.116-118). It seems best, therefore, to understand John 10:41 at face value: John was not a miracle worker.

According to Mark’s Gospel, John denounced Herod and was martyred as a result (6:17-29). Josephus explains John’s death somewhat differently but also presents it as a martyrdom (*Ant.* 18. 18.116-119). Was John considered “more than a prophet,” then, because he suffered martyrdom? In fact, his death is probably alluded to in Q 11:49;

⁴⁸⁰ Baldensperger, *Prolog*.

⁴⁸¹ See especially the reviews by Rishell, “Baldensperger’s Theory,” 38-49, and Rhees, 368-71.

⁴⁸² Wink, *John the Baptist*, 87-106.

13:34; 16:16; and Q/Luke 13:33. But John was certainly not the first prophet to experience martyrdom (1 Kgs 18:4; Neh 9:26; 2 Chron 36:15-16; Q 11:49; 13:34; Q/Luke 13:33, etc.). So this cannot be what rendered him *περισσότερον προφήτου*.

Manson tries to explain the enigmatic epithet in Q 7:26 by noting that John did not merely prophesy but “actively prepared a people for the coming crisis” through preaching and baptizing.⁴⁸³ Other prophets also prepared (or at least tried to prepare) Israel for coming crises through preaching, however. Hence, Manson’s only real distinction between John and other prophets lies in the fact that he baptized people. But it is hard to believe that this is what is at stake in the present saying. While in later “Christianity” baptism may have been touted as a sacrament of the Church this can hardly be the perspective of Q, which never even mentions baptism as a practice of Jesus or his followers. Thus, Manson’s interpretation also seems inadequate.

On its own, the epithet *περισσότερον προφήτου* could be taken in a number of ways. Any guesses as to what it means will therefore have to be controlled by some broader context. Its most immediate context would, of course, include v. 27. But for the sake of the argument I shall bracket this verse and look for clues in other Q texts dealing with John the Baptist’s role. Verse 28 declares that John is the greatest of those born of women but does not explain why. Hence, it cannot be used to explain the epithet in v. 26. Verse 31 describes John as having lived an austere life of self-denial but this hardly explains why he would be regarded as *περισσότερον προφήτου*. In 3:16 and in John’s Question and Jesus’ Reply, John is portrayed as a prophetic forerunner to the Messiah Jesus. This is probably how his role is envisaged in 16:16 as well (although the meaning here is highly disputed). We are therefore driven back to v. 27 as the most obvious explanation for why John is called *περισσότερον προφήτου* in v. 26. John’s greatness is not really his own, inherently, but derives from his relation with Jesus. In 3:16; 7:18-20+22-23; and 7:27 John is portrayed as both a prophet and as someone who announced the coming of Jesus. The

⁴⁸³ Manson, *Sayings*, 70.

significance of the latter action rests, of course, in Q's conception of Jesus. John did something that no other prophet before him had done—prepare the way for the promised Messiah.

According to the interpretation advanced here, 7:27 is not intrusive to vv. 24-26 but integral since it explains what is meant by the ambiguous term *περισσότερον προφήτου*. The quote can therefore be seen as entirely apt and not as disrupting any logical progression as one moves from v. 26 to v. 28a. But there is yet another reason for doubting that v. 28a ever joined immediately with vv. 24-26; for the introductory words *λέγω ὑμῖν* in v. 26 are unlikely to have been repeated so quickly in v. 28: *ναὶ λέγω ὑμῖν, καὶ περισσότερον προφήτου. λέγω ὑμῖν, μείζων ἐν γεννητοῖς...* Catchpole claims that the second *λέγω ὑμῖν* is redactional but this explanation is too facile, especially in light of the other arguments I have now adduced for v. 27 being integral to the unit.

Catchpole is right to note the extremely laudatory tone of vv. 24-26 and 28a. The regard for John expressed here is quite remarkable: John was greater than Samuel, Isaiah, and even Moses! But it is hardly obvious, as Catchpole claims, that v. 27 causes “the graph of assessment” on John to fall dramatically. Quite the contrary: the portrayal of John as the fulfilment of Mal 3:1a helps to underscore his lofty status by casting him as the eschatological Elijah and messianic forerunner.⁴⁸⁴

5.4. 7:28—a *crux interpretum*

Scholarly judgments about the original unity of vv. 24-27 often depend very much on what one takes to be the relationship between these verses and v. 28. Several questions need to be resolved therefore with respect to the latter verse. Was it originally an independent saying? Was it an original unity or a composite, with v. 28b being a later

⁴⁸⁴ See Tuckett, *History*, 132: “v. 27 scarcely gives any indication of John’s *inferiority*.” Tuckett seems inclined, however, to accept that v. 28b is a secondary redaction within Q and thinks it was added to bring down the estimate of John (p. 133). More on v. 28 later.

“Christian” redaction? Was v. 28a originally attached to v. 26 or to v. 27? At what point was it attached to either verse and how did its new attachment affect its meaning? Who is being referred to with the term ὁ μικρότερος? Is this best read as a comparative or a superlative? Is ἐστίν to be construed as a simple present tense verb or a “futuristic present”?

These questions are all interrelated but let me begin with the one about how to interpret ὁ μικρότερος. This can be taken either as a generic reference (“whoever is least”) or as a circumlocutionary self-reference (“the one who is less [than John]”/“the Lesser One”). Understood generically, the expression would refer to any of Jesus’ followers. In support of this interpretation, note that Jesus’ followers are referred to as οἱ μικροί at Q 17:2 as well as at Matt 10:42; 18:10, 14. In fact, the exact expression, ὁ μικρότερος, occurs in Luke 9:48 where it is usually taken to have a generic sense. Furthermore, Jesus often refers to his followers with terms that convey similar notions of lowliness/social insignificance: νήπιοι (Q 10:21); παῖδες (Mark 9:33-37 *par.*; 10:13-16), πτωχοί (Q 6:20); ἔσχατοι (Q 13:30); ὁ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν (Q 14:11), etc. But while all this evidence is strong, a generic interpretation at Q 7:28 is not hereby established. Jesus has just declared John to be greater than all who had ever been born. Such a statement would have naturally elicited a question as to whether John were greater than Jesus himself; but if ὁ μικρότερος is understood generically this question would be left unanswered.⁴⁸⁵

From an early time, ὁ μικρότερος in this saying was taken as a title for Jesus.⁴⁸⁶ Nor is this interpretation implausible. In the Gospel traditions, Jesus often identifies himself very

⁴⁸⁵ I cannot understand the objection to this line of reasoning by Davies and Allison (*Matthew*, 2.252) who claim that “a strong statement about [Jesus’] own greatness is hardly expected” after v. 28a. It is absolutely expected.

⁴⁸⁵ Scholars who believe this saying excludes John from the kingdom include: Edwards, *Theology*, 97; Schönle, “Johannes,” 68-69; Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts*, 109; Öhler, *Elia*, 68-69; Wink, *Baptist*, 24.

⁴⁸⁶ Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.18.8 (CC 1.591); John Chrysostom, *Hom.* 37.2-3 in *Matt.* 11 (PG 57.421, 422); Hilary, *Comm. in Matt.* 11.6 (PL 9.980-81); Jerome, *Comm. in Matth.* 2.11 (PL 26.74A). For these patristic citations, see Michel, “μικρός,” *TDNT* 4.654 n. 27; Viviano, “Least,” 41-54 (44-47). For modern interpreters who take the saying in this way, see Franz Dibelius, “Kleinere,” 190-192; idem, “Zwei Worte,” 190-192; Cullmann, *Christology*, 24, 32; idem, *Early Church*, 180; Hoffmann, *Studien*, 220-24; Catchpole, *Quest.* 69;

closely with his followers (cf. Q 10:16). Note that in texts like Mark 10:45 *par.* he envisages himself as a humble minister and in Matt 11:29 as being “gentle and lowly in heart.” His life and death are also seen as a model of humility in one early hymn (Phil 2:6-11). Hence, there is no obvious difficulty in thinking that Jesus—whether the historical or simply the Jesus of Q—referred to his followers as οἱ μικροί but that he also referred to himself as ὁ μικρότερος.

I argued earlier that ὀπίσω μου and the sandals imagery in Q 3:16b-17 help to underscore the irony of how one of John’s own disciples would far surpass him in might and worthiness. Such irony would only have been recognizable in a historical context where John’s greatness was unquestioned while Jesus’ was not. A similarly ironic statement is likely at play in Q 7:28. Here John is said to be the greatest of those born of women yet Jesus is said to be (or expected to be) greater than him in the kingdom of God, despite the latter’s present lowliness. Jesus probably saw himself as *less than* John in some sense. This is at least how he is presented to us in Q. His perceived inferiority to John may have had something to do with the fact that he had been John’s disciple, or because he had been John’s junior (Luke 1-2),⁴⁸⁷ or had been less well known than John during his lifetime (cf. Mark 6:14). But he also believed (or is at least presented to us in Q as believing) that his greatness would exceed John’s in “the kingdom of God.” Allison and Davies object to this interpretation, saying that it would seem out of character for Jesus to have made “a strong statement about his own greatness.”⁴⁸⁸ Yet it would not have been unprecedented (cf. Q 10:22; Mark 12:37). Moreover, a circumlocutionary self-reference here would be quite veiled and in that respect the saying would seem analogous to other sayings in which Jesus opaquely attests his own greatness (cf. Q 11:22; 12:8-10; Q/Matt

Viviano, “Least,” 41-54.

⁴⁸⁷ So Dibelius, “Zwei Worte,” 190-192.

⁴⁸⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2.252.

19:28; Mark 2:28; Matt 26:64). Of special note here is the saying in Q 11:31-32 where I take Jesus to be implicitly referring to himself as *πλεῖον Σολομῶνος* and *πλεῖον Ἰωνᾶ*.⁴⁸⁹

Ἔστιν may be either a true present tense verb or a futuristic present. A decision about this will depend on whether “the kingdom of God” is taken to be a present or future reality. Both notions are attested in Q.⁴⁹⁰ But it is perhaps better to assume a futuristic sense at Q 7:28 since the kingdom is most often referred to that way in Q and since the only other instance in Q where the phrase *ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ* occurs clearly speaks of a future reality (13:28-29). For my own interpretation of *ὁ μικρότερος*, which takes the expression as a comparative and as a self-reference, the issue here does not seem particularly crucial: whether *ἔστιν* is taken as a true present or a futuristic/prophetic present, Jesus (“the Lesser One”) will have to be counted as greater than John (either in the here-and-now or in the hereafter). But if one takes *ὁ μικρότερος* in a generic sense and as a superlative then a future sense of *ἔστιν* would effectively exclude John from the future kingdom: “the very least person in the kingdom *will be* greater than John (who, by implication, will not be in the kingdom).” It is unlikely that Jesus meant to exclude John from the kingdom, however, since he elsewhere regards John as a fellow minister sent to minister to “this generation” (cf. 7:31-35).⁴⁹¹ I suspect that for those who understand *ὁ μικρότερος* generically the only way around this problem of John being excluded from the future kingdom is to construe *ἔστιν* as having a purely present sense and to follow the hard-fast distinction Manson makes between the present and future kingdom: “There is a distinction between the Kingdom as it is revealed in the present age in Jesus and those who follow Him, and the Kingdom as it is to be fully realised in the future.”⁴⁹² This interpretation assumes that someone who is not a partaker of the kingdom’s present

⁴⁸⁹ The neuter terms here are no argument against this interpretation. See Caragounis, *Development of Greek*, 237, 238. The fuller discussion includes pp. 235-40.

⁴⁹⁰ Future reality: 6:20; 11:2; 12:31(?); 13:18-21(?), 28-29; Q/Matt 22:29-30. Present reality: 10:9; 11:17-20; 17:20-21(Q?).

⁴⁹¹ Indeed, one could argue that in Q 16:16 Jesus specifically places John in the kingdom epoch, although this interpretation is disputable. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2.253-54.

⁴⁹² Manson, *Sayings*, 70.

manifestation will nonetheless be able to partake of its future manifestation. But is this really a distinction we can find in Q? Q does certainly make a distinction between the kingdom as it is presently revealed and the way it will be revealed in the future (13:18-21, 28-29). But one surely cannot expect to partake of the future kingdom if he has not partaken of it in the present (cf. 19:12-13+15-24+26; 12:39-40, 42-46; 13:24-27). The best approach, then, is to understand ὁ μικρότερος not in a generic sense but as a self-reference.

In order for ὁ μικρότερος to be construed as a self-reference it would have to be understood not as a superlative but as a true comparative. Ordinarily this would not be a problem. The term is, after all, a comparative, at least in its form. But many argue that comparatives with the -τερος ending were, by the first century C.E., falling out of use and functioned instead as superlatives. Ὁ μικρότερος should, in that case, be translated as if it were ὁ ἐλάχιστος. As support for this reading of Q 7:28, Blass-Debrunner's well known grammar is often cited (BDF §60, 244). But notice that the grammar includes ἐλάχιστος in its list of superlatives that are still retained in the New Testament (§60). Moreover, Fitzmyer points out that in our disputed text at Q 7:28 the dependent genitive μείζων indicates that we are dealing with genuine comparatives and not superlatives.⁴⁹³ Thus, ὁ μικρότερος can really only be construed as a true comparative.

As I mentioned earlier, Catchpole thinks that vv. 24-26+28a were drawn from a rival Baptist source. He thinks v. 28a elevates John to the highest degree while v. 28b downgrades him to a position less than Jesus (understanding ὁ μικρότερος as a reference to Jesus). If ὁ μικρότερος can, as I myself have argued, be understood as a self-reference the implication would certainly be that in v. 28b John is being assessed as someone *less than* Jesus. But does this suggest that v. 28b is secondary? In fact, John's inferiority to Jesus is a central theme of Q. It certainly turns up in 3:16b-17. And his subordinate role as forerunner is expressed in 7:18-20+22-23; 7:24-27; and probably 16:16. Catchpole tries to isolate texts like 3:16c; 7:27, 28b and to see them all as christologically motivated

⁴⁹³ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 675.

interpolations into more primitive Baptist source material. But this approach is difficult to justify. I explained above why 3:16c appears to have been integral to 3:16-17 and why 7:27 appears to have been integral to 7:24-26. Now I shall try to show why 7:28b should not be seen as a later addition to 28a.

As we have seen, the identification of John as *περισσότερον προφήτου* in v. 26 demands explication. Verse 28a does not supply that but v. 27 does. Verse 28a would therefore not have needed to hang together with vv. 24-27. It seems more likely that all of v. 28 (i.e. both a and b) was originally an independent saying. This is suggested by the introductory formula *λέγω ὑμῖν*,⁴⁹⁴ the fact that the saying is intelligible on its own, and the fact that vv. 24-27 do not require it. The original *unity* of v. 28 is suggested by its antithetic parallel structure:

οὐκ ἐγήγερται
 ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν
 μείζων Ἰωάννου·
 ὁ δὲ μικρότερος
 ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ
 μείζων αὐτοῦ ἐστίν

It is hard to believe that this poetic structure was not original. Indeed, the cryptic nature of v. 28b and Jesus' oblique self-reference (if that is indeed what ὁ μικρότερος is) would cohere with what we can discern about the historical Jesus' speaking patterns. There are compelling reasons, then, for doubting that v. 28b was a later interpolation. The best way of handling v. 28 is to take it as a unity and as having originally circulated independently. It was probably given its present location (between vv. 24-27 and vv. 29-35) by the original Q redactor because of its mention of John.

⁴⁹⁴ Cp. Q 10:12; 12:22; 13:35(?); 18:19; 19:26(?); Q/Matt 11:22, 24; 19:28; Mark 3:28-29 *par.*; 9:1 *par.*; 11:23(?), 24(?); 14:18(?), 25(?); 18:29(?); Matt 6:25. On the other hand, *λέγω ὑμῖν* occurs quite often not at the beginning of a saying but somewhere within a larger unit—often at the end—and just before a climactic saying: e.g., Q 7:9; 10:1-12; 12:37, 42-46, etc. In such cases, the formula can often convey a certain solemnity upon what is about to be spoken and indicate that it is of special importance within the larger unit of speech. Thus, the argument here is not definitive, by itself, in establishing that the saying was originally independent.

5.5. Location in Q

Both Matthew and Luke join Jesus' Encomium on John (Q 7:24-28) to John's Question and Jesus Reply (Q 7:18-20+22-23). Additionally, both evangelists introduce Jesus' Encomium on John with a note that Jesus only made his remarks about John after his disciples had departed. It is clear, therefore, that in Q 7:24-28 followed immediately after 7:18-20+22-23.

According to Jacobson, Q's placement of the Exod-Mal quote at 7:27 implies that John was not regarded as a forerunner to Jesus but to God. He notes that the quote is given *during* Jesus' ministry, indicating that John's forerunner role still had validity even at that point in Jesus' life and hence did not come to an end with his appearance.⁴⁹⁵ Jacobson contrasts Q with Mark's Gospel, which places the same biblical quote in its Prologue, clearly because John was regarded by the evangelist as a forerunner to Jesus (cf. Mark 9:11-13). Thus, John's role is understood quite differently by Q and Mark.

Jacobson's line of reasoning here is not very convincing. At least in Q the present unit (i.e. 7:24-27) falls on the heels of John's Question and Jesus' Reply (Q 7:18-20+22-23). Admittedly, the exact *Sitz im Leben* for this interaction between John and Jesus is difficult to establish due to the disagreements between Matthew and Luke in the opening verse. But in Matthew's Gospel John is said to be in prison and hence no longer engaged in ministry. And in Luke's Gospel, John's prior imprisonment is at least implicitly affirmed in Luke's broader narrative (cf. Luke 3:20). In both Matthew's and Luke's version of the story John does not ask the question to Jesus in person but by means of his disciples. This too suggests that John was, at this point, in prison. Moreover, the repeated ἐξήλθατε in 7:24-26 of the present unit is in the aorist tense, suggesting that John's ministry had, at this point, come to an end. If we look beyond the present unit we can see that John's role as Jesus' forerunner has already been implied in Q's Prologue itself, which featured John as

⁴⁹⁵ Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 115.

preparing Israel for “the Coming One” (3:16-17), and in 7:18-20+22-23 where Jesus was identified as this anticipated figure. Again, John’s Baptism of Jesus (which I take to have been part of Q) is apparently understood as a kind of anointing ceremony, with John acting the part of Elijah by anointing the Messiah (→3.5.4.). If John’s role is understood differently in 7:24-27(+28?) then the unit will not cohere with those other units.

There is another issue here that is more difficult to resolve. I argued above that 7:24-27 was an original unity. Verse 27, that is, the conflated quote of Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a, is evidently not a secondary redactional intrusion since it occurs after v. 26b in both Matthew and Luke and since it explains the ambiguous saying in v. 26b. Curiously, though, the same highly distinctive biblical conflation of Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a (even down to the latter text’s alterations of ἐπιβλέψεται to κατασκευάσει and μου to σου) turns up in Mark’s Gospel and there it does not appear in the same context as it does in Q; for Mark’s Gospel contains no equivalent of John’s Encomium on John. Rather, this conflated biblical quote occurs in Mark’s *Prologue*. How can this be explained?

The first thing to notice about Mark’s Prologue is that it contains several overlaps with Q, suggesting that the evangelist made extensive use of Q at this point (→2.1.2., 2.2.1., 2.2.5.1-4.).⁴⁹⁶ This observation, along with the distinctiveness of the conflated quote, provide good rationale for thinking the evangelist derived this quote from Q. He may have simply lifted the conflated quote from its original context at Q 7:27 and joined it together for the first time with Isa 40:3 in his prologue. But while the first point here may be granted, it is unlikely that Mark was the first to join Exod 23:20a, Mal 3:1a, and Isa 40:3. I suggested above that Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a had already been brought together before the composition of Q, possibly within Judaism prior to Jesus or his movement, by means of the exegetical principle known as *gezera šawa* (→Excursus B). This same principle was doubtless what allowed these two texts to be brought together with Isa 40:3 as well. Note the verbal correspondence between all the three biblical texts:

⁴⁹⁶ Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 28, 31.

Exod 23:20

לפניך לשמרך בדבר ולהביאך אל־שלח מלאך אנכי הנה המקום אשר הכנת קאי ידוֹ אֶפְסוֹסְטֶלְלוּ τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ
προσώπου σου ἵνα φυλάξῃ σε ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ὅπως
εἰσαγάγῃ σε εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ἠτοίμασά σοι

Mal 3:1

הנני שלח מלאכי **a** ידוֹ אֶפְסוֹסְטֶלְלוּ τὸν ἄγγελόν μου
וּפְנֵה־דַרְבַּר לִפְנֵי **b** καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδὸν πρὸ προσώπου μου
וּפְתָאֵם יבוא אל־היכלו הַגִּבּוֹנִים **c** καὶ ἐξαίφνης ἦξει εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἑαυτοῦ κύριος ὄν
ὕμεῖς ζητεῖτε
וּמֵלֶאךְ הַבְּרִית **d** καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς διαθήκης ὄν ὕμεῖς θέλετε
הַנְהַבֵּא **e** ידוֹ ἔρχεται λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ

Isa 40:3

קול קורא במדבר פִּנּוּ דַבַּר נְהַגֵּה יִשְׂרוּ בערבה מסלה φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν
לאלהינו κυρίου εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν

The following links are especially noteworthy:

- The word for “way” (דַּרְבַּר/ὁδός) occurs in all three texts. This is not inconsequential. The term or idea appears to have had important theological significance for at least two religious communities in the first century. For the Qumran sectarians דַּרְבַּר was used with reference to their own religious group or its teachings (1QS 8:10, 13-14; cf. also 9:19-21). For Jesus’ early followers this same term’s Greek equivalent was used as a virtual name for their group.⁴⁹⁷
- “Behold I am sending my/your messenger before you/me” occurs in both Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a.
- דַּרְבַּר + the verb פָּנָה occurs in both Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3. (NB: the verbs here do not agree in the Septuagint: ἐπιβλέψεται vs. ἑτοιμάσατε.)
- In Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3, preparation is to be made in view of the coming “Lord.” Although the Hebrew words differ (יהוה ≠ האדון) they agree in the Septuagint (κύριος). Also, the *qere*⁴⁹⁸ reading for יהוה in Isa 40:3 would have been יְהוָה. Thus, at least when the two texts were read the term ^a*donāy* in Isa 40:3 would have allowed for a verbal connection with *hā-’ādōn* in Mal 3:1c.

⁴⁹⁷ Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; cf. also 13:10; 16:17; 18:25-26.

⁴⁹⁸ I.e. what was read as opposed to what was written.

The verbal and conceptual links between these three texts are striking. If Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a had been brought together by means of the *gezera šawa* principle even before the composition of Q or Mark's Gospel, it is *prima facie* likely that Isa 40:3 had been brought together in with these two texts at that time as well. And since Mark appears to have been using Q in his own prologue, this is all the more reason to suspect that he quarried *all three* of these texts from Q (rather than from Q and his own exegetically savvy mind).

What is most difficult to determine is not why the Exod-Mal conflation and Isa 40:3 were brought together in Mark's Prologue but why Isa 40:3 alone appears in Matthew and Luke's prologues while the Exod-Mal conflate appears in these two evangelists' respective versions of Jesus' Encomium on John (Matt 11:7-11||Luke 7:24-28). The use of Isa 40:3 in the prologues of Mark (1:3), Matthew (3:3), Luke (3:4-6), and even John (1:23) is quite impressive and has led many to think that Q had cited the biblical text in its own prologue and that Mark simply derived it from there.⁴⁹⁹ But one would then have to posit that in Q the quote from Isa 40:3 had, for some reason, been dissociated from the Exod-Mal conflate and that Mark, writing at a later period, brought them back together again. This hypothesis seems rather complicated. Dunderberg suggests that Mark was using a non-Q source for his biblical quotes at Mark 1:2-3 and that this source was also used by Matthew and Luke.⁵⁰⁰ It seems unnecessary, however, to multiply sources here when another hypothesis can adequately explain the data. I would propose that all three texts had originally been cited together in Q, as a string of quotes in Jesus' Encomium on John. For whatever reason, Mark omitted this pericope from his Gospel. This allowed him to dislodge all the quotes from their original location in Q and to use them at the beginning of his own Gospel where he introduces John. Matthew and Luke, by contrast, chose to include in their Gospels Jesus' Encomium on John and for this reason could not follow

⁴⁹⁹ So Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 1.160 n. 98; Allison and Davies, *Matthew*, 1.294; Lambrecht, "Baptist," 364; Catchpole, "Beginning," 214, 218; Gnllka, *Markus*, 1.40-41; Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 80-81.

⁵⁰⁰ Dunderberg, "Beginning," 510-11.

Mark’s lead in every way. They both followed him in quoting Isa 40:3 in their own prologues, probably because this text—with its mention of “a voice” and “the wilderness”—seemed like a compelling way to introduce the Baptist preacher. Yet in order to avoid repetition they did not also follow him in quoting the Exod-Mal conflate text here. Rather, they kept it at its original location in Q—within Jesus’ Encomium on John—but omitted the quote from Isa 40:3 in that pericope. Thus, I conjecture that at Q 7:27 the string of biblical quotes originally ran as follows:

Q 7:27a οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὗ γέγραπται· **b** ἰδοὺ [[ἐγὼ]] ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου (Exod 23:20a), **c** ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου (Mal 3:1a)· φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ (Isa 40:3).

On this reconstruction, Mark would have simply lifted all the biblical material from its original location in Q and used it to construct his prologue.

5.6. Commentary

In my discussion about the redaction history of this unit I have already had to exegete most of the material. But it will be helpful here to recap a bit of what was said.

Jacobson, as I mentioned, infers from Q’s placement of the Exod-Mal quote on the lips of Jesus *during* his own ministry (rather than in its prologue, where it appears in Mark’s Gospel) that Q regarded John as a forerunner to God rather than to Jesus. I explained why this reasoning is not cogent. But Jacobson also argues that John’s role as forerunner to God in Q can be deduced from its very use of Isa 40:3: φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου. For Jacobson, κύριος here must have referred not to the Messiah but to God (N.B. in the Hebrew the term is יהוה).

I cannot respond to this argument in any detail here. Suffice it to say that Mark’s Gospel is able to cite Isa 40:3 and to understand κύριος in this text as a reference to Jesus

(Mark 1:2-11). This is not because the evangelist identified Jesus as God/Yahweh.

Admittedly, Mark is not Q. But it would not be unreasonable that Q's understanding of this biblical text was similar. The κύριος title was, after all, applied to Jesus from a very early time (cf. Phil 2:9-11; 1 Cor 16:22; Mark 12:35-37). Q itself uses the title of Jesus in 6:46 and 12:42-46. Identifying Jesus as κύριος allowed Jesus' early followers to apply a number of biblical texts to him (e.g. Joel 2:32 [MT/LXX 3:5]; Ps 110:1).

The questions Jesus asks about John in 7:24-25 are probably not meant to have any deep symbolic meaning in themselves (e.g. that John was nothing like a reed shaken by the wind because he was strong willed and unbendable). They do, however, help to provide us with some useful nuggets about how John was understood in Q. For example, we can see here that John's ministry in "the wilderness" (ἡ ἔρημος) was not thought to have taken place in a waterless desert. Lexically, the term could also refer to an uninhabited area (e.g. Mark 6:31-32). Reeds grew near the Jordan River and this fact further coheres with John's *baptism* ministry.⁵⁰¹ Again, the contrast of John with kings dressed in soft and luxurious clothing suggests that John had a distinctive dress, probably that of an ascetic (cf. Mark 1:6; Q 7:33). But while these questions may be of some use to us historically they only really speak to John's important role in redemptive history. The people did not go out to see a reed blowing in the wind or to see a finely dressed aristocrat. They went out to see a prophet. Jesus acknowledges that John was a prophet. But not even this term suffices. John was "more than a prophet," a term which, as was explained, presupposes John's role as forerunner to the Messiah.

Earlier I concluded, with some hesitation, that v. 28 was originally an independent saying. Here I am concerned with what it would have meant in Q, that is, attached to the unit in vv. 24-27. This is at least how it came down to Matthew and Luke and therefore needs to be reckoned with as such. I have opted to understand ὁ μικρότερος as a self-

⁵⁰¹ That ἔρημος could be used of area near the Jordan is demonstrated by Josephus' use of the synonym ἐρημία at *War* 3.515. In this case, however, the synonym does suggest an arid, desert-like place. As the Jordan extends into the Dead Sea the surrounding area can indeed be described as a desert.

reference and ἔστιν as a futuristic present. If those decisions are right the saying would have meant that while John is the greatest man to have ever lived, his greatness will be surpassed by Jesus' in the kingdom of God (taken as a future reality). Following on the heels of v. 27 the saying in v. 28 would have effectively reiterated the main thrust of vv. 24-27: John had been great, but his greatness lay in his association with Jesus who is/will be far greater.

James A. T. Robinson's interpretation of Q 7:27 is highly idiosyncratic but worth mentioning if only because it brings together so many hermeneutical blunders. He thinks Jesus was putting a new twist on John's prophecy about "the Coming One" in Q 3:16. John was not expecting the Messiah but Elijah. Jesus' statement in 7:27 therefore turns John's expectations upside down:

'This (οὗτος) is the one of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee"' (Matt. xi. 10 = Luke vii. 27). In other words, *John* is the messenger of Malachi, the coming mighty one. And, as if this were not enough, it is at once followed, in Matthew, by another statement even more explicit: 'And if you are prepared to accept it, he is himself (αὐτός ἐστιν) Elijah, the one who is to come' (Matt. xi. 14). ... 'Are you the coming one?', asks John of Jesus. 'He is *himself* the coming one', says Jesus of John; 'all that this man said of another is true—but of himself!'⁵⁰²

Robinson's interpretation here can be challenged on several counts. First, from the standpoint of syntax, the phrase αὐτός ἐστιν Ἐλίας in Matt 11:14 is probably not emphatic ("He is *himself* Elijah"). The statement is more naturally taken to mean, "He is Elijah." Second, it is methodologically precarious to interpret a text in Q by appealing to another text unique to Matthew's Gospel, indeed, one that is almost certainly MattR.⁵⁰³ Furthermore, Robinson's interpretation of this Matthean text is itself highly implausible.

⁵⁰² Robinson, "Elijah," 267.

⁵⁰³ The quote from Mal 3:1a at Q 7:27 appears to have prompted Matthew to interject the idea about John's identity as Elijah, which the evangelist himself derived from Mark's Gospel (9:11-13||Matt 17:10-13).

