

---

# A Major Support from a Minor Agreement: Matthew's Use of Mark and Luke

**Hendry ONGKOWIDJOJO**  
Trinity Theological College

## Abstract

The minor agreement (MA) between Matthew and Luke against Mark is arguably the most delicate problem for those who believe in Q, and the MA of "Who is it that struck you?" (τίς ἐστὶν ὁ παίσας σε/ *tis estin ho paisas se*) in Matthew 26:67-68 // Luke 22:64 (absent in Mark 14:65) has been regarded as the most crucial one. This has led to long and intense debates about whether this MA is genuine or not. Assuming Matthew's use of Mark and Luke, I will argue that this MA is genuine. Although there is an internal incoherence within Matthew 26:67-68, I will show that it is not because of a conjectural emendation but because of the way Matthew used his source and the limitations faced by the first-century writer.

## Keywords

Synoptic Problem, the minor agreement, Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis, Mark-Q overlaps, conjectural emendation

Since the two-source hypothesis with its "Q" has become the majority view, *the minor agreement* (MA) is arguably the most delicate test that it has to face. Among hundreds of MAs, I have not yet found any other MA that is more challenging for the two-source hypothesis than Matthew 26:67-68 // Mark 14:65 // Luke 22:64. This MA is particularly strong because (1) it consists of five consecutive words *tis estin ho paisas se*, (2) the word *paio* (struck) is an *hapax legomenon*, both in Matthew and Luke, and (3) it occurs in the passion narrative, which means this is not a case of Mark-Q overlap.

**Corresponding author**

Hendry ONGKOWIDJOJO: wangmacan75@gmail.com

I will argue that this MA can best be explained if I assume neither the two-source nor the Farrer hypothesis, but the Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis. In the first part of this article, I will follow the debate between the “Q” theorists and Martin Goulder, while in the second and the third parts, I will propose my point of view.

### THE Q-GOULDER DEBATE

In addressing this MA, the two-source theorists propose a *conjectural emendation*, which means that although in fact *all* extant manuscripts support the reading of “Who is it that struck you?” in Matthew 26:68, what we have here is *not* the original text of Matthew. Hence, according to them, the phrase “Who is it that struck you?” that originally appears in Luke 22:64 had been transferred to Matthew 26:68, and all extant manuscripts of Matthew 26:68 happen to adopt this change. If this was correct, then there would be no MA in the original text of Luke 22:64 and Matthew 26:68 against Mark 14:65.

Streeter has provided a representative argument to justify this conjectural emendation.<sup>1</sup> Considering the MSS *per se*, however, it is difficult not to take sides with Goulder. It is telling that while we can find some notes for Matthew 26:63-67, 69-73 in the apparatus of NA<sup>27</sup>, the apparatus for Matthew 26:68 in NA<sup>27</sup> is clean and clear, which means we do not have even the slightest indication that this text has variations! Therefore, Goulder’s objection must be taken seriously:

If we are to justify conjectural readings wherever there is a synoptic parallel, then we bid farewell to the falsifiability of the standard position. For then *whenever* there is an impressive MA, it will always be possible to invoke the dubious claim that a conjecture which avoids it is not guesswork because of the parallel in Mark. What is this then but a license to prefer a hypothesis to the united testimony of all the manuscripts, the versions and the Fathers?<sup>2</sup>

1 B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship and Dates* (London: Macmillan, 1924), 325-328.

2 Michael Goulder, *Luke* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), I.9.

Foster in reply to Goodacre says, “To deny the possibility of early corruption for which there is no longer any extant mss evidence seems to place an unwarranted level of confidence in the textual tradition at all points.”<sup>3</sup> This argument is, admittedly, hard to refute. But the problem is that with our current situation, it is nearly impossible to refute it. For even if we had MSS evidences for Matthew 26:68 that come from the era as early as P<sup>52</sup>, it would arguably change nothing because if Streeter’s conjecture is correct, then, considering how massive is its influence upon the extant MSS evidence, we would face not an early assimilation, but an *extremely* early one.

There is, however, an internal incoherence in Matthew 26:67-68 that Streeter has revealed. For those who do not notice, the information about Jesus’s face being covered actually does *not* occur in Matthew. Thus, while in Mark we can read about Jesus being blindfolded and thus cannot know “Who is it that struck you,” in Matthew we meet with the insult but there is no information about Jesus’s face being covered. And for Streeter, this is serious because “the whole point of the taunt ‘Prophecy who it is that struck thee’ depends upon the fact that He was prevented by the veil from *seeing* who did it.”

