

- a) The Baptism of Jesus is a significant event from both religious and historical perspectives. This is believed to be the moment when John the Baptist highlighted Jesus as the better person he prophesied about. Thus, it became apparent to believers that Jesus is their leader.

In the Gospel of Mark, this baptism is emphasized.¹ Initially—Jesus leaves Nazareth then arrives at Galilee to get baptised by John. After baptism is complete, the heaven gets torn open and the Holy Spirit descends downwards like a dove. Then God the Father's voice comes from heaven through which he declares his love for Jesus. Followed by this: The Holy Spirit takes Jesus into wilderness where he encounters the devil's temptations for 40 days. During that time angels were attending him and he was surrounded by wild animals. Then Jesus goes into Galilee to announce the kingdom of God.

Hooker asserts that the dove was associated with the Holy Spirit in Judaism of the first century.² This passage from Mark also highlights the link between dove and the Holy Spirit. Generally, the dove is conceived as a symbol of peace. In this biblical passage, the meaning of dove, as a symbol of peace, is not visible. There is no explicit message of peace in this passage.

Hence, it's possible that the dove was mentioned by Mark as a representation of the Holy Spirit rather than to symbolize something. Luke showed that the Holy Spirit descended in the shape of a dove. Perhaps this is what Mark also wanted to emphasise.

'Mark may be portraying Jesus as a new Adam...' says Hurtado.³ They link Adam's interaction with animals at the Garden of Eden with Jesus spending time with wild beasts. Moreover, both Adam and Jesus get tempted by Satan. Adam falls for temptation then commits the Original Sin while Jesus, on the other hand, is attended by angels and successfully resists the temptations. These similarities between Adam of Genesis and Jesus of Mark can't be dismissed as coincidence.

By comparing and contrasting these similarities between Adam & Jesus it can be said that Mark highlighted Jesus as the better Adam. Jesus was alone with animals and got tempted but still he managed to not fall for Satan's manipulation unlike what Adam did. Moloney concludes that the opening of heavens highlights the beginning of a new age.⁴ Possibly meaning that the communication between God and mankind will be more direct from now on. It is believed that God arrived on earth in the form of Jesus through incarnation. Before Jesus' birth, there was a huge distance between God in heaven and humans on earth. However it's said that God took the form of a man through Jesus and

¹ *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*, Authorised King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Mark 1.9-15 King James Bible Online ebook.

² Morna Hooker, *Gospel According to Saint Mark* (London: A & C Black), p. 46.

³ Larry Hurtado, *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), p. 21.

⁴ Francis Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), p. 36.

interacted with humans directly. The opening of heavens may represent this new type of direct communication between man and God. Thus the start of a new epoch.

This can be further supported by the fact that God's voice directly came from heaven to earth in order to proclaim his love for Jesus. God sending his voice on earth may suggest that he now wants to have a closer relationship with humans.

Another key point to notice is why Jesus got baptised by a mortal human like John. Baptism is for the cleansing of sins, on the other hand Jesus is believed to be sinless. (to be continued)

Bibliography

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- b) The Q hypothesis is a clarification for the similarities and differences between the following gospels: Mark; Luke and Matthew. The contents of these three synoptic gospels are very similar in some occasions while there are also differences amongst them. This leads to the synoptic problem: Which sources did the authors utilise while composing these gospels?

It is proposed that 'Q' could be a sayings gospel (a book containing a collection of Jesus' sayings). This Q source, along with Mark, influenced the authors of Matthew and Luke.

'Q' is derived from the German word called 'quelle' which means 'source'.

The Two Document Hypothesis is that the Gospel of Mark was crafted before Matthew & Luke at around 70 CE. Authors of Matthew & Luke used Mark alongside another source called 'Q'. The contents which are absent in Mark but are common in Luke and Matthew—for example Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5- 7] and Sermon on the Plain [Luke 6:17-49]--could be taken from the Q source

Piper claims that Q is just a hypothetical source, not an identifiable collection or book.⁵ Q could be the source of oral traditions that were used by authors of Matthew and Luke. There is no objective evidence for Q's existence. The Q hypothesis is proposed to explain the similarities of some Non-Markan content from Matthew And Luke. Some argue that authors of Matthew and Luke used this hypothetical source.

Stanton and Perrin assert that there are very similar verbal agreements between Luke and Matthew over multiple verses. This can be considered to put forward a case in favor of the Q hypothesis. In line after line comparison of these two gospels, there are sometimes very similar Greek texts which suggest that both these gospels shared the

⁵ Ronald Piper, 'The Sayings Source', *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell), p. 264.

same source. For example at Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.⁶ These similarities can not be dismissed as coincidence hence it is certain that authors of both these gospels used a common source that is not accessible today.

Q source, if discovered today, can highlight more information on the historical Jesus. It would also be interesting to see if there are any contents of Q that both Matthew and Luke ignored. Some wording of Q would most likely be similar to that of Non-Markan shared content of Matthew and Luke. Since the content they share with Mark also has similar wording, in some cases. Therefore it's likely they would have done the same for Q source.

There is also the possibility that authors of Matthew and Luke used different versions of Q source.

Some passages are common in both these gospels but wording differs a lot. For example Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49 are both about the parable of man who constructed his home on rock but the wording differs a lot.

Thus it can be argued that they had dissimilar editions of Q source.

It is claimed by several scholars that the gospel of Thomas can be seen as proof of the existence of Q source. Like Thomas, Q source could be a sayings gospel without any description of Jesus's life. However it is said that Thomas is dependent on Synoptics.⁷

Bibliography

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⁶ **(WIP)** STANTON & PERRIN pg 712 (**confused on how to put this into MHRA order**)

⁷ John Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday), p. 135-138.