True, Jesus has just identified John as the “messenger”/Elijah figure of Mal 3:1a and 4:5, but this does not mean he is also identifying John as “the Coming One.” If Jesus were identifying John as “the Coming One”—and thus flipping John’s whole message on its head—would he have chosen to convey this in such a grammatically ambiguous way? Matthew himself did not even understand him in that way; for he elsewhere portrays Jesus as “the Coming One” (Matt 3:11-17; 11:2-5; 21:9; 23:39).⁵⁰⁴ Thus, the phrase ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι in Matt 11:14 is best seen as an incidental use of a mundane Greek expression, not a deliberate invocation of the title/phrase ὁ ἐρχόμενος used in John’s earlier preaching. Finally, it seems problematic to conclude, as Robinson does, that Jesus thought John had misunderstood his own prophecy. Or, at the very least, it would be highly ironic: the man whom Jesus was now designating as Elijah, his own prophetic herald, had gotten things completely backwards—and this while speaking in his prophetic capacity!

The historical John was undoubtedly a great man in the social world in which Jesus lived and operated. In v. 28 Jesus declares John the greatest man ever to have ever lived. But the saying was not framed simply to praise John. John’s greatness is mentioned only in order to emphasize Jesus’ greatness in the kingdom of God. It would not be unreasonable to think that the reason Jesus’ greatness is expected to exceed even John’s in the kingdom is because Jesus saw himself (or was at least seen by the Q redactor) as the designated King. This inference would, at least, be consonant with Q’s use of such titles as “Son of man” (→Appendix E.4) and “Son [of God]” (→3.5.3.), and its application of Psalm 2 in Jesus’ Baptism by John (→3.5.2.4.). Indeed, Jesus’ royal prerogative is implied in the ending of Q where he says that he will appoint his disciples to “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (22:30). Although the wording is different in both Matthew’s and Luke’s versions of this saying, Jesus is clearly envisaged as a King, presumably the supreme authority from which the twelve ruling disciples will derive their

⁵⁰⁴ Novakovic, *Healer*, 153.

own.⁵⁰⁵ It would miss the point completely if we were to infer that Jesus' royal authority will be no different than his disciples. He will appoint for them positions of authority. He will therefore be their superior.

⁵⁰⁵ Matt 19:28: ὅταν καθίσῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ.
Luke 22:28: καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου βασιλείαν.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Q's Prologue (3:2-3+7-9+16b-17)

I argued that John is portrayed in Q's Prologue as Jesus' prophetic forerunner. This comes through, first of all, in Q's arrangement of the material, since it locates material dealing with John's baptism ministry and his prophecy about "the Coming One" at the very beginning of the composition. Literarily, the arrangement allows for John to be seen as preceding and anticipating Jesus' arrival. In 3:7b-9 John preaches a message of repentance, thereby recalling the person of Elijah. His use of the phrase/title *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* in 3:16 introduces a leitmotif in Q. As 13:35b indicates, the title/phrase was derived from Ps 118:26. The terminology at 3:16 should therefore be seen as "messianic" and as anticipating the coming of Jesus. Although John's preaching in 3:16b-17 is imbued with several metaphors that are difficult to interpret, these can all be understood as having their fulfilment in the person of Jesus. In other early writings connected with the Jesus movement Jesus' inaugurates the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit at his ascension. Q most likely presupposes this idea when it portrays John as announcing that "the Coming One" will baptize in the Holy Spirit. The baptism in fire is something altogether different. It is punitive and will not be fulfilled until Jesus' second coming when he returns as the Son of man. The metaphors in v. 17, as in v. 16, are both redemptive and punitive. Jesus can be understood to fulfil them at both his first and second coming. He begins, during his "earthly ministry," to gather the "wheat" (the elect) into his "granary" (the kingdom of God) through his healing and preaching ministry. At his second coming he will fulfil the other metaphor about the burning of the chaff. This metaphor is concerned with the same event as the fiery baptism in v. 16e, namely, the destruction of the wicked, which will take place at the eschaton.

I have found no evidence of Baptist source material in Q's Prologue. It is true that 3:7b-9 contains nothing that is clearly distinctive of the early Jesus movement; but it is not unambiguously Baptist either. The material may, however, adumbrate the Gentile mission of the early Jesus movement in its reference to "stones" being raised up "as children to Abraham" in the place of Jews. Furthermore, unless one can demonstrate that Q used Baptist material elsewhere there is no good reason to posit that it used such a small excerpt here.

Verse 16cd is often seen as an intrusion into a more primitive saying (i.e. v. 16b+e). But this is difficult to maintain because the saying requires ὁ ἐρχόμενος in 16ca as its subject and with that term the saying coheres literarily with an important theme in Q: Jesus-the Coming One/Messiah. The subordination of John in 3:16cd cannot be taken as evidence that one of Jesus' early followers had tampered with earlier Baptist material in 3:16b+e. 16cd actually coheres with 16b+e insofar as the latter text contrasts John's humble baptism in water and the coming figure's baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire.

Since no Baptist or pre-Q sources could be detected in Q's Prologue and since the section links up thematically and narratively with other sections or sayings in Q it is best to regard the Prologue as the work of a Jesus follower. Certainly nothing can be discerned here about the beliefs of a rival Baptist sect. It is often supposed that the historical John had anticipated the arrival of God. But none of the material in Q 3 necessarily implies that John was anticipating the advent of God. Verses 7-9 mention nothing about a coming *figure* (whether God or anyone else). Verses 16b-17 can only be taken as referring to God, if one removes 16cd where it is so clearly implied that the figure is a human being. Yet even without 16cd the saying would not have actually suggested that John was expecting the advent of God, given that 16b+e contains no specific name, title, or phrase to indicate who exactly John was anticipating. And even if one were to retain ὁ ἐρχόμενος from 16ca this would do little to suggest that John was anticipating God. Removed from its present Q context as well as the other material in 16cd (i.e. all the material besides ὁ ἐρχόμενος) the

saying would then have just been ambiguous. True, it would then be “coherent with the view that John looks for the coming of God,” as Catchpole observes. But it would have been no less coherent with the view that John looks for the coming of Elijah or the Messiah.

6.2. Jesus’ Baptism by John (3:22-23)

Although it is a disputed whether Q contained Jesus’ Baptism by John, the arguments for its inclusion seem sufficiently compelling. This story relates to the messianic forerunner concept in several ways. First, it effectively identifies Jesus as “the Coming One” whom the Baptist had just anticipated in his preaching. Second, it casts Jesus as the royal Messiah by narrating his baptism with biblical echoes from Isa 42:1; 61:1; Ps 2:7; and Gen 1:2. The significance of John’s baptism is much disputed; but I have suggested that it too can be best understood in view of the messianic forerunner concept. John was engaged in this ministry of baptism, first, to prepare Israel for the coming Messiah. Repentance was demanded if one were to participate in John’s baptism and repentance is precisely what needed to occur prior to the Messiah’s advent. John may have also baptized in order to reveal the Messiah to Israel. Jesus’ baptism is characterized in early writings connected with the Jesus movement as a kind of anointing ceremony. Even in Q the idea is likely presupposed since Jesus’ baptism is told using intertexts from Isa 61:1 and since the event occurs at the outset of his ministry. If baptism was administered, among Jesus’ early followers, through the pouring of water this may have recalled the pouring of oil on the head of newly anointed kings.

I have found no evidence that Jesus’ Baptism by John ever existed apart from Q’s Prologue or the Temptation that immediately follows it. The three pericopes seem inextricably linked. They are therefore best seen as constituting a unified composition made by someone involved in the early Jesus movement.

6.3. John's Question and Jesus' Reply (7:18-20+22-23)

The messianic forerunner concept surfaces again in this unit. Here Jesus implicitly identifies himself as ὁ ἐρχόμενος, which I have understood to be a messianic title/phrase derived from Ps 118:26 (as at Q 13:35). Indeed, his response in 7:22 is best seen as messianic in thrust since it frames his ministry in terms of several texts from Isaiah which were likely associated with the Messiah.

The material used here is unlikely to have been composed by a Q redactor. It was plausibly based on a real historical event. It is also somewhat difficult to explain in light of John's earlier prophecy about the Coming One in 3:16b-17, which is better seen as a redactional creation. The only piece of evidence that could point to this unit as being redactional rather than traditional is its use of the title/phrase ὁ ἐρχόμενος. I have proposed that while the bulk of this unit is traditional this title/phrase and v. 23 are not. They were added by the Q redactor in order to link the unit back to John's earlier preaching about the Coming One in 3:16 and to Jesus' saying in 13:35 (which also influenced the redactor when he composed 3:16), as well as other traditional sayings in Q that use the verb ἔρχεται/ἦλθον. Probably in the pre-Q form of this unit John had asked Jesus something different: "Are you *the Messiah*." This would explain why Jesus responded as he did, by evoking a pastiche of what appear to have been regarded as messianic texts. It would also explain any lack of connection between this unit and John's earlier preaching (notwithstanding my attempt at making sense of the passage within the broader composition of Q).

I have reconstructed the pre-Q version of John's Question and Jesus' Reply as follows:

Q 7:18 καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν Ἰωάννη [ὄντι ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ] οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἰησοῦς. καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τινὰς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ὁ Ἰωάννης ἔπεμψεν αὐτῷ λέγων· **19** σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν; **20** παραγενόμενοι δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ ἄνδρες εἶπαν· Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστὴς ἀπέστειλεν ἡμᾶς πρὸς σὲ λέγων· σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός ἢ ἄλλον προσδοκῶμεν;

22a καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· **b** πορευθέντες ἀπαγγείλατε Ἰωάννη ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ βλέπετε· **c** τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν, νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται· **23** καὶ μακάριός ἐστιν ὃς ἐὰν μὴ σκανδαλισθῆ ἐν ἐμοί.

Q 7:18 And his disciples declared to John [while he was in prison] the works of Jesus. And having called some of his disciples, John sent to him, saying, **19** “Are you the Messiah or shall we look for another?” **20** And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the Messiah, or shall we look for another?’” **22a** And having answered, he said to them, **b** “Go and report to John what things you hear and see: **c** the blind regain their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor are evangelised.”

6.4. Jesus’ Encomium on John (Q 7:24-28)

The messianic forerunner concept comes through here in Jesus’ characterization of John as “more than a prophet,” which I have taken to mean “a prophet who acted as the Messiah’s forerunner.” Jesus identifies John as the Elijah figure of Mal 3:1a. In carrying out his Elijah role John prepared the way for Jesus. This important redemptive task would be trivialized if Jesus himself had simply been regarded by the Q redactor as a prophet. By defining John’s role in this way, then, Jesus is also implying something about himself, namely, that he is the Messiah.

With Dunderberg and Tuckett I have argued that 7:27 coheres quite well with v. 26b and provides a much needed conclusion to the unit. Verse 28 does not link up with v. 26b as some have argued and hence did not originally follow it immediately. Also, there are good reasons for thinking that v. 28 once circulated independently.

I have reconstructed the pre-Q version of 7:24-27 thus:

Q 7:24 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἤρξατο λέγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωάννου· τί ἐξήλθατε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον θεάσασθαι; κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον; **25** ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; ἄνθρωπον ἐν μαλακοῖς ἡμφιεσμένον; ἰδοὺ οὐ τὰ μαλακὰ φοροῦντες ἐν τοῖς οἴκοις τῶν βασιλέων εἰσὶν. **26a** ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; προφήτην; **b** ναὶ λέγω ὑμῖν, καὶ περισσότερον προφήτου. **27a** οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὗ γέγραπται· **b** ἰδοὺ [[ἐγὼ]] ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, **c** ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου. **d** φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ.

Q 7:24 And Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? **25** What then did you go out to see? A person clothed in soft clothing? Behold, those wearing soft clothing are in kings’ houses. **26a** What then did you go out to see? **b** A prophet? Yes, I tell you: more than a prophet! **27a** This is he of whom it has been written: **b** Behold, I am sending my messenger before your face, **c** who will prepare your way before you. **d** A voice crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

Nothing in this pre-Q source suggests that it is of Baptist provenance. Nor does it seem to have been written up as a polemic against rival Baptist sectarians. John’s prophecies are affirmed, not rejected or re-defined. The unit is the work of one of Jesus’ early followers.

Although I have discussed the saying at Q 7:28 under the same heading as 7:24-27 it really ought to have had its own heading since it most likely circulated independently and deserves to be interpreted separately. It is an original unity which stood in exactly the way it now does in Q:

Q 7:28a Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν· οὐκ ἐγγίγερται ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν μείζων Ἰωάννου· **b** ὁ δὲ μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ μείζων αὐτοῦ ἐστίν.

Q 7:28a Amen, I say to you: among those born of women none is greater than John; **b** yet the lesser one, in the kingdom of God, is [going to be] greater than he.

I have argued that the messianic forerunner concept is assumed (rather than explicitly stated) in this saying. John’s greatness is not inherently his own. It derives from the fact that he acted as the forerunner of Jesus (= ὁ μικρότερος).

6.5. Implications for the synoptic problem

Aside from its obvious bearing on the origins of the messianic forerunner concept, this thesis also has implications for how the Q hypothesis is best formulated. I have taken Fleddermann’s arguments for Mark’s dependence on Q as a working hypothesis and have found it to be tremendously explanatory. It has helped to reconstruct several Q texts in ways that cohere with Q’s vocabulary and style, theology, and narrative plot. It has also

helped to fill in some missing pieces in the Matthean and Lukan versions. For example, it has helped to construct a plausible beginning to Q. Other reconstructions have proposed that Q began with John's preaching in 3:7-9. But this is highly abrupt and does not explain anything to the reader about what exactly John was doing. I have also suggested some reasons as to why Mark's version differs from Q. For example, with respect to the saying about the Coming One in Q 3:16 Mark appears to have taken a rather complex saying and spliced it in two. This made the saying more prosaic. He also omitted all the fire references in order to avoid the implication that John's prophecies would be fulfilled immediately.

6.6. What, then, about Faierstein?

As I noted in the Introduction, Morris Faierstein claimed that the earliest texts that mention the messianic forerunner concept are the Gospel of Mark and Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*. In the present thesis I have argued that the concept can also be found in Q, which pre-dates Mark's Gospel. Q was not a Jewish work, of course, and Faierstein was really just arguing that the messianic forerunner concept originated within the Jesus movement. So even if I am correct what exactly has this proven *with respect to Faierstein's article*? Perhaps not a lot. It has simply pushed the concept back a bit further to one of our earliest records of the Jesus movement. Indeed, I have argued that John's Question and Jesus' Reply (Q 7:18-20+22) and Jesus' Encomium on John (Q 7:24-27), two units which clearly presume the messianic forerunner concept, originally circulated independently and therefore pre-dated even Q.

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Appendixes for Messianic Forerunner Thesis

Appendix A: antecedents/background to the historical John's baptism and its meaning

Scholars have often pondered the origins of John's baptism (→1.1.2.4.). Two theories seem to have gained the widest acceptance. One sees it as an extension of the older Levitical purity illustrations, the other as a kind of re-envisioning of Jewish proselyte baptism. Both of these views are problematic in some ways but instructive in others.

1. Levitical purity laws

Archaeological and documentary evidence indicate that in the first century C.E. immersion pools (*miqva'ot*) were quite commonplace.¹ Many Jews were apparently immersing themselves in these pools before eating, after visiting the market, after coming into contact with a Gentile, etc. Although these ablutions had not been specifically prescribed in the law of Moses they were likely patterned on and extrapolated from the Levitical purity laws.² Given the popularity of these ablutions and their formal similarity with John's baptism, many scholars have concluded that the latter was simply a variation on the former (→1.1.2.4.). Indeed, Josephus declares in no

¹ See, e.g., Reich, "Miqveh Debate," 52-53; idem, "Ritual Baths," 50-55; Magness, *Archaeology*, 134-162.

² Joan Taylor (*Immerser*, 59) conveniently lists the types of situations that called for immersions in the Mosaic law: Having a contagious skin disease (Lev 14:8-9); having a genital discharge (Lev 15:13); touching a corpse (Lev 22:4-6; Num 31:23-24); having a seminal emission (Lev 15:16; Deut 23:11); eating an animal that has not died a natural death or had been savaged (Lev 17:15); touching a man or woman with a bodily discharge or coming into contact with anything closely associated with them (Lev 15). It is also possible that immersions were required for coming in contact with or eating an unclean animal (Lev 11:24-28, 31, 39; cf. v. 40).

uncertain terms that John's baptism had been "for a purification of the body" (ἐφ' ἀγνείᾳ τοῦ σώματος) (*Ant.* 18.117).

Several counterpoints can be offered to this view. First of all, Josephus' description is not corroborated by the Gospel accounts which characterise John's baptism as a "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Q 3:3; Mark 1:4). His baptism could not have been "for a purification of the body" and at the same time "for the remission of sins" because "[t]here is nothing morally sinful about being impure."³ Furthermore, Josephus "doth protest too much, methinks." His description reads almost like a response to the "Christian" view that baptism was "for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38; cf. also 22:16; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 3:21). Compare Josephus' description of John's preaching with Q's with Mark's:

Josephus, *Ant.* 18.117

[John taught that] baptism would certainly appear acceptable to him [i.e. God] if they were using [it] not in supplication for certain sins (μη ἐπί τινων ἀμαρτάδων παραιτήσει χρωμένων) but for purification of the body, because the soul had

Mark 1:4 (cf. also Q 3:2-3)

John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (κηρύσσω βάντισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν).

³ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 58. Taylor (88-100) tries to address this problem by dissociating John's *message* of repentance from his baptism. But while Josephus does not connect John's baptism and preaching, in Q and Mark his baptism seems inextricably tied to his preaching about repentance. This is evident not only in the phrase βάντισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν (which Taylor tries to reinterpret by hypothesising about an Aramaic original of the saying) but in the fact that John's baptism ritual included a confession of sins (Mark 1:5). Adela Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 139) tries to link purity ablutions in the Levitical law with sin. But neither of the examples she cites from the Hebrew Bible (sexual intercourse and cleansing from leprosy) support her point. She adds that the LXX translates ἰσθῆ (reparation offering) as πλεμμέλεια ("trespass-offering"). There was undoubtedly a symbolic connection made between ritual impurity and sinfulness. But it seems altogether likely that the two things were distinguished from an early time as the issue would have arisen quite often in the life of any Jew who was trying to adhere to the moral and ritual purity laws of the Mosaic code. It is difficult to imagine, for example, that a pious Jew would have felt the need to confess his sin every time he had sex with his wife.

already been cleansed before by righteousness.

I would suggest that Josephus here is trying to correct what he took to be a misunderstanding of John's baptism.⁴ But his own explanation is not necessarily more historical.

Immersion performed for the sake of ritual purity were necessarily repeated whenever a person contracted a new uncleanness. Yet there is no evidence, even in Josephus' account, that John's baptism was repeatable. I say this not simply because we are never told that it was repeatable. Two pieces of positive evidence suggest that this was the case as well: (i) John's baptisms were not self-administered but were performed by John;⁵ (ii) John conducted his ministry in "the wilderness" (i.e. a place that was physically removed from any major population centres). These two points make it unlikely that John's baptism was repeatable. For if it were, we would have to imagine individuals making treks back out to the wilderness area near the Jordan (or wherever John happened to be) every time they contracted some new impurity. Few would have had the time or devotion to follow such an arduous protocol.

⁴ Joan Taylor (*Immerser*, 88) agrees that Josephus is trying to correct a misunderstanding but she sees him as pitting John's baptism against immersions that were being performed "as part of a process of pleading forgiveness" (cf. *T. Levi* 2.3 [ms e]; *Sib. Or.* 4.162-70; *Apoc. Mos.* 29.6-13). In other words, she thinks Josephus was correcting a misguided *Jewish* view that immersions could be used in some way to effect inner/moral change. The texts she cites, however, are not apposite because Josephus' argument seems to be that John's baptism would only be efficacious if performed after inner/moral change had taken place. "Christian" baptism is a more likely target of Josephus' rhetoric because it was often (mis)understood to effect forgiveness *ex opere operato*, that is, independently of human action (cf. Acts 22:16; *Barn.* 11.11; Justin, *Dial.* 14; Theophilus, *Autol.* 2.16).

⁵ Cf. his name, "the Baptist" (ὁ βαπτίζων) (Mark 1:4; 6:14, 24) as well as the statements that the crowd "was baptised by him" (ἐβαπτίζοντο ὑπ' αὐτοῦ) and that Jesus was "baptized ... by John" (ἐβαπτίσθη ... ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου) (Mark 1:9). Joan Taylor (*Immerser*, 51-52) suggests alternative translations of ἐβαπτίσθη ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου (e.g. "he underwent baptism by/under/through John's authority") and cites a variant at Luke 3:7 (D it: "baptised in his presence") as support for her idea that John did not physically touch the persons he was baptising. But the passive verb + ὑπὸ gen. is surely best taken to mean "X was acted upon by Y." The variant at Luke 3:7 is not incompatible with the notion that John made physical contact with the baptisands. John was certainly present, in any case, during the baptisms and this is my main point here.

Another reason to doubt that John's baptism was concerned with ritual purity is its distinctive character. This is something that is suggested both by John's notoriety and by his title "the Baptist/Baptiser," which is used in both the NT Gospel traditions and Josephus. Given the fact that in the first century C.E. a great number of lustrations were being performed for the sake of ritual purity it is difficult to see how John could have distinguished himself if this were all he had offered people.⁶ Joan Taylor suggests that John's baptism was regarded as distinctive because John taught that its ritual efficacy was contingent on a prior moral reform.⁷ But this is unpersuasive because other writings from around the turn of the era adopt identical (or at least very similar) perspectives with regard to ritual lustrations.⁸ Taylor also points to a tradition of naked baptisms in the Jesus movement as evidence of an earlier concern for ritual purity.⁹ But this tradition, which also involved the putting on of a white garment after the person emerged from the water, was more likely introduced for its symbolic value. In Paul's letters, death is described as a putting off of the old body/life and a putting on of a new (1 Cor 15:53-54; 2 Cor 5:1-5). And Paul understands baptism as a symbol of the believer's death to the flesh and resurrection to new life in Christ (Rom 6:1-14). Cyril of Jerusalem explains the tradition of naked baptism in light of this Pauline teaching.¹⁰

⁶ The distinctiveness of John's baptism may be presumed both by his apparent notoriety and by his sobriquet "the Baptist/Baptiser," which occurs in both the NT Gospels and Josephus.

⁷ Taylor, *Immerser*, 86, 92, 94, 98, 99-100.

⁸ E.g. 1QS 3.4-9; 4:19-22; Matt 23:25-26; Philo, *Unchangeable* 7-9; *Spec. Laws* 1.191; cf. also *Sib. Or.* 4.162-170. Taylor herself (*Immerser*, 76-88) cites most of these texts as parallels for understanding John's baptism and seems to admit that in view of these texts John's baptism would "possibly not" have been recognised as distinctive (see esp. p. 86).

⁹ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 54. For the tradition, see *Didasc. Apost.* 16 (3:12); Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 20.2.

¹⁰ "Immediately, then, upon entering, you removed your tunics. This was a figure of 'the stripping off of the old man with his deeds'" (*Catech.* 20.2).

2. Proselyte baptism

John's baptism has also been seen as a re-envisioning of Jewish proselyte baptism.¹¹ In order for a Gentile to become part of the Jewish fold he was expected to undergo circumcision and an immersion in water; he also needed to offer a sacrifice in the temple. Scholars disagree, however, as to when exactly proselyte baptism came to be practiced.¹² In ancient Israel circumcision alone seems to have sufficed if someone wished to become a member of the Israelite society (cf. Exod 12:48; Jdt 14:10; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.257-58, 318-19). Immersion may have been added at some point because Gentiles came to be regarded as ceremonially unclean. That notion, at least, traces back at least to the first century C.E.¹³ The earliest undisputed reference to it is in *b. Yeb.* 46a-47b and *Ger.* 60b (2.5) (cf. also *Sifre Num.* 15:14), where a rabbinic dispute is recorded that might well date back to around the turn of the first century C.E.¹⁴ Other texts have also been cited as evidence that proselyte baptism was being practiced in the first century C.E. but these are difficult to date and/or interpret.¹⁵ There is a notable silence about the practice in works like Philo, Josephus, and the Pseudepigrapha.¹⁶

¹¹ Jeremias, *Infant Baptism*, 24-37; Pusey, "Proselyte Baptism," 141-145; Rowley, "Proselyte Baptism," 313-34; Gavin, *Jewish Antecedents*, 26-58; Torrence, "Proselyte Baptism," 150-154.

¹² Arguing for an early date of this tradition are Jeremias (*Infant Baptism*, 24-37) and Feldman (*Jew and Gentile*, 288-341). Arguing for a later date are Smith ("Proselyte Baptism," 13-32) and Webb (*Baptizer*, 122-130). For other treatments of the subject, see Schürer *et al.*, *History* 3.173-174; Zeitlin, "Baptism," 78-79; Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 18-31; Scobie, *Baptist*, 95-102; Cohen, "Proselyte Baptism," 278-92.

¹³ Cf. Acts 10:28; John 18:28; Josephus, *War* 2.150; *Ant.* 14.285; 18.93-94; *m. Ṭehar.* 7:6; *t. Yoma* 4:20; *t. Pes.* 7:13. But see *b. Pes.* 92a, where R. Yoḥanan (ca. 250-290) is said to have taught that prior to a proselyte's conversion he is not subject to purity laws. This text is often cited as evidence of differing views about Gentile uncleanness. But the text could also mean simply that since Gentiles are in a constant state of uncleanness they could not contract further uncleanness (cf. *m. Neg.* 3.1; *b. Naz.* 61b). So Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 66-67.

¹⁴ The discussion involves R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and R. Joshua ben Hananiah, two second generation tannaim.

¹⁵ Epictetus, *Diss.*, 2.9.19-21; *Sib. Or.* 4.162-170; *T. Levi* 14.6 (NB: the key words, καθαρίζοντες αὐτὰς καθαρισμῶ παρανόμῳ, are not found in some mss and this is apparently why they are not rendered in the *OTP* translation by Kee. See de Jonge, *Testaments*, 42.

¹⁶ See Webb, *Baptizer*, 127-128.

Let us assume, here, for the sake of the argument, that proselyte baptism had indeed been practiced in John's day. An obvious problem remains that John was not concerned with proselytes, that is, with Gentiles converting to Judaism. His implied audience in Q 3:7-9 are "sons of Abraham," that is, Jews. This is confirmed by Josephus who says that John preached τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, "to the Jews" (*Ant.* 18.117).

Perhaps this is not an insuperable problem. If John indeed patterned his own baptism in some way on Jewish proselyte baptism this could be taken to mean that for John any unbaptised Jew was a *de facto* Gentile.¹⁷ Such a view might seem a bit extreme. But John's harsh rhetoric in Q 3:7-9 could be viewed similarly, especially the phrase "generation of vipers" and his warning about not relying on physical ties to Abraham.¹⁸ One could also compare John here with the Qumran sectarians who appear to have regarded any Jew outside of their own community as a reprobate (cf. 1QS 5:11-13). From such a perspective, anyone entering the community would be seen as a virtual proselyte and the act would have doubtless required an immersion.¹⁹

¹⁷ So, e.g., Flemington, *Doctrine*, 14-15.

¹⁸ I myself argued above, however, that John's rhetoric here is directed at the Pharisees, not the Jews in general.

¹⁹ See Torrence, "Origins," 169-170; Webb, *Baptizer*, 159-162. Adela Yarbro Collins ("Christian Baptism," 31-32) disputes whether the Qumran sectarians had an initiatory immersion for new members. Webb, however, infers one on the basis of indirect evidence. The sectarians regarded non-members as ceremonially impure (e.g. 1QS 3:4-6). Thus, in order to join the community, one would have needed to go from being in a continual state of impurity to one of general purity. That change in a person's state would have presumably required an immersion since this is how all ritual purification was achieved at Qumran. That particular immersion may have resembled other ordinary immersions practiced by regular sectarian members, but the fact that it could effect such an important change in the person's condition—removing him from a state of uncleanness and non-membership and putting him into a state of cleanness and membership—implies that it was regarded as something quite unique and unrepeatable (unless, perhaps, the person withdrew from the sect and had to be readmitted).

3. Prophecies about an eschatological outpouring of God's Spirit

As was argued in 3.5.4., I think it most likely, at least in view of the limited information available to us, that the historical John took his inspiration for baptism from biblical prophecies about the eschatological renewal of Israel and the outpouring of God's Spirit, ideas that were expressed using water imagery (Isa 4:1-6; Ezek 36:25-27; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; Zech 12:10; 3:18; Zech 13:1; 14:8). If that is correct, his baptism can hardly be seen as a mere bodily purification. The above texts are not about that but about inner renewal. Its purpose, then, from John's standpoint, would have perhaps been three-fold: (1) to signify the need for spiritual renewal in Israel; (2) to identify (at least objectively) members of the renewed/restored Israel; (2) to anticipate, in symbolic form, the eschatological outpouring of God's Spirit.

This interpretation of John's baptism has three advantages. First, it coheres very well with John's preaching as it is recorded both in the NT Gospel traditions and in Josephus. Second, it coheres with the fact that John is often identified as or associated with the eschatological Elijah; for the latter was expected to "restore" Israel (cf. Sir 48:10) and this could be understood in moral/spiritual terms but probably not ceremonial ones. Third, it fits well with the historical links between John and Jesus as well as their respective movements. After all, if Jesus and his movement appropriated baptism from John we would expect at least some of John's original ideas—especially the most prominent ones—about the ritual to have been retained by Jesus and his followers. Given the historical link between John and Jesus as well as the shared practice of baptism by both John and Jesus' followers, it is *a priori* unlikely that John's baptism was something wholly different from so-called "Christian baptism."

The interpretation I am advocating here does not deny the possible historical antecedents to John's baptism in the Levitical purity laws or even proselyte baptism (which I do suspect was around in John's day). Those practices undoubtedly provided *some* of the background and inspiration for John's new ritual. But neither of these practices really gets to the heart of what John was doing in my opinion. If his baptism had been merely another application of the Levitical laws it would not have set John apart from the many other contemporaries who advocated ritual ablutions and would not explain why it was unrepeatable. If his baptism had been the re-envisioning of proselyte baptism this would not really explain the eschatological dimension to John's preaching.

4. An anointing for the Messiah

I also maintain that John's baptism functioned to anoint Jesus as the Messiah (→3.5.4. [#1]). But in this case the argument is based only on how John's baptism has been presented to us in Q and other early writings of the Jesus movement. Whether the historical John regarded his baptism in this way is more suspect since it serves an obvious christological purpose, but even this is not impossible, given the eschatological and messianic dimensions of John's preaching, at least as we have it preserved in Q and the NT Gospels and given the likelihood that even outside of the Jesus movement Elijah was expected to reveal the Messiah to Israel.