Assuming Matthew has used at least Mark as his source, Streeter’s argument is indeed valid. If Matthew had not used Mark or Luke, this omission in itself would not be problematic for, in that case, it is possible that they mocked Jesus because he did not know personally those who spat at him. But if Matthew has used Mark, or in our case not only Mark but also Luke, and both of them record Jesus being veiled, then this omission in Matthew can be regarded, at least at first sight, as an internal incoherence. Therefore, Streeter submits that if Matthew does write “Who it is that struck you?” he should also mention the fact that Jesus was being blindfolded. Because this is not the case for him, this internal incoherence supports the conjectural emendation. Streeter insists, “[T]hese two [the veiling and the insult] stand or fall together.”<sup>4</sup>

In a sense, the debate for this MA is about this internal incoherence. Without it, the ball is in the court of Q theorists: they have to explain

3 Paul Foster, “Is It Possible to Dispense with Q?” *Novum Testamentum* 45 (2003): 325.

4 Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 326.

on what ground they may expect all to believe that a case of conjectural emendation in Matthew 26:68 actually exists. But because of this internal incoherence, the burden of proof moves to those who refuse the emendation. During the span of twenty-five years, Goulder had made no less than three major attempts to solve this incoherence, and I will look at his arguments one by one.

In his first attempt, Goulder explains this incoherence as *an unfortunate omission*. Goulder notes that Matthew “wants to clarify Mark’s slightly ambiguous *prophēteuson*..., and explain the ‘prophesying’ with *σε τίς ἐστίν ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ*.”<sup>5</sup> But here comes the problem: “he is involved in a slight oversight:... he has overlooked the fact that ‘his face’ was blindfolded in Mark.” For Goulder, however, “This is an unfortunate omission, but in alterations such oversights are common.”<sup>6</sup> In his previous work, Goulder made a similar comment: “Unfortunately Matthew is somewhat hasty in making the improvement, and leaves out the veiling..., this was an easy mistake to make.”<sup>7</sup> Thus in Goulder’s explanation, Matthew does not inform us about Jesus being blindfolded simply because he has “made a mistake” or “overlooked the fact.”

This omission is indeed an unfortunate one, not only for Matthew but also for the Farrer hypothesis. Goulder seems to realize that he cannot just argue that Matthew has overlooked the fact. A couple of years later, he made his second attempt. Here he argues that Matthew “involves himself in a muddle,” and that “muddle” is one of Matthew’s characteristics.<sup>8</sup> As Goodacre himself admits, however, “acceptance of Goulder’s point will depend on acceptance of his general argument about ‘muddle’ among all the evangelists.”<sup>9</sup>

Finally, a decade later, after reading Jarmo Kiilunen’s article, Goulder made his last attempt.<sup>10</sup> Goulder says that in this pericope, Matthew in

5 Goulder, *Luke*, I.7.

6 Goulder, *Luke*, I.7.

7 M. D. Goulder, “On Putting Q to the Test,” *New Testament Studies* 24 (1978), 227.

8 Goulder, quoted in Mark Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels: An Examination of a New Paradigm* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 103.

9 Goulder, in Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels*, 104.

10 Jarmo Kiilunen, “‘Minor Agreements’ und die Hypothese von Lukas’ Kenntnis des Matthäusevangeliums,” quoted in Michael Goulder, “Two Significant Minor Agree-

fact “has two groups of mockers, and has given the prophecy challenge to the second group.”<sup>11</sup> Following Kiilunen, he argued that Matthew

divides the Sanhedrists into two groups, the second being introduced as οἱ δεῖ [hoi de], and transfers to them the beating with canes which Mark had imputed to the servant. He envisages Jesus as surrounded by his persecutors. Some he is facing as they spit and punch: the others are alongside and behind him, beating him on the back of the head. This latter he cannot see, so it is suitable to include Mark’s “Prophecy!” taunt for them.<sup>12</sup>

Based on BAG [today: BDAG],<sup>13</sup> Goulder says, “In secular Greek *rapizein* almost always means hitting with a club or rod.” Thus for him, Matthew 26:67-68 should be read, “Then they [the first group] spit in his face and struck him. And some [the second one] *hit him with a club* [from behind], saying, ‘Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?’” Thus, although Matthew did not inform us about the veil, his account is still coherent.

In my opinion, Goulder’s third effort is the weakest. Although he might be right that the use of *rapizein* in the secular Greek could support his suggestion, Matthew 5:39 shows that Matthew can use *rapizein* differently from the secular Greek. In Matthew 5:39, where Matthew also uses the same word, it is not possible to translate *rapizein* as “hit with a club” because the meaning of that verse would become, “But if anyone hit you with a club on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Here, we have to translate *rapizein* as “slap.” Therefore, it could be argued that in Matthew 26:67-68 too, it is more natural to give *rapizein* the same meaning. Thus I agree with all modern English translations that prefer to translate *rapizein* in Matthew 26:67-68 as “slap” instead of as “hit with a club.”

Goulder’s efforts are truly impressive. His first article arguing for this MA, “On Putting Q to the Test,” appeared at 1978, and his last one, “Two Significant Minor Agreements,” in 2003; that is twenty-five years

---

ments (Mat. 4:13 Par.; Mat. 26:67-68 Par.),” *Novum Testamentum* 45, (2003): 365.