Appendix B: Alleged Baptist source material in Q generally examined

According to many commentators, the John of Q is often envisaged in ways that are different from and even incongruous with the ways that Jesus' early followers envisaged him. For example, he (supposedly) anticipates the coming of God rather than of Jesus (3:7-9, 16b+e). He has to ask whether Jesus is "the Coming One" (7:18-20), something that does not fit very well with the canonical Gospels, which portray Jesus as the Coming One and John as cognizant of Jesus' messianic status (Matt 3:13-15; Mark 11:27-33 *par.*; Luke 1:41-44; John 1:29-34; 3:25-36). Again, in Q 7:28a John is said to be the greatest man ever to have been born, which is precisely what Jesus' early followers believed about Jesus.

Appealing to the so-called "criterion of dissimilarity,"²⁰ many commentators cite these differences between Q's John and the one portrayed in the NT Gospels as evidence that at least some Q material has been drawn from a Baptist source.²¹ On this view, the redactor(s) of Q made use of this source but redacted it at various points in order to make it more amenable with their own views. By identifying redactional elements within this putative Baptist source material, modern critics think they can recover what this material originally said.

Although I am not so much concerned in this thesis with historical issues I am deeply concerned with identifying and analysing any early sources used by the redactors of Q. At several points in the main body of this thesis I consider supposed instances in which Q used Baptist source material. In every case I have found good reasons for doubting this possibility. I

²⁰ On the criterion, see Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 1.171-172; Sanders and Davies, *Synoptic Gospels*, 316-17.

²¹ E.g. Ernst, *Täufer*, 55; Webb, *Baptizer*, 267-69; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.32; and many other scholars interact with throughout this thesis.

would suggest here that the Baptist *source* hypothesis is poorly founded because it rests on the Baptist *sect* hypothesis, which is itself poorly founded.

1. Supposed evidence of an ongoing Baptist *sect*

Evidence of an ongoing Baptist *sect* can supposedly be found in:

(1) References made to “the disciples of John” in the Gospels (Q 7:19; Mark 2:18; Luke 11:1; John 3:25).

These are often thought to reflect ongoing debates between Jesus’ and John’s followers that took place in the decades *after* their respective leaders’ deaths. Goguel adopts this viewpoint, arguing that references in the Gospels to “the disciples of John” instead of “John and his disciples” imply that John himself was already dead.²²

(2) The stories of Apollos in Acts 18:24-28 and of certain “disciples” at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-7.

These stories are thought to demonstrate the continuance of John’s movement many years after his death.

(3) Various passages in the Fourth Gospel that are thought to contain anti-Baptist rhetoric.

This rhetoric is thought to betray ongoing tensions between Jesus’ and John’s disciples.

²² Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, 45.

(4) Passages in the Pseudo-Clementine literature that speak of “hemerobaptists” (“morning bathers”) and connect them back to the arch-heretic Simon Magus who was himself, we are told, a disciple of John the Baptist (*Hom.* 2.23-24; *Rec.* 1.54-60; 2.8). Members of this heresy, we are told, identified John as their Messiah.

Against this evidence the following points can be made:

(1) References to “the disciples of John” in the Gospels are all set within the *Sitze im Leben* of Jesus’ so-called earthly ministry.

One cannot simply assume that these references are in no way reminiscent of historical circumstances in Jesus’ ministry and therefore reflect only later *Sitze im Leben* in which Jesus’ *followers* were polemically engaged with an ongoing Baptist sect. As Hughes writes:

Certainly we know that an unspecified number of John’s disciples remained loyally on hand to entomb their master’s corpse (Mark vi 29; Matt. xiv 12). But the critical issue here is not if John’s followers remained committed loyally to Johannite views after his death, but for how long this commitment lasted.²³

John’s disciples undoubtedly continued as a group for a short time after John’s death. What is unclear is for how long. One could make the argument that with John’s death his movement quickly lost steam and began to evaporate. The high conversion rates within the early Jesus movement (cf. Acts 2) can be plausibly seen as a result of John’s disciples joining up with the Jesus movement.

²³ Hughes, “Forerunner of God”, 214.

(2) The stories in Acts 18 and 19 are much less supportive of the Baptist sect hypothesis than is often imagined.²⁴ In Acts 18 Priscilla and Aquila encounter Apollos at Ephesus as a lone preacher, not the member of a larger Baptist *movement*. The narrator describes him as someone who “spoke and taught accurately *the things concerning Jesus* (τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), though he knew only the baptism of John” (v. 25). This hardly sounds like someone involved in a *rival* Baptist movement.

The group in Acts 19, whom Paul encounters at Ephesus, is numbered at “about twelve.” They are described as “disciples” (v. 1). This could mean that they identified as *John’s* disciples but it could also mean that they were latent or *de facto Jesus followers* (perhaps because they had embraced John’s message in ways that were amenable to the beliefs of others in the Jesus movement).²⁵ Neither Apollos nor the “disciples” in Acts 19 are described as members of a larger, organised group; nor are they described as hostile to Jesus’ disciples or message.

(3) The passages in the Fourth Gospel are of even more dubious relevance in establishing the existence of an ongoing rival Baptist movement. Much of the supposed anti-Baptist polemic here does not need to be explained by positing the existence of such a movement. It is better explained as simply reflecting the evangelist’s high christology. The Fourth Evangelist seeks to exalt Jesus and portray John as his ideal witness. He is not interested in denigrating John or polemicizing against members of a later Baptist movement.²⁶

²⁴ For an excellent article on Acts 19:1-7 see Paroschi, “Acts 19:1-7,” 73-100.

²⁵ Commentators often note that μαθητής is frequently used in Acts as a term for Jesus’ followers (e.g. 6:1, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 26; 11:29; 13:52; 14:20, 21, 22, 28, etc.).

²⁶ See Wink, *Baptist*, 87-106. Wink does not deny the existence of an on-going Baptist sect. But he leaves such little

(4) The Pseudo-Clementine literature is too late and too tendentious to be of any historical value. It likely offers a purely fictional explanation for the origins of the “hemerobaptists.” There were undoubtedly Jewish groups in Samaria and elsewhere who immersed themselves each morning before prayer. Perhaps there were even some Christian groups who adopted a similar practice. Heresiologists of the early Church would have naturally associated the immersions of these groups with John the Baptist. Thus, they likely created legends about their supposed founder Simon Magus’ relationship with John in order to help explain their existence. The fact that these groups were associated with Samaria would have provided grounds for associating them with Simon Magus. Indeed, the Fourth Gospel tells us that John conducted part of his ministry in Samaria (John 3:23).

2. Supposed evidence of Baptist *source material*

Texts thought to contain Baptist *source material* include the following:

- Q 3:7-9;
- Q 3:16-17;
- Q 7:24-26+28a;
- Certain sections of Luke 1.

This evidence too is highly suspect:

evidence on which to base this hypothesis that one wonders why he did not abandon it altogether.

- For those hoping to unearth Baptist material, Q 3:7-9 is probably the least problematic of the texts listed here. The passage is brief, christologically innocuous, and able to stand on its own. But this evidence only shows that the verses *might have* been derived from a Baptist source. That should not be taken as a foregone conclusion, however. Other evidence suggests that these verses reflect the interests and ideas of the early Jesus movement (→2.2.3.). Their Baptist provenance should therefore be held in abeyance until it can be established that other material in Q is more definitely of Baptist provenance.
- Q 3:16b-17 is difficult to see as Baptist source material for reasons that have already been discussed at length (→2.2.6.-2.2.6.1.6). Many commentators regard 16cd as secondary. By removing this section they claim to have recovered an earlier Baptist saying. It is unlikely that 16cd can be assigned to a late redactional stage of Q since it is attested in multiple sources (Matt, Mark, Luke, John, Acts). It is also unlikely to be a pre-Q redaction since it appears to be integral to the saying, forming a crucial part of its chiastic structure and cohering thematically with the rest of the saying and with other parts of Q. Indeed, its reference to “the Coming One” introduces an important leitmotif in Q: Jesus-the-Coming-One. The phrase/title “the Coming One” was apparently derived from Ps 118:26 since that is clearly the intertext at Q 13:35 where Jesus uses the title/phrase with reference to himself (→Excursus A). Hence, its use at Q 3:16 is most easily attributed to a Q redactor who wanted, first, to have John anticipate Jesus coming to him for baptism in Q 3:22-23 and, second, to have Jesus use the key expression with reference to himself at Q 13:35. Nor is it possible to excise “the Coming One” as an interpolation added by a follower of Jesus and attribute all the rest of the saying to John or one of his followers since this element provides the saying with a much-needed subject for the verb and pronouns that follow. The entire

saying should therefore be regarded as stemming from someone in the Jesus movement. Q's Prologue (3:2-3, 7-9, 16b-17, 22-23), where this saying occurs, seems to have formed part of a larger composition that had been put together by a/the Q redactor. This composition also included, at least, 3:22-23 and 4:1-13.

- Q 7:24-26+28a is no less problematic for those hoping to find Baptist source material in Q. Contrary to what some commentators have claimed, v. 28a cannot be regarded as the original conclusion to vv. 24-26. Verse 27, which presents John as Jesus' prophetic forerunner, is the most likely conclusion of these verses since it explicates the enigmatic *περισσότερον προφήτου* in v. 26 (→5.3.). This makes it unlikely that the unit was derived from a Baptist source, at least if we are thinking here of a source produced by a *rival* group; for such a source would not have presented John as the prophetic forerunner of Jesus. Meanwhile, v. 28 (and not just 28a) probably circulated independently (→5.4.). But even if it was the original climactic ending to vv. 24-27, it was hardly derived from a rival Baptist source since it portrays John as having a lower status in the kingdom of God vis-à-vis Jesus (or Jesus' followers, depending on how one understands *ὁ μικρότερος*).
- A full treatment of alleged Baptist tradition in Luke 1 would require an extended discussion beyond what I can provide in this short appendix. I would simply refer the reader to Raymond Brown's masterful treatment of this subject. He has convincingly argued that the material in this chapter was either composed by Luke himself or—as in the case of the *Benedictus* and *Benedictus* hymns—derived from an early “Jewish-Christian” community.²⁷
- A more basic objection might be raised against the Baptist *source* hypothesis as well. For it is not clear why Jesus' early followers would have needed to utilise Baptist sources in

²⁷ Brown, *Birth*, 377-78, 381; see also 346-55 for a more general discussion about sources in Luke's *Magnificat* and *Benedictus* hymns.

order to gain information about John, particularly if those sources were out of keeping with their own christological views. At least some of Jesus' early followers—and perhaps a great number of them—were apparently former disciples of the Baptist, including a few of Jesus' own immediate disciples (cf. John 1:35-42; Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-7). Why, then, would early members of the Jesus movement have wanted to or needed to rely on rival Baptist sources when searching for information about John? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that Jesus' early followers would have either got their information about John from others in their own movement who knew John? Or, if that seems implausible, would they not, at least, have utilised sources that were so antithetical to their own christological views?

- Often those who argue for the presence of Baptist material in Q and the Gospels claim that this material has been used but altered by Jesus' followers so as to portray John as Jesus' inferior and prophetic herald. The purpose behind this alteration, we are told, was to convince Baptists to the Jesus movement. But this explanation seems implausible. Baptist members would have presumably known the truth about who their master was and what he taught; or, barring that, they would have surely been able to learn about these matters from their fellow Baptist members, whose views would have obviously differed. The supposedly tactic used by the Q redactor(s), then, could have scarcely been an effective one. It would have been like a group of Evangelical Christians trying to convert Mormons by publishing a book with excerpts from the *Book of Mormon* which had been deceptively altered in order to make Joseph Smith declare that Mormonism is a false religion. What Mormon would take such a book seriously? What Evangelical would adopt such a pointless tactic?

Appendix C: Additional notes on the establishing of various Q texts

The discussions here are meant to supplement those in the body of this thesis under the heading “Establishing the Q text.” I have relegated these discussions to an appendix because they did not seem obviously germane to the messianic forerunner concept. Nevertheless, since the reader may be unsure at certain points as to how I arrived at my reconstructions I have decided not to omit the discussions entirely.

1. Q’s Prologue (Q 3:2-3+7-9+16b-17)

Q 3:7-9

Aside from what I discussed in 2.2.2.2, the differences between Matthew and Luke in Q 3:7-9 are rather slight. Matthew’s singular καρπὸν in v. 8 is more likely original. It reflects Semitic style, whereas Luke’s plural term plausibly anticipates the three examples of ethical conduct in Luke 3:10-14. The phrase καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας also looks suspiciously Lukan since it matches ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα at Acts 26:20.²⁸

Δόξητε λέγειν in Matt 3:9 is stylistically awkward, so Luke’s ἄρξησθε λέγειν in Luke 3:8b is probably a redactional polishing.

²⁸ So Fleddermann, “Beginning”, 156.

Q 3:16b-17

Unlike 3:7-9, 3:16-17 has several fairly substantive issues that need to be resolved in order to establish the most primitive Q text. Most of these I have discussed in sections 2.2.2.-2.2.2.2. and 2.2.5.-2.2.5.4. The introductory note in Luke 3:16a is not paralleled in Matthew's Gospel. Luke had to add this because of the intervening material in Luke 3:10-15, especially the comment about the crowd's musings in v. 15, which demanded a change of subject prior to vv. 16b-17.

Matthew's εἰς μετάνοιαν is likely redactional since it fits with a Matthean redactional theme (cf. Matt 3:2; 4:17) and repeats a term already used in Q 3:8a. It also detracts from the parallelism that would otherwise exist between Q 3:16b and 16e. Luke, who is himself quite fond of repentance, would probably not have omitted the phrase if it had been in his source. And Mark's version does not have it either.

I cannot decide between Luke's infinitives διακαθάραι ... συναγαγεῖν and Matthew's καί + futures but the meaning would be unaffected whichever option one chooses.

Αὐτοῦ would have either modified τὸν σῖτον (Matt) or τὴν ἀποθήκην (Luke). Fleddermann argues that Matthew adjusted the pronoun in order to allegorise the wheat and make it conform to his parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30+36-43).²⁹ His argument seems as good as any.

2. John's Question and Jesus' Reply (Q 7:18-20+22-23)

Matthew and Luke agree in saying that it was after John had learned of Jesus' works that he posed his question to Jesus, so Q may be presumed to have said something about this as well.

²⁹ Fleddermann, *Q*, 220.

The exact wording here is extremely difficult to establish, however. Matthew's version is notably terse. It has likely been compressed. One of Matthew's tendencies, when he is working with material in Mark's Gospel, is to abbreviate passages, especially if they contain redundant or ostensibly extraneous elements.³⁰ The present unit would have provided Matthew with sufficient motivation to follow this redactional programme here if it had looked anything like Luke's version, which is clumsy, repetitive, and verbose. I have therefore opted to follow Luke's wording in most respects. Matthew and Luke agree that John's question had been prompted by John's having heard about Jesus' miraculous works and preaching but Matthew does not specify who gave John the information. In Luke's version John's disciples are the informants. Luke's version also differs with Matthew's in not expressly stating that John had been in prison at this time. This may be because in Luke's Gospel this had been previously noted (Luke 3:20) and the evangelist deemed it unnecessary to reiterate that detail. I have retained the Matthean note partly for this reason and partly because it fits the scene so well since it helps to explain why John was communicating with Jesus through a delegation.³¹ Meier adds that Matthew had more reason than Luke to retain Q's reference to John's imprisonment here because he, unlike Luke, had only made a passing reference to it in Matt 4:12 and in this case the Markan term παραδοθή was also a bit ambiguous since it could mean "handed over" or "betrayed" and since we are not told what became of John thereafter. Meier thinks as well that Matthew prefers the term φυλακή over δεσμωτήριον, the latter being a *hapax legommenon* in his Gospel.³² I find myself mostly convinced that Q contained some reference here to John's imprisonment but I have placed it in

³⁰ For instances of Matthean compression of Mark, see Matt 8:28-34; 9:15, 20-22; 14:34-36; 17:14-21, etc.).

³¹ Cf. Mark 2:18 where the third person verb could be taken to include "the disciples of John." If that is a correct way to read the syntax would this anecdote also assume John's imprisonment? Or are these disciples members of an ongoing Baptist group which had continued to exist after John's death? I think the first option is more likely.

³² Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.132, 198 n. 89,

brackets in my reconstruction in order to indicate my uncertainty about how exactly the clause should be reconstructed.

Matthew's τὰ ἔργα τοῦ χριστοῦ would hardly have been omitted by Luke and substituted with the vague πάντων τούτων. Yet πάντων is rather characteristic of Lukan redaction and a comparable Lukan phrase—ἀπήγγειλαν ταῦτα πάντα—occurs at Luke 24:9 (diff. Mark 16:8). Luke's πάντων τούτων obviously links the present chreia with the two healings that occurred in his narrative just prior to vv. 1-10 and 11-17. But some such link probably existed in Q, given how the preceding material has been arranged in order to prompt John's question in the first place and to provide Jesus with the narrative background for his reply in v. 22. An exact textual reconstruction here may be impossible but the gist is clear: John was told about Jesus' impressive works. Luke's πάντων τούτων may be an amplification, meant to include not just Jesus' works (as in Matthew) but his words as well (cf. εὐαγγελίζονται in v. 22c). Matthew's τὰ ἔργα χριστοῦ may have therefore originally read τὰ ἔργα Ἰησοῦ. This reconstruction, while conjectural, has two advantages: (1) it provides John with an express motivation for his quotation (beyond the merely implicit motivation that might have otherwise been deducible from Q's general narrative up to this point); (2) it would provide αὐτῷ in v. 18 with a much-needed antecedent (tracing the antecedent all the way back to v. 9, as Witetschek does, is unconvincing). Fleddermann thinks Matthew derived τὰ ἔργα from Matt 11:19 (where ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων is clearly Matthean).³³ But the evangelist might have just as easily derived the latter phrase from the former, which he found in Q. Matthew nowhere else uses ἔργα in connection with *Jesus'* works. I would maintain that at 11:2 he got the term from Q.

³³ Fleddermann, *Q*, 354.

The reference to *two* disciples may be a Lukan redaction since it is likely meant to introduce the Mosaic law's stipulation that "only on the evidence of two witnesses ... shall a charge be sustained" (Deut 19:15).³⁴

Πρὸς τὸν κύριον λέγων is obviously a Lukan redaction (cf. Luke 7:13; 10:1, 41; 17:5; 19:8, etc.). Matthew's ἀπὸ τοῦ is preferable. The tense and mood of λέγω are not critical but I have stuck with Luke in using a present participle rather than Matthew's aorist indicative.

Matthew's ἕτερον agrees with Luke 7:19, 20 in many important Lukan mss.³⁵ But this agreement is usually attributed to a scribal assimilation of Luke's text to Matthew's.

Fleddermann suggests that Luke originally wrote ἄλλον because he was influenced by the term in the immediately preceding pericope (7:8).³⁶ This explanation seems as good as any.

Aside from the note that the disciples had been sent by John the material in vv. 19-21 is usually discarded *in toto* as a Lukan redaction. But this is unnecessarily reductive. It must be emphasised again that Matthew often compresses material in his Markan source, especially if it is repetitive or clumsy.³⁷ There seems no obvious reason for Luke to have added the extra material in vv. 19-20 if it were not already present in Q.³⁸ I have therefore taken most of this as original to Q. Verse 21, however, should be dropped as redactional.³⁹ Luke elsewhere uses the

³⁴ See Fleddermann, *Q*, 356. Cf. Acts 23:23.

³⁵ Verse 19: ἕτερον κ B L R W Ξ Ψ 28 33 982 1241 1424 *pc* | ἄλλον A D Θ *f*¹³ 38

Verse 20: ἕτερον κ D L W Ξ Ψ *f*¹ 33 892 1241 *pc* | ἄλλον 38⁷⁵ A B Θ *f*¹³ 38

³⁶ Fleddermann, *Q*, 355.

³⁷ See n. 30 above.

³⁸ Contra Fleddermann (*Q*, 356) who refers to "Luke's tendency to duplicate Q." As examples of this tendency he cites Luke 6:24-26; 9:61; 10:7, 8, 10, 11; 15:8-10. These texts are not analogous to Q 7:20, however, because they are expansions, not duplications (assuming here that all of these verses are, in fact, Lukan, and do not derive from Q). Nolland (*Luke 1-9:20*, 329) points as well to Luke 19:34 and 15:18-19, 21 as illustrations of Lukan repetition. In 19:34 Luke's ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχει replaces Mark's καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. The repetition is minimal, however, and allows Luke to re-introduce his own favourite title for Jesus. As for Luke 15:18-19, 21, the wording is indeed repetitive but the parable containing it might not be Lukan and this one example cannot, in any case, establish a genuine Lukan tendency.

³⁹ Kümmel, *Promise*, 109 n. 15.

phrase, “In that hour,”⁴⁰ and the whole verse is a blatant set-up for v. 22 (this is a technique Luke employs elsewhere in his writings: e.g. Luke 3:15; 20:1). Moreover, v. 21 is unnecessary to the narrative: it would only make explicit the fact that the miracles and preaching in v. 22 had been performed by Jesus and not someone else—a rather obvious point.

Verses 22-23 contain fewer issues. In v. 22b Matthew and Luke disagree in the tense and order of the two last verbs: ἀκούετε καὶ βλέπετε (Matt) vs. εἶδετε καὶ ἠκούσατε (Luke). Since the sequence *see and hear* occurs at Q 10:23-24 (where Matthew and Luke agree) that may have also the original sequence here. The verbs were probably written in the present tense. Luke clearly dislikes historical presents. He regularly adjusts them in the Markan material and may be suspected of having done that here too.

3. Jesus’ Encomium on John (Q 7:24-28)

In v. 24 Matthew’s less explicit τούτων is likely more original than Luke’s ἀγγέλων τῶν Ἰωάννου, which would probably not have been deleted by Matthew if it had existed in Q. Luke elsewhere uses ἄγγελος with ἀπέρχομαι (Luke 1:38; 2:15; 7:24; Acts 10:7) or ἀρίστημι (Acts 12:10) so Matthew’s πορευομένων is perhaps also the more likely original Q reading (although the meaning would be the same if ἀπελθόντων were original). Matthew’s Ἰησοῦς is arguably from Q as well. Luke may have omitted it because it was no longer needed with the unit joined as it is to John’s Question and Jesus’ Answer. Luke shows a tendency to omit ὁ Ἰησοῦς elsewhere as well, as I mentioned earlier (→5.2.).

Ἐγὼ in v. 26 was likely added by Matthew in order to make the quote conform to LXX Exod 23:20a and Mal 3:1a, both of which utilise the pleonastic pronoun.

⁴⁰ Luke 7:21; 10:21; 12:12; Acts 22:13.

Luke's differences with Matthew in v. 25 are all either characteristically Lukan (ἐνδόξω, ὑπάρχοντες) or explicable as Lukan redaction (ἰματίοις).⁴¹

The quote from Exod 23:20a in Q 7:27 agrees with the Septuagint (the agreement is almost verbatim) but the quote from Mal 3:1a differs in several ways. The most significant difference is in Q's use of the verb κατασκευάσει ("make ready", "prepare").⁴² This is actually a decent, although idiomatic, rendering of the *pi'el* form of פָּנָה (פָּנֶה), which can be rendered into English as, "clear away", "make clear."⁴³ The Septuagint's ἐπιβλέψεται ("look upon," "consider," "have regard for") appears to presume a *qal* reading (פָּנֶה), which can be rendered, "turn to look upon"/"have regard for" (e.g. 1 Sam 13:17; 2 Sam 9:8; Ps 25:16). One possible explanation for Q's (and Mark's) departure from the Septuagint is that a Q redactor wanted to bring the translation into closer agreement with what he took to be the meaning of the Hebrew, having constructed פָּנָה as a *pi'el*. Note, for example, that the two later Greek translations of Aquila and Symmachus, both of which tried to bring the Greek into closer agreement with the Hebrew, used the related term ἀποσκευάσει, apparently adopting a *pi'el* reading. Theodotion did not like ἐπιβλέψεται either and opted for ἐτοιμάσει, a synonym of παρα/κατασκευάσει.⁴⁴ Fleddermann, however, proposes that a Q redactor adjusted the verbs not out of the concern for a supposed Hebrew reading but "because the Septuagintal verb would not work in the context of John's Question [in Q 7:19]."⁴⁵ John was not someone who merely "looked upon" or "had regard for" the way before Jesus; he *prepared* that way, by encouraging repentance/baptism, and by acting

⁴¹ See Fleddermann, *Q*, 358-59.

⁴² For this meaning of κατασκευάζω see *LSJ*, s.v. I.3.

⁴³ See Gen 24:31; Isa 57:14; 62:10.

⁴⁴ For κατασκευάζω and ἐτοιμάζω as synonyms, cf. Luke 1:17: ἐτοιμάσαι κυρίῳ λαὸν κατεσκευασμένον. For παρασκευάζω and ἐτοιμάζω as synonyms (meaning, "get ready", "prepare"), see *LSJ*, s.v. παρασκευάζω, I.1; s.v. ἐτοιμάζω, I.1. Ἀποσκευάζω (Α', Σ') meant something like "clear away" (*LSJ*, s.v. I.1) but the secondary meaning of preparation would not have been absent from its use in Mal 3:1 since that is the whole thrust of the passage. For readings from Theodotion, Symmachus, Aquila, see Ziegler, *Duodecim Prophetae*, ad loc.

⁴⁵ Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 26-27.

as Jesus' forerunner (→2.2.8.1-4.). Again, Fleddermann claims that scripture quotations in Q always follow the Septuagint (or Theodotion) and that the present verse is the only possible place where the Greek has been adjusted to conform more closely to the Hebrew, and here the adjustment would have only been made with respect to an individual word.⁴⁶ Fledderman's claim about Q's consistent use of the Septuagint is perhaps overstated⁴⁷ but at least generally true. Hence, one can probably best explain this rather idiosyncratic adjustment of Mal 3:1a not as a redactor's attempt at bringing the translation into closer agreement with the Hebrew, but "as a free adaptation of the Greek text of the OT", as Fleddermann proposes.⁴⁸

Fleddermann attributes all the other differences between LXX Mal 3:1a and Q's quotation of it to the Q redactor as well:

Most of these changes assimilate the Malachi text to Exodus and adapt it to the context in Q. The relative [ὅς] improves the syntax following the Greek tendency to subordinate in more elegant prose. The article with ὁδόν and the substitution of ἔμπροσθεν for πρὸ προσώπου are stylistic variations demanded by the combination of the two texts. The redactor uses τὴν ὁδόν σου to balance τὸν ἄγγελόν μου and to avoid repeating πρὸ προσώπου σου.⁴⁹

These proposals all seem reasonable enough (I discussed the adjustment of μου to σου in Excursus B). For Q's citation of Mal 3:1a, one need not posit a familiarity with the Hebrew text. The changes appear to have been based on stylistic and conceptual concerns about the Greek (Septuagint) text.

⁴⁶ See Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 27 n. 10 for a complete listing of OT quotes in Q.

⁴⁷ In the case of the Temptation narrative (Q 4:4, 8, 10-11, 12), for example, it is less clear that the LXX is being used. See Tuckett, "Temptation," 483-85. Nor is it obvious that the scripture allusions in 7:22 are dependent on the LXX (→4.3.).

⁴⁸ Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 27.

⁴⁹ Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 26-27.

Appendix D: Charts to illustrate how John’s coming figure in Q 3:16b-17

might have been understood

In this chart I provide a few quotes in order to illustrate the ideas at the top of the column. Then I provide a number of additional references, citing only the book with chapter and verse numbers. References to “Webb” are to his book *John the Baptist*. I have omitted several of his references that did not seem particularly apposite. The ones I have included from his lists seemed generally more so but many of these are also of dubious relevance. Webb’s survey is even more problematic in that he restricts himself to works written prior to 70 C.E. He no doubt did this for both practical and methodological reasons. But in so doing I believe he omitted much relevant material. I have therefore occasionally included works dated beyond 70 C.E. (e.g. *4 Ezra*) and have tried to place in square brackets any references I myself have added.

	judge (a) /restorer (b)	coming figure	mighty	will baptise with the Spirit (a) and fire (b)	threshing-floor imagery
God	<p>“...the Lord’s mercy is upon those who fear him with judgment—to separate between the righteous and the sinner.” (<i>Pss. Sol.</i> 2.33-35)</p> <p>For both (a) and (b) cf. God’s role in Israel’s exile and restoration: e.g. Deut 29-31; Isa 29; 54; Jer 30-31; Neh 9; Dan 9; Bar 2, 4-5; <i>Jub.</i> 1; <i>Pss. Sol.</i> 2; <i>Sib. Or.</i> 3.265-94; CD 1.3-8. For (a), cf. Joel 2:1-11; Mal 4:1; <i>I En.</i> 90.26-27; <i>Pss. Sol.</i> 8.26; Isa 13:1-16; Ezek 21:1-23; <i>Sib. Or.</i> 3.295-572; Isa 24:1-23; 63:1-6; Joel 3:2-21; Sir 36:1-10; <i>I En.</i> 1.3-10; <i>Pss. Sol.</i> 2.30-35; 1QpHab 13.1-4. For (b), cf. Ezek 20:33-38; Mal 3:5; 4:1-3; <i>I En.</i> 1.7-10; 5.4-10; CD 1.6-9; 1QMyst 1.5-7; Ezek 34:11-31; Joel 2:18-27; Bar 4:21-5:9; <i>Jub.</i> 1.15-18; <i>Pss. Sol.</i> 11.2-8; <i>Sib. Or.</i> 3.282-94; 1QM 1.4-14; Jer 31:34; Ezek 11:17-20; 36:25, 29; <i>Jub.</i> 1.23; 1QS 4.10-21; 1QH 6.6-10; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 16:59-63; Bar 2:35; <i>Sim.</i> 60.6; <i>T. Mos.</i> 12.13; 1QS 4.22-23; CD 3.12-20; Ezek 2:2-4; 60:5-11; Zech 8:20-22.⁵⁰</p>	<p>“Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with recompense of God. He will come and save you.” (<i>Isa</i> 35:4)</p> <p>See Appendix I.1. for more references and discussion; Also Webb, 224 n. 17.</p>	<p>“the mighty God.” (<i>Isa</i> 10:21)</p> <p>Isa 10:21; 33:13; 49:26; 62:8; 63:1, 15; Jer 16:21; Ezek 20:33-34; Sir 36:3, 8; <i>I En.</i> 84.2; <i>Pss. Sol.</i> 2.29; <i>Liv. Proph.</i> 2.12; 1QS 10:16-17; CD 2:5; 1QM 3:5-6; 12:9-10; 13:13-16; 18:11-14; 1QH 6:30; 4Q181 fr. 1 2.⁵¹</p>	<p>“I will pour out my spirit on all flesh...Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit.” (<i>Joel</i> 2:28-29)</p> <p>Ezek 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-29; <i>Jub.</i> 1.23; 1QS 4.21; <i>Sib. Or.</i> 2.196-282.⁵²</p>	<p>“I have winnowed them with a winnowing fork in the gates of the land; I have bereaved them, I have destroyed my people; they did not turn from their ways.”</p> <p>Jer 15:7; 51:2, 33; Nah 1:10; Mal 4:1; Jer 13:24; Isa 5:24; 33:11; 47:14; Joel 2:5; Wis 5:23.⁵³</p>
Elijah	<p>“[he will] restore the tribes of Israel.” (<i>Sir</i> 48:10)</p> <p>“his dwelling will be light and his word judgment, and he will judge Israel.” (<i>Liv. Proph.</i> 21.3)</p> <p>(a) <i>Liv. Proph.</i> 21.3</p> <p>(b) <i>Sir</i> 48:10; cf. Mal 3:2-4 for Elijah(?) as purifier.</p>	<p>“Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” (<i>Mark</i> 9:11)</p> <p>Cf. Mal 3:2 (for reference to a coming figure who <i>may</i> have been interpreted as Elijah)</p> <p>See Appendix I.2. for more references and discussion.</p>	<p>“he will judge Israel with sword and fire” (<i>Liv. Proph.</i> 21.3 acc. to some mss)</p> <p>Cf. Mal 3:2-3 for fire imagery used with reference to a figure who may have been interpreted as Elijah.</p>		<p>Cf. Mal 4:1</p>

⁵⁰ Webb, 222-23 nn. 8-14.

⁵¹ Webb, 224 n. 18.

⁵² Webb, 224 n. 19.

⁵³ Webb, 226 n. 30.

	judge (a) /restorer (b)	coming figure	mighty	will baptise with the Spirit (a) and fire (b)	threshing- floor imagery
(Davidic) Messiah	<p>“Undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers, to purge Jerusalem from gentiles...to drive out the sinners from the inheritance; to smash the arrogance of sinners like a potter’s jar...to destroy the unlawful nations with the word of his mouth; at his warning the nations will flee from his presence; and he will condemn sinners by the thoughts of their hearts. He will gather a holy people whom he will lead in righteousness; and he will judge the tribes of the people...” (<i>Pss. Sol.</i> 17.22-26)</p> <p>(a) Isa 9:7; 11:4; Jer 23:5-6; 33:15-16; Zech 9:9-10; <i>Pss. Sol.</i> 17.22-27</p> <p>(b) 1QSb 5.21-23.⁵⁴</p>	<p>“Lo, your king comes to you.” (<i>Zech</i> 9:9)</p> <p>Isa 11:1; Jer 30:21; Mic 5:2; Zech 9:9; CD 19:10-11; 1QS 9:11; 1QSa 2:12.</p> <p>See Appendix I.3. for more references and discussion.</p>	<p>May you be [...] with the power (אִתּוֹ) of your mouth.] With your sceptre may you lay waste the earth. With the breath of your lips 25 may you kill the wicked. May he give [you a spirit of coun]sel and of everlasting fortitude (דְּבוֹרַת עוֹלָם)... For God has raised you to a scepter 28 for the rulers be[fore you ... all the na]tions will serve you, and he will make you strong (יַבְרִכֶּה) by his holy name...</p> <p>Isa 9:6; 11:2; <i>Pss. Sol.</i> 17.22, 36-40; 18.7; <i>Jub</i> 31.18; 1QSb 5:24-25; poss. 1QH 3:10.⁵⁵</p>	<p>“Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations.” (<i>Isa</i> 42:1)</p> <p>[“...he sent forth from his mouth as it were a stream of fire...and burned them all up...” (<i>4 Ezra</i> 13.10-11)]</p> <p>(a) Endowed with God’s Spirit: cf. <i>Isa</i> 11:2; 32:1-8; [42:1; 61:1]; <i>Jer</i> 3:15; 23:5; <i>Pss. Sol.</i> 18.7; 1QSb 5:25.</p> <p>(b) Unleashes fire: cf. [<i>4 Ezra</i> 13.10-11] (cited above).⁵⁶</p>	No examples
Son of man	<p>“...the wind made something like the figure of a man ... [H]e sent forth from his mouth something like a stream of fire, and ... a flaming breath, ... and a storm of sparks ... and [they] fell on the onrushing multitude that was prepared to fight, and burned up all of them...” (<i>4 Ezra</i> 13.2, 10, 11).</p> <p>(a) <i>Sim.</i> 69.27-28; 38.3; 45.2-3; 49.4; 50.2; 55.4; 61.8.</p> <p>(b) Cf. <i>Sim.</i> 48.4; 49.2; <i>4 Ezra</i> 13.⁵⁷</p>	<p>“...with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.” (<i>Dan</i> 7:13)</p> <p><i>Dan</i> 7.13; cf. <i>Sim.</i> 69.29; 38.2; 51.5; 52.9.⁵⁸</p>	<p>“For he is mighty in all the secrets of righteousness...and his might [is] to all generations. And in him dwell the spirit of understanding and the spirit of insight and the spirit of might.” (<i>Sim.</i> 49.2-3)</p> <p><i>Sim.</i> 52.4; 49.2-3; cf. also 69.29.</p>	<p>“And the Elect One seated him upon the throne of his glory, and the spirit of righteousness was poured upon him, and the word of his mouth will slay all the sinners, and all the unrighteous will perish from his presence.” (<i>Sim.</i> 62.2)</p> <p>For the SM as a fiery judge, see <i>4 Ezra</i> 13.10-11, cited under Davidic Messiah. Cf. also <i>Sim.</i> 54.6.</p>	Cf. <i>Sim.</i> 48.9.

⁵⁴ Webb, 231-33 and n. 50.

⁵⁵ Webb, 233 n. 59.

⁵⁶ References to *Isa* 42:1; 61:1; *4 Ezra* 13 are not listed by Webb. On *4 Ezra*, see the discussion in Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 63-73. This passage is not referenced by Webb because it dates to after 70 C.E., his arbitrary cut-off date for sources examined.

⁵⁷ References from Webb, 247 and nn. 105-106 on the same page. I have omitted several references that do not seem particularly apposite. I have included others that seemed dubiously apposite.

⁵⁸ Webb, 247-48 and n. 112. Note here that the references in *1 Enoch* speak of the figure “arising” and “appearing”, not “coming.”

Appendix E: Alternative christologies for Q?

In this thesis I argue that Jesus is envisaged as the Davidic Messiah. Because this is a disputable point the current appendix is devoted to alternative christologies.

Interestingly, the term *χριστός* does not seem to have been used in Q. Some have inferred from this that Q did not envisage Jesus as the/a Messiah.⁵⁹ Yet this view is untenable. In the main body of this thesis I have noted three pieces of evidence that Q did actually envisage Jesus as the Davidic Messiah: (1) its identification of him as the God's unique "Son" (→3.5.3.); (2) its application of the title/phrase "the Coming One" to Jesus (→Excursus A); and (3) its portrayal of Jesus as fulfilling various Isaianic prophecies relating to the eschaton and the Messiah (→4.5.2.). In this appendix I shall add two more reasons for seeing Jesus in Q as the Davidic Messiah: (4) Q's identification of him as the anointed figure of Isa 61:1, and (5) its identification of him as the Son of man figure of Dan 7:13-14. But more on those last two arguments a bit later.

Surprisingly, despite the rather compelling pieces of evidence that I have mentioned, few commentators acknowledge that Q advocated a *Davidic* messiah. Here I shall discuss some of the most noted and most viable alternatives to such a christology in Q.

1. Priestly Messiah: A priestly Messiah is sometimes mentioned as the possible object of John's prophecy about "the Coming One" in Q 3:16-17.⁶⁰ But while this interpretation is occasionally get mentioned, no modern interpreter, as far as I can tell, commits him/herself to it. Very little in Q would lead us to see Jesus in Q as a priestly Messiah. Besides this, references to a priestly Messiah in the extant works from around the turn of the era are relegated, for the most part, to

⁵⁹ Borg, et al., *Lost Gospel*, 27-28; Mack, "Jewish Wisdom", 214; idem, *Lost Gospel*, 4. Cf. also Tuckett, *Q*, 214; Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts*, 90-91.

⁶⁰ E.g. Webb, *Baptizer*, 335-37.

the Qumran sectarian literature.⁶¹ If we were to exclude this literature, expectations of a priestly Messiah would be very rarely attested in Second Temple or rabbinic Judaism.⁶² Furthermore, this figure of the priestly Messiah is almost never referred to in isolation, as John refers to his expected figure in Q 3:16 and 7:19.⁶³ Rather, “the Messiah of Aaron” is mentioned in association with “the Messiah of Israel”. Finally, if Q’s John were expecting a priestly figure we should probably have expected him to indict the current priesthood or claim something about how the present temple was polluted (cf. 4:9; but cf. also 11:49-51; 13:35a). Therefore, it seems unlikely that John’s prophecies about “the Coming One” refer to a priestly Messiah (unless, perhaps, one were to identify this priest with Elijah, but see below for why an Elijah christology in Q is also problematic).

2. Elijah:⁶⁴ In view of John’s preaching in Q 3:16 about “the Coming One” (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) it is often noted that several ancient texts refer to Elijah as a *coming* figure (→ Appendix I.2). Among these texts, the most notable is Mal 3:1-2, where “the messenger of the covenant” is expected to come to his Temple and act as a refiner’s fire to purify “the sons of Levi.” Concerning this figure we also read: “But who can endure the day of his coming (וְיִמְי מְכַלְכֵּל אֶת־יּוֹם בּוֹאֵו / καὶ τίς ὑπομενεῖ

⁶¹ E.g. CD 12:23-13:1; 14:19?; 19:10-11; 20:1; 1QS 9:11; cf. also CD 7:18-21; 1QM 5:1 with 2:1; 15:4; 16:13; 18:5; 19:11. The figure also appears in some pseudepigraphical works: *Jub.* 31:12-20; *T. Levi* 18; *T. Judah* 21. The first two of these are also attested at Qumran, suggesting an ideological link. So Collins (“Jesus and the Messiahs of Israel”, 170): “The expectation of a priestly messiah was rooted in the priestly ideology of the sect. It does not appear to have been widely shared by other Jews of the time.”

⁶² The only non-Qumranic references to a priestly Messiah is in the Greek version of *T.12 Patr.*, in *T. Levi* 18. The *T. 12. Patr.* is now generally regarded as a Christian composition, however. To be sure, fragments of the *T. Levi* have been discovered at Qumran but this fact only further suggests that expectations of a priestly Messiah were largely relegated to the Qumran community.

⁶³ The one exception here is *T. Levi* 18.

⁶⁴ Cf. Robinson, “Detection”, 263-81; Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 472, 666-67; Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 122-124; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 268, 284; Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 288-94 (in Q 7:19 John was asking whether Jesus were Elijah, whom John was expecting, although Jesus viewed himself as only a prophet); Collins, *Encounters*, 169-178; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 3.655-57.

ἡμέραν εισόδου αὐτοῦ), and who can stand when he appears?” (Mal 3:2). Texts in the NT Gospels, targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the Bavli, and a few medieval midrashim identify this figure as “Elijah the prophet” in Mal 4:5 (→1.5.1.). Other works associated with the early Jesus movement and broader Judaism speak of Elijah as a *coming* figure as well (→Appendix D and I.2). The associations of John’s expected figure with fire in Q 3:16b-17 might also seem to conjure up ideas of Elijah, the fiery prophet.⁶⁵ Indeed, Jesus’ statement, “I have come (ἦλθον) to send fire on the earth” (Q 12:49), seems to recall the two occasions when Elijah called down fire from heaven (1 Kgs 18:38; 2 Kgs 1:9-12). In THE REJECTION OF JESUS AT NAZARETH (Luke 4:16-30), which is arguably from Q, Jesus compares himself to Elijah and Elisha. THE HEALING OF THE WIDOW’S SON AT NAIN (Luke 7:11-16), the pericope which in Luke’s Gospel immediately precedes the one we are presently discussing, may also derive from Q and it clearly portrays Jesus as an Elijah-like figure. Finally, Jesus’ references in Q 7:22c to raising the dead and healing lepers may recall the healing miracles performed by Elijah or Elisha (1 Kgs 17:8-24; 2 Kgs 4:8-37; 5:1-19; 6:17-20). Thus, it is possible that Q envisaged Jesus as Elijah *reditus*.⁶⁶

Another possible Elijah connection in Q is the fact that Jesus appoints twelve disciples and speaks of a time when they will be appointed to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Q 22:28-30). The latter saying envisions a restored Israel, which may presuppose the idea of Elijah restoring the tribes of Israel as expressed in Sir 48:10: “you [Elijah] who are ready at the appointed time, ... to restore the tribes of Jacob.” But Jesus’ appointing of twelve disciples and his statement in Q 22:28-30 may, alternatively, recall Isa 49:6, a text which was often interpreted, both in the

⁶⁵ Cf. Mal 3:2-4; Sir 48:1; *Vita Prophetarum*; 1 Kgs 18:30-40; 2 Kgs 1-16.

⁶⁶ I prefer the term *reditus* (“returned”) to *redivivus* (“reborn”) since Elijah never died but was taken to heaven. Also, the prophecy in Mal 4:5-6 only speaks of Elijah returning, not being reborn.

early Jesus movement and wider streams of Judaism, as a reference to the Messiah.⁶⁷ The notion in Q of a restored Israel is therefore ambiguous with respect to any Elijah associations. Given what we have already seen about Q's conception of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah it seems better to understand Jesus here in the same way.

An Elijah christology in Q may be questioned on several grounds. First, whatever associations with fire the historical Elijah might have had, the eschatological Elijah in Mal 4:5-6 is not expected to bring fiery punishment. His role is not punitive at all but reconciliatory: "he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse." Second, with respect to Elijah's role in bringing familial reconciliation, Jesus draws a clear contrast between himself and the eschatological Elijah in Mal 4:5-6:

Q 12:51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; **52** for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; **53** they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.⁶⁸

Third, Jesus contrasts himself with Elijah in another way:

1 Kings 19:19 And [Elijah] set out from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat, and he was plowing (ήροστρία) with oxen—twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelve—and he came upon him and threw his hairy mantle over him. **20** And Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah (κατέδραμεν όπίσω Ηλιου) and said, "I will kiss my father and will

Q 9:57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you (άκολουθήσω σοι) wherever you go." **58** And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." **59** To another he said, "Follow me" (άκολούθει μοι). But he said, "Let me first go and bury my father" (τόν

⁶⁷ Luke 2:28-32; Acts 1:6-8; 26:23; *Pss. Sol.* 17.26-28; *Sim.* 48.4; *4 Ezra* 13.39-50. Cf. also 1QM 5.1-2 where the names of the twelve tribes are written on the staff of "the Prince." On the other hand, Isa 49:6 is understood as referring to Elijah in *Tg. Ps.-Jon.* at Deut 30:4.

⁶⁸ See the remarks of Manson, *Sayings*, 121; Robinson, "Elijah, John and Jesus", 234; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 270.

follow after you (καταφιλήσω τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ ἀκολουθήσω ὀπίσω σου),” and Elijah said, “Go back, for I am done with you” (ἀνάστρεφε ὅτι πεποίηκά σοι). **21** And he returned from behind him (ἀνέστρεψεν ἐξόπισθεν αὐτοῦ) and took the yoke of oxen and slaughtered and boiled them with the equipment from the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate, and he arose and went after (ἐπορεύθη ὀπίσω) Elijah and ministered to him.

πατέρα μου). **60** But he said to him, “Let the dead bury their dead.” **61** Another said likewise, “I will follow you (ἀκολουθήσω σοι); but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” **62** Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow (ἄροτρον) and looks to the things behind [him] (βλέπων εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω) is fit for the kingdom of God.”⁶⁹

The numerous intertextual links here indicate that the narrator meant to evoke ELIJAH’S CALLING OF ELISHA.⁷⁰ But note that whereas Elijah allows Elisha to return home to bid his family farewell and even to enjoy a feast before taking up his new vocation, Jesus grants no such indulgences to his would-be followers. The statement about putting one’s “hand to the plow” (ἄροτρον) and “looking back” (βλέπων εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω)⁷¹ is clearly allusive of Elisha’s having “returned from behind him” (ἀνέστρεψεν ἐξόπισθεν αὐτοῦ) in order to slay and eat the oxen with which he “was plowing” (ἡροτρία). The allusions to the story about Elisha’s calling here are not meant to show how Jesus is similar to Elijah but how he is different. There is also a fourth reason and most compelling reason for rejecting an Elijah christology in Q, namely, the fact that in 7:27 Jesus does not identify himself but *John* as Elijah (→5.6.). Indeed, even without 7:27 John’s role as Elijah would be an important theme in Q; for we have seen that the whole point of Q’s PROLOGUE, which features John as its central character and which presents him as announcing

⁶⁹ This is my own reconstruction. I follow mostly Luke’s text, but omit some of the more obvious Lukan elements. Matthew seems to have compressed the unit, in accord with his usual tendency. See n. 30 above.

⁷⁰ Allison, *Intertextual*, 142-45. The subtle intertexts continue into vv. 61-62, suggesting that they are also from Q, not a Lukan expansion. This, contra Fleddermann (*Q*, 395-96), who argues that Luke constructed the verses on the basis of his own vocabulary, as well as other vocabulary he derived from vv. 57-60 and the LXX. Nor is he any more convincing when he argues that the plough saying reflects a distinctively Lukan interest in perseverance. The saying is not so much about perseverance *per se*, but about wholehearted commitment, which is precisely what is expressed in vv. 57-60.

⁷¹ This statement is only found in Luke’s Gospel. But its intertextual links with the story of Elijah’s calling of Elisha, and its literary coherence with vv. 57-60 (which also contain intertextual links with the Elisha story), suggest that it was part of Q.

Jesus' coming, is to cast John as a prophetic forerunner to Jesus, the implication here being that Jesus is the Messiah and John is Elijah (→2.2.7.; 2.2.8.4.). One would be hard-pressed explaining how Q could have ever maintained a coherent christology if it had presented both John and Jesus as Elijah *reditus*. Finally, an Elijah christology would raise a difficult historical problem, at least for those who trace an Elijah self-consciousness back to the historical Jesus himself. As Dale Allison asks: "Would Christians have turned John into Elijah if Jesus had claimed that role for himself?"⁷²

Kloppenborg, who advocates for an Elijah christology in Q, tries to address the problem of how John and Jesus can both be associated with Elijah. He talks of how "various expectations associated with Elijah" allowed Q "to distribute these qualities between John and Jesus and thus to negotiate the relationship between the two figures."⁷³ As Kloppenborg sees it, John fulfils his Elijah role by proclaiming repentance and by acting as "my messenger" in Mal 3:1a whereas Jesus "emulates Elijah's restorative ministry." But against Kloppenborg, while it may be correct to see Jesus' ministry as ultimately restorative (cf. esp. 22:28+30) it can hardly be seen as restorative *in an Elijanic manner*, given the saying in Q 12:51-53.

Joan Taylor, approaching the Q material from a primarily historical perspective rather than a strictly source-critical or compositional one, tries to escape this same problem of Jesus and John allegedly both being associated with Elijah.⁷⁴ She thinks that in Q 7:19 John was not asking whether Jesus were the Messiah but whether he were Elijah. Jesus, she suspects, knew that John was still anticipating Elijah and this is why he responded to him as he did, that is, by drawing attention to his own Elijah-like miracles (healing lepers and raising the dead). Jesus' response

⁷² Allison, *Constructing*, 269.

⁷³ Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 123-124.

⁷⁴ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 288-93. Her views here are similar to those of Schweitzer (*Quest*, 373-76) and Robinson ("Elijah, John and Jesus", 28-52).

was somewhat duplicitous, however, since he did not actually view himself as Elijah. He viewed John as Elijah and himself merely as a prophet and co-worker with John. Taylor's approach here is methodologically unsound because it attempts to psychoanalyze Jesus' motives, something we have no objective way of doing. If pressed, I suspect that Taylor would fall back on the notion that much of the tradition preserved or redacted in Q is hopelessly incoherent.⁷⁵ But before resorting to such a "council of despair", let us see whether there are other approaches to the present issue that can help us to arrive at a more coherent Q christology.

Before doing that, though, it must be acknowledged that while Q clearly rejects the notion that Jesus is the eschatological Elijah who restores families and neighbours, it does, at the same time, portray him as being *like* Elijah insofar as he is a miracle worker. Jesus' associations with Elijah seem evident enough in Q 7:22c and in the possible Q texts found in Luke 4:16-30 and Luke 7:11-16. How might these texts fit into Q's christology, given what we have seen in Q 9:57-62 and 12:51-53 where Jesus seems to distance himself from Elijah? Perhaps a distinction needs to be drawn here between the *eschatological* and the *historical* Elijah.⁷⁶ Q, without doubt, envisages John as the former, at least in its prologue and 7:27. It envisages Jesus only as the latter; or, to put the matter more precisely, it envisages him as someone who performed miracles reminiscent of the historical Elijah's miracles.

Against this line of interpretation, it might be asked why Q would envisage Jesus as an Elijah-like figure at all, given how this only detracts from John's associations with Elijah and creates such a confusing portrayal of Jesus. Perhaps someone thought that in order for Jesus to have a proper place in redemptive history he needed to be compared to some biblical figure. The

⁷⁵ See Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 321-22.

⁷⁶ My inspiration for this proposal comes from Miller ("Messenger", 1-16) who attempts to resolve a similar Elijah tension in the Gospel of Luke. Miller's approach is different though. He draws a distinction between Elijah-typology (which applies only to John) and Elijah-comparisons (which can apply to Jesus as well as John).

Jewish Bible—at least if we can assume a first century proto-canon similar to the one affirmed by Josephus in *Ag. Ap.* 1.38-40—features only four miracle workers: Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah. Of these, the last is only associated with one healing (Isa 38:1-8). Moses was not much of a healer either, although he did heal Miriam of her leprosy and set up the bronze serpent that allowed many Israelites to be healed of their snake bites (Num 21). He also performed various miracles but none of these is comparable to Jesus’ miracles, all of which, in Q at least, are healings. So if Jesus was known to have worked miracles—especially healings—the list of possible biblical parallels would have been quite limited. It was probably inevitable, therefore, that he would come to be compared to either Elijah or Elisha, given their fame in miracle-working. Note, by way of comparison, that Honi the Circle Drawer and Hanina ben Dosa, both of whom were famous miracle workers, were similarly associated with the historical (though not the eschatological) Elijah.⁷⁷ Note too that in at least one later Jewish tradition the messianic age is expected to resemble the miraculous days of Elijah (*Pesiq.* 76a. 13 (Str.-B. 1.594) (c. 300). What is perhaps more surprising is not the fact that in Q Jesus is compared with Elijah but that his miracles do not also recall the person of Moses, as they do in the canonical Gospels.

3. The Eschatological Prophet/Prophet like Moses:⁷⁸ Interpreters often note Q’s interest in Isa 61:1-3 and infer from this that Jesus is envisaged in Q as “the Eschatological Prophet” or a non-

⁷⁷ →1.1.2.3. (on Géza Vermes).

⁷⁸ E.g. Tuckett, *History*, 221-37; idem, “Isaiah in Q”, 54-55; Stuhlmacher, *Das paulinische Evangelium*, 1:218-19; Hahn, *Titles*, 380; cf. also the historical sketches of Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2.1039-49; Scot McKnight, “Jesus and Prophetic Actions”, *BBR* 10.2 (2000), 197-232; Hooker, *Signs*; McKeating, “Prophet Jesus—2”, 50-53; Fuller, *Foundations*, 171; Cullmann, *Christology*, 36; Dunn, *Spirit*, 53-62, esp. 61; Goulder, “Anointed”, 66-74; Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 264-80; Betz, “Jesus’ Gospel”, 53-74; Bird, *Are You the One?*, 98-104. Often commentators conflate the Eschatological Prophet with Elijah, making it difficult for those of us keeping score to know where exactly they stand. For example, John Collins often characterises Jesus as Elijah(-like) but also as “the Eschatological Prophet.” It is possible that Elijah was, indeed, seen by some at around the turn of the era, as one and the same with the prophet like Moses in Deut 18 (cp. 1QS 9:11 with 4QTest). But at least in the Fourth Gospel the

royal, strictly prophetic Messiah. The term “Eschatological Prophet” is not actually found in Isa 61:1, the Bible, or related literature. Nevertheless, this biblical verse is written in the first person singular so commentators usually identify the speaker as a prophet, given that the author of the entire book of Isaiah was apparently a self-styled prophet.⁷⁹ Having identified this figure as a prophet, modern commentators often associate this biblical text with Deut 18:15 where Moses declares: “Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren—him you shall heed” (cf. also v. 18).

Q itself never alludes to the prediction about a Moses-like prophet in Deut 18. Some would argue, however, that it presents Jesus as a Moses-like figure.⁸⁰ In THE TEMPTATION, Jesus is said to have fasted for forty days in the wilderness and this can be seen as recalling Moses’ fast of forty days and forty nights on Mt. Sinai. But while Matthew makes this express link to the fasting of Moses (cf. Matt 4:2), Q itself does not (cf. Luke 4:2). Another possible association of Jesus with Moses in THE TEMPTATION is when Satan asks Jesus to turn a stone into bread. This could be seen as recalling the biblical story about the Israelites being fed with manna in the wilderness. But in THE TEMPTATION the term $\mu\alpha\upsilon$ is not used, and in the manna story Moses is not involved in performing the miracle anyway (he only hears, and presumably communicates to Israel, what God himself was about to do). Furthermore, the manna is said to have come down from heaven and this description of the event bears little resemblance to the devil’s demand that Jesus turn a stone into bread.⁸¹ Some also understand the phrase, “by the finger of God” (Q/Luke

“priests and Levites” are said to recognise them as separate eschatological characters (John 1:19-21).

⁷⁹ E.g. Ellinger, “Tritojesaja”, 112-41; Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 226, 255; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 365-67; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 222-23; Slotski, *Isaiah*, 526-29; Childs, *Isaiah*, 505; Gregory, “Postexilic Exile,” 480-81. Cf. also the numerous citations from Isaiah that are introduced in the NT with comments like “as Isaiah says/said” (John 12:38 = Isa 53:1; Rom 10:20 = Isa 65:1); “spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said” (Matt 3:3 = Isa 9:1).

⁸⁰ The argument is made most convincingly by Allison, *Constructing*, 270-74, 352-380.

⁸¹ On alleged associations with Moses in Q’s Temptation, see further, Teeple, *Prophet*, 75-77.

11:20), as an allusion to Exod 8:18-19. But the Matthean parallel reads “by the Spirit of God” (Q/Matt 12:28) and this is likely the original Q reading.⁸² Matthew likes to cast Jesus as a new Moses so it is unlikely that he would have neglected an opportunity to do that here if his source had read ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ.

Thus far, I have found none of the most oft-cited evidence for a Mosaic christology in Q to be convincing. But Dale Allison adds two other arguments that, to my mind, have a good deal of force. He finds an allusion to the generation of Moses in Q’s repeated phrase ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη (7:31; 11:29-32, 50-51).⁸³ The juxtaposition of ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη with γενεὰ πονηρά at 11:29 seems all too clear in this regard. But can we infer that behind this language lies a belief that Jesus is the Prophet like Moses in Deut 18? Quite possibly. Allison suggests as well that Jesus’ SERMON in Q 6 is meant as a rewriting of Lev 19.⁸⁴ If that is correct, and Allison makes a very compelling case that it is, the implication would certainly be that Jesus is envisaged in Q as a new Moses.

How would Q’s portrayal of Jesus as the prophet like Moses in Deut 18 correlate with its use of Isa 61:1, a text that is applied to Jesus at least twice in Q? The Isaiah text speaks of a figure who has been anointed by Yahweh. Modern scholars have often interpreted this figure as an anointed prophet.⁸⁵ The reception history of Isa 61:1-3, however, suggests nothing about *ancient* interpreters identifying this figure with the prophet like Moses in Deut 18; nor does it indicate that they ever envisaged this anointed figure as a non-royal, strictly prophetic Messiah.⁸⁶ For

⁸² See further the discussion in Fleddermann, *Q*, 483-84. For an alternative view, see Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, 53-57; idem, *New Moses*, 237-38.

⁸³ Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, 57-59; *Constructing Jesus*, 272. Note especially Deut 1:35: “Not one of these men of this evil generation (הָרַע הַזֶּה/LXX omits) shall see the good land which I swore to give to your fathers.” Other relevant texts are Ps 78:8; 95:10 (LXX: 94:10).

⁸⁴ Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 352-386.

⁸⁵ →n. 79 above.

⁸⁶ For the reception history of Isa 61, see James Sanders, “From Isaiah 61”, 46-69; Flowers, “11QMelchizedek”, Appendix. I have also written a more extensive article (“Exit”) dealing with the reception history of both Isa 52:7 and 61:1-3 which I hope to publish in the near future. I argue that these texts were never understood as referring to a

ancient interpreters, the verb מָשַׁח (“to anoint”), used in Isa 61:1, would have easily brought to mind the cognate term מְשִׁיחַ (“anointed one”, “Messiah”). The most anticipated “Messiah” in Jesus’ day would have doubtless been the *Davidic* Messiah.⁸⁷ The New Testament writers obviously believed that Jesus was the Davidic Messiah yet they seem to have found no difficulty in identifying him as the prophet like Moses in Deut 18 (e.g. Mark 9:7 *par.*; Acts 3:22; 7:37; John 1:43-51; 6:14-15; Acts 3:17-19).⁸⁸ Similarly, Jewish works, at least from the rabbinic and medieval periods, frequently seem to conflate the prophet like Moses with the Messiah.⁸⁹ The two figures might have already been conflated in Q therefore. Nothing can be said with any degree of confidence about Jews having ever expected a non-royal, strictly prophetic Messiah.⁹⁰ Yet one can probably hazard a decent guess as to how the prophet like Moses in Deut 18 had come to be associated with the Davidic Messiah. In several traditions from around the turn of the era Moses was remembered as a king as well as a prophet.⁹¹ While the Qumran scrolls sometimes refer to prophets as מְשִׁיחִים (“anointed ones”) this may have been because these

prophetic Messiah and that the whole notion of a strictly prophetic (non-royal) is a modern scholarly construct.

⁸⁷ See Collins, *Scepter*, 52-78; idem, “What Was Distinctive?” 83: “the expectation of a Davidic messiah [at around the turn of the era] was not a particularly sectarian idea, but was grounded in an exegetical tradition that was widely known across sectarian lines.” Also, idem, “Messiahs of Israel”, 171: “the concept of a royal messiah was more widespread than any other.”

⁸⁸ For Jesus as the prophet like Moses, see especially Allison, *New Moses*, 96-106.