11 Kiilunen, in Goulder, “Two Significant Minor Agreements”: 371.

12 Kiilunen, in Goulder, “Two Significant Minor Agreements”: 372.

13 *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

*in toto*. And although I cannot agree with his third effort, I would like to argue that assuming Matthew's use of Mark and Luke (our view), instead of Luke's use of Mark and Matthew (Goulder's view), I can "develop" Goulder's first and second attempt. (1) I agree with Goulder's first explanation that Matthew "is involved in a slight oversight." Nevertheless, I will demonstrate that assuming Matthew's use of Mark and Luke, the cause of this oversight can be traced to the limitation that must be faced by all first-century writers, as it is proposed by Downing and Derrenbacker. (2) Instead of Goulder's "muddle," I would like to propose "fatigue," a term coined by none other than Goulder himself, as the possible cause of this omission.

### THE MATTHEAN POSTERIORITY HYPOTHESIS'S TWO PROPOSALS

#### The First Proposal: "X" + "y" or "x + Y"

According to Tuckett, "in very broad terms, Mark has X, Luke has Y, and Matthew has X + Y."<sup>14</sup> I want to refine Tuckett's "X + Y" formula and propose that the way Matthew redacts his sources can be described as "X" + "y" or "x + Y", which means that when Matthew uses both Mark and Luke, he never uses both at the same time. He always picks one of them as his main source for one particular passage and then adds one or two details from the other *using his memory*. This minor alteration is important because it will remove the necessity of Matthew having both Gospels in front of him, one thing that is currently deemed as nearly impossible for the first-century writers.

According to Derrenbacker's investigation, "[W]riting desks did not come into use until sometime after the fourth century CE."<sup>15</sup> And the consequence is that the ancients must write in a posture that limits the way they may handle their resources. It is not possible for ancient writers

14 Christopher Tuckett, "The Current State of the Synoptic Problem," in P. Foster et al., eds., *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 32.

15 Robert Derrenbacker, "Greco-Roman Writing Practices and Luke's Gospel: Revisiting 'The Order of a Crank,'" in Christopher A. Rollston, ed., *The Gospels according to Michael Goulder* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2002), 66.

to put all their sources in front of them and then compare these sources extensively and minutely. Therefore, “[a]ll Synoptic source theories run into problems when the writer is imagined to be conflating two or more source texts for extensive periods and with relatively high degrees of verbal agreements.”<sup>16</sup>

Beside this, Derrenbacker also informs us about how the ancient writers use their memory in the process of writing. For this, he refers to the work of Small and Pelling. Small says that before starting to write, ancient writers would “go over all the relevant sources” and use their memory to organize the data.<sup>17</sup> According to Pelling, an ancient author

would generally choose just one work to have before his eyes when he composed, and this work would provide the basis of his narrative.... Items from the earlier reading would more widely be combined with principal source, but a writer would not normally refer back to that reading to verify individual references, and would instead rely on his memory, or on the briefest of notes.<sup>18</sup>

If the way Matthew uses his two Gospels is indeed “X” + “y” or “x + Y,” then he has only one of them in front of him (“X” or “Y”), while quoting the other from memory (“x” or “y”).

Downing seems to agree with Derrenbacker, “[E]ven the most highly literate and sophisticated writers employ relatively simple approaches to their ‘sources.’”<sup>19</sup> And by “simple approaches” Downing means that “[n]o one in or around the first century seems to have considered ‘unpicking’ a source that showed signs of being or even admitted being ‘conflated,’ before reusing it in their own composition.”<sup>20</sup> The “unpicking” here is central to Downing’s argument against the Farrerians and, especially, the

---

16 Robert Derrenbacker, “Text, Tables, and Tablets: A Response to John C. Poirier,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 35 (2013): 383.

17 J.P. Small, quoted in Derrenbacker, “Greco-Roman Writing Practices and Luke’s Gospel,” 70.

18 C. B. R. Pelling, quoted in Derrenbacker, “Greco-Roman Writing Practices and Luke’s Gospel,” 71.

19 F. Gerald Downing, “Compositional Conventions and the Synoptic Problem,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988): 70.

20 Downing, “Compositional Conventions,” 70.

Griesbachians.<sup>21</sup> Next, after investigating how Plutarch redacted Livy's and Dionysius's accounts of Camillus's siege of the Etruscan town of Veii, Downing concludes,

Where they [Livy and Dionysius] agree, he [Plutarch] follows (unless the story line is particularly weak); where they can be taken as supplementing each other, he allows them to; where they entirely disagree, he simply follows one; where they contradict in detail in an otherwise similar episode, he makes up his own version.<sup>22</sup>

This last investigation is particularly important for our topic because (1) as Matthew uses Mark's and Luke's Gospels, so does Plutarch use Livy's and Dionysius's works, and (2) as Matthew, Mark, and Luke talk about the same topic, so do Plutarch, Livy, and Dionysius. Therefore, it is to be seen whether or not the way Matthew redacts Luke and Mark is similar to the way Plutarch handles Livy and Dionysius.