⁸⁹ *Tanḥ.* ‘Eqeb 7b; *Exod. Rab.* 1.26; *Ruth Rab.* 5.6; *Eccles. Rab.* 1.28; *Pesiq. R.* 15.10; *Tg. Cant.* at 4:5; 7:4; *Tg. Lam.* on 2:22 (“The King Messiah” will proclaim liberty as Moses and Aaron did in Egypt).

⁹⁰ Contra the claims of many recent scholars who assert that this was an established belief in Second Temple Judaism. See, e.g., de Jonge, “Anointed”, 141-142; Berger, “Problem”, 1-30; idem, “Messiastraditionen”, 1-44; Harvey, *Constraints*, 120-53; van der Woude, “Melchisedek”, 367; García Martínez, “Two Messianic Figures”, 30-36 [also in *Qumranica Minora*, 13-32]; Poirier, “Endtime Return”, 226; de Jonge and van der Woude, “11Q Melchizedek,” 307; Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 61; Xeravits, *Protagonists*, 74, 218-19; Brooke, “MMT”, 72-90 (75-76); Collins, “Herald,” 225-40; idem, “Works,” 98-112; idem, *Scepter*, 131-141, 229-34; idem, “Jesus, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 113-119 Tuckett, *Christology*, 193-195; Catchpole, *Jesus People*, 214. Most of the authors listed here invoke Isa 52:7 or 61:1 as primary evidence for a Prophet-Messiah concept in the early Jesus movement and Judaism more generally.

⁹¹ Cf. *Ezekiel the Tragedian* (in Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 9.28-29); Philo, *Moses*, 1.148-149, 158; *Sib. Or.* 1.435; *Mek.* On Exod. 18:14; *Tg. Ps.-Jon.* On Deut 33:5; *b. Zeb.* 102a; *Exod. Rab.* 15.13; *Midr. Ps.* 1.2.

prophets were also anointed priests.⁹² In Jewish tradition priests and kings were anointed but prophets were not.⁹³ Furthermore, there is no clear indication that the Qumran sectarians themselves expected an individual Prophet-Messiah. In 1QS 9:11, the “Prophet [like Moses]” is carefully differentiated from the royal and priestly Messiahs insofar as the term משיח is not applied to him: עד בוא נביה ומשיחי ישראל ואהרן.

Because many modern interpreters regard the anointed figure in Isa 61:1 as a prophet they often assume (often without any argument) that ancient interpreters could not have identified him as the Davidic Messiah. But the prophet-*or*-Davidic-Messiah dichotomy is a false one. The Davidic Messiah in Isa 11 is, like prophets, endowed with Yahweh’s Spirit (vv. 2-5; cp. Ezek 11:5: ותפל עלי רוח יהוה ויאמר אלי אומר כה־אמר יהוה). And even more significantly, king David was widely regarded, within Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity, as a prophet.⁹⁴ Ancient interpreters familiar with this tradition would have had good rationale for expecting David’s successor, “the root of Jesse” and “son of David”, to be similarly endowed with prophetic abilities. Hence, there is no reason to suppose that Q’s interest in Isa 61:1-3 implies that Jesus had been envisaged as a non-royal, strictly prophetic Messiah. The arguments offered in this thesis for seeing Jesus in Q as a royal Messiah stand and should be taken as a presupposition for

⁹² The priestly composition of the Qumran community is widely recognised. See, e.g., Kugler, “Priesthood”, 93-116; Fabry, “Priests”, 243-62.

⁹³ 1 Kgs 19:16 is often cited as counter evidence to this point. But תמַשַׁח here is likely influenced by the anointing of Hazael and Jehu, two kings. When Elijah designates Elisha as his successor in vv. 19-21 the former does not physically anoint the latter (ctr. 2 Kgs 9:6) but only places his mantle on him. The term תמַשַׁח in v. 16 is therefore best understood metaphorically and should be translated “appoint.” Ps 105:15 (||1 Chron 16:22) is also sometimes cited as evidence of prophetic anointing. But here “prophets” and “anointed ones” refer to the Patriarchs. Also, the parallelism may not be synonymous but synthetic, in which case the verse could be taken to mean that some of the Patriarchs were anointed as kings or priests while others were prophets; or, it could be taken to mean that some, like David, were both kings and prophets (see below for more on David’s status as prophet). In other words, the parallelism does not necessarily identify the offices.

⁹⁴ E.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 6.166 + 7.391; *Pss. Sol.* 17.43; 18.7-8; Mark 12:36; Acts 2:29-30; also *Tg. Neb. at 2 Sam.* 23:1-2, 11; *Tg. 1 Chron.* 22:7-8; 11QPs^a xxvii 11; *b. Sot.* 48b. For the biblical basis for this view, see 1 Sam 16:13; 23:1-2. Solomon was similarly remembered as a prophet: cf. *Tg. 1 Kgs.* 5:13 [ET 4:33]; *Tg. Ps.* 72:1. See further, Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 447-48.

any further considerations about how the Q redactor(s) understood the anointed figure in Isa 61:1.

4. Son of man:⁹⁵ The Son of man concept has been extensively debated.⁹⁶ It is doubtful that a consensus will ever be reached as to how the expression, in its original Aramaic or Hebrew, would have been most naturally understood in Judea and Galilee of the first century C.E., whether the historical Jesus ever actually used the expression, or, if he did, what he personally meant by it. I am not so much concerned here with the historical Jesus, however, but with Q.

Some have suggested that the so-called “eschatological the Son of man” sayings, preserved in Q and elsewhere, originally referred to someone other than Jesus himself.⁹⁷ Many of these sayings are at least capable of such an interpretation (e.g. Q 12:8; 17:24, 26; Q/Matt 19:28; Q/Luke 12:8-9; Mark 8:38 (||Luke 9:26); 14:62); but none actually requires it and the evidence points very much against it. The Gospel writers all take for granted that Jesus and the person he refers to as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου are one and the same person:

Q/Luke 6:22: “the Son of man” (||Q/MattR 5:11: “me”).

⁹⁵ Most authors accept that Q attests some form of a “Son of man” christology. But among those who see it as very central to Q’s christology are Lohmeyer, *Das Urchristentum*, 159; Hoffmann, *Logionquelle*, 200; Becker, *Johannes der Täufer*, 35; Luz, *Matthew 1-7* on 3:11-12; cf. Kraeling, *Baptist*, 57.

⁹⁶ Among the more influential works on the subject are probably Tödt, *Son of Man*; Vielhauer, *Aufsätze*; Frederick Borsch, *Son of Man*; idem, *Gnostic Son of Man*; Casey, *Son of Man*; idem, *Solution*; Colpe, “ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου,” 400-77; Vermes, “Use”, 310-28; idem, *Jew*, 137-165; Perrin, *Pilgrimage*; Lindars, *Son of Man*; Caragounis, *Son of Man*; Burkett, *Son of Man*; Adela Yarbro Collins and Collins, *Son of God*, 75-100; Adela Yarbro Collins, “Daniel and Jesus”, 92-96; idem, “Origin of the Designation”, 391-407; Collins, “Son of Man”, 460-61; Hurtado and Owen (eds.), *Son of Man*. For more extensive bibliography, see Arland Hultgren, *Christology*, 174-204; Burkett, *Son of Man*, 126-161.

⁹⁷ See, e.g., Bultmann, *Theology*, 1.28-31; idem, *History*, 112, 122, 128, 151-152; Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 200; Yarbro Collins, “Origins of the Designation”, 391-408; Lindars, *Son of Man*; Tödt, *Son of Man*, Fuller, *Christology*; etc.

Q/Luke 12:8: “the Son of man” (||Q/MattR 10:32: “I”).

Mark 8:27: “I” (||MattR 16:13: “the Son of man”).

Mark 8:31: “the Son of man must suffer”

Mark 8:31: “the Son of man” (||MattR 16:21: “he”).

Luke 22:69: “Judas, would you betray the Son of man with a kiss?”

John 3:13: “No man has ascended to heaven but he who descended from heaven, even the Son of man...”

It is true that the evangelists often redact Son of man sayings in their sources precisely because they are ambiguous and the evangelists are trying to clarify that the person being referred to is, in fact, Jesus. Nevertheless, their redactions are purely literary in concern; there is no suggestion that the evangelists were engaged in a debate with others as to the identity of “the Son of man.” We find, in these redacted sayings, none of the usual marks of persons embroiled in a serious debate. If the evangelists knew of a tradition that differentiated Jesus from the Son of man they show no obvious interest in confronting it. And as far as Q is concerned, Allison poignantly remarks: “if Jesus is ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in Q 7:34; 9:58, this is sufficient cause to make that identification elsewhere in Q, at least for any stage that included those sayings.”⁹⁸

The main reason for suspecting that Jesus’ Son of man sayings originally referred to someone other than Jesus is the fact that Jesus speaks these sayings in the third person. But Son of man sayings are not unique in this regard. Jesus also speaks of himself as “the Son” (Q 10:21-22; Mark 13:32), “a prophet” (Mark 6:4; Luke 13:33), and “Master” (Matt 10:24-25). Hence, there is no reason to assume that his Son of man sayings are something other than self-referential simply

⁹⁸ Allison, *Constructing*, 294 n. 307. But Allison’s further suggestion that Jesus referred to the Son of man in the third person because he had in mind his “celestial twin”, which he considered his “true self”, is highly speculative and unnecessary.

because they are spoken in the third person. The exact reason for why Jesus spoke of himself in the third person is not immediately obvious. But perhaps he did this for one or both of the following reasons: (1) in order not to sound too pretentious when making significant claims about himself (this explanation would apply not just to Son of man sayings but others also spoken in the third person); and (2) in order to evoke the figure of Dan 7:13-14 (as we shall now see).

One possible background for the Son of man expression, as it is used in Q, is the well known passage in Dan 7:13-14 where the prophet refers to “[one] like a son of man” (כִּבְרֵ אֱנוֹשׁ / ὁ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου). In this passage the Son of man figure comes on (or with) the clouds, is brought before the Ancient of Days, and is given “dominion, glory, and a kingdom.” Virtually all scholars agree that this biblical text is alluded to in some of Jesus’ sayings found in Mark and the other Gospels (e.g. Mark 13:26 *par.*; 14:62||Matt 26:64). But many insist that Q’s use of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου was distinctive: it shows no connection with Dan 7.⁹⁹ Not all scholars accept this view, however. Christopher Tuckett concedes that, “Q has no verbal or explicit reference to Dan. 7 (apart from the use of the phrase ‘SM’ itself”¹⁰⁰). Nevertheless, he argues that some Son of man sayings in Q cohere with exegetical traditions found in other works (e.g. *Sim.* 61; *4 Ezra* 13) where the Danielic Son of man is envisaged as a representative of the suffering saints and as an apocalyptic metaphor for their ultimate triumph over their persecutors at the final judgment. Tuckett draws special attention to Q 22:30, claiming that this text effectively democratizes the Son of man concept as it is found elsewhere in Q.¹⁰¹ In this saying it is no longer the Son of man

⁹⁹ Casey, *Son of Man*, esp. 194; Vaage, “Son of Man”, here 126; Jacobson, “Apocalyptic”, 416; James M. Robinson, “Son of Man”, 315-35, esp. 326-27.

¹⁰⁰ Tuckett, “Inclusive Aspects”, 164-190.

¹⁰¹ Tuckett, “Inclusive Aspects”, 175-177.

as an individual who executes judgment¹⁰² but his twelve disciples (whom Tuckett apparently takes as representatives of all the persecuted saints). Tuckett finds a similar theme of representation in other texts which likewise connect the Danielic Son of man with his followers (Q 6:22-23; 7:34; 9:58) and concludes that Son of man christology in Q “is not one that serves to distinguish Jesus from all other human beings. Both as ‘earthly SM’ and as ‘eschatological/coming SM’, Jesus and his followers are seen to be united.”¹⁰³

Tuckett is undoubtedly correct that the themes of suffering, judgment, and representation, which are implicit in many Q sayings, find their conceptual and exegetical background in Dan 7. But I would maintain that he takes the theme of representation too far. In 22:30 Jesus’ individuality is not absorbed into the Twelve any more than the individuality of the Twelve is absorbed into all believers. Jesus/the Son of man is still presented here an individual who appoints his disciples to serve as judges. As such, he is necessarily still distinct from them and still implicitly their superior since he bestows rulership or judicial authority upon them. To be a representative of a group is not to be identical with it. There is an enormous difference between being identified *with* and being identified *as* another.¹⁰⁴ Tuckett himself admits that

in Q, as in *1 Enoch*, the SM figure seems to be a single individual. Q gives no indication that the term ‘SM’ itself refers to anyone other than to Jesus (e.g. to a corporate group of Jesus and his followers). Indeed, a saying like Q 12.8 effectively demands such an individual interpretation, since it is the follower of Jesus (‘whoever confesses me’) who is the object of the activity of the ‘SM’ (‘the SM will confess him/her’), and hence cannot be the subject as well. So too in 6.22, a corporate interpretation seems equally unlikely. Jesus’ followers are persecuted for the sake of him as SM, not in any sense for the sake of themselves!¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² As, e.g. in Q 12:40; 17:24, 26; cf. 12:8-9, 43-46; 19:12-26.

¹⁰³ Tuckett, “Inclusive Aspects”, 176.

¹⁰⁴ This is something that was driven home to me by my Ph.D. supervisor Todd Klutz since I would often refer, inexactly, to John the Baptist as being identified *with* rather than *as* Elijah.

¹⁰⁵ Tuckett, “Inclusive Aspects”, 179.

These admissions, as far as I can see, undermine Tuckett's other claim that Son of man christology in Q "is not one that serves to distinguish Jesus from all other human beings."

Throughout Q the Son of man is clearly distinct from and superior to his disciples. One could, perhaps, argue that this is not *by virtue of him being the Son of man*. But that argument would depend largely on whether one thinks the allusions to Dan 7 in Q were meant to have any messianic connotations. If that is the case, it would be hard to argue that the Danielic allusions did not serve to differentiate Jesus from his disciples and indeed the rest of humanity.

I would approach this matter somewhat differently than Tuckett. I agree with him that Q often uses ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in contexts concerned with suffering and in this respect its usage of the phrase coheres with other exegetical traditions that connect the Danielic Son of man figure with the suffering saints mentioned in Dan 7:19-27. But I am not convinced that these traditions also regard the Danielic Son of man figure as being so "united" with these suffering saints as to be identical with them or to be their equal. Within these traditions the Son of man is, of course, always united with the saints in some sense but he is also envisaged as being both superior to and distinct from them, as I shall now demonstrate.

The Enochic *Similitudes* (first century C.E.¹⁰⁶) introduce a "Son of man" figure with Danielic imagery in ch. 46 and he becomes the main protagonist of the Second and Third Similitudes (chaps. 45-69).¹⁰⁷ In other texts the figure is alternatively referred to as "the Chosen One"¹⁰⁸ and

¹⁰⁶ On dating the *Similitudes*, see Charlesworth, "Composition Date", 450-68; idem, "Date and Provenience", in Charlesworth and Bock, *Parables*, 37-57. Knibb, "Date," 350; *Tradition and Composition*, 32. See also the articles dealing with the topic in Boccaccini (ed.), *Enoch*, 415-96; Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *I Enoch* 2, 58-63.

¹⁰⁷ The "Son of man" terminology, at least in the extant Ethiopic text, is not consistent: *walda sab'* (≈ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου: 46.2, 3, 4; 48.2; 60.10); *walda be'esi* (≈ υἱὸς ἄνδρος/ἀνθρώπου: 62.5; 69.29b, 29e; 71.14); *walda 'egwalda 'emaḥeyāw* ("son of the offspring of the mother of the living/Eve": 62.7, 9, 14; 63.11; 69.26, 27; 70.1; 71.17). Nevertheless, according to Nickelsburg (*I Enoch* 2, 114), "all three expressions can comfortably be understood as translation variants of a common Greek υἱὸς (τοῦ) ἀνθρώπου ("son of [the] man"), which would likely reflect an earlier Aramaic בר אַנְשׁ (*bar 'enaš*). Thus, most translations (appropriately) render the various terms uniformly as "Son of man." Casey (*Solution*, 93-94) notes that the Ethiopic translation of the Four Gospels

“his Messiah.”¹⁰⁹ He is clearly an individual Messiah.¹¹⁰ The language of Dan 7 is also invoked throughout chapters 47-51 and here the Son of man figure is certainly united *in the cause* of the persecuted saints and executes judgment on their behalf. Nevertheless, both here and throughout the *Similitudes* he remains distinct from them.¹¹¹ Given his supernatural powers and prerogatives he is also clearly their superior.¹¹²

consistently translates ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου as *walda 'egwalda 'emaḥeyāw*. All this really proves is that the “Son of man” phrase in *1 Enoch* was not translated into Ethiopic on the basis of New Testament usage. Casey labors the point that Son of man in the *Similitudes* is not a tittle. This may be the case but it would be a *non-sequitur* to infer from this, as Casey seems to do, that the author of *Similitudes* had not interpreted the Son of man figure in Dan 7 as the Messiah.

¹⁰⁸ 39.6; 40.5; 45.3, 4; 49.2, 4; 51.5a, 3; 52.6, 9; 53.6; 55.4; 61.5, 8, 10; 62.1.

¹⁰⁹ 48.10; 52.4; cf. also 62.2 where the verb “poured out” is plausibly an allusion to his anointing. For the various titles given to the Son of man figure, see Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 113-123; also VanderKam, “Righteous One”, 169-191.

¹¹⁰ Aside from the explicit term “Messiah”, the term “the Chosen One” (cf. Isa 42:1) also functions as a messianic title for this figure, as is evident from the intertext with Isa 11:2, 4 at 62.2; 49.3-4. The Son of man is made to sit on a “glorious throne” and has subjects worshipping him like a (messianic) king (48.5). Indeed, the pervasive theme in the *Similitudes* of the Son of man executing the final judgment (e.g. 51.3; 55.4; 61.8; 62.2; 69.29) is most plausibly a kind of midrashic reflection on Isa 11:1-5. Apparently, Casey (*Solution*, 91-111) sees nothing exegetically significant about the fact that the “Son of man” phrase is used in connection with various messianic titles and texts, or that it is used in connection with other phrases and ideas found in Dan 7. But all of this can surely only imply that the author of the *Similitudes* had interpreted the figure in Dan 7:13-14 as the Messiah.

¹¹¹ Cf. 48.2-7; 51.5a+2; 53.6; 62.7-8, 13-15; 69.26-29.

¹¹² Cf. 48.5; 49.2-4; 51.3; 52.4-9; 55.4; 61.6-62. In 71:14 the identification of Enoch with “that Son of man” has perplexed many interpreters. How could Enoch, a human being with a genealogical record (Gen 5:18-24), be identical with the pre-existent (48.2, 8), heavenly figure of the *Similitudes*? Nothing is said of the latter figure’s earthly existence. And aside from 71.14 the *Similitudes* always presumes a subject-object distinction between this figure and Enoch (e.g. 46.1-6). Furthermore, in 70.1-2 Enoch is said to be raised “into the presence of that Son of man.” This indicates unequivocally that the two figures are distinct. However, some (e.g. Casey, *Son of Man*, 105; idem, *Solution*, 107-108; Olson, “Epilogue”, 27-38; idem, “Revisited”, 233-40) appeal to a variant reading in some mss which omit *baxabu* (“into the presence of”). This variant reading could allow the verse to be translated: “the name of that Son of man was raised while he was still alive to the Lord of Spirits.” While this variant would not conflict so blatantly with 71.14 it would not indicate that Enoch and the Son of man figure were seen as identical either. If 71.14 was indeed original to the *Similitudes* it would mean that the patriarch Enoch had been identified as the Messiah (see n. 110). Such a view might not be inconceivable but it would at least be without parallel in Second Temple Judaism. In the final analysis, the best explanation for the unexpected remark in ch. 71.14 is probably that ch. 71 is a later interpolation, added by an editor with views similar to those found in other Enochic traditions where the patriarch Enoch is identified as Metatron, a heavenly angelic figure (e.g. *2 En.* 22; *3 En.*). On ch. 71 as a later expansion, see the discussion in Nickelsburg, “Structure(s),” 43; Knibb, “Structure”, 63; Nickelsburg-VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 330-32; Collins, “Response”, 216-27, esp. 221-27. For further discussion of the Enoch-Metatron identification and its possible roots in Second Temple Judaism, see Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

In *4 Ezra* 13.1-13 the prophet Ezra sees a vision featuring a mysterious man-like figure who is, once more, readily associated with the Son of man figure in Dan 7. We are told that “a wind arose from the sea and stirred up all its waves”; after “the wind made something like the figure of a man¹¹³ come up out of the heart of the sea” (vv. 2-3) and that this figure “flew with the clouds of heaven” (v. 3). A good bit of the language and the ideas here are unmistakably derived from Dan 7. The man-like figure is implicitly identified as the Davidic Messiah in v. 10 with language derived from Isa 11:4. The peaceful people in 13.12-13 are implicitly the saints who have suffered under the rule of the wicked (cf. v. 23). The man-like figure delivers them by defeating the wicked. He is obviously united with them yet he is also distinct and superior to them.

The vision in *4 Ezra* 13.1-13 might not have been composed by the author of *4 Ezra* himself. Michael E. Stone argues that it was an earlier composition that the author of *4 Ezra* incorporated into his work and interpreted in vv. 21-52.¹¹⁴ Thus, the interpretation can, perhaps, be taken as another example of how the Danielic Son of man was interpreted in the first century C.E.¹¹⁵ The author’s familiarity with Dan 7 was already evident in 12.11. But now, after presenting the vision in 13.1-13, he interprets the man-like figure from that vision as the Messiah. He had actually prepared the reader for this interpretation in 12.31-34 when he described “the Messiah” as a pre-existent being (cf. 13.26), as someone who would execute judgment against the wicked by means

¹¹³ The Latin text here omits the key clause here about the man-like figure due to homoioteleuton. See Syriac: “this wind made *something like the figure of a man* (‘ēyḵ ḏ’ mūtā ḏ’ barnāšā) come up out of the heart of the sea” (RSV). Casey (*Solution*, 112) puts more stock in the Latin (*homo*) and the Ethiopic (*be’esi*), and sees *barnāšā* as a translation not of υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου but of ἄνθρωπος, which would have corresponded to מֶלֶךְ in the original Hebrew. But he fails to discuss or explain other intertextual links with Dan 7, both in the vision and the interpretation. These links leave no doubt that the figure being described and commented upon has been constructed, at least in part, from the vision of the “one like a son of man” in Dan 7:13-14.

¹¹⁴ See Michael E. Stone, *Features of the Eschatology of 4 Ezra* (HSS 35; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 123-125; idem, “The Concept of the Messiah in IV Ezra”, *Religions in Antiquity, Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough* (ed. Jacob Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 305-6; idem, “The Messiah in 4 Ezra”, *Judaisms and Their Messiahs* (ed. Jacob Neusner; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987), 213; idem, *Fourth Ezra* 253.

¹¹⁵ So too Collins, “Son of Man”, 461-63.

of his powerful voice (cf. 13.33-38), and as someone who would save his dispersed remnant (cf. 13.39-50). In the interpretation itself, the man-like figure is referred to three times—at least in the Latin and Syriac—as God’s “Son” (vv. 32, 37, 52; also in 7.28).¹¹⁶ This may be a messianic title derived from Ps 2:7.¹¹⁷ Alternatively, it may just be a faulty translation of παῖς. In that case, the term would likely have identified the man-like figure as the (יהוה) עבד from the book of Isaiah who restores the tribes of Israel (cf. Isa 49:6).¹¹⁸ This “servant” figure was identified as the Messiah in other writings. Apropos of this, Ezra is told that the man-like figure he saw in the vision “will himself deliver his [God’s] creation” (vv. 25-26), that is, the twelve tribes of Israel (vv. 39-49). Here we can once more see a clear distinction between the man-like figure and the suffering saints. He is certainly identified and united *with* them in one sense but remains distinct from and superior to them in another.

As in the *Similitudes* and *4 Ezra*, Q often refers to the Son of man figure in contexts dealing with the final judgment (12:8-9, 39-40; 17:22-25, 26-30; Q/Matt 19:28). This, in itself, already suggests that the phrase is being influenced by Dan 7:13-14 where we read of a υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου figure being similarly involved in or at least associated with the final judgment (cf. Dan 7:9-10, 22, 26). Contra Tuckett, I would suggest that, in addition to the Son of man phrase, there is a verbal reference to Dan 7 whenever ἔρχομαι is used in connection the phrase with ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ

¹¹⁶ Lat: *filius meus* (*Jesus/Christus*); Syr: (משיח) ברי; Arab¹: *wldy 'lmsyh*, “my Son the Messiah” (7.28), *qt'y*, “my flesh/offspring” (13.32, 37, 52; 14.9); Arab²: *qt'y* (13.32, 37, 52 [ms B]). But ctr. Eth: *masiḥeya*, “the Messiah” (7.28); *q'el'ēya masiḥeya*, “my servant the Messiah” (7.29), and Arab²: *'bdy*, “my servant” (13.52; 14.9). Ctr. also Georg, Arab², Arm, Sah, all of which omit the “Son” reference in 7.28 while these authorities and Ar¹ omit it in 7.29. See the chart in Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 208.

¹¹⁷ So, e.g., Collins, “Son of Man”, 462-63; idem, “Psalm 2”, 61-62. See also Knibb and Coggins, *Esdras*, on 7.28. Collins notes the rage of the heathen and the man-like figure’s perch upon “Mount Zion” in vv. 33-38.

¹¹⁸ See, e.g., Jeremias, “παῖς θεοῦ,” 682; Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 207). The Latin and Syriac read “Son” but other versions suggest that this may have translated the Greek word παῖς (“son/servant”) which had itself been the translation of an earlier Hebrew עבד (“servant”).

ἀνθρώπου (12:40; Q/Matt 24:27, 37, 39; cf. also 12:43, 46, 49; 19:23); for in Dan 7:13 this verb is likewise associated with the son of man figure:

LXX: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἦρχετο

Θ': καὶ ἰδοὺ μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενος ἦν

The apparent conceptual and verbal links with Dan 7:13-14 in many of Q's Son of man sayings are relevant to our study of Q's christology because—as we have already seen to some extent in the above comments on the *Similitudes* and *4 Ezra*—there were at least some Jews living in the first century and beyond, and several early Christian authors, who identified this Danielic figure as the Davidic Messiah.¹¹⁹ It is really not so surprising that a messianic interpretation of the Danielic figure should have developed by the first century C.E. In the book of Daniel this mysterious figure succeeds four other kings (Dan 7:17), and is granted universal dominion. He is therefore a royal figure whose dominion parallels that of the Davidic Messiah in Ps 2:¹²⁰

Dan 7:14 And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an

Ps 2:7 I will tell of the decree of Yahweh: He said to me, “You are my son, today I have begotten you. **8** Ask of me, and I will make the

¹¹⁹ See further Collins, “Son of Man”, 448-466; Horbury, “Messianic Associations,” 144-151. Aside from the *Similitudes* and *4 Ezra*, one could also argue that a messianic interpretation of the Danielic Son of man can be found in *Sib. Or.* 5.414-33 (early 2nd cent. C.E.) and 4Q246 (1st cent. B.C.E.). On the former text, see Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 84, 102-103. On the latter text, see Collins, “Son of God Text,” 69-73; idem, *Son of God*, 71-73; Zimmermann, *Messianische Texte*, 164-168; Knibb, “Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha”, 174-77 [= idem, *Essays*, 316-19]; idem, “Eschatology”, 2.393-96 [= idem, *Essays*, 341-44]). In the synoptic Gospels Jesus is clearly identified as the Danielic Son of man at Mark 13:26 *par.*; 14:62 (||Matt 26:64). The references to “the clouds of heaven” make the Danielic allusion unmistakable. And in Mark 14:62 (||Matt 26:64), Jesus is answering a question put to him as to whether he is “the Christ, the Son of the Blessed”, so it would appear that “the Son of man” has been taken—either by Jesus himself or the evangelist—as a (quasi-)messianic title. For messianic interpretations of Dan 7:13-14 in rabbinic literature, see *b. Sanh.* 98a; *Num. Rab.* 13.14; *Agg. Ber.* 14.3; 23.1.

¹²⁰ Ps 2 was widely understood as speaking of the Davidic Messiah. See Collins, “Psalm 2”, 49-66.

everlasting dominion, shall not pass away, and his kingdom one shall not be destroyed.

nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

The Danielic Son of man's close association with the final judgment—which is emphasised in the *Similitudes*, *4 Ezra*, *Q*, and the canonical Gospels—could also have been linked quite easily with the statement about the Davidic Messiah in Isa 11:3b-4a:

Dan 7:9 As I looked, thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat; ... **10** A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened... **13** I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

Isa 11:3 He shall not judge by what his eyes see, decide by what his ears hear; **4** but with righteousness he shall judge the poor (וְשָׁפֵט בְּצֶדֶק (דָּלִים), and decide with equity for the meek of the earth (וְהוֹכִיחַ בְּמִישׁוֹר לְעַגְוֵי־אֶרֶץ).

At least in *Q*, then, there is no warrant for drawing a hard-fast distinction between “the Son of man” and the Davidic Messiah. The two were likely seen as identical.

Aside from the fact that ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in *Q* shows literary and thematic connections with *Dan 7*, a chapter that seems to have been understood by some in the first century in a messianic sense, a messianic interpretation of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in *Q* is likely implied by the phrase, “the days of the Son of man” (17:26; cf. also v. 24). This phrase compares nicely with “the days of the Messiah” (יְמֵי הַמָּשִׁיחַ), a frequently occurring rabbinic expression.¹²¹ In this case “the Son of man” appears to have been used as an alternative for the title “the Messiah.”

¹²¹ E.g. *m. Ber.* 1.5; *b. Ber.* 12b; 34b; *b. Zeb.* 118b; *b. Ar.* 13b (||*Pesiq. R.* 21.1); *b. Shab.* 63a; *b. Pes.* 68a; *b. Sanh.* 91b; 97a-b; 99a; cf. also *1 En.* 61.5: “the day of the Chosen One” = the Messiah; *4 Ezra* 13.52: “the time of his [the Son’s] day.” See Klausner, *Idea*, 408-426.

Appendix F: Critique of Clare K. Rothschild's *Baptist Traditions and Q*

At many points in this thesis I have examined texts which one scholar or another has identified as Baptist source material. Clare K. Rothschild has taken this approach to a new extreme, arguing that in its most primitive form “Q” contained Baptist traditions exclusively. That is to say, she proposes that all the sayings in Q that are now ascribed to Jesus were once ascribed to John. She lays out her case for this remarkable hypothesis in the third chapter of her monograph, *Baptist Traditions and Q*. As support, she points to three main pieces of evidence:

(1) *double attribution* or the attribution of certain sayings to John in Q, to Jesus elsewhere in the Synoptics; (2) *contradictions* between Jesus' sayings in and outside of Q; and (3) *thematic continuity* between Q sayings and Baptist traditions...¹²²

The problems with Rothschild's hypothesis are legion. Here I shall examine and offer criticisms against the three basic arguments she has listed here, taking them each in turn.

1. Double attribution of sayings

As part of her first argument, Rothschild points out that certain sayings attributed to John in Q are attributed to Jesus in the synoptic Gospels:

Attributed to John in Q

Attributed to Jesus in the synoptics

¹²² Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 83.

Q 3:7 γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν
φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;

Q 3:9 πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν
καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται.

Matt 12:34 γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, πῶς δύνασθε ἀγαθὰ
λαλεῖν πονηροὶ ὄντες; ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς
καρδίας τὸ στόμα λαλεῖ.

Matt 23:33 ὄφεις, γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, πῶς φύγητε
ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς γεέννης;

Matt 7:19 πᾶν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν
ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται.

Rothschild adds that Matt 23:33 falls within a larger section of 23:2-39 which contains much Q material (= Q 11:39a, 42, 39b, 41, 43-44; 11:46b, 52, 47-48; 11:49-51; 13:34-35).¹²³ She concludes that the sayings attributed to Jesus in Matt 7:19; 12:34 and 23:33 were, like Q 3:7, 9, taken from Q. The Q redactors chose to attribute these sayings to Jesus even though they knew they had previously been attributed to John.

Against Rothschild, there is no compelling reason to think that the three above-mentioned texts from Matthew's Gospel were derived from Q. The sayings only appear in Matthew's Gospel and are most easily regarded as Matthean redaction. Matthew was probably influenced by the rhetorically powerful language of Q 3:7-9 and applied some of the language and ideas that he found there to Jesus. Alternatively, the historical Jesus may have really been influenced by John's preaching and appropriated certain "Johannine" motifs into his own teaching.¹²⁴

Rothschild also observes that the introduction to THE LORD'S PRAYER in Luke's Gospel has the disciples asking Jesus: "Lord, teach us to pray, *just as John also taught his disciples*" (καθὼς καὶ Ἰωάννης ἐδίδαξεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ) (Luke 11:1).¹²⁵ This saying is not actually part of the

¹²³ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 86.

¹²⁴ This is the explanation offered by Allison, "Continuity", 6-27.

¹²⁵ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 86-87.

“double tradition” since it is not attested in Matthew’s Gospel. And in Luke’s Gospel it is spoken by Jesus. Nevertheless, Rothschild proposes that in Q the prayer was originally attributed to John. Matthew’s omitted the introductory material precisely for this reason whereas Luke chose to alter it.

The obvious problem here is that neither Matthew nor Luke actually attribute the saying to John. Nor is it even correct to claim, as Rothschild does, that the saying is unattributed in Matthew’s Gospel; for the entire SERMON ON THE MOUNT is attributed to Jesus (cf. Matt 4:17; 5:1; 7:28). In composing this “sermon” Matthew and the Q redactor before him probably made use of several independently circulating sayings but removed or adjusted redundant elements that had once served to introduce these sayings (e.g. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς). The omission of superfluous elements such as these would have made Jesus’ “sermon” flow and cohere better. Luke’s introduction does not suggest, as Rothschild contends, that the prayer had been originally attributed to John. It simply portrays John as someone who had taught his disciples to pray (Luke 5:33).

2. Contradictions between Jesus’ sayings in and outside of Q

a. A feasting Jesus and a fasting John in the synoptics vs. a fasting Jesus in Q¹²⁶

The synoptics

Jesus is known to feast (Mark 2:15-17 *par.*; Mark 2:18-22 *par.*; Matt 11:19; Luke 15:2; John 2:1-11).

Q

Jesus fasts and exhorts others to do the same (Q 4:2; 6:21a; 11:3; 12:22b-24, 29, 45-46). It is Jesus’

¹²⁶ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 89-92.

On the other hand, John *is* known to fast (Mark 1:6 || Matt 3:4; Mark 2:18 *par.*). opponents who are said to “eat and drink” (13:26-27; 17:26-27, 28-29, 30).

Rothschild infers that the portrayal of Jesus in Q as someone who fasts is secondary. Originally, the sayings in the Q column here were spoken about or attributed to John, not Jesus.

None of Rothschild’s examples in the Q column here is actually apposite to her argument. (This is a recurring problem in her book.) The only example here in which Jesus is actually said to fast is Q 4:2 and in this case the fasting is done on a single occasion at the outset of his ministry. This hardly conflicts with the portrayal of a “feasting Jesus” such as we find in the synoptics. Moreover, the sayings in Q 7:34 and Q/Matt 22:28, 30 cohere quite well with what we find in the synoptics in that they characterise Jesus as someone who feasts rather than as someone who fasts.

b. An urban Jesus and a rural John in the synoptics vs. a rural Jesus in Q¹²⁷

The synoptics

Jesus ministers in urban centres like Galilee (Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44; Matt 4:23), Capernaum (Mark 1:21-22; Luke 4:31-32), Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6a; Luke 4:16-30; Matt 13:53-58), and Jerusalem (cf. Matt 11:1).

Q

Jesus waxes eloquently on life outside of cities (Q 9:58; 10:3, 4, 5-9; 12:22b-31, 33-34, 54-56; 14:27; 15:4-5a, 7; 17:1-2, 23-24, 37). Jesus even pronounces judgments against Chorazin and Bethsaida (10:13), as well as Capernaum (10:15). Jesus also speaks negatively about certain “urban establishments” like the *avgora*, (7:32; 11:43),

¹²⁷ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 92-93.

the law courts and prisons (12:58-59), and the
platei/a (10:10?; 13:26).

Rothschild alleges that this contradictory portrayal of Jesus in the synoptics and Q implies that the sayings attributed to him in Q were originally attributed to John. But most of the texts she cites in the Q column do not support her argument. The only exception here might be Q 9:58 (“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.”). Contra Rothschild, this saying need not be taken to imply that the speaker had lived a purely itinerant and rural way of life. It only suggests that he had no home of his own. Nor is it necessary to see Jesus’ remarks about “urban establishments” or his denunciations of certain cities as a repudiation of city life as such. His comments are about people, not places. Moreover, these sayings suggest a certain familiarity with city life on the part of the speaker and in that respect do not suggest that he was a committed rustic. The pronouncements against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum suggest that the speaker had been personally rejected when visiting these cities.¹²⁸

c. A Jesus with family associations in the synoptics vs. a Jesus detached from family in Q¹²⁹

The synoptics

Jesus associates with family and some of his disciples are siblings (e.g. Luke 5:10; Mark 1:29-

Q

Jesus encourages the dismantling of familial ties (e.g. Q 9:57-60; 12:53; 14:26-27; 17:33).

¹²⁸ In this sense the 10:13-15 would be more appropriately attributed to Jesus than John. On Jesus’ evangelistic travels into various cities, see Flowers, “Jesus’ ‘Journey’,” 158-185.

¹²⁹ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 93-94.

31; 3:21, 31-35; 6:3; John 19:26-27).

John, as Rothschild puts it, “leaves family and other filial connections and exhorts others to do so too (e.g. Mark 1:2-6; Luke 3:1-6; Matt 3:1-6; Matt 3:1-6).”

Rothschild suggests that the characterization of Jesus in Q here was originally that of John. But the Jesus of the synoptics and the Jesus of Q are not really so far removed. I find it particularly unconvincing that Rothschild cites Mark 3:31-35 *par.* as *support* for her view about the synoptics portraying Jesus as someone who encouraged family associations:

Mark 3:31 And his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him. **32** And a crowd was sitting about him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you.” **33** And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” **34** And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! **35** Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Rothschild claims that in this passage Jesus “simply redefines the community of his followers as mothers, brothers and sisters, *reinforcing* his commitment to them and to family structures in general.”¹³⁰ But if he is redefining the family can he really be seen as encouraging family associations?

No more convincing is the way Rothschild handles the following texts in the synoptics:

¹³⁰ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 94 n. 46. Emphasis original.

Mark 1:20 And immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and followed him.

Mark 6:4 And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.”

Rothschild dismisses the problem posed by the former verse. While James and John abandon their father Jesus does not seek to dismantle the family altogether. Rather, he seeks to preserve it to some extent by choosing two brothers. Rothschild also dismisses Mark 6:4 but does not attempt to explain why it has no bearing on this issue of Jesus’ attitude toward family.¹³¹

d. In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus allows divorce in the case of *pornei* , a but in Q he allows no exceptions at all¹³²

Matthew’s Gospel

Matt 5:31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’

32 But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

Matt 19:6 “So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let

Q

Q 16:18 Every one who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery. (cf. also Mark 10:11-12)

¹³¹ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 94 n. 46.

¹³² Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 94.

not man put asunder.” 7 They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” 8 He said to them, “For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery.”

Rothschild suggests that this contradiction results from the fact that Q 16:18 was originally a Baptist saying whereas Jesus’ teaching on divorce, which is faithfully preserved in Matt 5:31 and 19:6, differed slightly from John’s.

A more plausible explanation here is that Matthew’s version of this saying is redactional. The evangelist has inserted the exception clause into the saying because he did not understand Jesus’ statement, which he knew from both Q and Mark, as an absolute prohibition against divorce.

e. Jesus’ willingness to display miracles in the synoptics vs. Jesus’ polemic against those who seek signs in Q¹³³

According to Rothschild, the Jesus of Q is quite averse to performing miracles. Note especially Q 11:29: “This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” This saying is difficult to reconcile with the miracle-working Jesus in the four Gospels. It would fit better, according to Rothschild, with the portrait

¹³³ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 94-97.

of John. For in Q, the Gospels, and Josephus the Baptist is not said to have worked any miracles (cf. esp. John 10:41).¹³⁴ Again, if THE TEMPTATION in Q was originally a story about *John* rather than Jesus this would help explain why Jesus refuses to perform any miracles (4:2-4, 9-12). It would not fit with Jesus' reputation as a miracle worker.

It is interesting to see how Rothschild deals with other stories and sayings in Q which do, in fact, envisage Jesus as a miracle worker. She struggles with how to deal with the healing story of centurion's child/servant in Q 7:1-10. If this story had originally been about the Baptist would it not, on Rothschild's hypothesis, suggest John was a miracle worker? Rothschild quite unconvincingly dismisses the story, claiming it to be "noteworthy for its lack of the marvellous."¹³⁵ She also dismisses Luke 11:14 ("Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marvelled") on similar grounds, even though the story ends with the words, "And the crowds marvelled." Rothschild also has to reckon with 10:9 where Jesus commands his disciples to "heal the sick" in the cities and villages where they are sent. Again, in 7:22 Jesus points to several of his miracles: "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up." In the end, Rothschild is forced to admit that "John performed some healings, miracles, or exorcisms"¹³⁶ and that this is why miracles are occasionally mentioned in Q. But in making this admission she undermines her argument since she can no longer offer a clear basis for attributing anti-miracle sayings to John rather than to Jesus. If a miracle-working John could polemicize against miracles then a miracle-working Jesus could do so as well.

¹³⁴ Q 3:7-9+16-17; Luke 3:10-14; John 10:41; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116-118.

¹³⁵ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 95.

¹³⁶ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 95 n. 52.

3. Thematic continuity between Q sayings and Baptist traditions¹³⁷

Rothschild also points to Q's thematic unity as evidence that it was originally a Baptist work: "Despite the paucity of evidence in the NT about John, *all of the major themes of Q can be connected to his few traditions.*" Rothschild cites the following texts as illustrations of this phenomenon:

Announcement of a coming kingdom	6:20; 7:28; 10:9; 11:2b, 20, 52; 12:31; 13:18; 16:16; 17:20-21; cf. Matt 3:2
Eschatological warnings	3:7-9; 3:16b-17
Pronouncement of punishment on this generation and its leaders	7:31; 11:29, 30, 31, 32, 50, 51; cf. Matt 3:7
Rejection of traditional family structures	9:59-60; 12:49, 51, 53; 14:26; cf. Luke 1:80
The rigors of an itinerant wilderness lifestyle	9:58; 10:4; 12:22b-31, 33-34; 14:27; 16:13; cf. Mark 1:6 Matt 3:4
Warnings of persecution	6:22-23; 12:4-5, 8-12; 17:33; Mark 6:17-29 <i>par.</i>
Wisdom sayings	3:9, 11, 13, 14, 18; cf. Luke 3:10-14, 18
"The Lot cycle"	3:2b-3a; 10:12; 17:28-30

Rothschild also points to several thematic *images* found in Q in connection with John which also turn up elsewhere in Q:

¹³⁷ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 98-100.

	The theme appears in connection with John	The same theme appears elsewhere in Q
wheat/chaff	3:17	10:2
snakes	3:7	11:12
trees	3:9	6:43-45
fire	3:17	12:49
children	3:8	7:32 , 35; 10:21; 11:13 ; 13:34
stones and rocks	3:8	4:3, 11; 11:11

According to Rothschild, the fact that these themes all turn up in connection with John suggests that Q was once entirely about John.

Rothschild's argument here is a bit difficult to follow and does not seem to follow logically in any case. A Q redactor might well have wanted to employ certain themes in his work. In arranging the traditional material at his disposal and in composing some things of his own he would likely have repeated some of these themes or connected them. None of this demonstrates or even suggests that Q was originally a Baptist work.

With respect to the second chart, I have crossed out the texts in the second column that do not seem apposite because the images in these texts are used in rather different contexts or with different meanings than those that occur in the first column. Of the examples that remain, the theme of fruit bearing trees in 6:43-45 may indeed echo the words of John in 3:9. But this hardly suggests that the saying in 6:43-45 was originally attributed to John. One could just as well argue that the historical Jesus appropriated one of the themes in John's preaching or that the person who composed Q 3:9 liked this imagery and put it on the lips of both John and Jesus. The same things could be said of the "children" theme in 7:35; 10:21; and 13:34. From a historical point of

view, if Jesus had indeed been one of John's disciples we would only expect for some of the themes and message of John to turn up in Jesus' preaching. From a redaction-critical standpoint, it would be unsurprising for a redactor to repeat some of his favourite themes throughout Q.

Q 10:2 and 12:49 deserve separate treatment here:

Q 10:2 And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

Q 12:49 "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!"

These sayings connect with John's earlier preaching but not in the way Rothschild suggests. That is, they do not suggest that the sayings were all originally attributed to John. I would maintain that in both sayings Jesus is best seen as the *fulfilment* of John's prophecy about the Coming One in 3:16b-17. In 3:17 John had spoken of how this figure would "gather the wheat into the granary." In 10:2 Jesus is portrayed as doing this very thing by sending out his disciples to reap a harvest of souls for the kingdom of God. Similarly, in 12:49 Jesus is portrayed as acknowledging his role as the Coming One, claiming that he came (ἦλθον) to cast fire on the earth. This recalls John's prophecy about the Coming One in 3:16-17 where this figure is expected to baptise in fire and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. Thus, while 3:16b-17 seems to link up quite well thematically with both 10:2 and 12:49 the thematic link only makes sense literarily within Q if the latter two sayings are attributed to Jesus.

4. Matthean *Sondergut*

Having laid out her three main lines of reasoning for why she thinks that Q originally contained only Baptist material, Rothschild adds one more.¹³⁸ She claims to find several verbal and thematic links to the Baptist in the uniquely Matthean material and proposes it derives from Q.

a. Matt 6:16-18

Matt 6:16 And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **17** But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, **18** that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Rothschild's comments about this saying are similar to what I discussed under #2a. She claims that it conflicts with the characterization of the Jesus in the synoptic Gospels as someone who feasts and does not fast. She thinks it would fit better with what we know about John since he and his disciples are known to have fasted (Q 7:33; Mark 2:18-20 *par.*). She therefore concludes that Matt 6:16-18 was originally attributed to John and stems from Q.

In my opinion, Rothschild's claims about Matt 6:16-18 being so incongruous with the characterization of Jesus in Q 7:33-34; Mark 2:18-20 *par.* is overstated. There is nothing in Q or the synoptic Gospels to suggest that Jesus rejected fasting altogether. In THE TEMPTATION Jesus fasts for forty days (Q 4:1-13). Rothschild's proposal that this story was originally about John is

¹³⁸ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 101-122.

gratuitous and has been dealt with above. One should also bear in mind that the story in Mark 2:18-20 *par.* ends:

Mark 2:20 The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then *they will fast in that day.*”

This saying seems to offer an explanation for why the historical Jesus and his disciples were not known for their fasting practices during his earthly ministry. At that time, Jesus and his disciples’ eating habits reflected the idea that the Messiah’s advent would be a time of joy.¹³⁹ Fasting would have been inappropriate because that was something people did to express grief or to beg God for answers to prayer. The saying does not teach that fasting is unnecessary, however. Quite the opposite; for it portrays him as saying that his disciples would fast after he is “taken away.” Thus, Mark 2:19-20 cannot be properly cited as evidence that Jesus rejected fasting or that he would never have taught his disciples to engage in the practice.

Rothschild also cites the *Gos. Thom.* 6 and 104 as evidence that Jesus was in principle opposed to fasting:

Gos. Thom. 6 His [Jesus’] disciples asked him and said: “How shall we fast, and how shall we pray, and how shall we give alms, and what shall we observe when we eat?” Jesus said, “Do not lie, and what you hate do not do! For all things will be full of truth before heaven. For nothing is hidden that

¹³⁹ Jesus’ saying in Mark 2:19-20 expresses a principle similar to that underlying the so-called messianic banquet: 1QSa 2.11-12, 18-21; 1QSB 3.2; *1 En.* 60.24; 62.12-16; *2 Bar.* 29.1-8; *4 Ezra* 6.49-52; *5 Ezra* 2.33-41; *T. Jacob* 7.23-24; *Matt* 22:1-14; 25:10; 26:29; *Luke* 14:15; *Rev* 19:9. For a discussion of this idea, see Priest, “Messianic Banquet,” 222-238; Meadors, “‘Messianic’ Implications”, 253-77.

will not be made manifest. Blessed is he who does not do these things. For all things will be made manifest to the Father who is in the heavens.¹⁴⁰

Gos. Thom. 104 They said [to him]: “Come, let us pray today and fast.” Jesus said: “What then is the sin that I have done, or in what have I been overcome? But when the bridegroom comes out [departs] from the bridal chamber, then let them fast and pray.”¹⁴¹

These sayings are not actually relevant to the present discussion. They are clearly secondary to the synoptic Gospels and were likely composed at some point in the second century, long after the composition of Q.¹⁴² *Gos. Thom.* 6 seems to be a synthesis of ideas from several Matthean texts: Matt 6:1-18 (teachings on almsgiving, prayer, and fasting), 5:33-37 (teaching on oaths/truth-telling), 7:12 (THE GOLDEN RULE), 10:26 (NOTHING HIDDEN THAT WILL NOT BE MADE MANIFEST), and perhaps THE BEATITUDES. *Gos. Thom.* 104 is likely a late reflection on Mark 2:19-20, with its reference to “the bridegroom,” but expanded now to include certain “Gnostic” notions about “the bridal chamber.”

Rothschild relies heavily on Betz’s thesis that THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT in Matthew’s Gospel was derived from a version of Q (which he designates Q^{Matt}).¹⁴³ Betz’s argument that THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT derives from Q is based largely on its (supposed) lack of christological reflection as well as its lack of reflection on Jesus’ salvific death and resurrection. Moreover, it exhibits a certain “tension” with other parts of Matthew’s Gospel such as the sermon’s negative attitude toward Gentiles and, by implication, toward the Gentile mission (6:32; ctr. 28:28:19).

¹⁴⁰ Greek text can be found in Aland, *Synopsis*, 85. ET used here is by Betz, *Sermon*, 336.

¹⁴¹ *NTApo*, 1.129 (ET here by Beate Blatz).

¹⁴² See Tuckett, “Thomas,” 132-157; Gathercole, *Composition*; idem, “Rejoinder”; Goodacre, *Thomas*.

¹⁴³ See further Betz, *Sermon*, 42-44.

Dale Allison has responded to many of Betz's arguments.¹⁴⁴ He points out, for example, that Matt 10:5-6 also opposes a Gentile mission (cf. also 15:26), which suggests that the theme may actually be Matthean. Again, he points out that there are other large sections of Matthew's Gospel that are similarly lacking in christological reflection or say nothing about Jesus' death or resurrection. Rothschild does not adequately address Allison's criticisms. She simply proposes that the evangelist Matthew incorporated material from Q into his sermon without any attempt to reshape or modify it.¹⁴⁵ She then claims that much of the material in THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT appears to derive from Q because it has a "Baptist *Tendenz*" and because "most of Q's distinguishing characteristics are shared by the [SERMON ON THE MOUNT]."¹⁴⁶

Rothschild's argumentation here open to serious criticism. For one thing, she hardly establishes that THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT was derived from Q. Most scholars see it as a Matthean construction, put together largely on the basis of sayings from Q but rearranged according to his own predilections and with several redactions mixed in. But even if one were to grant that it derives from Q, the "Baptist *Tendenz*" that she identifies in this sermon is far from obvious. She makes a great deal of Matt 6:16-18, for example. But as I have already mentioned, this text is not necessarily incompatible with the characterization of Jesus elsewhere in Q and the synoptics.

¹⁴⁴ See Allison, "Review," 136-137.

¹⁴⁵ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 104.

¹⁴⁶ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 104.

b. Matt 6:1-18

Rothschild next considers the larger collection of material in Matt 6:1-18, a portion of THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT that deals with almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.¹⁴⁷ She points out that some of the terminology in these verses (esp. ταμεῖον and ὑποκριταί) are also found in Q.¹⁴⁸ She also argues that certain themes in the sermon link up with “Baptist traditions” elsewhere. For example, its critique of public worship in Matt 6:6 fits well with John’s wilderness ministry; its admonition to “go into your *storage room*” fits better with a rural setting since a ταμεῖον would have been found mostly in “houses in rural areas where harvesting took place.”¹⁴⁹ She then makes a further connection with John’s preaching in Q 3:17 where a harvesting metaphor is used. Again, she contends that the term “hypocrites,” which occurs in 6:2, 5, and 16 also occurs in other Q sayings at Matt 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, and 29. This terminology, she claims, is quite condemnatory and in this sense links up with the general tenor of John’s preaching in Q 3:7-9+16b-17. She finds it particularly significant that in Q/Matt 23:29, where the term “hypocrites” is used (diff. Q/Luke 11:47), this is followed, in v. 33, by the phrase “snakes, generation of vipers!” That very same phrase occurs on the lips of John in Q 3:7a.

Much of Rothschild argumentation here is quite tenuous. For example, commentators typically attribute the term “hypocrites” in Matthew’s Gospel to MattR. The same is true for the

¹⁴⁷ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 104-111.

¹⁴⁸ She reconstructs Q 17:23-24 to contain ταμεῖον, as in Matt 24:26, and assigns Luke 12:3, 24 to Q.

¹⁴⁹ Rothschild infers far too much about the meaning and significance of ταμεῖον. The Septuagint most often uses the term to translate רִבּוֹן (“room”) and in these cases frequently refers to a *bed chamber* (cf., e.g., Gen 43:30; Exod 8:3 [HT: 7:28]; Judg 15:1; 2 Sam 13:10; 1 Kgs 1:15; 2 Kgs 6:12; Ecc 10:20; Song 1:4; 3:4; 8:2). To be sure, it is also used to translate מִדְּבָר, “storehouse (for grain)” (Deut 28:8; Prov 3:10) and מִדְּבָר, “granary” (Ps 144:13/LXX: 143:13). But this usage is rare. Nor was this term used only of chambers located in rural places (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 20:30; 2 Kgs 9:1-2; Song 1:4). It referred simply to a private chamber. Whether the chamber was suitable for storing grain or whether it was the sort that one typically found in rural homes can only be discerned from the wider context where the term is used. And in the context of Matt 6:16 the emphasis is simply on the chamber’s private location. Nothing is suggested about it being located in a rural or urban home or whether it might have been a bed chamber or something more suitable for the storing of grain. It would seem odd, however, to encourage people to pray in a place where grain is ordinarily stored.

phrase “snakes, generation of vipers!” in Matt 23:29. But even if she is correct in attributing this terminology and phrase to Q and even if it be granted that Matt 6:1-18 derives from Q (I myself am not opposed to this idea) she has hardly demonstrated that the material was once attributed to John rather than Jesus. For instance, her claim that John is more likely than Jesus to have denounced public acts of piety is quite baseless. Why should we believe this? Because John ministered in a “wilderness” setting? That is a non-sequitur, especially if John expected most of those who were baptized to return to their homes in the cities as is implied in Luke 3:10-14. Moreover, there is no evidence that John (whether we are thinking here of the historical one or the one presented to us in the NT Gospel traditions) taught that pious deeds were to be performed in private. The very opposite is suggested by Q 7:33 and Mark 2:18 *par.* where John’s and his disciples’ fasting habits are presumed to have been public knowledge. Likewise, Luke 11:1 suggests that John’s disciples prayed publicly. It is true that Jesus conducted much of his ministry (not all of it by any means) in urban areas and is often portrayed as performing miracles publicly. But when Rothschild suggests that Jesus’ public evangelism and working of miracles somehow conflict with the teachings in Matt 6:1-18 about pious acts being performed in private she is making a rather specious argument.

c. Matt 7:13-23¹⁵⁰

Rothschild turns next to the “eschatological warnings” found in Matt 7:13-23. This saying presents the way of salvation as something arduous and difficult. Rothschild therefore pits the saying against another in Matt 11:28 which makes the way of salvation seem easy and unburdensome:

¹⁵⁰ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 111-113.

Matt 7:13 Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is spacious, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. **14** For the gate is strait and the way is narrow, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Matt 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

According to Rothschild, the contradictory perspectives given in these two sayings results from the fact that the first one derives from Q and was originally attributed to John whereas Matt 11:28 reflects the authentic teachings of Jesus. She even argues that THE WIDE AND NARROW GATES logion had originally been directed against Jesus and his movement.

Rothschild also finds anti-Jesus polemic in Matt 7:15 where Jesus warns against “false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing.” She thinks this too was originally spoken by John against. Since Jesus was “an urban dwelling prophet” he would have possibly worn “a mantle or pelt of sheep.” Hence, the imagery of “sheep’s clothing” may be a subtle reference to Jesus’ attire. Rothschild thinks the “wolves” in this saying are “a metaphor for urban lives of predatory voracity and gluttony,” things that John abhorred but which Jesus embraced.¹⁵¹

Rothschild similarly interprets Matt 7:22 as a statement that had been originally spoken by John against Jesus and his movement:

Matt 7:22 On that day many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?”

¹⁵¹ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 111.

As support for her interpretation Rothschild notes that Jesus performed all these miracles.

The interpretations Rothschild proposes with respect to the above-mentioned texts cannot be taken seriously as they are riddled with exegetical and logical fallacies. Suffice it to address only a few of them here.

The supposed contradiction between Matt 7:13-14 and 11:28-30 seems to have much to do with how the former is translated. Jesus refers to the way leading to life as *πλατεῖα* and *εὐρύχωρος*. Rothschild translates these, with the RSV, as “wide” and “easy.” Actually, both terms convey the idea of broadness. Hence, I have translated them above as “wide” and “spacious” (cf. KJV: “wide ... broad”). Likewise, I have taken *στενή* and *τεθλιμμένη* as functional synonyms, translating them as “strait” and “narrow” (= KJV). Rothschild translates them, again with the RSV, as “narrow” and “hard.” This is not a mere quibbling over terms because the term “easy” also occurs in many English translations of Matt 11:30 (KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV, etc.). To a biblically literate English speaker, then, Rothschild’s translation makes the two sayings sound more contradictory than they actually are; for in the latter Matt 11:30 the Greek term is *ἐλαφρόν*. At any rate, there is no need to see these two sayings as contradictory. Many Christians today would probably speak of the Christian life as being both difficult and strenuous, on the one hand, but liberating, restful, and joyous on the other. The apostle Paul, in certain contexts, could speak of how he had endured the distresses of persecution, physical injury, tribulation, and other strivings (1 Cor 4:11-13; 2 Cor 4:8-11). In other contexts he could speak of the freedom and peace one has in Christ (Rom 5:1; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 5:1, 22-23; Phil 4:7). These are not contradictory views. They simply reflect differences in perspective.

The “false prophets” in Matt 7:15 are very implausibly identified by Rothschild as Jesus’ disciples. There is no reason to think that the wolves in sheep’s clothing refer to a city-dwelling Jesus who dressed in wool. Nor is there any reason to think that “wolves” is a metaphor for urbanites. Rothschild’s whole line of reasoning here is purely imaginative and gratuitous.

Rothschild’s interpretation of Matt 7:22 is even more baseless and unreasonable. If the saying had originally been spoken by John against Jesus we would have to conclude that John saw himself as the judge of humanity. Also, we would have to conclude that in the saying Jesus is portrayed as standing before John on the day of judgment and declaring that he had performed miracles in John’s name with John responding: “I never knew you!” Can such an exegesis really be taken seriously? One wonders how Rothschild managed to get this doozy past her editor at Mohr Siebeck. There is no evidence that Jesus or anyone performed miracles in John’s name, much less that anyone expected John to act as the final judge of humanity. The saying here undoubtedly envisions *Jesus* as the judge of humanity and the miracles cited are those that had been performed in *Jesus*’ name (cf. Mark 9:38-39; John 14:13-14; 16:23-26; Acts 3:6; 16:18, etc.).

d. Matt 5:3-12, 25:31-46¹⁵²

Rothschild suggests that an appropriate *Sitz im Leben* for THE BEATITUDES in Matt 5:3-12 would have been the ritual setting of John’s baptism. This, however, is another purely gratuitous suggestion.

¹⁵² Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 113-115.