When I compare Matthew 26:67-68 // Mark 14:65 // Luke 22:64, it will be seen that Matthew's record is closer to Mark's than to Luke's. Not only is Luke's account much shorter, but it also places the mocking of Jesus *before* the trial. On the other hand, we find a remarkably similar basic outline between Matthew and Mark: (1) Jesus being led to the chief priest; (2) the gathering of the elder and the scribes; (3) Peter's effort of following his master from a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; (4) the whole council were seeking false accusations but failed; the accusation of destroying the temple; (5) Jesus remained silent; the direct question from the high priest to Jesus; (6) Jesus affirmed that he was the Son of God/Son of the Blessed; Jesus talked about the Son of Man's coming; (7) the high priest tore his garment; (8) the decision was being made; (9) Jesus was being mocked.

---

21 According to the Farrerians, Mark is the first Synoptic ever written. Matthew then used Mark and finally, Luke used Mark and Matthew. On the other hand, the Griesbachians believe that Matthew is the first Synoptic, Luke used Matthew and finally, Mark used them both. The Farrerians and the Griesbachians agree that there is a direct literary relationship between the three Synoptics, and therefore Q is unnecessary.

22 Downing, "Compositional Conventions," 81.



The result is thus very similar to the way Plutarch handles Livy and Dionysius. Because here Matthew finds a quite different account of Mark and Luke, then he has to follow one of them, and this time, he chooses Mark as his primary source; this is the one that Matthew has in front of him. But second, because Mark and Luke here “can be taken as supplementing each other,” Matthew adds some information in Luke that he cannot find in Mark, which is “Who is it that struck you?” via his memory. Because Matthew has been familiar with Luke’s version of the story, when he arrived at Mark’s slightly ambiguous *prophēteuson* he could naturally add the content of the mockery. There is only one small step away from the word *prophesy* that he could read in the Gospel of Mark to the content of the mockery that he *had* read in Luke’s Gospel before he started to write. This addition from Luke could simply come out of Matthew’s mind when he arrived at the word *prophesy*, and no one was there to remind him that he had not yet informed the reader about Jesus’s face being veiled. Thus the internal incoherence happened because of the way Matthew used his two Gospels and of the limitation of ancient writers.

### The Second Proposal: The Argument from “Fatigue”

For our second proposal, I think it is better to explain this omission, not as Matthew’s muddle but as a case of Matthew’s editorial fatigue, a term coined by Goulder and affirmed by Goodacre.<sup>23</sup> According to Goulder, “Matthew and Luke sometimes write versions of Marcan pericopae in which they make initial changes, only to lapse into the thought or wording of the original.”<sup>24</sup> Goodacre gives us a more comprehensive definition:

Editorial fatigue is a phenomenon that will inevitably occur when a writer is heavily dependent on another’s work. In telling the same story as his predecessor, a writer makes changes in the early stages which he is unable to sustain throughout. Like continuity errors in film and television, examples of fatigue will be *unconscious* mistakes, *small errors of detail* which *naturally* arise in the course of constructing a narrative. They are interesting because

23 See M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lction in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974), 35.

24 Goulder, *Midrash and Lction in Matthew*, 45.

they can betray an author's hand, most particularly in revealing to us the identity of his sources.<sup>25</sup>

The "title of Herod" in Matthew is often used as an example. In Goulder's words, "At 6.14 Mark has 'King Herod,' which Matthew amends, for accuracy, to 'Herod the tetrarch' (14:1): but at 14:9, in line with Mark, he has become 'the King.'"<sup>26</sup> Thus, after improving Mark with the more accurate title for Herod, Matthew, because of fatigue, lapses into the less accurate title previously given by Mark.

Although not all would agree with Goulder,<sup>27</sup> this kind of lapse *could* be caused by fatigue. I think, however, that the definition of editorial fatigue needs to be broadened slightly, not only when "a writer makes changes in the early stages which he is unable to sustain throughout." In my experience as a translator, the one thing that I fear most is that in translating a work, I miss the word "not," because this will make the meaning of my translation be exactly opposite to the original one. Once the mistake happens, it is not that easy to track and find it. This "small" and "unconscious" omission is possible when we are tired, and it is not easy to keep ourselves fresh and alert all the time, as every translator and editor would agree. Thus, fatigue did and does happen.

This being said, I cannot use this argument too broadly. The best example for this too broad usage is when Goodacre sees the Parable of the Pounds (Mt 25:14-30 // Lk 19:11-27) as demonstrating editorial fatigue on the part of Luke. At the beginning of this parable, Luke talks about ten servants who have received one mina each. But at the end of the story, Luke informs us that only three servants give an account to their master. According to Goodacre, because Luke has read Matthew's version of this parable, which is the Parable of the Talents, at the end of his story "Luke has three servants in mind, like Matthew, and not ten after all."<sup>28</sup> In other words, because of fatigue, Luke has made an accidental lapse.

25 Mark Goodacre, "Fatigue in the Synoptics," *NTS* 44 (1998): 46; emphasis added.

26 Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, 45.

27 For Paul Foster, "[t]his variation could surely be for stylistic reasons, such as avoidance of the longer title, rather than a case of editorial fatigue," "Dispense with Q": 329.

28 Goodacre, "Fatigue in the Synoptics": 55.

Against Foster, who deems the Parable of the Pounds as “the strongest example”<sup>29</sup> of editorial fatigue, I submit that this kind of using fatigue is way too broad. Commonsensically speaking,<sup>30</sup> is it possible for Luke to jump from ten to three within a couple of seconds *unconsciously*? It will be a stretch of our imagination to think that in the beginning Luke had originally planned to write about the ending of all ten servants, but then only a couple of seconds later, because of his familiarity with Matthew’s version, he ended his story with talking about only three of them and, because of fatigue, he did not realize that he had made such a huge lapse.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, on the one hand, I cannot and should not refuse to accept the reality of editorial fatigue. On the other hand, we must guard ourselves against labeling every kind of lapse in the Gospel narratives as being caused by editorial fatigue. But I would like to propose Matthew 26:67-68 as an appropriate example for editorial fatigue. The “mistake” here is minor; it is not about quoting an Old Testament text, nor about Jesus’s words, but about a minor detail during Jesus’s passion. It is possible that in using Mark, Matthew because of fatigue missed including “to cover his face” and did not realize this omission when, a couple of seconds later, right after writing the word *prophecy*, he decides to add “Who is it that struck you?” that he took from Luke relying on his memory?

In support of the possibility of this scenario, I refer to our manuscript evidence. Is it not striking that not even a single Matthew MS can be found that tries to amend this incoherence? While I do find manuscripts that add “Who is it that struck you?” in Mark 14:65, I cannot find *even one* manuscript that inserts “to cover his face” in Matthew 26:67! It looks as if our

---

29 Foster, “Dispense with Q”: 331.

30 I admit that there are no strict criteria for deciding whether a mistake can be categorized as “minor” or “major,” and propose that “common sense” can be effectively used for this.

31 For an explanation that Luke made this lapse consciously, see François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51-19:27*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 614: “The fate of the second servant is but a shadow of that of the first one, to the point that we may ask why the story did not operate with just two servants, as with the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9-14). In any case, it is understandable why the Judeo-Christian Gospel is a bit particular in distinguishing among what is good, what is tolerable, and what is bad.” Thus, Luke had a clear purpose for this parable. See also Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 679n236.

early scribes had not noticed this incoherence, or some of them may have realized it but deemed it sufficiently “minor” that they did nothing about it. And if, borrowing Goulder’s words, this can happen to “the united testimony of all the manuscripts, the versions, and the Fathers,” why can this not happen to Matthew? And it is to be noticed that this phenomenon of fatigue is accepted not only by the Farrerians (Goulder and Goodacre) but also by the two-source theorist (Foster).

Thus, I admit that we do find an internal incoherence in Matthew 26:68, but I submit that this internal incoherence does not demand a conjectural emendation. Because Matthew here takes Mark as his main source, while taking from Luke additional information based on his memory instead of opening and reading it carefully line by line, it is understandable if Matthew omits some minor details. And because for the first-century writer this way of using sources is not a matter of preference but caused by some unavoidable limitations, then it is difficult to expect that Matthew would have written differently. This possibility is strengthened if we accept the reality of fatigue. One question remains, however: Can we really maintain that the “X + y” or “x + Y” is the way Matthew redacts his sources? If this is indeed Matthew’s pattern then we can expect to find some supporting evidence.

### THE MATTHEAN POSTERITY HYPOTHESIS AND THE MARK-Q OVERLAPS

In all, there are six Mark-Q overlaps that, according to Tuckett, have been recognized by “most defenders of the Q theory,”<sup>32</sup> and they show that the “X + y” or “x + Y” can always be spotted in all of them. Because of space, however, I can only discuss the first overlap: the temptation of Jesus.

---

32 Christopher Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 31. These six Mark-Luke (Q) overlaps are: (1) The Temptation of Jesus (Mt 4:1-11 // Mk 1:12-13 // Lk [Q] 4:1-13); (2) The Beelzebul Controversy (Mt 12:22-32 (9:32-34) // Mk 3:22-30 // Lk [Q] 11:14-23; 12:10); (3) The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mt 13:31-32 // Mk 4:30-32 // Lk [Q] 13:18-19); (4) The Mission Discourse (Mt 10:7-16 // Mk 6:7-13 // Lk [Q] 10:1-16); (5) The Sign of Jonah (Mt 16:1-4 // Mk 8:11-12 // Lk [Q] 11:29-30); (6) The Eschatological Discourse (Mt 24:1-36 // Mk 13:1-32 // Lk [Q] 17:24, 37b; 21:5-33).