She further argues that THE PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS in Matt 25:31-46

“includes seminal Baptist themes.” She lists these themes as follows:

	Mat 25:31-46	Q
Judgment	vv. 31-46	3:7-9
The kingdom	v. 34	Matt 3:2
Reference to God as Father	v. 34	Luke 11:1-2
Eternal punishment	vv. 41, 46	3:7
Hunger/thirst	vv. 35, 37, 42, 44	Matt 11:18; Mark 1:6 <i>par.</i>
Strangers	vv. 35, 38, 43, 44	3:8; Luke 3:10-14
Lack of clothing	vv. 36, 38, 43, 44	Mark 1:6 <i>par.</i>
Prison	vv. 36, 39, 43, 44	Mark 1:14; 6:17; Luke 3:20; Matt 14:3
Purification through good works as opposed to nationality	vv. 33-40	3:8

Contra Rothschild, many of these themes are quite generic and could easily have been associated with Jesus. The themes of judgment, eternal punishment, and the necessity of good works can hardly be tied exclusively to John and his followers since these themes appear frequently in other works of the Second Temple period and in many Jesus traditions beyond just what we have in Q (e.g. Mark 10:21; 13; Rom 2). The kingdom theme is far more closely associated with Jesus than John. Matt 3:2 is usually seen as redactional. Jesus is also well known to have referred to God as Father (e.g. Mark 11:25; 13:32; 14:36). Rothschild’s appeal to Luke 11:1-2 assumes that THE LORD’S PRAYER was originally a Baptist prayer but we have seen why this hypothesis is without merit. Themes of hunger/thirst, strangers, and lack of clothing are not

obviously Baptist. The texts Rothschild cites from the parable are not apposite since John's hunger/thirst, social aloofness, and attire were adopted voluntarily, as an act of religious devotion, whereas prisoners would have experienced these things involuntarily and would have welcomed any assistance they could receive. While John was himself a prisoner this fact does not provide a sound basis for positing that the parable originated in Baptist circles. Moreover, Rothschild would have to explain how a follower of John would have understood the Son of man/King in the parable. Was it John? Are we really to believe that John's followers regarded him as the future judge of humanity? There is no evidence for such beliefs. There is plenty of evidence, on the other hand, that Jesus' followers regarded him as the Son of man and mankind's future judge.

5. Lukan *Sondergut*¹⁵³

In her monograph Rothschild does not consider several Lukan *Sondergut* passages: e.g., the promise of John's birth (1:5-25), Mary's visit to Elizabeth (1:39-56), the account of John's birth and early years (1:57-80), John's ethical teaching (3:10-14), and the Lukan genealogy (Luke 3:23-38). This is because these passages are narratives or accounts about John rather than sayings attributed to him; also, Rothschild thinks it unlikely that Matthew, who omitted very little material from Mark, would have omitted or rejected all this material from Q if it had really existed in Q.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, Rothschild does not believe that this material had its origins in the Jesus movement (whether with Luke himself or some earlier Jesus tradition). Rather, she thinks that Luke used *another* Baptist source besides Q:

¹⁵³ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 115-122.

¹⁵⁴ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 115.

If in fact, the hypothesis is correct that Q existed as a source containing Baptist traditions exclusively, it is likely other written Baptist sources existed alongside it.¹⁵⁵

I find Rothschild's suggestion here to be quite gratuitous. Nothing we have examined so far has convinced me that Q was a Baptist source. There are also reasons for thinking that the Lukan *Sondergut* material in question here originated in the Jesus movement, not a Baptist group.¹⁵⁶

The Lukan *Sondergut* passages that Rothschild ascribes to Q are Luke 1:68-79 and 12:50. Let us consider these each in turn.

a. Luke 1:68-79

Rothschild suggests that the terms ἐπισκέπτεσθαι (“to visit”) (Luke 1:68, 78) and ἐγείρειν (“to raise up”) (v. 69) “possess significant lexical ties to Baptist traditions.” She argues this point on the grounds that these same terms are juxtaposed in THE HEALING OF THE WIDOW’S SON AT NAIN (Luke 7:11-16), which she also thinks was part of Q. Thus, after Jesus raises a child from the dead we read: “Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has

¹⁵⁵ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 117.

¹⁵⁶ See, e.g., Brown (*Birth*, 346-55) for the alleged Baptist source material in Luke 1. →Appendix G for an argument that Luke 3:10-14 was Lukan redaction. The genealogy in Luke 3:23-38 is unlikely to have been John’s originally. Rothschild points to John’s priestly parentage and the fact that several names in the genealogy are associated with priests: Heli (Eli), Eliakim, Judah, Simeon, Levi, Matthat, Eliezer, Mattathias, Levi, Matthat, Heli. But According to Ilan (*Lexicon*) there is no evidence for distinctly priestly names in the first century C.E. Indeed, Judah, Simeon, Levi, and Mattathias were among the most popular Jewish names in Palestine around the turn of the era and were widely used by Jews outside the region as well. Moreover, the genealogy traces Jesus’ origins from Judah the Patriarch through Zerubbabel in what is clearly a royal lineage. Thanks to Richard Bauckham for the reference to Ilan here.

arisen (ἠγέρθη) among us!’ and ‘God has visited (ἔπεσκέψατο) his people!’” (v. 16). Rothschild points out that this story is evocative of another miracle story concerning Elijah in 1 Kgs 17:17-24. She connects this with the fact that John is identified as Elijah in Q (7:27), Mark (1:6; 9:11-13), and Matthew (11:13-14; 17:10-13). Moreover, in Luke 7:17 we read, “And this report concerning him (περὶ αὐτοῦ) spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.” Rothschild suggests that the pronoun here originally referred to John rather than Jesus. She thinks this to be somehow confirmed by what follows in v. 18: “And the disciples of *John* reported to him about all these things.”

Rothschild’s reasoning here seems confused and is probably not cogent. Does she think that THE HEALING OF THE WIDOW’S SON AT NAIN was originally about John? If so, why do his disciples need to inform him about the healing afterwards? Also, she assumes without much argument that Zechariah’s words in Luke 1:68-75 were spoken about John. But unless one also assumes that THE *BENEDICTUS* was derived from a Baptist source her argument has no foundation. For the acclamation that God “has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David” would have been most naturally understood by members of the Jesus movement as a reference to Jesus. This is also how it is most naturally understood within Luke’s writings generally where Jesus is often portrayed as a descendant of David/royal Messiah (e.g. 2:4; 18:38-39; Acts 4:25-28; 15:16) and has, in fact, already been presented that way in Luke’s opening chapter (1:27, 32). Raymond Brown has offered a compelling case for seeing the *BENEDICTUS* as a “Jewish-Christian” work.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Brown, *Birth*, 377-78, 381.

2. Luke 12:50

Rothschild argues that Luke 12:50 was also part of Q and referred to John's baptism. I quote the verse here along with its surrounding verses:

Luke 12:49 I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! **50** I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! **51** Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; **52** for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; **53** they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

A number of scholars who attempt to reconstruct Q accept that vv. 49, 51, and 53 were part of Q.¹⁵⁸ Rothschild offers several reasons of her own for thinking that v. 50 was part of Q. The biggest objections to seeing v. 50 as a part of Q are that it is not attested in Matthew and can be seen as a reworking of Mark 10:38, a Markan saying that is otherwise unattested in Luke's Gospel.

Even if one were to grant that the verse originally belonged to Q the question would remain as to why it should be attributed to John rather than Jesus. Rothschild acknowledges two serious difficulties in reading the saying in this way. First, the statement βάπτισμα δὲ ἔχω βαπτισθῆναι is presumably written in the passive voice. Why would John have spoken of having to be baptised by someone? According to Rothschild, the statement should be translated actively: "I have a baptism with which *to baptise*." Her reasons for proposing this translation seem rather

¹⁵⁸ See the list of scholars in Kloppenborg, *Parallels*, 142.

transparent. In any case, they are not based on a good understanding of syntax or lexical usage of the verb βαπτίζω. She argues that “in Hellenistic Greek the active and passive meanings of the term βαπτίζειν were somewhat blended.” She appeals here to Joan Taylor who observes that Jewish immersions were almost never received passively; rather, “the person goes down into the water and immerses himself or herself. No one pushes the person underwater.”¹⁵⁹ Yet evidence suggests that John’s baptism was performed differently than other Jewish baptisms (→n. 4 above). Taylor herself concedes that John “may well have held on” to the persons he was baptising.¹⁶⁰

Another problem with thinking that v. 50 had originally been attributed John is the particle δέ, which connects this saying with the saying in v. 49 where the speaker says that he came to cast fire upon the earth. If v. 49 also derives from Q then it could not have been spoken by John because it would then conflict with the Baptist’s own prophecy in 3:16b-17 where it is not John but the Coming One who is expected to baptise with fire and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. By contrast, if the saying had originally been attributed to Jesus it would fit very well in the wider context of Q where Jesus is envisaged as the fulfilment of John’s Coming One (→2.2.5.1.; Excursus A). Rothschild seems to recognise the difficulty here and accepts that βαπτισθῆναι may be better understood as a passive. She proposes, however, that it could then be read as a “divine passive.” She claims that as a divine passive it would function epexegetically and could be translated: “I have a baptism for [many] to be baptised [by God].”¹⁶¹ But this interpretation is unnatural and unnecessary. The speaker is most naturally seen as the one who is to be baptised not the one who administers it either directly or as God’s agent. The next statement, καὶ πῶς

¹⁵⁹ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 50.

¹⁶⁰ Joan Taylor, *Immerser*, 51. However, she is ultimately agnostic about the matter, saying that he may well have taken a hands-off approach (pp. 51-53).

¹⁶¹ Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 121.

συνέχομαι ἕως ὅτου τελεσθῆ (“and how I am stressed until it is accomplished”) most naturally anticipates Jesus’ death. As such, it finds a parallel in Mark 10:38.¹⁶²

General criticisms of Rothschild’s *Baptist Traditions and Q*

Methodologically, Rothschild’s work suffers from many defects, starting with her most basic premises. In order to know whether a saying in Q had originally been attributed to John rather than Jesus we would need some kind of control, preferably a collection of undisputed sayings of the historical John with which to compare potential sayings of the man. Rothschild often appeals to what she calls “Baptist traditions” and tries to match these with many portions of Q. But she never actually lays out for us what these traditions are or how she knows they provide us with accurate or serviceable information about the historical John. Apparently she includes in this category of “Baptist traditions” a good deal of material that simply mentions something about John or his disciples. But this is surely granting herself too much latitude since many traditions that mention John are really more about Jesus than they are about John (e.g. 7:18-20+22-23; 7:24-27; 7:28; 16:16; Mark 2:18-22; 11:27-33; Luke 7:11-17). John frequently appears in Q as a foil for the author to indicate something about Jesus. The only sayings that are explicitly attributed to John in the synoptic material are those found in Q 3:7-9+16b-17; Q 7:19-20; and Mark 6:18. Other traditions that merely mention John or his disciples are quite limited in what they tell us about him and his movement. Q 3:2-3; 7:24-27; and Mark 1:1-6 relate some information about his wilderness location as well as his distinctive attire and diet. Q 7:18-20 tells

¹⁶² Rothschild (*Baptist Traditions*, 122) dismisses this parallel, claiming it cannot help to illumine Luke 12:50 because it reflects a Pauline understanding of baptism (cf. Rom 6:3-5). But how can we know this was a uniquely Pauline understanding? Is it not just as possible that Paul was familiar with an earlier tradition similar to what we have in Mark 10:38?

us that he inquired as to whether Jesus were “the Coming One,” about whom he had prophesied. Mark 2:18 indicates that John’s disciples fasted. Luke 11:1 indicates that John taught his disciples to pray, although we are not told what or how. The story in Mark 6:14-29 indicates that he denounced Herod Antipas for an “unlawful” marriage and that he was imprisoned and executed as a consequence. Luke 1 tells us that John was a relative (συγγενής) of Jesus, that he came from a priestly family, that his parents were righteous, and that he was born miraculously when they were quite aged. Luke 3:10-14 tells us a little bit about the ethical advice John gave to the people (generally), to tax collectors, and to soldiers. Josephus tells us that John was a righteous man, that he encouraged people to come together in order to be baptised, and that he taught them to behave piously toward God and justly toward one another. And that’s pretty much it. Can this small amount of information really suffice in helping us to know what sort of language, themes, or interests were distinctively John’s or his followers, such that we can distinguish these from Jesus’ and his followers? That seems highly unlikely. And this procedure of identifying distinctively Baptist material would be even more problematic if we accept that Jesus had been a disciple of John or had at least been deeply influenced by him.

Moreover, it may well be that much of Rothschild’s so-called “Baptist traditions”—perhaps all of it—was actually composed by persons involved in the Jesus movement. This is precisely my argument with respect to the material about John in Q’S PROLOGUE, which I attribute to the same Q redactor who composed JESUS’ BAPTISM BY JOHN and THE TEMPTATION (→2.2.7.; 3.2.1.#5.). This redactor, I maintain, composed John’s prophecy about “the Coming One” in 3:16 in order to anticipate the arrival of Jesus in 3:22-23 and to anticipate the traditional Jesus saying in 13:35 (→2.2.8.4.). This redactor would have likely been responsible for composing other parts of Q as well and for deciding which traditions would be incorporated into his finished work.

Hence, the vocabulary, themes, and interests peculiar to this redactor would have likely surfaced at various points in Q. If I am correct about this one cannot appeal to the material about John in Q'S PROLOGUE as a guide for establishing whether other sayings had originally been attributed to John. Any parallels one might be able to draw between the John of Q'S PROLOGUE and other parts of Q could just as well be attributed to the Q redactor responsible for composing that unit.

Many of Rothschild's comparisons between "Baptist traditions" and other parts of Q are quite superficial and are often based more on pseudo-parallels than meaningful or obvious ones. For example, she observes that the Q sayings in Matt 23 which employ the word "hypocrites" are quite condemnatory and in this respect cohere well with John's condemnatory preaching in Q'S PROLOGUE.¹⁶³ This superficial parallel does not even do proper justice to John's preaching since it contained redemptive and not exclusively condemnatory elements. Again, as I mentioned earlier, Rothschild contrasts the teachings on "inconspicuous piety" in Matt 6:1-18 with Jesus' "public performances of healing and exorcism." But the pious acts mentioned in these verses are almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, not healings and exorcisms.

Rothschild also makes a number of gratuitous assertions in her monograph. For example, in discussing THE PARABLE OF THE FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANTS (Q 12:42-46) she proposes that "the theme of condemnation" in this parable and its advisory against eating and drinking with those who, on account of their master's delay, are getting drunk originally reflected a Baptist polemic against Jesus' followers. According to Rothschild Jesus' followers had adopted lax attitude about the eschaton after a certain period of time had passed and John's prophecies had still not been realised. This sort of imaginative readings of texts, while intriguing, should really have no place in critical scholarship since it is probably impossible either to confirm or even disconfirm and relies on numerous assumptions about a rival Baptist sect

¹⁶³ E.g. Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions*, 109.

movement being afoot in the early decades of the Jesus movement. The “Master” in this parable is most reasonably taken as a reference to Jesus and the delay in his return refers to the delay in Jesus’ second coming.

Several pieces of evidence suggest that Q was *not* a Baptist composition. Q 17:23-24 does not seem particularly pro-Baptist since it discourages people from going out into the wilderness, the very place where John conducted his ministry. Again, while JOHN’S QUESTION AND JESUS’ REPLY (Q 7:18-20+22-23) may feature John as one of its characters he is really just a foil who appears in order that Jesus can make an important christological statement about himself in vv. 22-23 (→4.5.2.- 4.5.2.2.1.). It is hard to see how this unit could have stemmed from a Baptist source therefore.¹⁶⁴ The same must be said for the units in 7:24-27; 7:28; and 16:16. While these sayings mention John the obvious emphasis is, again, on Jesus.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Notwithstanding Rothschild’s (*Baptist Traditions*, 194-195) implausible exegesis of this unit (→4.5.2.).

¹⁶⁵ In 7:28 I have interpreted ὁ μικρότερος as a christological title (→5.4.).

Appendix G: Was Luke 3:10-14 part of Q?

Luke 3:10 And the multitudes asked him, “What then shall we do?” **11** And he answered them, “He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.” **12** Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” **13** And he said to them, “Collect no more than is appointed you.” **14** Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

Luke 3:10 Καὶ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες· Τί οὖν ποιήσωμεν; **11** ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· Ὁ ἔχων δύο χιτῶνας μεταδότω τῷ μὴ ἔχοντι, καὶ ὁ ἔχων βρώματα ὁμοίως ποιείτω. **12** ἦλθον δὲ καὶ τελῶναι βαπτισθῆναι καὶ εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν· Διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσωμεν; **13** ὁ δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· Μηδὲν πλέον παρὰ τὸ διατεταγμένον ὑμῖν πράσσετε. **14** ἐπηρώτων δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ στρατευόμενοι λέγοντες· Τί ποιήσωμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς; καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Μηδένα διασεισητε μηδὲ συκοφαντήσητε, καὶ ἀρκείσθε τοῖς ὀψωνίοις ὑμῶν.

The description of John’s interaction with “the crowds”, “tax collectors”, and “soldiers” can be assigned to one of three different sources: (1) a non-Markan source (“L”);¹⁶⁶ (2) Q; (3) Lukan redaction.

Appeals to a non-Markan source seem overly speculative and unnecessary when they can be easily explained either as stemming from Q or Luke’s own hand.

Whether the verses stem from Q or Luke, however, is extremely difficult to determine, despite dogmatic claims made either side of this debate.¹⁶⁷ Not everything in the passage is characteristically Lukan. Also, the reference to tax collectors would link up nicely with another likely Q text in Luke 7:29-30.

¹⁶⁶ From Q: Plummer, *Gospel*, 90; Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 169 and n. 53. From L: Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 464.

¹⁶⁷ Among those who see it as a Lukan composition are: Fleddermann, *Q*, 191; Hoffmann, *Studien*, 16; Goulder, *Luke*, 274-75; Loisy, *L’Evangile*, 136.

The weight of evidence, however, suggests that this is a Lukan composition. The thrice repeated τί ποιήσωμεν is the same response that Luke puts on the crowds' lips after Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:37). The presentation of three distinct groups seems to be a Lukan contrivance. In THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan are the main actors (cf. 10:36). In THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE the husbandman complains that he has come *for three years* seeking fruit but found none (13:7). During Jesus' trial Pilate will ask the crowds *three times* why they wish for Jesus to be condemned (23:22). *Three different reactions* to Jesus' crucifixion—by the rulers, Jewish soldiers, and a thief—are then mentioned (23:35, 36, 39). Luke's version of ON FOLLOWING JESUS (Luke 9:57-62||Matt 8:18-22) also features three would-be disciples whereas Matthew's version only features two (although I myself would see Matthew here as truncating Q). Furthermore, the reference to tax collectors finds a parallel in the person of Zacchaeus, another tax collector who features in a parable that is unique to Luke's Gospel (19:1-10). Indeed, as Goulder points out, John's command that the tax collectors not defraud (συκοφαντήσητε) sounds very similar to Zacchaeus' claim that if he has defrauded (ἔσυκοφάντησα) anyone he will restore fourfold.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Goulder, *Luke*, 275.

Appendix H: Was Q's Prologue inserted during the "Q²" redactional phase?

Q scholars have proposed a number of different theories about redactional stratification in Q. Among the more widely accepted is the one advanced by Kloppenborg. He argues that John's preaching of judgment belongs to a secondary stratum of Q's development—"Q²." He arrives at this position by means of a highly complex form- and redaction-critical analysis, by which he isolates and categorises Q sayings or chreia as having their own distinct interests and forms:

Q¹: "community-directed exhortations concerning self-definition and general comportment toward the world, discipleship, and mission, and the prospect of persecution and death".¹⁶⁹

Q²: "prophetic sayings (often framed as chreiai) which announce the impending judgment of this generation and which evince the Deuteronomistic understanding of history".¹⁷⁰

The Q¹ stratum can be characterised more generally as "instructional" and "sapiential" since it consists largely of uncontextualised aphoristic sayings which are not notably Jewish in character and which some commentators have even characterised as "Cynic."¹⁷¹ By contrast, the "Q²" stratum can be characterised generally as "prophetic." It introduces larger units of chreiai as well as biblical quotes and motifs. On this stratification hypothesis the sayings in 3:7-9+16b-17 would fit much better with "Q²" than with the original "Q¹" stratum.

¹⁶⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 454. Included here are: Q 6:20-49; 9:57-60 (61-62?); 10:2-16; 11:2-4, 9-13; 12:2-12, 22b-34; 13:24; 14:26-27, 34-35; 17:33.

¹⁷⁰ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 454. Included here are: Q 3:7-9, 16-17; 7:1-10, 18-28; (16:16?), 31-35; 11:14-26, 29-36, 39-52; 12:39-40, 42-46, 49, 51-53, 54-59; 17:23-37; 19:12-13, 15-26; 22:28-30.

¹⁷¹ Most notable proponents of this view are Crossan, *Historical Jesus*; Mack, *Lost Gospel*. F. Gerald Downing is also a major proponent of the so-called "Cynic Jesus" and relies heavily on Kloppenborg's theory of Q stratification for this. But Downing has moved more in the direction of seeing Jesus first as a Jew and only secondly as someone who had been heavily influenced by Cynic philosophy.

Although Kloppenborg's stratification hypothesis has been highly influential it has also been severely criticised.¹⁷² Most notably, much of his analysis relies on a presumed dichotomy between "sapiential" and "prophetic" material. As many scholars have observed, this dichotomy is quite artificial, being based on modern conceptual distinctions rather than an ancient ones. A rather large number of works from around the turn of the era contain both sapiential and prophetic elements (e.g. *Daniel*, *4 Ezra*, *1 Enoch*, *1QS*, *Didache*). It would be gratuitous to explain these elements as indications of different redactors.¹⁷³ Allison nicely summarises many of the problems in Kloppenborg's hypothesis. I quote him here at length:

That the figure of Wisdom appears not in Kloppenborg's sapiential stratum but in his prophetic layer [Q 7:35 and 11:49] moves one to ask whether the dichotomy between wisdom and prophecy is not artificial. ... That Kloppenborg must argue that the sayings in sapiential sections that reflect a Deuteronomistic outlook (and so characterise the prophetic layer) are all interpolations¹⁷⁴ gives one further cause for concern, as does the fact that the beatitudes in the inaugural sermon (Q 6:20-49), a sermon which Kloppenborg labels "sapiential," have "little of the sapiential content or formulation." Kloppenborg himself writes that "the first three [beatitudes] depend upon a logic of eschatological reversal, while the last uses the motif of eschatological reward."¹⁷⁵ Can one really then so neatly distinguish sapiential complexes from prophetic complexes? Or is this a distinction more at home in the world of modern scholars than in ancient Judaism. Q 11:31-32 compares Jesus with both Solomon, a wise man, and Jonah, a prophet.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² For criticisms, see Horsley, *Whoever*, 61-83; Ingolfsland, "Stratification," 217-32; Tuckett, "Stratification," 213-22; Allison, *Constructing*, 118-125.

¹⁷³ See further Collins, "Court Tales," 218-34; idem, "Compatibility," 165-186; J. Z. Smith, "Wisdom and Apocalyptic," 131-170; Nickelsburg, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism," 715-32; Yarbrow Collins, "Review," 722.

¹⁷⁴ 6:23c; 10:12-15, 21-24; 12:8-9, 10; 13:25-30, 34-35; 14:16-24.

¹⁷⁵ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 173.

¹⁷⁶ Allison, *Jesus Tradition*, 5.

Allison continues:

[T]here are literary patterns and editorial techniques that cut across [Kloppenborg's] proposed layers. He assigns Q 6:20-23b to Q¹; 3:16-17, 7:18-23, and 13:34-35 to Q². It is true that 3:16-17; 7:18-23; and 13:34-35 belong together. Whereas in 3:16-17 the Baptist prophesies a coming one, in 7:18-23 Jesus himself, by referring to the elements of his own ministry, indirectly claims (in answer to the Baptist's question) that he is this coming one. He supports this christological claim by alluding to texts from Isaiah—35:5 (the blind see); 35:6 (the lame walk); 35:5 (the deaf hear); 26:19 (the dead are raised); and 61:1 (the poor have good news preached to them). Finally, in 13:34-35 Jesus explicitly says that he is the eschatological figure who will come and be blessed in the name of the Lord.

What needs to be noticed is that Q 7:18-23 alludes to this same text. "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" draws upon Isa 61:1; "Blessed are those who mourn, for you will be comforted" takes up the language of Isa 61:2; and "Rejoice and be glad" recalls Isa 61:10. So the development in Q regarding the subject of Jesus as the coming one evolves in stages:

- John prophesies one who is to come (3:16-17).
- Jesus implicitly associates himself with Isaiah 61 (6:20-23).
- Jesus, in answer to a question about the coming one, associates himself with Isaiah 61 and other texts (7:18-23).
- Jesus calls himself "the one who comes" (13:35).

Surely this christological sequence is due to deliberate design, and it is natural to assign the four texts to the same redactional stage.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ Allison, *Jesus Tradition*, 6-7.

Appendix I: references to *coming* eschatological figures in Second Temple and rabbinic literature

Who exactly is John referring to in Q 3:16 when he prophesies of *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, “the Coming One”? Was he invoking some kind of known title, or would the expression at least have been intelligible within the context of his eschatological preaching? In this appendix I survey a wide range of texts from the Bible and related works of the Second Temple and rabbinic periods in order to illustrate that the verb “to come” (or synonymous term) could be used with reference to at least three different eschatological figures: God, Elijah, and the Messiah.

1. God as a coming figure

Several biblical texts refer to the “coming” of God or anticipate his “visitation”¹⁷⁸:

Ps 96:12 The plains shall rejoice, and all things in them: then shall all the trees of the wood sing **13** before Yahweh; for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth (לְפָנַי יְהוָה בִּי בָא בִּי בָא לְשִׁפֹּט הָאָרֶץ) /πρὸ προσώπου κυρίου, ὅτι ἔρχεται, ὅτι ἔρχεται κρῖναι τὴν γῆν). He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

Isa 26:21 For behold, Yahweh is coming forth (יָצָא מִמְּקוֹמוֹ יְהוָה /κύριος ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου ἐπάγει) out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity...

¹⁷⁸ For God as a coming figure, see references in Schnutenhaus, “Kommen,” 1-22.

Isa 29:6 you will be visited by Yahweh of hosts (מַעַם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת תִּפְקֹד = παρὰ κυρίου σαβαωθ ἐπισκοπή) with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire (שֶׁאֵשׁ אוֹכֵלֶת/καὶ φλόξ πυρὸς κατεσθίουσα).

Isa 35:4 Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come (הַיְהוָה אֵלֵיכֶם בְּגֵם יְבוֹא) ≠ κρίσιν ἀνταποδίδωσιν) with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”

Isa 40:10 Behold, the Lord Yahweh comes with might (הַיְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ יָהוּה בְּתוֹק יְבוֹא = ἰδοὺ κύριος μετὰ ἰσχύος ἔρχεται), and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

Isa 59:20 And a redeemer will come to Zion (וְיָצִיחַ לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל) ἕνεκεν Σιών ὁ ῥυόμενος), even to those in Jacob who turn from transgression (וְיִלְשָׁבִי פְשָׁע בְּיַעֲקֹב), says Yahweh.

Isa 63:1 Who is this that comes (מִי־זֶה/τίς οὗτος ὁ παραγινόμενος) from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength (וְהָיָה כְּרֹב כְּחוֹ) (οὗτος ὡραῖος ἐν στολῆ βία μετὰ ἰσχύος)? “It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save.”

Isa 66:15 For behold, Yahweh will come in fire (וְיָהוּה בְּאֵשׁ יָבוֹא/κύριος ὡς πῦρ ἵξει), and his chariots like the stormwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

Mic 1:3 For behold, Yahweh is venturing out of his place (יֵצֵא יְהוָה מִמְקוֹמוֹ)/κύριος ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτοῦ), and will descend (יֵרֵד) and tread upon the high places of the earth.

Zech 14:3 Then Yahweh will venture out (*הַיְהוָה יֵצֵא*/καὶ ἐξελεύσεται κύριος) and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. **4** On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley; so that one half of the Mount shall withdraw northward, and the other half southward. **5** And the valley of my mountains shall be stopped up, for the valley of the mountains shall touch the side of it; and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then Yahweh your God will come, and all the holy ones with him: *וַיָּבֹאוּ הַיְהוָה וְכָל הַקְּדוֹשִׁים* *וְיָצְאוּ*/καὶ ἦξει κύριος ὁ θεός μου καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ).

1 En. 1.3 ...The Great Holy One will come forth from his dwelling (ἐξελεύσεται), **4** and the eternal God will tread from thence upon Mount Sinai. He will appear with his army, he will appear with his mighty host from the heaven of heavens. ... **7** The earth will be wholly rent asunder, and everything on the earth will perish, and there will be judgment on all. **8** With the righteous he will make peace, and over the chosen there will be protection, and upon them will be mercy. ... **9** For he comes (ἔρχεται) with the myriads of his holy ones (Ethiopic; Ἰδοὺ ἦλθεν κύριος ἐν ἀγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ¹⁷⁹), to execute judgment on all, and to destroy all the wicked, and to convict all humanity for the wicked deeds that they have done, and the proud and hard words that wicked sinners spoke against him.

1 En. 25.3-5 ... This high mountain that you saw, whose peak is like the throne of God, is the seat where the Great Holy One, the Lord of glory, the King of eternity, will sit, when he descends to visit the earth in goodness (ὅταν καταβῆ ἐπισκέψασθαι τὴν γῆν ἀπ’ ἀγαθῶ). **4** And (as for) this fragrant tree, no flesh has the right to touch it until the great judgment, in which there will be vengeance on all and a consummation forever. Then it will be given to the righteous and the pious **5** and its fruit will be

¹⁷⁹ This is how the words are cited in Greek in the Epistle of Jude (14).

food for the chosen. And it will be transplanted to the holy place, by the house of God, the King of eternity.

I En. 90.18 And I saw until the Lord of the sheep *came* to them and took in his hand the staff of his wrath and struck the earth, and the earth was split, and all the beasts and all the birds of heaven fell (away) from among those sheep and sank in the earth, and it covered over them. **19** And I saw until a large sword was given to those sheep, and the sheep went out against all the wild beasts to kill them, and all the beasts and the birds of heaven fled before them.

I En. 91.7 ... the holy Lord *will come forth* in wrath and with a scourge, to execute judgment upon the earth.

T. Mos. 10.3 For the Heavenly One will [arise] from his kingly throne. And he will go forth from his holy habitation (*et exiet de habitatione sancta*) with indignation and wrath on behalf of his sons. ... **7** For God Most high will venture forth (*quia exurgit summus deus*), the Eternal One alone. In full view will he come to work vengeance on the nations. Yea, all their idols will he destroy.

T. Mos. 12.13 For God, who has foreseen all things in the world, will go forth (*exiuit ... deus*), and his covenant which was established, and by the oath which [...]¹⁸⁰

1QS 3:18 ...until the moment of his visitation (עד מועד פקודתו).

1QS 4:19 God, in the mysteries of his knowledge and in the wisdom of his glory, has determined an end to the existence of injustice; and in the appointed time **19** of the visitation (ובמועד פקודה) he will obliterate it forever. Then truth shall rise up forever (in) the world...

¹⁸⁰ The text breaks off here.

CD 7.9 ...when God visits the earth (בפקד אל את הארץ) in order to empty over them the punishment of the wicked.