### Matthew's Primary Gospel for the Temptation of Jesus

It is clear that Matthew has chosen Luke instead of Mark as his primary gospel for our first Mark-Luke (Q) overlap. Matthew has quoted from Luke not only the three kinds of temptations that the devil has brought to Jesus but also the opening stage of the temptation story. In their introduction to the temptation Matthew and Luke (1) mention the name *Jesus* (Mt 4:1 // Lk 4:1), instead of "him," as in Mark (1:12); (2) prefer to call the tempter "the Devil" instead of "Satan"; (3) mention that Jesus was hungry after forty days of fasting, a detail absent in Mark (Mt 4:2 // Lk 4:2). Therefore, for the temptation overlap, Luke is the gospel that Matthew has in front of him.

### Matthew's Secondary Gospel for The Temptation of Jesus

Although Matthew had used Luke heavily for the temptation story, a trace of Mark can be detected in the final part of this story. Instead of ending the temptation story with saying that the devil "departed from him until an opportune time" (as in Luke 4:13), Matthew prefers Mark's ending. In Mark 1:13 we read "and the angels were ministering to him" (*kai hoi angeloi diēkonoun autō*), while Matthew 4:11 says, "and behold, angels came and were ministering to him" (*kai idou angeloi prosēlthon kai diēkonoun auto*). Although not verbatim, the parallel between them is obvious enough.

This way of using sources is similar to what I have found in our MA: Matthew keeps using one source at a time and inserts a piece of information from the other source from memory. In our MA, Matthew is using Mark as his main source when, in the midst of it, he inserts a particular piece of information from Luke: "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?" Here, he is reading Luke as the primary source and inserts one particular piece of information from Mark, "angels came and were ministering to him" (Mt 14:11 // Mk 1:13). In both cases, there is no unpicking or any need to use both sources at the same time. And for the rest of the Mark-Luke (Q) overlaps, we will meet a similar pattern.

### Matthew's Redaction of the Temptation of Jesus

First of all, why does Matthew prefer to end his temptation story according to Mark instead of Luke? In short, the reason is because Matthew has such a high regard for Jesus's words. First, Matthew spends a lot of time and effort to record and to organize Jesus's teaching, and the five discourses are a major feature of his Gospel. Second, one aspect of Jesus's teaching that Matthew emphasizes is Jesus's authority. Already in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew declares, "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had *authority*, and not as their scribes" (Mt 7:28-29, emphasis added). Furthermore, Jesus's word is regarded as more than enough to stop the wind and waves (Mt 8:26-28).<sup>33</sup>

Third, in Matthew, each and every word of God matters. In the temptation story, *only* Matthew writes, "but by *every word* that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:11; emphasis added). Moreover, in Matthew 5:18 we read, "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." Finally, this principle finds its clearest articulation in the Great Commission: "teaching them to observe *all* that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20; emphasis added). Thus, since the very beginning until the very end of Matthew's Gospel, God's word matters. Hence, if Jesus commands the devil to leave, he must leave. Therefore, after noting Jesus's command, "Be gone, Satan!" (Mt 4:10; absent in Luke), it is understandable that Matthew chooses to end his temptation story by using Mark rather than Luke. The fact of angels ministering to Jesus after the temptation conveys the finality of Jesus's word more clearly than the fact of Satan waiting for a better opportunity to tempt Jesus again.

Next, why does Matthew change the order of Luke's second and third temptation? According to Davies and Allison, "The first [temptation] takes place in the desert, the second on a pinnacle of the temple, the third

33 Ulrich Luz sees the effectiveness of Jesus's word from another angle: "The only point at which Matthew has quite consistently 'improved' the picture of the disciples is in his elimination of the Markan motif of their failure to understand"; "For Matthew it is important that the disciples do finally—after Jesus' instruction—understand: Jesus is shown here as a good teacher who successfully gives the disciples full instructions about everything," *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 121-122.

on a mountain from which all the kingdoms of the world can be seen. This progression corresponds to the dramatic tension which comes to a climax with the third temptation.<sup>34</sup> Luz concurs: "The temptations of the devil become more intense: from the wilderness, Jesus is led to the temple; finally, on the high mountain it involves rule over the whole world."<sup>35</sup> Thus, the reason for Matthew's rearrangement of Jesus's temptations is that he wants the story to reach a proper climax.

Moreover, there are hints in Matthew that Jesus will actually meet all three of the devil's challenges *according to this order*. When the devil tempts Jesus to prove his identity as the Son of God by changing stone into bread, Jesus rejects this temptation outright. In the miracles of feeding five thousand and four thousand, however, Jesus shows that he actually has that power. It is to be noticed that (1) the temptation and the two feeding miracles have a connection with food; (2) Jesus and the crowds are hungry; (3) all three incidents happened in a desolate place; (4) who can say that it takes a lesser power for Jesus to feed the crowds than to change stone into bread?

Therefore, if, according to Satan, the undeniable sign for Jesus's status as the Son of God lies in his power to provide food, then with the miracle of the feeding, Jesus shows that he is indeed the true Son of God.<sup>36</sup> The wonderful thing is that Jesus declines to use his power to fulfill his own need but graciously meets the needs of others. I cannot help but see the irony in Matthew that even after Jesus performed these two feeding miracles, the Pharisees and the Sadducees still asked for a miracle from heaven (Mt 16:1-4)!

The parallel for the second temptation can be found in the passion of the Christ. In agreement with Hagner, I can hear an echo of the second temptation in "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Mt 27:40).<sup>37</sup> It is not difficult to see that both Satan and the elders base their thinking on a similar logic: The Father will protect his Son no matter

34 W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 352.

35 Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 183.

36 John Nolland makes an interesting parallel between Satan's first demand and the Baptist's statement that "God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham," *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 164.

37 Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1995), 838.

what. There is no parallel for “If you are the Son of God” in either Luke or Mark. Matthew is the only one who connects this contempt with Jesus’s claim that he is the Son of God. To further emphasize Jesus’s identity, Matthew adds, “He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God’” (Mt 27:43, again absent in Mark and Luke).

As an answer to both Satan’s and the scribes’ challenge, Matthew shows that the Father will indeed take care of his Son. He protects his Son not by preventing his death, however, but by raising him from the dead. According to Hagner, “If, however, one looks forward to the resurrection, one may say that God did indeed deliver him in a greater significance.”<sup>38</sup> Jesus’s resurrection is proof that without having to put God to the test, he is God’s Son under the Father’s good hand. With his resurrection, Jesus has answered not only people’s mocking but also Satan’s second temptation.

Finally, Jesus refuses without any hesitation to bow down under Satan in exchange for all the kingdoms of the world. In the Great Commission he claims that “[a]ll authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt 28:18).<sup>39</sup> Again, this ultimate claim has no parallel in Mark and Luke. Thus, in the last episode of Matthew’s Gospel, readers can see that Jesus has received what Satan once promised to give to him, but in a correct way: not by worshipping the devil but by obeying the Father. This may help us better to understand his teaching: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Mt 6:33). Jesus is the best example for those who always seek first the kingdom of God, and the Great Commission shows how all things have been

---

38 Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 840.

39 According to Joel Kennedy, “Later Jesus at the end of the Gospel proclaimed on a mountain that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him (28:18), a scene that has correlations with 4:8-10,” *The Recapitulation of Israel: Use of Israel's History in Matthew 1:1-4:11*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series (Heidelberg: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 214. Kennedy also argues that Matthew has followed the chronology of Israel’s experience in the desert. According to him, “Thus it appears Matthew follows the chronological order of Exodus: the hunger theme of chapter 16, testing God incident of chapter 17, and the idolatry with the golden calf event of chapter 32,” 187. Thus, we can find more than one reason for why Matthew has arranged his temptation series differently from Luke.



added to him. He is truly God's beloved Son beyond measure.<sup>40</sup>

To sum up, we can see that in assuming Matthew's use of Mark and Luke, it is possible to track not only the "X+y" or "x+Y" formula but also the reason behind Matthew's redaction in the temptation story.

### Mark-Matthew Overlaps?

While I argue that Mark-Q overlaps can actually be explained as Mark-Luke (Q) overlap, can the Farrerians claim the Mark-Matthew overlaps? The answer is no. If Luke was the one who used Matthew and Mark, then in these cases, we do not have overlap. What we do have are five pericopes in which Luke uses Matthew without Mark, and one, the sixth, in which Luke uses only Mark.

It must be said that this by itself will do no harm to the Farrerian hypothesis. There is no law that Luke has to use the same formula. It is his right if, in writing the temptation story, he solely uses Matthew. We cannot impose one writer's method upon another. Therefore, in analyzing whether Luke uses Matthew in the temptation story, our focus will be on the rationalization of his redaction. Because in his prologue Luke states that he has given special attention not only to how he verified his sources but also to the way he composed his Gospel (Lk 1:3), it is reasonable to expect that Luke's redaction of Matthew will provide greater clarity and richer meaning.

For the temptation story, if Luke is the one who uses Matthew, then it would mean he changes the order of the second and third temptations. This change can be understood if we recognize the significance of Jerusa-

---

40 Nolland rejects the parallel between the third temptation and 28:18 because "Matthew fails to provide the vocabulary links which could have made this clear," *The Gospel of Matthew*, 167. If our above interpretation is correct, the vocabulary link indeed exists. Moreover, both incidents have the mountain setting; in Matthew 28:18 we read, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of *the Son* and of the Holy Spirit" (emphasis added). Interestingly, although he recognizes that "'Son' is a central christological title for him [Matthew]," Nolland admits that "Jesus is 'Son of God' less often in Matthew than 'Christ' or 'Son of Man,'" 1269. So why in arguably the most important verse in his Gospel, does Matthew use "Son" instead of "Christ"? I propose that because Jesus has proved himself as the Son of God, believers must be baptized in his name and, with that, give him glory.

lem for Luke.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, there are two other things in Luke's redaction that demand explanation. First of all, why does Luke remove "... but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4)?