CD 8.2 They shall be visited (לפוקדם) for destruction at the hand of Belial. This is the day **3** when God will make a visitation (היום אשר יפקד אל).

2. Elijah as a coming figure

In the New Testament Gospels Elijah is referred to as a coming figure:

Mark 9:11 And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come (ἐλθεῖν)?”

12 And he said to them, “Elijah does come (ἐλθὼν) first to restore all things; and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? **13** But I tell you that Elijah has come (ἐλήλυθεν), and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

Matt 11:14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come (αὐτός ἐστιν Ἠλίας ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι).

There are also references in rabbinic sources to the “coming” of Elijah. The phrase is stereotyped and occurs frequently: עד שיבא אֵלֵינוּ, “until Elijah comes” (*m. Metz.* 2.8; *B. M.* 2.8; 3.4, 5; etc; also *t. 'Ed.* 3.4d; *b. Pes.* 13a; *b. Men.* 63b, etc.

3. The Messiah as a coming figure

Finally, there are several “messianic” texts in the Bible that refer to the Messiah as a “coming one” or anticipate his “coming”:

In **Gen 49:10** we encounter the difficult statement: עַד כִּי-יָבֹא שִׁילֹה. The RSV renders this very enigmatically: “until he comes to whom it belongs.” Alternatively, שִׁילֹה can be read as a proper name: “until Shiloh comes”/“until he comes to Shiloh.” In **LXX Gen 49:10** there is a variant (Epiph II 136 289) that reads: “until he comes for whom it is laid up” (ἕως ἔαν ἔλθῃ ᾧ ἀποκείται).¹⁸¹ The targums all interpret this text messianically:

Tg. Onq. on Gen. 49:10 The ruler shall never depart from the House of Judah, nor the scribe from his children's children for evermore, until the Messiah comes (עַד דְּיִתְּי מְשִׁיחָא), to whom belongs the kingdom, and him shall the nations obey. **11** He shall lead Israel round about his city; the people shall build his Temple; the righteous shall be round about him; and they that carry out the Law shall be with him in study. Let his raiment, be of fine purple, and his garment all woollen, crimson, and of bright sparkling colors. **12** His mountains shall be red with his vineyards; his vats shall be dripping with wine; his valleys shall be white with grain and with flocks of sheep.

Tg. Neof. on Gen. 49:10 Kings shall not cease from among those of the house of Judah and neither (shall) scribes teaching the Law from his sons until the time King Messiah shall come (עַד-זְמַן דְּיִתְּי (מלכא משיחא), to whom the kingship belongs; to him shall all the kingdoms be subject. **11** How beautiful is King Messiah who is to arise (למקום) from among those of the house of Judah. He girds his loins and goes forth to battle against those that hate him; and he kills kings with rulers, and makes

¹⁸¹ The received LXX text reads: ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ (“until the things stored up for him come”).

the mountains red from the blood of their slain and makes the valleys white from the fat of their warriors. His garments are rolled in blood; he is like a presser of grapes. **12** How beautiful are the eyes of King Messiah; more than pure wine, lest he see with them the revealing of nakedness or the shedding of innocent blood. His teeth are purer than milk, lest he eat with them things that are stolen or robbed. The mountains become red from his vines and the vats from wine; and the hills will become white from the abundance of grain and flocks of sheep.

Ps.-Jon. on Gen 49:10 Kings and rulers shall not case from those of the house of Judah, nor scribes teaching the Law from his descendants, until the time the King Messiah comes (עד זמן די ייתי מלכא (משיחא), the youngest of his sons, because of whom the people will pine away. **11** How beautiful is the King Messiah who is to arise (למקום) from among those of the house of Judah. He girds his loins and comes down (נחית) arranging battle lines against his enemies and slaying kings together with their rulers; and there is no king or ruler who can withstand him. He makes the mountains red with the blood of the slain; his garments are rolled in blood; he is like a presser of grapes. **12** How beautiful are the eyes of the King Messiah, like pure wine, for they have not seen the uncovering of nakedness or the shedding of innocent blood. His teeth are whiter than milk because he has not eaten what has been robbed or taken by force. His mountains and his press will be red from wine, and his hills white from the harvest and from the flocks.

LXX Num 24:7 foretells that “a man shall come forth (ἐξελεύσεται—fut. of ἐξέρχομαι)¹⁸² from his [Jacob’s/Israel’s] seed and he shall rule (κυριεύσει) over many nations, and his reign shall be exalted beyond Gog, and his reign shall be increased.” This text would have been most naturally connected with **v. 17**, the well-known messianic text where we read that “a

¹⁸² The Hebrew does not use the word “man” but says that “a root shall come forth (אֶצְטָרֵץ).” The Septuagint translator of Isaiah may have already linked Isa 11:1 with Num 24:17 when he uses the term ἐξελεύσεται to translate אֶצְטָרֵץ. See Horbury (*Jewish Messianism*, 50) for another possible link with Gen 49:10, another messianic text, on the basis of the term ἀναβήσεται.

star shall arise (ἀνατελεῖ) out of Jacob and *a man* (ἄνθρωπος) shall shoot forth (ἀναστήσεται) out of Israel.

LXX Isa 11:1 speaks of the Davidic Messiah's advent in similar terms: "There shall come forth (ἐξελεύσεται) a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."

In **Acts 7:52** Stephen says that the fathers of those persecuting him had "killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One (τῆς ἐλεύσεως τοῦ δικαίου), whom you have now betrayed and murdered." The Messiah is referred to here as the coming one and the language likely hearkens back to Num 24:7 or Isa 11:1.

Royalty is very conspicuously tied with the verb בּוֹא/ἔρχομαι at **Zech 9:9** where we read: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you (הִנֵּה מֵלְכֶךָ יָבוֹא לָךְ /ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεται σοί); triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass."

The Hebrew of **Hab 2:3** reads: כִּי עוֹד חִזוֹן לְמוֹעֵד וַיִּפְסַח לְקֶזֶז וְלֹא יִכְזָב אִם־יִתְמַהֲמַה חִבְה־לוֹ כִּי־בֹא יָבֹא לֹא, "For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end – it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; for it will surely come, it will not delay." The 3ms pronoun here (translated impersonally as "it") is most naturally understood to refer to the "vision." But ancient interpreters could have construed it as a *personal* pronoun ("he") and taken it as a reference to the coming Messiah: "If *he* seem slow, wait for *him*; for *he* will surely come, *he* will not

delay.¹⁸³ Such a reading is possible in the Septuagint as well: “For there is a vision for an appointed time, and it/he will rise up (ἀνατελεῖ) at the end and not in vain. If it/he should tarry (ἐὰν ὑστερήσῃ), wait for it/him (ὑπόμεινον αὐτόν); for coming it/he will come and not delay (ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἥξει καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίση). In **Heb 10:37** this text is cited with reference to Jesus’ second coming: “For yet a little while, and the Coming One shall come and shall not tarry (ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἥξει καὶ οὐ χρονίσει).” Also, Paul cites the very next verse, Hab 2:4 (“the just shall live by faith”), in order to show that justification is obtained by faith in Christ, suggesting, once more, a messianic reading of the text in early Christianity (Rom 1:17; 3:11; cf. Heb 10:38). Messianic readings are attested in later rabbinic texts as well. {check Str.B at Heb 10:37}

As I explain in Excursus A, **Ps 118** was recited antiphonally in Second Temple times.

Whatever its original meaning and purpose, by the first century C.E. it appears to have taken on Davidic associations and would have likely been recited with hopes that Davidic kingship would be restored through the coming of the Messiah. Q and all four of the NT Gospels cite **v. 26** (“Blessed be he who comes [בָּרֵךְ/ὁ ἐρχόμενος] in the name of Yahweh! We bless you from the house of Yahweh/the Lord”) in a messianic context, as if it had foretold Jesus’ coming.

In **Mal 3:1** we are told that “the Lord” will come suddenly to his temple. Most commentators understand יהוה here as a reference to God. But as I explain in 1.5.1.2. it seems to be used in

¹⁸³ It is unclear whether *Habakkuk Peshar* interprets the text messianically. The verse is clearly understood as pertaining to “the last days.” But after citing the verse we only read as follows: “Its interpretation concerns the men of truth, those who observe the Torah, whose hands do not grow slack in the service of the truth, when the last period is drawn out for them, for all of God’s periods will come according to their fixed order, as he decreed for them in the mysteries of his prudence” (1QpHab 7:10-14 trans. Horgan).

apposition with מְלַאֲךֵי הַבְּרִית and this latter epithet, at least, would be difficult to read as a reference to God. Kings were often referred to as ἀρχιεπίσκοπος μου and David is associated with God's covenant in Ps 89:28, 34, 39; Isa 42:6; 55:3; Jer 33:20-21. It is not implausible, therefore, that in the time of Jesus מְלַאֲךֵי הַבְּרִית and מְלַאֲךֵי הַבְּרִית in Mal 3:1 were read as references to the Messiah, not God. Support for this is found in the early Jesus movement where the first term is apparently taken as a reference to Jesus, the Messiah. In the targum *Pseudo-Jonathan* (on Exod 4:13), *Exodus Rabbah* (32.9), and *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezar* (29) this “messenger of the covenant” is not understood as a reference to the Messiah, however, but to the eschatological Elijah. Yet in these same works Elijah is apparently envisioned as a forerunner not to God but to the Messiah (Tg. *Ps.-Jon.* on Deut 30:4 and Num 25:12; *PRE* 43; cf. also 29; *Exod. Rab.* 32.9). Does this too suggest that מְלַאֲךֵי here has been interpreted as a reference to the Messiah?

In **LXX Isa 40:3** we read of “a voice crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord’” (ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, v. 3). A few verses later, in v. **10**, the prophet declares: ἰδοὺ κύριος μετὰ ἰσχύος ἔρχεται (“behold, the Lord comes with might”)—language remarkably similar to John's in Q 3:16 (ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν). Isa 40:3 is quoted in Mark 1:3 in what appears to be a “Mark-Q overlap” (→5.5.). Here the evangelist understands κυρίου as a reference to Jesus, for whom John the Baptist had prepared the way.

1QS 9:11 ...until the prophet comes and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel (עד בוא נביא ומשיחי אהרן וישראל). Note the phrase עד בוא is applied to all three figures.¹⁸⁴ The “prophet” here is identified (in 4QTest, which seems to be a kind of proof-text for 1QS 9:11) as the prophet like Moses in Deut 18. But could he have also been identified as Elijah (who was, in many ways, like Moses)? Or is the Messiah of Aaron here to be identified as Elijah?

¹⁸⁴ In this case the singular verb applies distributively to each of the three figures.

4Q252 V 3 ...until there comes the Messiah of righteousness, the sprout **4** of David (עד בוא משיח הצדק (צמח דויד). Once again we encounter the phrase עד בוא (ה)משיח, which appears to have been a stereotyped expression at Qumran, much like we saw earlier with עד שיבא אליהו.

Mark 11:9 “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου).

Matt 24:5 For many will come (ἐλεύσονται) in my name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and they will lead many astray.

In the rabbinic literature there are numerous references to the Messiah’s “coming,” a small sample of which includes the following:

b. Ber. 28b [Yohanan b. Zakai on his deathbed:] Prepare a throne for Hezekiah, the King of Judah, who is coming (הכינו כסא לחזקיהו מלך יהודה שבא)

j. Kil. 9.3 (Aramaic). After giving instructions for how he is to be buried R. Jeremiah [4th cent.] declared: “so, when the Messiah comes (אתא משיחא), I shall be ready.”

b. Sanh. 96b R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: “Have you heard when *Bar Nafle* will come (מי שמייע לך) (אימת אתי בר נפלי)?” “Who is *Bar Nafle*?” he asked. “Messiah,” he answered. “Do you call Messiah *Bar Nafle*?” “Even so,” he rejoined, “as it is written, in that day I will raise up **97a** the tabernacle of David that is fallen (הנפלת).” [Amos 9:11]

b. Sanh. 97a It has been taught: R. Nehorai [ca. 135-170] said: In the generation in which the Son of David comes (דור שבן דוד בא בו), young men will insult the old, and old men will stand before the young [to give them honour]; daughters will rise up against their mothers, and daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law.

b. Sanh. 97a It has been taught, R. Nehemiah said: In the generation in which the Son of David comes (דור שבן דוד בא בו) impudence will increase, esteem be perverted, the vine yield its fruit, yet shall wine be dear, and the Kingdom will be converted to heresy with none to rebuke them. This supports R. Isaac, who said: The son of David will not come until the whole world is converted to the belief of the heretics.

b. Sanh. 97a The son of David will not come until (אין בן דוד בא עד) denunciators are in abundance.

b. Sanh. 97a In the generation when the son of David comes (דור שבן דוד בא בו), the house of assembly will be for harlots.

b. Sanh. 97a ...at the conclusion of the septennate the son of David will come (במוצאי שביעית בן דוד בא). R. Joseph [ca. 290-320] demurred: But so many septennates have passed, aye, and has he not come! (כן ולא אתא).

b. Sanh. 97a R. Hanina said: The Son of David will not come until (אין בן דוד בא עד) a fish is sought for an invalid and cannot be procured...

b. Sanh. 97a R. Hama b. Hanina said: The son of David will not come until (אין בן דוד בא עד) even the pettiest kingdom ceases [to have power] over Israel...

b. Sanh. 97a Ze'iri said in R. Hanina's name: The son of David will not come until (אין בן דוד בא עד) there are no conceited men in Israel...

b. Sanh. 97a R. Simlai said in the name of R. Simeon: The son of David will not come until (אין בן דוד (בא עד) all judges and officers are gone from Israel...

The above survey illustrates that by itself the expression “the Coming One” (ὁ ἐρχόμενος), when used in an eschatological context, might have been ambiguous. It might have been used with reference to any of the three figures mentioned above.

In Excursus A I consider how this expression is used specifically in Q and other early writings associated with the Jesus movement.

Appendix J: ἰσχυρότερος and cognates in the LXX and extra-biblical works

In this appendix I have assembled texts which use either the adjective *ivscuro, j*, its nominal cognate *ivscu, j*, or their translational equivalents, as references to God or the (Davidic) Messiah:

1.) *ivscuro, j* used of God

Deut 10:17 For the Lord your God, he *is* God of gods, and the Lord of lords, the great, and strong, and terrible God, who does not accept persons, nor will he by any means accept a bribe:

Deut 10:17 o` ga.r ku,rioj o` qeo.j u`mw/n ou-toj qeo.j tw/n qew/n kai. ku,rioj tw/n kuri,wn o` qeo.j o` me,gaj kai. ivscuro.j kai. o` fobero,j o[stij ouv qauma,zei pro,swpon ouv dV ouv mh. la,bh| dw/ron

Josh 4:24 That all the nations of the earth might know, that the power of the Lord is mighty, and that ye might worship the Lord our God in every work.

Josh 4:24 o[pwj gnw/sin pa,nta ta. e;qnh th/j gh/j o[ti h` du,namij tou/ kuri,ou ivscura, evstin kai. i[na u`mei/j se,bhsqe ku,rion to.n qeo.n u`mw/n evn panti. cro,nw|

2 Sam 22:31 As for the Mighty One, his way *is* blameless: the word of the Lord *is* strong *and* tried in the fire: he is a protector to all that put their trust in him.

2 Sam 22:31 ο` ivscuro,j a;mwmoj h` o`do.j auvtou/ to. r`h/ma kuri,ou
krataio,n pepurwme,non u`peraspisth,j evstin pa/sin toi/j
pepoiqa,sin evpV auvtw/|

2 Sam 22:32 ti,j ivscuro.j plh.n kuri,ou kai. ti,j kti,sthj e;stai
plh.n tou/ qeou/ h`mw/n

2 Sam 22:32 Who *is* strong, but the Lord? and who will be a Creator except our God?

2 Sam 22:33 *It is* the Mighty One who strengthens me with might, and has prepared my way without fault.

2 Sam 22:33 ο` ivscuro.j ο` krataiw/n me duna,mei kai. evxeti,naxen
a;mwmon th.n o`do,n mou

2 Sam 22:48 The Lord who avenges me *is* strong, chastening the nations under me,

2 Sam 22:48 ivscuro.j ku,rioj ο` didou.j evkdikh,seij evmoi, paideu,wn
laou.j u`poka,tw mou

2 Sam 23:5 For my house *is* not so with the Mighty One: for he has made an everlasting covenant with me, ready, guarded at every time; for all my salvation and all my desire *is*, that the wicked should not flourish.

2 Sam 23:5 ouv ga.r ou[twj ο` oi=ko,j mou meta. ivscuroj/ diaqh,khn
ga.r aivw,nion e;qeto, moi e`toi,mhn evn panti. kairw/|
pefulagme,nhn o[ti pa/sa swthri,a mou kai. pa/n qe,lhma o[ti ouv
mh. blasth,sh| ο` para,nomoj

1 Esd 6:14 And the house was built many years ago by a king of Israel who was great and strong, and it was finished.

1 Esd 6:13 kai. wv|kodo,mhto o` oi=koj e;mprosqen evtw/n pleio,nwn dia. basile,wj tou/ Israhl mega,lou kai. ivscuroj kai. evpetele,sqh

Neh 1:5 And I said, Nay, I pray thee, O Lord God of heaven, the mighty, the great and terrible, keeping thy covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to those that keep his commandments:

Neh 1:5 kai. ei=pa mh. dh, ku,rie o` qeo.j tou/ ouvranou/ o` ivscuro.j o` me,gaj kai. o` fobero,j fula,sswn th.n diaqh,khn kai. to. e;leoj toi/j avgapw/sin auvto.n kai. toi/j fula,ssousin ta.j evntola.j auvtou/

Neh 9:31 But thou in thy many mercies didst not appoint them to destruction, and didst not forsake them; for thou art strong, and merciful, and pitiful.

Neh 9:31 kai. su. evn oivktirmoi/j sou toi/j polloi/j ouvkv evpoi,hsaj auvtou.j sunte,leian kai. ouvkv evgkate,lipej auvtou,j o[ti ivscuro.j ei= kai. evleh,mwn kai. oivkti,rmwn

Neh 9:32 And now, O our God, the powerful, the great, the mighty, and the terrible, keeping thy covenant and thy mercy,

Neh 9:32 kai. nu/n o` qeo.j h`mw/n o` ivscuro.j o` me,gaj o` krataio.j kai. o` fobero.j fula,sswn th.n diaqh,khn sou kai. to. e;leo,j sou

2 Macc 1:24 The prayer was to this effect: "O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things, who art awe-inspiring and strong and just and merciful, who alone art King and art kind,

2 Macc 1:24 h=n de. h` proseuch. to.n tro,pon e;cousa tou/ton ku,rie
ku,rie o` qeo,j o` pa,ntwn kti,sthj o` fobero.j kai. ivscuro.j kai.
di,kaioj kai. evleh,mwn o` mo,noj basileu.j kai. crhsto,j

Ps 7:11 God is a righteous judge, and strong, and patient, not inflicting vengeance every day.

Ps 7:12 o` qeo.j krith.j di,kaioj kai. ivscuro.j kai. makro,qumoj mh.
ovrgh.n evpa,gwn kaqV e`ka,sthn h`me,ran

Job 22:13 And thou has said, What does the Mighty One know? does he judge in the dark?

Job 22:13 kai. ei=paj ti, e;gnw o` ivscuro,j h= kata. tou/ gno,fou
krinei/

Job 33:29 Behold, all these things, the Mighty One works in a threefold manner with a man.

Job 33:29 ivdou. pa,nta tau/ta evrga/tai o` ivscuro.j o`dou.j trei/j
meta. avndro,j

Job 34:31 For *there is* one that says to the Mighty One, I have received *blessings*; I will not take a
pledge:

Job 34:31 o[ti pro.j to.n ivscuro.n o` le,gwn ei;lhfa ouvkv evnecura,sw

Job 36:22 Behold, the Mighty One shall prevail by his strength: for who is powerful as he is?

Job 36:22 ivdou. o` ivscuro.j krataiw,sei evn ivscu,i avvtou/ ti,j
ga,r evstin katV avvto.n duna,sthj

Job 36:26 Behold, the Mighty One is great, and we shall not know *him*: the number of his years is even infinite.

Job 36:26 ivdou. o` ivscuro.j polu,j kai. ouv gnwso,meqa avriqmo.j
evtw/n aurtou/ kai. avpe,rantoj

Job 37:5 The Mighty One shall thunder wonderfully with his voice: for he has done great things which we knew not;

Job 37:5 bronth,sei o` ivscuro.j evn fwnh/| aurtou/ qauma,sia
evpoi,hsen ga.r mega,la a] ouvk h;|deimen

Job 37:10 And from the breath of the Mighty One he will send frost; and he guides the water in whatever way he pleases.

Job 37:10 kai. avpo. pnoh/j ivscuroj/ dw,sei pa,goj oivaki,zei de. to.
u[dwr w`j eva.n bou,lhtai

Sir 15:18 For great is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power and sees everything;

Sir 15:18 o[ti pollh. h` sofi,a tou/ kuri,ou ivscuro.j evn dunastei,a|
kai. ble,pwn ta. pa,nta

Philo, Spec. 1.307 Do you not see that the most important and greatest of all the powers (me,gistai tw/n duna,mew,n) of the living God are his beneficent and his punishing power (h[te euverge,tij kai. kolasth,rioj)? And his beneficent power is called God (h` me.n euverge,tij qeo,j), since it is by means of this that he made and arranged the universe. And the other, or punishing power, is called Lord (h` de. e`te,ra ku,rioj), on which his

sovereignty over the universe depends (kaqV h]n avnh/ptai tw/n o[lwn to.
kra ,toj). And God is God, not only of men, but also of gods; and he is great (me ,ga j), being
truly mighty and truly powerful (w'n o;ntwj ivscuro.j kai. krataio,j). [Deut 10:17.]

2.) ivscu, j and Hebrew equivalents used of the Davidic Messiah

And he will not weaken all his days, (relying) upon his God, for God made him powerful in the holy spirit ... with strength and righteousness. And the blessing of the Lord will be with him in strength, and he will not weaken; ... Then who will succeed against him, mighty in his actions and strong in the fear of God?" (*Pss. Sol.* 17.36-40)

See also Isa 9:6, where the Septuagint does not use the term ivscu, j but the Hebrew uses an equivalent:

Isa 11:2 And the spirit of God shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might (pneu/ma boulh/j kai. ivscu,oj), the spirit of knowledge and godliness.

Isa 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God (rABGI lae), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ The LXX reflects a rather different *Vorlage* here: "because a child was born for us, a son also given to us, whose sovereignty was upon his shoulder, and he is named Messenger of Great Counsel, for I will bring peace upon the rulers, peace and health to him."

There is also a relevant passage from the book of Jubilees which recounts Jacob's blessing to his son Judah. The biblical equivalent here is Gen 49:8-12, a passage widely understood to contain messianic prophecy:

Jub 31:18 And to Judah he [Jacob] said: "May Yahweh give you might and strength to tread upon all who hate you. Be a prince, you and one of your sons for the sons of Jacob; may your name and the name of your son be one which travels and goes about in all the lands and cities. Then may the nations fear before your face, and all the nations tremble, [and every nations trembles]. **19** And with you will be the help of Jacob and with you will be found the salvation of Israel. **20** And on the day when you sit on your righteous throne of honor, there will be great peace for all the seed of the beloved's sons..."

1QSb 4.24 May you be [...] with the power (hšk[yp] z<a[b] of your [mouth.] With your sceptre may you lay waste the earth. With the breath of your lips **25** may you kill the wicked. May he give [you a spirit of coun]sel and of everlasting fortitude, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of God. May **26** justice be the belt of [your loins, and loyalt]y the belt of your hips. May he make your horns of iron and your hoofs of bronze. For God has raised you to a sceptre **28** for the rulers be[fore you ... all the na]tions will serve you, and he will make you strong (hkrb~gy) by his holy Name, **29** so that you will be like a li[on ...] you're the prey, with no-one to give it [back]...

Appendix K: Critique of Paul G. Bretscher's reconstruction of Q 3:16d

Paul G. Bretscher offers a rather novel reconstruction of Q 3:16d and a translation-based argument for seeing John as a forerunner to God.¹⁸⁶ He claims that the sandals to which John refers in his preaching were his own, not the Coming One's. John's original message can be reconstructed to have read something like this:

But behold, there is someone coming after me, of whom I am not worthy to remove the sandals of my feet.¹⁸⁷

I am concerned here only with the second clause (= Q 3:16d). With this reconstruction Bretscher thinks that John was alluding to Exod 3:5 or Josh 5:15 where Moses/Joshua is commanded to remove his sandals because the ground on which he stood was holy.

There are multiple reasons as to why Bretscher's reconstruction cannot be sustained:

(1) Mark's, Luke's, and John's versions of this saying make it very clear that the sandals were not John's own but the Coming One's:

Mark 1:7 οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς κύψας λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ·

Luke 3:16 οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ

John 1:27 οὗ οὐκ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ἄξιος ἵνα λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος

¹⁸⁶ Bretscher, "Whose Sandals", 81-87.

¹⁸⁷ Bretscher, "Whose Sandals", 85. Bretscher's reconstruction is only given in English!

It is only the versions found in Matthew and Acts that do not *explicitly* state that the sandals belonged to the Coming One:

Matt 3:11 οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι

Acts 13:25 οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἄξιος τὸ ὑπόδημα τῶν ποδῶν λῦσαι

Here the pronoun is omitted. Bretscher takes this as evidence that the most primitive version of this saying had John speaking of his own sandals. But this leaves unexplained how the other versions of the saying originated. It is not difficult to imagine how the two sayings in Matthew and Acts originated. If the evangelists understood the relative οὗ as modifying the sandal(s) they could have easily dispensed with the αὐτοῦ as a redundant (pleonastic) element within the saying.¹⁸⁸

Bretscher regards Matthew's version as the most primitive. One of the reasons for this, he says, is that "Matthew's audience included disciples of John the Baptist, and these disciples knew full well what their master had really said."¹⁸⁹ This claim is gratuitous and question-begging. It is impossible to know whether Matthew's audience included disciples of John or, for that matter, whether the other Gospels' audiences did not; nor can we know what exactly these disciples might have recalled about their master's prophecy.

I have argued above that there are good reasons to regard Luke's λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ as the original Q wording of the saying (→2.2.5.3.). Matthew, I suggest, reformulated the saying because it seemed clumsy and prolix.

¹⁸⁸ Incidentally, the αὐτοῦ in the other three versions is not redundant since it modifies τῶν ὑποδημάτων whereas the relative pronoun οὗ modifies a different word, ὑποδημάτων: "whose latchet of *his* sandals..." This perhaps explains why the αὐτοῦ is only omitted in Matt 3:11 and Acts 13:25.

¹⁸⁹ Bretscher, "Whose Sandals", 86

(2) Bretscher’s proposed reconstruction does not agree with *any* of the five versions of John’s preaching (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:27; Acts 13:25) but is rather a composite of Matt 3:11 and Acts 13:25. Bretscher offers no convincing criteria for why he privileges these two versions and arbitrarily picks out elements from one or the other. His only criteria seem to be that the two are shorter and that John’s words were originally meant to recall Exod 3:5 and/or Josh 5:15 where the words ὑπόδημα, λύσαι, and ποδῶν occur together.¹⁹⁰ But these biblical allusions are quite dubious. The three words are all quite common and it is not terribly surprising to find at least two biblical texts in which “sandals” and “feet” are used in the same context. The term λύω is used in Luke 3:15; John 1:27; and Acts 13:25. It therefore has decent support for being part of the original Q saying. But the loosening being spoken of in Luke 3:15 and John 1:27 refers to the *strap* (τὸν ἱμάντα) on the Coming One’s sandals, not the sandals themselves. Only in Acts does John speak of loosening the Coming One’s sandals (οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἄξιος τὸ ὑπόδημα τῶν ποδῶν λύσαι) and in this case the evangelist is most likely paraphrasing or abbreviating the saying which he had already recorded in Luke 3:16 (οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἱκανὸς λύσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ). The alleged allusion Exod 3:5 and/or Josh 5:15 is therefore unpersuasive. As I discuss elsewhere, John’s metaphor of unfastening the sandals of another can thus be understood in light of a known custom; for the act of removing someone else’s sandals was seen as too undignified task even for a disciple (→2.2.8.3.). This particular metaphor becomes all the more apposite when it is recognised that the phrase ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος is also a metaphor concerned with discipleship.

¹⁹⁰ Bretscher, “Whose Sandals”, 84-85

(3) It would be nonsensical for John to have said, “I am unworthy to carry my sandals.” Hence, Bretscher’s proposes that βασιτάζω can be understood in the sense of “wear.” But none of the major lexicons mention this as a possible meaning. In my own search of the Septuagint, the NT, and Josephus, I found numerous examples where it clearly means “carry.”¹⁹¹ By contrast, I could only find one example where the term could possibly be taken to mean “wear” (Acts 15:10) but even here this is debatable since a yoke could have easily been viewed as carried rather than worn. Bretscher also points to Gal 6:17 and Luke 10:4 but the former text demands no special translation and the latter is simply imprecise since it uses the verb in connection with several other items which are clearly carried and not worn.

(4) Bretscher’s proposed translation would be more convincing, from a grammatical standpoint, if the relative pronoun had not been οὗ but ᾧ: “*for whom* I am not worthy to remove [my] sandals.” The genitive is difficult to construe in the way Bretscher proposes.¹⁹²

(5) The relative οὗ is, in Matt 3:11 and Acts 13:25, most naturally taken to modify “the sandal(s)” (or “the latchet” in the other versions of the saying). This is evident from the saying that immediately follows, where a similar structure is used:

3:11 οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα whose sandals I am not worthy to untie

¹⁹¹ Mark 14:13; 7:14; Luke 10:4; 11:27; 14:27; John 10:31; 20:15; Acts 3:2; 21:35; Gal 6:5; Rev 17:7; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.316; 3.210; 5.292; 6.171; 7.284; 7.287, 320, 393; 8.101, 258; 9.142, 254; 10.65, 145, 146; 12.250; 14.226; *Ag. Ap.* 1.209. Bretscher (“Whose Sandals,” 84) seems to have come up with the idea that βασιτάζω can mean “wear” by analogy with the German word *tragen*. It has no apparent basis in Classical Greek.

¹⁹² One would have to regard the relative pronoun as a “genitive of respect” but these are quite rare. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 127-128.

βαστάσαι

3:12 οὗ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ whose winnowing shovel is in his hand and he
διακαθαριεῖ τὴν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ will thoroughly purge his threshing floor

Bretscher claims that οὗ can be taken as modifying ἰκανός but this makes no sense grammatically and is not reflected in Bretscher's own translation.

For multiple reasons, then, Bretscher's proposed reconstruction should really be dispensed with once and for all.