Goulder addresses this question by noting that "[i]t is sometimes thought that Matthew has extended the shorter Q form in line with his theology of Jesus as the Wisdom of God; but ... it seems that Luke has the fuller form in his *Vorlage*." The reason is because Luke "writes at 4:22, 'they wondered at the words of grace *proceeding* from his *mouth*,'" and for Goulder, "[a]s so often he [Luke] has split his source."<sup>42</sup> It is to be noted that the Farrerians argue that Luke "regularly shorten[s] Mark's discourses, retaining some material, omitting other material and relocating the rest."<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, in this particular case, it is difficult to see how Luke has to relocate "by every word that comes from the mouth of God" from the temptation story to Luke 4:22 because he thought Matthew's temptation story was too long.

For Goulder, Luke has split his source in this particular case because all that is relevant in the temptation story is "the insufficiency of bread to meet the Lord's need." Luke then relocates "by every word that comes from the mouth of God" from the temptation story to the synagogue story because, still according to Goulder, "it is not until the scene in the synagogue that the words proceeding from (*dia*) God's mouth out of (*ek*) Jesus' mouth will bring life to men."<sup>44</sup> I have some objections against this proposal. First, because the sole weapon that Jesus uses to defeat Satan's temptation is God's word, it is more likely that "word" is most important in this story. Second, considering that much of Luke's content is related to basic Christian life, which includes the significance of hearing the Word (for example, the story of Mary and Martha, Lk 10:38-42), wouldn't it be

41 See, for example, I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 166-167.

42 Goulder, *Luke*, 292.

43 Goodacre, *The Case against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002), 92. For another example, see Heather M. Gorman, "Crank or Creative Genius? How Ancient Rhetoric Makes Sense of Luke's Order," in John C. Poirier and Jeffrey Peterson, eds., *Markan Priority without Q* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 80.

44 Goulder, *Luke*, 292.

fitting for Luke to include this statement of Jesus? Third, because Luke gives such a great emphasis on putting one's life not upon money, but upon God's hand (for example, Lk 12:22-34), wouldn't this statement be relevant to his case? Fourth, as a matter of fact, Luke does not say that Jesus's word brought life to his audience, because his word is rejected in Nazareth (Luke 4:22).

The second aspect of Luke's redaction in the temptation story that demands explanation is why Luke also removes "and behold, angels came and were ministering to him" (Mt 4:11 // Mk 1:13; absent in Luke). According to Goulder, Jesus in Luke "has 'the power of the Spirit' (v. 14), and has no need of angels."<sup>45</sup> It is difficult to agree with Goulder's comment, however, because in recording the incident at Gethsemane, Luke is the only Gospel writer who notes, "And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him" (22:43).<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Again because of space, I can only investigate one Mark-Luke (Q) overlap. All I can say here is that if I do the same kind of investigation of the other five overlaps, I will come up with the "X + y" or the "x + Y" pattern, as we will also see that Matthew's use of Mark and Luke is generally more explicable than Luke's use of Mark and Matthew. When I argue for the "X + y" or the "x + Y" pattern, however, I do not mean to say that Matthew, in writing his Gospel, will mechanically use the same formula from start to finish. Sometimes he may want to use only one Gospel, either Luke or Mark. What I do want to argue is that Matthew uses "X + y" or "x + Y" often enough, and clearly enough, for us to spot and to mark them. And the Gospel scholars have even provided a "label" for it: "the Mark-Q overlap." The existence of the label itself shows that what we have here is not a random phenomenon.

<sup>45</sup> Goulder, *Luke*, 293.

<sup>46</sup> There is a textual problem for Luke 22:43-44 because some manuscripts do not have these verses. For those who reject 22:43-44 see Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1444. For those who accept see Darrell Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1763-1764. What is relevant for our purpose here is that Goulder himself accepted the originality of Luke 22:43-44, *Luke II*. 741-42.

I submit that although there is an internal incoherence in Matthew 26:68, this does *not* provide a solid reason for a conjectural emendation. This incoherence is caused by the way Matthew used his sources and by the limitation faced by all first-century writers that are posited by the two-source theorists themselves. We have seen that *there is no unpicking nor any conflation in Matthew's redaction, and the way he used Mark and Luke does not require a large desk on which to put his sources*—everything is within the restriction proposed by Downing and Derrenbacker.

Finally, if the MA in Matthew 26:67-68 // Mark 14:65 // Luke 22:64 is genuine and if most, if not all, Q theologians have agreed that there is no Q in the passion story, then should we not, at least, be more open to the possibility of a direct literary relationship between Matthew and Luke? While all Farrerians and Griesbachians will agree with that, I have shown that by assuming Matthew's use of Mark and Luke, we can arrive at a simpler and more coherent explanation for the last-to-be-written Synoptic Gospel's redaction, both in the case of the MA and in the temptation overlap, than if I assume that Luke is the one who uses Mark and Matthew. Therefore, should we not consider the Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis as a possible solution for the Synoptic Problem? I submit that this MA supports Matthew's use of Mark and Luke.

### **About author**

Hendry Ongkowidjojo is a D.Th. candidate at Trinity Theological College, Singapore.